

# **Countering Ideological Support to Terrorism in the Circum-Caribbean**

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## ***The Americas and terrorism: an introduction***

Although it is an obvious cliché to say that on September 11, 2001 the world changed for Americans, it remains, nonetheless, an accurate statement. From the moment of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the aborted third attack aimed at Washington DC, international terrorism became the principal threat to the United States. All other threats came to be viewed in light of their relationship to the war against Al Qaeda and other violent Islamist jihadist extremists.

From a perspective south of the Rio Grande, however, international terrorism did not rise to anything like the level of the premier threat. For the Latin Americans many other problems have significantly higher priorities than international terrorism. Even Colombia, the only nation state in the Western Hemisphere that is directly threatened by a terrorist insurgency, perceives the threat in generally local terms. The *Frente Armada Revolucionaria Colombiana* (FARC) is a home-grown Marxist-Leninist group that is intimately linked with Colombian cocaine trafficking cartels. So, too, are the smaller insurgent groups, the ELN, and the right wing “paramilitaries”. In Peru, the only other Latin American country where insurgent terrorists are active, a somewhat revived *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) Communist movement is following in the mode of the FARC. None of the above cases have any apparent links to the Islamist jihadists.

What we see, therefore, is a sharp discrepancy in threat perception between the United States and the other states of the Americas. This paper will focus on one sub-region of the Western Hemisphere – the Circum-Caribbean. It will address the nature of the sub-region in the next section. This will be followed by an analysis of the threat, primarily as perceived by the states of the sub-region.

In turn, we will explore the general ambiance of anti-Americanism in Latin America and the sub-region. We will argue that it is this anti-American view of the US that complicates our efforts to get the governments and people of the Circum-Caribbean region to raise their perception of the priority of the terrorist threat and therefore limits their cooperation with the United States. At the same time, we will argue that there is a significant potential for the perceived threats to the sub-region to act as international terrorist enablers. It is this coincidence of interest, we suggest, that

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CSRC discussion paper 05/52

September 2005

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may be used to enhance cooperation between the US and the governments of the region.

We then turn our attention to American strengths and vulnerabilities with regard to our objective of countering ideological support to terrorism in the Circum-Caribbean. Finally, we suggest ways in which the US can exploit its strengths and reduce its vulnerabilities to achieve our long term objectives in this war.

**The Circum-Caribbean Region.** This is defined as the area closest to the US, which is encompassed by Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. In the region as a whole, the threat of terrorism remains low, as documented by a recent State Department report, the 2004 analysis of international terrorism, issued in April 2005 as *Country Reports on Terrorism*. The report outlines US concerns about terrorist threats around the world, including throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. While the report states that the international terrorist threat in the Western Hemisphere remained low in 2004, compared to other regions of the world, it also emphasized that “terrorists may seek safe-haven, financing, recruiting, illegal travel documentation, or access to the United States from the area and pose serious threats”.<sup>1</sup> It is the very closeness of this region to the US, as well as the lack of effective immigration and border control, and particularly the serious nature of criminal gangs that have spread from there into the US that give us concern.

**The nature of the threat: Gangs and what they can do.** The seriousness of the US gang problem and its connections with Latin America were emphasized in remarks given on August 1, 2005, by Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff at a Joint Press Conference on Community Shield (a national law enforcement programme against gangs):

Gang violence and gang criminal behaviour is the kind of threat to our vulnerabilities that all of us -- federal, state and local officials -- are very, very concerned about. Indeed, our threat assessments indicate that many gang members come to this country from overseas, or from other parts of the North and South American continent, which means that they are subject to our immigration laws and that when they violate those laws, we can take action against them. We are deeply committed to enforcing these immigration laws and restoring integrity to our immigration system.<sup>2</sup>

The most well-known and violent gang is the Mara Salvatrucha gang, also referred to as MS-13, which formed when people began fleeing El Salvador because of civil war. They settled primarily in Los Angeles. Since the 1980s, the gang spread across the United States and now has members from many Central American countries and Mexico. The nature of MS-13 violence encompasses robbery, car-jacking, murder, trafficking of people, drugs and arms, migrant smuggling, as well as murder for hire.

As a result of US legislation in 1996, many Central American gang members in the US who were convicted of crimes were deported to their countries of origin, beginning in 1997. Upon returning to El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, the deported criminals re-formed gangs, and recruited locals to expand their numbers. At first, the recipient countries were not notified of the criminal status of these deportees, but US reforms in recent years include notification of criminal records at the time of deportation.<sup>3</sup>

While Central American governments have adopted hard as well as soft measures in an effort to contain these violent gangs, the problem has expanded alarmingly. Estimates of numbers of gang members in Central America vary widely, but the US Southern Command has given the figure of 70,000-100,000. The US Department of Justice estimates there are approximately 30,000 gangs, with 800,000 members, in 2,500 communities in the US MS-13 alone is estimated to have from 8,000 to 10,000 members, in 33 states and the District of Colombia.<sup>4</sup>

In general, Californian gangs, particularly from the Los Angeles area, continue to have a major influence on Mexican American and Central American gangs in the US and in Latin America. The main rival of the MS-13 gang in the US is the M-18 (or Barrio 18), (formed by Mexican immigrants on "18<sup>th</sup> Street", in the Rampart section of Los Angeles, as early as the 1960s). M-18 was the first gang to accept recruits from all races and states.

While there were concerns that Al Qaeda may have been in Central America in 2004, making contacts with gang members, US officials maintained that there was no evidence for these concerns.<sup>5</sup>

### **Country and Regional Response to Gangs**

Many analysts believe that gang violence in the Circum-Caribbean region threatens social stability, inhibits economic and social development, discourages foreign investment, and may accelerate illegal immigration, as well as drug smuggling and trafficking in arms and persons. Most gangs are in the U.S, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico, with some activity also in Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica and many areas in the Caribbean.

**US.** As a result of MS-13's high profile and violence, the FBI is focusing its gang crackdown on the MS-13 in 2005. Also on the FBI's list of the most dangerous street gangs are Norteños (Northern California Latino gangs allied to the Nuestra Familia prison organization), Sureños (Southern California gangs allied to the Mexican Mafia prison organization), Latin Kings (mostly in Chicago, New York City and other Midwest and East Coast communities), and other street organizations in Texas, Arizona and Puerto Rico. Part of the FBI's strategy is to create a National Gang Intelligence Center and to establish the MS-13 National Gang Task Force. In an operation that began in February 2005, agents from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), along with local police, have raided gangs throughout the US. To date, they have arrested more than a thousand accused gang members, including many who are thought to be from MS-13.

US elected officials, especially from the area surrounding Washington D.C., are also taking action against MS-13 members, with proposed US legislation as well as communications with Central American leaders.<sup>6</sup>

**Honduras.** The greatest numbers of gang members are in Honduras, where in 2003 legislation was passed to establish a maximum 12-year prison sentence for gang membership, and in 2004, that penalty that was extended to up to 30 years in prison.<sup>7</sup> As a result, there was a significant reduction in crime (60% reduction in young gang violence), but human rights groups complained that civil liberties were affected.

