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REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION: AN EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN REGIONAL SECURITY INITIATIVE (CARSI) AND THE CARIBBEAN BASIN SECURITY INITIATIVE (CBSI)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION: AN EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN REGIONAL SECURITY INITIATIVE (CARSI) AND THE CARIBBEAN BASIN SECURITY INITIATIVE (CBSI)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:52 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Matt Salmon (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SALMON. I would like to call this committee meeting to order. I would like to start by recognizing myself for a brief opening statement. I know we have kept everybody waiting for a long, long time. So I apologize. Work here at the House from time to time is that they call votes on the floor. And that is audacious, isn't it, that they would expect that we would have to vote? But anyway, I believe some of the other committee members were planning on being here and will be here soon.

I would like to welcome everybody here today to the second of our two-part series of hearings on regional security. As you may recall, a few weeks ago, we focused on the Merida Initiative and the direction in which our security cooperation with the world's highest homicide rates, replacing Ciudad Juarez last year as the world's most violent city. Poverty, crime, public corruption and a legacy of violence in the region have created a perfect storm that critically hampers economic growth and opportunity, luring youth into a seemingly endless cycle of crime and drug trafficking.

This week we are going to delve into the security situation in Central America and the Caribbean Basin and examine programs we have undertaken in the region to deal with combating drug trafficking organizations to help the nations of both regions combat violence and criminality. The security situation in most countries of Central America and the Caribbean remains critical. Gangs and organized criminals continue to operate with impunity. Prisons are substandard, overcrowded. Corruption remains endemic. And the justice and law enforcement sector simply lack capacity.

Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, known as the northern triangle, suffer from excessive violence. San Pedro Sula in Honduras has the world's highest homicide rates. And interdiction

alone has proven insufficient in dealing with serious problems that plague the region. Through CARSI and CBSI, the United States has led the effort in assisting the region to address the underlying causes of what seems like a regional point of no return.

State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, INL, and USAID have put together a set of programs designed to help the region's law enforcement agencies contend with the creeping presence of the Zetas and Sinaloa cartels, while enabling municipal and Federal police forces to acquire the appropriate tools necessary to minimize corruption and human rights violations. In addition, U.S. personnel have worked diligently with regional partners in an effort to bring effective and sustainable justice sector reforms to the region, while USAID has worked with local and regional nongovernmental organizations to enable communities to partner with the private sector, to take the citizen security and prevention bull by the horns, so to speak.

I don't doubt that our efforts are earnest, but I am looking forward to hearing from both panelists today whether those efforts have yielded measurable success and if the political will exists within Central American and Caribbean governments to press with real results. The horrifying statistics from the region underscore that our efforts are needed, but we are only making a dent in the problem at this point. We need dedicated and strong willed partners if we are to make progress. And progress cannot be made without a series of unwavering commitments to transparency, human rights, and grit from the governments of the region.

As chairman of the subcommittee, I maintain that working with and assisting our neighbors in Mexico, Central America, and Caribbean to build the necessary capacity to deal with these challenges is in our national interest. Our region is interconnected not only geographically but culturally and economically. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, economic growth and prosperity in Central and South America will lead to more growth in prosperity in the United States.

Regional security matters. Without security, the countries of