Meanwhile, even at the lowered rate, gang crimes in Honduras continued to be sensational for their brutality. In December 2004, 28 people died and 14 wounded as a result of an assault on a public bus in Honduras. The attackers, who sprayed the bus with automatic weapon fire, were from MS-13, which has earned a reputation for ruthlessness wherever it operates—in the US and in Central America.

In July 2005, Michael Markey, a US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Agent, was murdered while visiting a church just outside the Honduran capital. One of the persons arrested in connection with Markey's death was a young Honduran named Colindres who was a member of M-18. Colindres had already been linked to 17 murders, detained and escaped six times. Such gang members and organized criminals find Central America a convenient transit station for smuggling people and drugs north and arms and cash south. The justice systems in the region cannot keep up with them, and they have become adept at manipulating and corrupting the law enforcement systems.<sup>8</sup> As a result of impatience with corrupt law enforcement, in spring 2005, some vigilante groups began attacking suspected gang members.<sup>9</sup>

**El Salvador.** In 2004, El Salvador passed legislation approving President Tony Saca's anti-gang programme, called *Super Mano Dura* (Super-Firm Hand) with steeper penalties for gang membership, up to five years in jail, and nine years for gang leadership. The government reported that this tough programme reduced the number of murders that year by 14%. In 2005, the legislature tightened gun ownership laws, and also began the complementary programme of prevention and rehabilitation called *Mano Amiga* (Friendly Hand).<sup>10</sup>

**Guatemala.** In Guatemala, President Oscar Berger supports strengthening legislation that would create both punitive jail sentences and rehabilitative programmes for gang members and leaders. Guatemalan prison gangs have recently been found to be communicating via a web page to order and orchestrate riots in seven different prisons at once. Apparently, the M18 gang has found it quite easy to bribe guards to bring in weapons, and according to Interior Minister Carlos Vielmann, "the gangs maintain constant communication, they have a web page and not only synchronize in Guatemala, they synchronize with El Salvador, Honduras, and with the United States". As a result of the discovery of the gangs' wide-spread communications, Vielmann emphasizes that the gangs have organizational power, which allows them to spread terror through much of the region.<sup>11</sup> In 2005, Guatemala and El Salvador organized joint security forces to patrol for gang activity along their borders.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Other countries, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica.**

Throughout Central America, as gang leaders were jailed, new leaders took their place, and new territory was scouted, leading to the spread of gangs into Mexico, the US, and other Central American countries, including to a lesser extent Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica. Nicaragua and Panama have adopted anti-gang strategies, although gangs have not yet threatened national security as much as they have elsewhere in the region.<sup>13</sup> Panamanian President Torrijos launched *Mano Amiga* in September 2004, as a government-sponsored set of alternatives for at risk youth aged 14-17, to provide theatre and sports activities, backed up by volunteers from the family, school and community.

**Mexico.** In Chiapas, just across the border from Guatemala, MS-13 and Barrio 18 began to prey upon poor Central American immigrants crossing illegally into Mexico on their way to the US. Robbing, wounding or killing these undocumented aliens sent a message to other gangs that their own *coyotes* or bribery/protection services ruled in Chiapas. From Chiapas, gangs spread with their objectives of territoriality, crime and dominance over others up to Mexico City through seven Mexican states and along the border with the US. While law enforcement authorities in Mexico have expressed concern that these gangs may be associated with Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, there has been no verifiable evidence to support the association.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, their presence, their sociopathic, carelessly violent nature, as well as their capability of smuggling persons and arms into the US are of great concern.

Whether the people-smugglers are youth gangs or other criminal organizations, it is a very serious problem between the US and Mexico. The F.B.I. has estimated that people smuggling to the US from Mexico earns criminal networks between \$6-9Bn annually, making it second only to drug trafficking in value as an illicit activity. It is estimated that there may be 300 groups that specialize in smuggling people to the US. An example was the so-called Boughader Group, led by a Mexican of Lebanese descent, who was arrested in December 2002 for having conveyed illegal immigrants from the Middle East. However, many analysts agree that any potential terrorists moving through Mexico are more likely to use false passports and have sufficient money to enter through airports and seaports.<sup>15</sup>

Recently, the porous US-Mexican borders are becoming a more prominent political irritant in the US, with a *Foreign Affairs* poll reporting 88 per cent of the American public desiring tougher action against illegal migrants, in the belief that it would aid national security.<sup>16</sup> This negative public perception is in reaction to reports of violence, with the large border town of Nuevo Laredo recently issuing a plea for Mexican troops to be deployed to restore order during the ongoing wars among drug gangs. To the consternation of the Mexican federal government, the US Ambassador temporarily closed the US Consulate in Nuevo Laredo in August 2005 as a protest against the violence. The continued reports of property damage and violence on the US side of the border recently resulted in states of emergency declared by Arizona and New Mexico, to obtain special funds to combat the influx of illegal migrants from the south. Fanning the ongoing perception of crisis, the media also frequently repeats that there are an estimated 10 million illegal migrants in the US, equal to the number who arrive legally, with the numbers of illegals rising by 500,000 a year.<sup>17</sup> In August 2005, Mexican President Vicente Fox pleaded for US –Mexican teamwork and cooperation to resolve the problems of US drug consumption, Mexican violence among drug gangs competing for territory, and the continued flow of illegal aliens into the US.<sup>18</sup>

**Organized Crime** It may be said that the transnational nature of gangs, drugs, arms, and people trafficking certainly overlaps the broader category of transnational organized crime, with its ability to exist in the “ungoverned spaces”, wherever government is weakest, such as in the sparsely guarded border areas between states.<sup>19</sup> In recognition of the security threat to the hemisphere that transnational organized crime represents, the UN and the Organisation of American States (OAS) have addressed this with several measures, including UN Resolution 2116, “Fighting Transnational Organized Crime in the Hemisphere”, adopted at the General Assembly fourth plenary session on June 7, 2005. This Resolution proposes several courses of action, including urging members to adopt or strengthen legislation and cooperation in order to combat the various

manifestations of transnational organized crime in the hemisphere, such as “illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, illicit arms trafficking, trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, cyber crime, criminal youth gangs, kidnapping, and corruption, as well as connections between terrorism and these manifestations”.<sup>20</sup>

**Gangs in the Caribbean.** A number of Caribbean countries are now coming to terms with the reality of gangs that engage in criminal acts, resulting in significantly higher crime levels in the region. One Caribbean Prime Minister has blamed the trend towards gangs on the hundreds of deportees who have been sent back to the Caribbean from the US and Canada.<sup>21</sup> That high numbers of deportees may have had a big impact on crime bears some credibility when one considers that an estimated 13,000 Caribbean criminals have been deported from the United States since 1999. While Jamaica has the highest level of violence, accounting for 60% of the crime in the region and some 85 gangs,<sup>22</sup> violence is also on the rise in other countries across the English-speaking Caribbean. Although the Virgin Islands, St. Kitts, and Trinidad-Tobago have a murder rate only 40% that of Jamaica, they continue to see an increasing presence of drug-dealing gangs.<sup>23</sup>

What is being done? Tough government programmes have begun to see results. In Jamaica, where the gangs are often called “posses”, and are capable of taking over entire neighbourhoods, the National Security Minister launched a major anti-gang initiative, called “Operation Kingfish”, in 2004, which featured the use of intelligence and international support and succeeded in cracking several major drug gangs. The Bahamas has also increased pressure on gangs, which resulted in the capture of five drug gangs since 2001. As a result, the Bahamas is one of the few countries in the region to have managed to lower the murder rate. In recognition of its own growing gang problem, Trinidad-Tobago launched a \$30M Special Anti-Crime Unit in 2004, under the direction of the National Security Ministry, with rules of engagement authorized by the Chief of Defence and the Police Commissioner.<sup>24</sup>

The results of such important government initiatives will be known over time, but the problems are even greater in Haiti, where gangs have become insurgents, and have severely disrupted the country. As an adjoining country, the Dominican Republic suffers from border incursions from Haiti, but also has its own problems with gangs. As in other countries, Dominican gangs continued their battles with rivals even after they were incarcerated. In spring 2005, some 134 prisoners were killed in one of the Dominican Republic’s worst jailhouse fires, when rival drug gangs deliberately set their bedding ablaze. As a consequence, Dominican President Leonel Fernández put forward a plan of zero tolerance. In an effort to find Caribbean solutions to the gang and other security problems, President Fernández presided over a regional seminar on “Security and Cooperation in the Caribbean: Role of Regional Political Leadership” in summer 2005 in Santo Domingo.<sup>25</sup>

### ***The Ambiance of Anti-Americanism***

*With our blood we are blocking the path leading to the annexation of the peoples of our America to that chaotic and brutal north which so despises them. I lived in the monster and I know its entrails...*

*José Martí, April 7, 1895<sup>26</sup>*

Anti-Americanism has a long and respected history in Latin America as seen in this quote from Cuba's poet hero of its war for independence. According to Greg Grandin:

Two broad arcs of antagonism define US – Latin American relations. The first began in the early nineteenth century and paralleled the initial phase of US territorial and economic expansion. Latin American intellectuals, politicians, and nationalists reacted with increasing hostility not only toward the growing influence of US capital ... but also toward the ever more frequent and threatening military interventions.... By the beginning of the twentieth century, such actions inflamed a generation of political and literary critics of US power....<sup>27</sup>

Among these critics were Martí, Rubén Darío of Nicaragua and Isidro Fabela of Mexico, all well known political and literary figures of the time. Their critique drew on specific policy disagreement but also “a more diffuse Spanish antipathy toward Anglo-Protestant ‘individualism’ and ‘materialism’”.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, opposition to the US grew in the Cold War based on policies such as the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954, support for Latin American dictators from the 1950s to the 1970s, and the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua twenty years later.

Nevertheless, the attitudes of Latin Americans toward the United States were deeply ambivalent. “A number of post-World War II polls carried out by UNESCO, the USIA, and other groups ... provid[ed] statistical confirmation that US values held great appeal for much of the world's population.”<sup>29</sup> A 1958 National Intelligence Estimate supported this conclusion. Latin American attitudes “expressed ‘envy by disparaging US materialism,’ yet wanted our consumer goods and capital; they espoused pan-Americanism but engaged in petty nationalism; they chafed at our military power but wanted our protection.”<sup>30</sup> Nothing in the ensuing half century would change that conclusion. In short, the ambiance of Latin American attitudes toward the United States prior to 9/11 remained pretty much as it had been. Latin American intellectuals railed against the US; Latin American leaders sought various kinds of accommodation with the US; Latin American people wanted what Americans have.

Survey research data since 9/11, however, has shown a disturbing world-wide trend in attitudes. There has been a significant rise in anti-Americanism – well over what had been seen in the previous eight years of the Clinton Administration. Nevertheless, it is not a new trend but rather an acceleration.

In a survey published in December 2001 by the Pew Trust<sup>31</sup> opinion leaders in many countries stated that US policies were a principal cause of the 9/11 attacks. This was true of 58% of the Latin American respondents. In addition, 71% felt that it was good for the US to feel vulnerable. A mere 37% of the Latin American respondents felt that the US was acting multilaterally at that time. In the same survey 58% of respondents expressed resentment of US power; 51% said that the US causes the gap between rich and poor nations while 44% saw the power of multinational corporations as a reason for disliking the US. Unlike other areas of the world, only 7% of the Latin Americans saw US support of Israel as a major problem (compared with 17% for the next highest area of the world).

As this survey data demonstrates, elite attitudes toward the US are largely negative for, apparently, the same reasons as they have been throughout the history of

inter-American interaction. George Yudice cites evidence from an informal survey of Latin American intellectuals that he took along with public statements by other intellectuals and political activists. He states that “the reactions to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, were like a release of pent-up rage at the long history of US interventions in the region’s affairs. Some prominent Latin American intellectuals felt vindicated, as if the attacks were a retaliatory strike on their behalf.”<sup>32</sup>

As the Puerto Rican intellectual and academic, Ramón Grosfoguel put it:

“One can’t expect that the North American state can bomb Iraq for an entire decade, finance the Israeli state’s massacre of Palestinians, invade Panama with a death toll of thousands, train military executioners in the arts of terrorism in the School of the Americas, and subsidize military dictatorships throughout the world for decades on end without someone someday getting it dished back.”<sup>33</sup>

Although these statements are filled with hyperbole and many of the allegations are false, these views are widely accepted in Latin America by both opinion leaders (as shown by the survey data) and by the population at large. Negative views of the US are confirmed by a BBC World Service poll conducted between November 2004 and January 2005 that asked respondents in 21 countries their views regarding President Bush’s reelection.<sup>34</sup> On the average and across all 21 countries 58% said that President Bush’s reelection was negative for global security while only 26% said it was positive. Among the most negative were the Latin Americans. Only 6% of Argentines, 17% of Brazilians, 19% of Chileans and 4% of Mexicans saw the President’s reelection as positive for global security. By contrast, 79% of Argentines, 78% of Brazilians, 62% of Chileans, and 58% of Mexicans saw it as negative. The most disturbing aspect of the data is that these views translate directly into how the respondents see the American people. Only 13% of Argentines, 28% of Brazilians, 16% of Chileans, and 14% of Mexicans feel better about the American people in the wake of Bush’s reelection while 54% of Argentines, 59% of Brazilians, 40% of Chileans, and 49% of Mexicans see Americans in a worse light.

A survey conducted in 23 countries at the same time by Globe Scan for the Programme on International Policy Attitudes of the University of Maryland asked respondents to identify whether Europe becoming more influential in world affairs than the US was positive or negative, as well as whether they saw the US (and other countries) as having a mainly positive or negative influence in the world.<sup>35</sup> Regarding Europe becoming more influential than the US, 57% of Argentines, 53% of Brazilians, 48% of Chileans and 66% of Mexicans saw this trend as mainly positive. Concerning the US: 19% of Argentines viewed its role as mainly positive while 65% saw it as mainly negative; 42% of Brazilians saw the US in mainly positive terms while 51% saw its role as mainly negative; 29% of Chileans viewed the US positively while 50% view it negatively; and 11% of Mexicans have a positive view compared to 57% who see the US in negative terms.

This perception is similar to that of many other countries. According to a report in the *Financial Times* based on the Nation Brands Index (NBI) survey by GMI, “The US is increasingly viewed as a ‘culture free zone’ inhabited by arrogant and unfriendly people...”<sup>36</sup> Yet, the US remains among a select group of nations at the top of the NBI. According to Simon Arnholt, developer of the NBI, “It seems that to be a top nation brand, the country needs to be stable, liberal, democratic and Western, with a tendency toward neutrality”.<sup>37</sup> The US ranks number 11 on the



survey among 13 Western democracies and ahead of all non-Western states in the list of 25. The major problem for the US on the NBI was the perception that the US government could not be trusted to make reasonable decisions on peace and security.

Although there is a clear ambience of anti-Americanism in Latin America it is based more on perceived policy disagreement than on value conflict. Granted that there is an element of the latter, however, there is strong support for the democratic values that are central to what the United States is and does. As Table 1 shows, Latin Americans in general and Central Americans and Mexicans in particular strongly support democracy as the best form of government in spite of its problems and reject authoritarian regimes.

Table 1: Latin American Attitudes Toward Democratic Values

	In spite of problems democracy is the best form of government	In some cases authoritarian government could be preferable	Powerful interests govern in their own interests	Democracy is the only system that can achieve development	Type of government doesn't matter if it solves economic problems	A little government repression is OK	Private enterprise in charge of the country is OK if it solves economic problems
CS	82%	7%	68%	79%	42%	78%	39%
PM	77%	8%	67%	80%	56%	71%	52%
DR	76%	11%	85%	76%	62%	67%	63%
NU	74%	10%	74%	76%	70%	59%	68%
MX	79%	14%	75%	75%	67%	54%	48%
GT	54%	11%	64%	60%	57%	78%	45%
ES	66%	10%	63%	67%	56%	78%	44%
HO	69%	11%	66%	75%	70%	78%	54%
LATAM	71%	15%	71%	72%	55%	64%	47%
SOURCE:	Latinobarometro 2004						

The eight countries specifically identified from our sub-region do not deviate significantly from the Latin American norm.<sup>38</sup> The survey data also clearly indicate that Latin American support for democracy is aspirational. The citizens of these eight countries and of the region as a whole believe that democracy is the system that can achieve the development they hope for. This belief, in turn, makes their support for democracy contingent on its success in attaining economic goals. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that a majority of all Latin Americans, as well as in seven of the eight countries surveyed in the sub-region, agreed with the statement that the type of government does not matter so long as it solves their economic problems. Only in Costa Rica did a majority support democracy in an unqualified manner.

One set of attitudes is particularly disturbing and that is the high level of agreement that powerful economic interests govern the country to their own benefit. This statement is supported by 71% of all Latin Americans and between 63% (El Salvador) and 85% (Dominican Republic) of the eight countries surveyed in the sub-region. In other words, most Latin Americans do not see “democracy” as governing in their interest. Thus, their assessment of democracy in instrumental terms is that it has been less than successful. Moreover, there is a high degree of ambivalence both in Latin America as a whole and in the sub-region toward a free market economy. Concomitantly, the data show significant residual support for statist economic solutions.

The final point to make with regard to this survey is that despite the perception of the researchers that the overwhelming response of significant majorities that “a little government repression is OK” signifies an authoritarian streak in Latin American political culture,<sup>39</sup> it is, rather, a recognition that certain very real threats must be met with a certain amount of repressive force. These are precisely the threats identified in the previous section. Discussion with Latin Americans from all over the region, but especially the sub-region, indicates that they view a degree of repression as necessary but only if carried out under the rule of law.<sup>40</sup>

To complete the picture of Latin American attitudes toward the US comes a picture of Mexican views toward migration to their northern neighbour. According to a poll taken in Mexico by the Pew Hispanic Center, 46% of adult respondents “would come to the United States if they had the means and opportunity. And about half of those people said they’d be willing to move to and work in the United States illegally.”<sup>41</sup> So despite an ambience of anti-Americanism and ambivalence about democratic performance, if not democratic values, a very significant number of Latin Americans would vote with their feet if they could.

### **Radical Islamists May Be Recruiting Prison Inmates in the US**

Although the US has been focusing on foreign terrorists entering the US, a new research project based at the University of Maryland contains data that support the observation that the odds favour domestic rather than international terrorists. Gary Lafree, who heads the project funded by the Department of Homeland Security (HLS), has collected data covering some 70,000 terrorist attacks since 1970, and of these, domestic terrorist events outnumber international events by 7 to one.<sup>42</sup> There have been recent reports that a militant Islamist group, thought to be operating in California prisons, was suspected of planning to attack targets in Los Angeles. The suspects in this California Folsom Prison case include US citizens and a Pakistani illegal immigrant. The Islamist militant group in this prison case is the *Jamiyyat Ul Islam Is Saheeh*, or JIS, which has had a presence at Folsom for about five years, with followers including both inmates and former inmates. The group's name translates from Arabic into the Assembly of Authentic Islam. The FBI is investigating possible Islamist groups in other US prisons.<sup>43</sup>

The Folsom case recalls that of José Padilla, a US citizen from Puerto Rico, who had been in and out of prisons several times for crimes connected with gang activities in Chicago. Padilla had converted to a radical form of Islam, possibly as a result of prison contacts, and was arrested at Chicago airport under suspicion of plotting a terrorist attack with a dirty bomb. However, there are other Islamist converts among US citizens with no prison association, such as the Ohio-born Mahmud Faruq Brent, who was secretly recorded bragging about attending a terrorist training camp in Pakistan in 2002. He had been living in Baltimore the

past five years, while working in nearby Washington D.C. as a cab and ambulance driver. Brent was arrested in August 2005, accused of association with *Lakshar-e-Taiba*, a militant Islamist group active in the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir.<sup>44</sup>

It is, therefore, necessary to consider the probability that radical Islamist groups will recruit Latin gang members as well as members of Jamaican posses and other gangs in the English speaking Caribbean. Such successful recruitment of people with strategic criminal capabilities and a predisposition toward anti-Americanism would signify a major increase in the nature of the terrorist threat.

### ***Tying the Problem Together***

The problem in Latin America, and especially in the Circum-Caribbean sub-region, is twofold. First, it is a problem of capabilities; second, it is a problem of attitudes. Compounding its complexity is the fact that the capabilities and the attitudes may be linked only very loosely, if at all. Indeed, there is no hard evidence that the terrorism enabling capabilities identified and discussed here are in any way linked to the anti-American attitudes found throughout the region. To address the problem we will consider it in both worst and best case terms. The question inherent in this approach is whether the actions we recommend to address the problem will be different in either case.

**Worst Case Scenario:** In the worst case, we imagine that the capabilities of the gangs – Mara Salvatrucha, M-18, Jamaican posses, Dominican gangs – organized criminals, narcotraffickers, and home grown insurgents, are profoundly and deeply influenced by a wide variety of anti-American attitudes. The gangs and the other groups view the US as the source of all their problems. Gang members reject American democratic values. So, of course, do the insurgents as well as many, if not most, of the criminals. Gang members, both those who have been deported from their US homes and those who have joined the gangs in their home countries, blame the US and its policies for that. Insurgents usually draw their ideological inspiration from Marxism-Leninism in either its Maoist or Castroite *foco*<sup>45</sup> form. Their resentment of the US is such that they are willing to make common cause with any radicals who would do harm to America.

**Best Case Scenario:** In the best case, we imagine that the gangs and other criminal or insurgent groups are largely indifferent to anti-American attitudes. Rather than being influenced by anti-Americanism, the gangs and criminal organizations are in the business of simply making money and protecting their interests. Thus, for a price, they are willing to undertake any action that would advance their interests.

The outcome is the same in either scenario. The gangs, organized criminals, and insurgents have the capability to enable terrorists to inflict harm on the US. For either ideological or mundane reasons they have an incentive to undertake such enabling activities. Therefore, the first order of business in dealing with the threat must be to reduce and, if possible, neutralize the threat capabilities. But herein lies the rub: without a reduction of anti-Americanism there can be no long term assurance that terrorists<sup>46</sup> will not be enabled by kindred ideological spirits in this hemisphere. So, the second order of business must be to wage the “information war” with the goal of turning many or most of the adherents of anti-Americanism into, if not supporters of US policy, at least friends of the US who fully share its values. As is suggested by the survey data, this is not “mission impossible”; how to

achieve it will be addressed below. First, however, we will consider American strengths and vulnerabilities.

### **American Strengths and Vulnerabilities**

Since 9/11 and the continuing terrorist attacks around the world against Western targets (such as 7/7 in Britain), Americans have been convulsed by a debate about who we are, and why some people in the world would want to kill us? Is our “Americanness” compatible with values shared by reasonable people around the world? Is there something “off” in the perception of the United States today? What are our strengths, which would be viewed as positive and attractive to the rest of the world?

Surely among our greatest strengths is our democratic system of government. That very democracy carries with it a great responsibility for its citizens, who have that precious freedom, to endeavour to be well-educated, capable of critical thinking, in order to make well-informed choices. Since the US is also the single superpower in the world today, those well-informed choices become all the more significant to the rest of the world. And as a country that grew by adding to its citizenry immigrants and their descendants from lands around the world it has an eclectic heritage. Hence, among the American greatest virtues is tolerance, towards itself and others. The flip side may be a lack of introspection and not caring too much about defining yourself, except that you have to now, because you are under threat.

Despite American “diversity” there is very much a narrative of American history, a set of American traditions, and especially an American “identity” or “brand” that the world has admired and even envied. Some American brands of merchandise, in fact, become closely connected to their country of origin and are quintessentially American. They represent the American innovation, lifestyle, image and even its foreign policy. That the foreign perception of the latter may begin to erode acceptance of American ideas and merchandise is predicted by Simon Anholt, author of *Brand America*, and is supported by a poll reported in the British *Financial Times* on August 1 2005, in the article “World turning its back on Brand America”, by Kevin Allison. The erosion of America’s corporate image abroad was also recently documented by a global survey company, GFKNOP, which interviewed consumers in 30 countries and concluded that it was due to two factors: competition, and a negative perception of American values and policies, especially the prestige lost since the US began the war with Iraq.<sup>47</sup> Another publication, *Working with Americans*, a business bestseller published by Prentice Hall in 2002, contains observations by one of the co-authors, Allyson Stewart-Allen, that US companies abroad need to align with their customers, and not present themselves as aggressively and arrogantly American, insisting on imposing their way of doing things in international markets. Publications on this subject generally concur that US companies, as well as the government, need to focus on an awareness of the client-base and its sensitivities.

**Exemplary measures to date** Much the same may be said of the style of presenting and explaining a well-reasoned US foreign policy to the US public and to our neighbours. What is the interest of the consumer—or the neighbouring country? How may the ideas be presented in such a way that demonstrates understanding of the neighbouring countries’ needs? One way would be to work cooperatively on the mutual security threat represented by transnational organized crime and gangs, which we have characterized as significant potential terrorist enablers.

An example of efforts that deserve US support are the fast-response special forces units to confront gangs, as proposed by Central American and Mexican leaders at a summit in Chiapas in June 2005. Officials in the region made it clear at that meeting that they expect Washington to help finance the unit, because both US drug consumption and increased US deportation of gang members have aggravated the security problem. Parenthetically, there is more reason to pay attention to fluid gang movements because of another new feature which will complicate the regional security problem -- CAFTA, the recent regional trade agreement with the region. CAFTA will likely help alleviate poverty in the long term, but in the short term it will not remove gang warfare or crime, but will actually provide more open borders, which would facilitate transnational criminal activities.

Other security measures also deserve US support, for they are agreements and organizations that already exist to mutually benefit the US and the region. The OAS – sponsored Inter-American Committee on Terrorism (CICTE) was revitalized after 9/11, as it endeavoured to identify actions that would strengthen cooperation in order to eliminate terrorism in the hemisphere. In June 2002, OAS members signed a new agreement, the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism.<sup>48</sup> In January 2003, CICTE met in El Salvador, and issued the Declaration of San Salvador, which condemned terrorism and pledged to strengthen cooperation through customs and financial security measures.

Another organization that receives key US support under the US State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and deals with gang violence, as well as drug use, is CICAD, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission. Since 2000, CICAD has held regional seminars to raise awareness about drug use and gang violence in the Western Hemisphere, especially in Central America and the Caribbean Basin. For instance, in 2003-4, CICAD cooperated with El Salvador on several projects to counter gang activity, including an innovative programme to help ex-gang members stay clear of gangs and engage in rehabilitative, environmental cleanup work.

Based on the same principle of understanding the needs of the targeted population, community-based programmes are likely to be the most successful in treating the cause of alienation and gang formation both in the US and in the region. In the US there have been such programmes in Los Angeles, Boston, and San José that include church-based programmes with after-school activities, counselling and protection for those leaving gangs. Recently, in the Maryland suburbs of Washington DC, new community programmes have emerged, such as *Sacando a Chicos de Problemas* (Removing Kids from Problems), targeted to Hispanic youth, offering counselling and sports activities.

Among the programmes created by the US Justice Department is the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Programme (ICITAP) initiative to train community policing in hundreds of Salvadoran towns. In addition, the FBI has its special task force focusing on MS-13, and has also created a liaison office in San Salvador which will share information with Central American authorities.

Other US government agencies are making new, substantial contributions to solving the international gang problem, in a manner that seeks to collaborate with foreign governments. In the Department of Homeland Security, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) created the new national anti-gang initiative called “Operation Community Shield”, which not only arrests suspected gang members,

but also coordinates with governments in the region. USAID has worked with ICITAP on the preventive side, and also has proposed a crime prevention programme in Guatemala, to create a “model youth home” for at-risk youth and former gang members, while providing education and vocational training to secure their futures.

Indeed, the seriousness of the situation was emphasized in the March 15, 2005 testimony by General Bantz Craddock, Commander of the US Southern Command, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, when he stated that “the level of sophistication and brutality of these gangs is without precedent,” so that regional solutions to the gang problem are absolutely essential.<sup>49</sup>

### ***What is to be done?***

**Addressing terrorism’s enabling capabilities** It is clear that, although the people and governments of the Circum-Caribbean sub-region and Latin America as a whole recognize it, they do not place nearly so high a priority on international terrorism as does the United States. Rather, in their priority lists it is well below (in approximate order) criminal gangs, narcotrafficking, organized crime and insurgency. There is, of course, some variation in these priorities from sub-region to sub-region as well as from country to country. However, it is interesting to note that narcotrafficking has moved higher on the regional priority lists over the last decade whether in response to solid US arguments or as a result of its becoming a significant crime, health, and security problem in its own right. Be that as it may, the US also sees criminal gangs, narcotrafficking, organized crime, and insurgencies as threats. More important, the US perceives these threats as capabilities that can be used to enable international terrorists in their efforts to target the American homeland and/or its interests. The result is a coincidence of interest among the US and its regional and sub-regional partners in addressing the highest priority threats as perceived by those partners.

The first step is to address the threat posed by criminal gangs. This requires agreement between the US and its partners as to exactly what the threat is as well as the causes of the threat. Many, but not all, of the criminal gangs in the region originated in the US. Both MS-13 and M-18 began as Los Angeles street gangs. Dominican and Jamaican gangs were either born on the streets of New York City or invigorated there. In all cases, US immigration law changes in 1996 and the processes of its enforcement resulted in the transfer of these and other gangs and their cultures to the home countries of their members as those members were deported. Often the deportations took place without the US informing the recipient country of the criminal background of the deportees. By the time this communication failure was rectified the gangs were well established on Central American, Caribbean, and Mexican turf.

Max Manwaring argues that:

Central American gangs’ seeming immunity from effective law enforcement efforts and the resultant lack of personal and collective security in that region have created a dangerous synergy between organized criminality and terror that is blurring the traditional line between criminal and political violence. In that context, the greatest fear haunting many Central American officials and citizens is that criminal violence is about to spiral out of control and acquire a political agenda. This fear is exacerbated because second and third generation gangs and their mercenary allies are controlling larger and larger portions of cities, the interior, and the traditionally inviolate national

frontiers – and have achieved complete freedom of movement and action within and between national territories. As a consequence, the effective sovereignty of all Central American countries is being impinged every day and the gangs' commercial motives are, in fact, becoming a political agenda for control of state governing and security institutions and for control of people and territory.<sup>50</sup>

To deal with the threat posed by criminal gangs requires a holistic approach that leverages the capabilities of the US, host governments and the private sector (writ large) to achieve effective unity of effort in neutralizing the threat. Neutralizing the threat, in turn, means attaining and maintaining the perceived legitimacy of the host government on the part of the nation's citizens. This means that the government must be able to provide security everywhere on its territory. To do this, it must govern that territory – areas of the country without effective state presence are no longer acceptable.

The principal actions that have shown promise are those like El Salvador's *super mano dura* policy coupled with its recently announced *mano amiga*. The former establishes long prison terms for gang members and longer ones for gang leaders. The latter combines actions targeted on prevention with rehabilitation, particularly of younger gang members. Preventive actions are those that seek to raise the standard of living in the sectors of the country most prone to gang activity and include education and job training. Both of these form major parts of the rehabilitative effort.

In a similar fashion the Jamaica Defence Force, in coordination with the Jamaica Constabulary, has developed a programme of actions targeted on prevention based on the development and rehabilitation of areas of the island that are heavily gang infected and influenced. Initial indications were that this approach was having some success, however, the proof would be in the ability of the Jamaican government to sustain the effort.<sup>51</sup>

The second capability that must be addressed is that of organized crime, in all its aspects, but especially with respect to narcotrafficking. Throughout the region there is clear evidence that the profits from narcotrafficking fund all sorts of criminal as well as legitimate economic activities. Not remarkably, this includes gang activity. Equally unremarkable is the role that narco-dollars play in corruption of government officials. All of this results in the delegitimization of the government along with a decrease in its capacity to govern effectively. The result is space created for other players to exercise authority in the absence of an effective legitimate state presence. With the exception of Mexico in our sub-region (where the Zapatista insurgents exist but are contained in a single area of the country) there is no active insurgency to make common cause with the organized criminals.<sup>52</sup>

In no case have the governments of the region nor of the US raised the level of the threat from organized crime per se to that of a threat to national security. The partial exceptions to this are narcotrafficking and gangs but the larger linkage has not been made. Therefore, organized crime is viewed simply as a problem for law enforcement and the judicial system. To a lesser extent this is also the prevailing perception of both gangs and narcotrafficking. But like terrorism, these are all threats to the security of the state and require a more holistic approach to deal with them.

At the national level, each of these threats requires the integration of the activities of multiple agencies at all levels of government. In many cases, the best approach is the creation of an integrated task force under a single director with the authority to direct the member agencies as well as to hire and fire his subordinates. The director may be a civilian, a police officer, or a military officer – there are numerous examples of this kind of unity of command.<sup>53</sup> Failing to attain unity of command is, unfortunately, the norm rather than the exception. Hence, other solutions to the problem need to be considered.

The necessary but insufficient condition for unity of effort is agreement among all participants on the objective. Without such agreement success will be unachievable; the gangs will not be neutralized; organized crime will continue to operate with impunity; narcotrafficking will continue to fund all sorts of criminal activities and corrupt government; and insurgents will be tempted to resource their operations from the profits of the drug trade. In addition to agreed objectives, there is a requirement for common procedures to coordinate the activities of the various entities engaged in the fight. Thus, it is critical for there to be common communications among the agencies involved, planning, and rehearsal of operations, etc.

Where one could hope for a fully integrated operation under a single director with command authority within a single state, such an operation involving two or more states becomes “a bridge too far”. Even the world’s most successful military alliance – NATO – does not cede full command to SACEUR. Rather, each national contingent retains the right to appeal a SACEUR decision to the North Atlantic Council (as the British did in Kosovo where their appeal was upheld). Thus, the best that can be achieved in the multinational arena is unity of effort. In turn, that requires effective politics in the most diplomatic sense of the word.

**Dealing with anti-Americanism.** If the potential for long term danger to American interests and the US homeland of Latin American anti-Americanism were not so great, addressing that anti-Americanism would not be particularly urgent. After all, not much has changed in the last half century. Latin American intellectuals still rail against the US as crass, crude and imperialistic. Latin American governments have significant policy disagreements but also share common interests. Latin American publics tend to blame the US for the impact of their own governments’ bad policy but would gladly emigrate to the US if they had the opportunity. However, the environment has changed significantly and the terrorism enabling capabilities of gangs, organized criminals, narcotraffickers, and insurgents, if they were fed by and linked with anti-Americanism, would boil up a veritable witches’ brew threatening the US homeland.

Because of this potential, there is an urgency in addressing the problem of Latin American anti-Americanism that did not exist even a decade ago. Anti-Americanism is, however, a subtle problem that calls for subtle and necessarily partial solutions. These include:

- Seeking true collaboration with Latin American governments on issues of common concern (such as gangs).
- Listening to our partners and seeking their advice in addition to giving our advice.
- Recognizing that there will be areas of disagreement but that other nations will act in their own interests. Some disagreements can be resolved by



persuasion and mutual respect; others simply require an agreement to disagree without being disagreeable.

- Recognizing that the countries of the region share with the US a common heritage of Western democratic values and building on that common ground.
- Recognizing, at the same time, that there is more than one Western tradition and that these different democratic traditions – particularly in law – make for basically different and, at times, irreconcilable assumptions.

In summary, based on an assessment of what has proved to be effective already, the recommendations are for community-based programmes, as well as for innovative regional cooperation, given the fluid, international nature of gangs and organized crime. Regional cooperation should offer shared databases and intelligence, and experience-based police training and preventive programmes, all of which need to be supported by pooled financial resources and expertise. Some other examples of good regional programmes are those supported by the US Justice Department, USAID, and others supported by the Inter-American Development Bank.<sup>54</sup>

### ***Recommendations for US policy***

The United States should:

- Identify those terrorism enabling capabilities that the states of the region identify as threats and commit resources to assist those states in dealing with those threats.
  - Regarding gangs, the US should build interagency task forces that include police, military, intelligence, finance, development specialists, etc., under a director with the required authority to work for the American ambassador to coordinate US actions with the host country. The host country should be encouraged to build a similar task force to address the problem. Regional and sub-regional multinational task forces should also be encouraged and assisted.
  - With regard to narcotrafficking the US should provide all necessary assistance to the countries of the Circum-Caribbean and Latin America. The interagency task force concept is appropriate and, for the US builds on the success of Joint Interagency Task Force-South.
  - For both gangs and narcotrafficking, combined interagency exercises can be used to train the forces in working together and in the kinds of skills needed. In addition, such exercises should have a developmental component to them similar to US Southern Command's *New Horizons (Nuevos Horizontes)* series which involves building roads, schools, medical posts, etc. in rural areas of Central America. If these exercises were conducted in conjunction with programmes like El Salvador's *Mano Amiga* they would have the primary effect of reducing the internal breeding grounds for gang activity. A secondary but equally important effect would be the impact on the perception of ordinary citizens of the US role in the region.
  - To deal with organized crime the US should expand its cooperative interagency efforts among the Department of Justice (ICITAP, LEGATT), USAID (Administration of Justice Programme), Department of Homeland Security (ICE), among others. To the extent necessary and possible the integrated interagency task force concept under a director with full authority should be adopted.

- All of these programmes must take account of the host country's needs and interests and not seek to impose US solutions on them. Rather, they need to be truly collaborative and responsive to the input and interests of regional and sub-regional partners.
- One additional area of essential collaboration is that of intelligence and intelligence sharing. Much of the intelligence required here is traditionally police intelligence but some falls within the purview of traditional intelligence agencies. The US must have the will to develop mechanisms for effective intelligence sharing with its partners in the police, military and national intelligence agencies.
- With respect to all of these areas of collaboration, workshops and conferences that include both academics and practitioners would be a useful means of developing new and improved approaches as well as to project an attitude of a government willing to listen to its partners and respond to their concerns.
- Addressing anti-Americanism is more subtle than dealing with terrorism-enabling capabilities but very closely related. Central to any effort to counter this ideological current is the need to keep clearly in mind the message the US is communicating. The essential message must be that we want to help you address the problems and threats you have identified; it is in our interest as much as it is in yours. Other components of the effort to counter anti-Americanism are addressed below but it must be recognized that they are designed specifically to support attitudinal change based on the perception that US behaviour supports Latin American and Caribbean values and interests.
  - The first step in directly countering anti-Americanism would be to invest again in a strong programme of bi-national cultural centres in the region. This would make US culture and its values more accessible to the people as they were in the not so distant past.
  - A second step would be to expand US scholarship and fellowship programmes to American universities along with shorter programmes for local leaders to study in the US. The flip side would be an expansion of the Fulbright lectureship programme.
  - To address Latin American intellectuals, US government leaders should engage in international conferences (such as the Latin American Studies Association), regional fora and other academic conferences. The Department of Defense should make every effort to be well represented at these conferences.
  - Programmes such as those of the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (HDS) and the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation clearly provide venues in which issues can be frankly addressed under conditions of academic freedom and non-attribution. Greater resources need to be devoted to them. In addition to these DoD programmes there is a need to create similar US institutions in other departments and/or on an interagency basis. These institutions need to be fully accredited academically as is the National Defense University and other war and staff colleges.
  - Not only should there be venues for publication by regional scholars such as CHDS' *Security and Defense Studies Review*, the Air University's *Airpower Journal*, and the Army Command & General Staff College's *Military Review* – all of which publish in English, Spanish and Portuguese – but there is a need for a multilingual non-

defense venue supported by the US government where views critical of US policy can be heard.

In short, every effort must be made to fight effectively and win what is properly called the information war. Otherwise, the potential linkage between terrorism-enabling capabilities in the region and anti-American ideology will become real, with a significant multiplier effect on the threat.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism*. 2004, April, 2005, p. 76 Western Hemisphere Overview.

<sup>2</sup> [www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/](http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/). See the 1 August speech by Secretary Chertoff. Also see the US Department of Justice definition of a gang, which is not simply a “street family”: “a group must be involved in a pattern of criminal acts to be considered a youth gang” in “Youth Gangs: An Overview” in *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, published by the US Dept. of Justice, August, 1998, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ana Arana, “How the Street Gangs Took Central America”, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2005.

<sup>4</sup> US Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programmes, National Institute of Justice. See [www.securitymanagement.com/library](http://www.securitymanagement.com/library).

<sup>5</sup> Mark P. Sullivan, “Latin America: Terrorism Issues”, *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RS21049, July 19, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Representative Randy J. Forbes of Virginia, author of the so-called “gang-busters bill” spoke in a PBS interview about gang brutality: “They’re cutting off people’s heads, they’re cutting off their fingers, they’re cutting off their arms”. (From PBS.Org. News hour, “Gang Violence”, August 2, 2005. ) Residents of suburban Maryland were shocked in August 2005 with the arrest of several Salvadoran immigrants accused of gang-related, brutal knife attacks. Maryland’s Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan traveled to El Salvador in August and spoke about gang problems related to Salvadoran immigrants, as well as about the Central American Free Trade Treaty (CAFTA )with Salvadoran President Saca (Nancy Trejo, “In El Salvador, Duncan Seeks Ally in Gang War”. *Washington Post*, Metro Section, August 9, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Estimates of the numbers of gang members in Honduras are usually in the range of some 40,000 individuals. Ana Arana, “How the Street Gangs Took Central America”, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2005, VOL 84, issue 3, p. 3. For an estimate of 100,000 gang members in Honduras—see Hector Duarte Jr., “DEA Agent Shot and Killed during Robbery in Honduras”, August 1, 2005, *All Headline News*.

<sup>8</sup> Marcela Sanchez, “From Freedom to Stability, More than a Leap of Faith for Central America”, *Washington Post*, August 12, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> As indicated in the State Department’s February 2005 Human Rights Report. See also “Death of Son Persuades Honduran President to Take Political Stage”, *Financial Times*, August 11, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Chris Kraul, “El Salvador Comes to Grips with Gangs,” *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RS22141, May 10, 2005. Human rights groups have expressed concern about the tough government programmes, with the observation that the poorest sectors may choose to join gangs in search of support, and carry weapons in order to defend neighborhoods against rivals. That many engage in criminal activities is acknowledged, while concern persists for the human rights of the accused. See Joint Press Release, No 26/04, “Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and UNICEF Express Concern over Situation of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents Involved with Gangs in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras”, December 4, 2004, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, OAS.

<sup>11</sup> Will Wiessert, “Guatemala Gangs Blame Guards for Weapons”, *Guardian Unlimited*, August 16, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Clare Ribando, Gangs in Central America”, *CRS Report for Congress* , May 10, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> See Ribando, who estimated the level of menace to be lower in these countries, but also a contrasting account in an online bulletin from Panama, that gives a view of an encounter with a 9-year old gang member, in “Time to leave protesters alone and attack the criminal gangs.” July 12, 2005. <http://www.bulletinpa.com/index.php>

<sup>14</sup> Secretaría de Seguridad Pública de Chiapas, Escenarios de la Mara Salvatrucha y Barrio Dieciocho en México, May 2005. Also, Athanasios Hristoulas, a researcher in security issues at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo in Mexico City was quoted as saying: “There have already been some cases of people suspected of having links to Al Qaeda caught in Mexico.” In Oscar Becerra, “Mexico People-Smuggling Trade Worth Billions”, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, December 1, 2004, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Becerra.

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<sup>16</sup> The poll was funded by the Ford Foundation, and was reported as “Public Agenda Confidence in US Foreign Policy”, in *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005.

<sup>17</sup> “Francis Harris, “Bush under Pressure on Influx from Mexico”, *The Telegraph.Co.UK.*, August 17, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> President Fox’s comment, urging US-Mexico cooperation on border violence was widely reported. For one example where this comment is mentioned, see [www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/latin\\_america/july-dec05/borders](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/latin_america/july-dec05/borders), in the PBS Newshour online programme, “US-Mexico Border Disputes”, August 18, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> See the link between street gangs and insurgency in Max G. Manwaring, “Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency”, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Series, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, March 2005.

<sup>20</sup> See UN Resolution 2116, on the UN Website.

<sup>21</sup> The Prime Minister is not named, but he is quoted as saying “Most of these rogues left the region at a very early age. Many of them have no families in the region and when they run afoul of the law...they are thrown back to the Caribbean.” From Norman ‘Gus’ Thomas, “Regional Crime Wave Fueled by Gangs and Deportees”, Caribbean Net News, August 15, 2005. [www.caribbeannetnews.com](http://www.caribbeannetnews.com)

<sup>22</sup> According to personal interviews with a Caribbean military officer, 2005. and corroborated by an on-line article summarized from the Economist, print edition, “Bubba, Bobo, Zambo and Zeeks—Domestic and International Issues Fuel Gang Violence in the Caribbean”, 4 Nov. 2004. [www.unesco.org/csi/smis/siv/inter-reg/art-crimeviolence.htm](http://www.unesco.org/csi/smis/siv/inter-reg/art-crimeviolence.htm)

<sup>23</sup> According to personal interviews with Caribbean security officials, 2005.

<sup>24</sup> According to personal interviews with Caribbean security officials, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> 1-2 August 2005, Santo Domingo, “Seguridad y Cooperación en el Caribe: Rol del Liderazgo Político Regional”, supported by the “Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo (Funglode), as well as the Programa Latinoamericano of the Woodrow Wilson International Center (WWIC), and the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO).

<sup>26</sup> Quoted by Ana Maria Dopico, “The 3:10 to Yuma,” in Andrew Ross and Kristin Ross (editors), *Anti-Americanism*, (New York: 2004), New York University Press, p. 47.

<sup>27</sup> Greg Grandin, “The Narcissism of Violent Differences,” in Ross & Ross, p. 19.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Data from this survey are presented below with the reference: <http://pewglobal.org/reports/print.php>. Pew Global Attitudes Project.

<sup>32</sup> George Yudice, “US Prepotencia,” in Ross & Ross, p. 75.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.pipa.org/OnlineReports/BBCworldpoll>. The margin of error in the poll ranged from 2.5% to 4%.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.pipa.org>.

<sup>36</sup> Kevin Allison, “World Turning its Back on Brand America,” FT.Com, August 1, 2005.

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.gmi-mr.com/gmipoll/press\\_room\\_wppk\\_pr.phtml](http://www.gmi-mr.com/gmipoll/press_room_wppk_pr.phtml). August 16, 2005.

<sup>38</sup> One such exception is Guatemala’s meager 54% support of democracy which is significantly lower than both the Latin American average and that of its peers. It is still a clear majority, however.

<sup>39</sup> [www.latinobarometro.org](http://www.latinobarometro.org), *Informe – Resumen*, Agosto 13, 2004.

<sup>40</sup> These observations come from discussions with numerous Latin American civilian and military officials, police officers, journalists, and academics held in Washington D.C. and in the region over the past eight years. All of these discussions were held under non-attribution rules.

<sup>41</sup> <http://npr.org/templated/story/story.php>, June 9, 2005

<sup>42</sup> NPR report by Pam Fessler, “Crafting a Mental Profile of a Terrorist”, All Things Considered, August 17, 2005.

<sup>43</sup> Greg Krikorian and Jennifer Warren, “Terror Probe Targets Prison in Folsom”, California Section, *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Eric Rich, “Suspected Jihadi Didn’t Stand Out in Neighborhood”, *Washington Post*, Metro, August 6, 2005.

<sup>45</sup> The term *foco*, Spanish for light or torch, is the theoretical insurgency strategy associated with the ideas of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro which used a small armed insurrectionist group as the focal point for the “revolution” to rally around.

<sup>46</sup> It is critical to point out here that we are not just talking about any terrorist – or any user of the terrorist tactic – but that the enemy is made up of types of the radical Islamist jihadist groups, especially those associated with Al Qaeda. These groups share only one ideological component with radicals in Latin America and that is a deep and profound anti-Americanism. That negative shared element is enough to form tactical alliances.

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<sup>47</sup> Carey Silvers, Vice President of the global survey company GFKNOP, in the consumer survey released this month, as reported by NPR, by Susan Stamberg, “Survey: American Brands Losing Prestige”, in Morning Edition, August 17, 2005.

<sup>48</sup> While the US is a signatory to the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism, two years later the treaty was in the Senate for advice and consent, and was sent to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Among other things, the treaty would seek to improve regional cooperation against terrorism by committing parties to support U.N. anti-terrorism instruments, and deny safe haven to terrorists.

<sup>49</sup> Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Army Commander, United States Southern Command before the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress Senate Armed Services Committee, 15 March 2005.  
senate.gov/armed\_services/statement/2005/March/Craddock

<sup>50</sup> Max G. Manwaring, *Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency*, Carlisle, PA: March 2005, Strategic Studies Institute, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with a Caribbean military officer who wishes to remain anonymous – 2005.

<sup>52</sup> By contrast, see the case of the Andean Ridge.

<sup>53</sup> See for example John T. Fishel and Max G. Manwaring, *Uncomfortable Wars Revisited*, Norman OK: 2006 (forthcoming), University of Oklahoma Press, especially Chapters 9 and 10.

<sup>54</sup> In June 2005, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) held in Panama City a regional seminar on strategies to prevent youth violence and crime, with delegates from governments and police forces from Central America, the Dominican Republic and Mexico. The IDB supports efforts by national and local authorities, civil society groups and the private sector to reduce violence in the region, through programmes to design youth policies, strengthening human development agencies, NGOs, communities, and modernizing police forces.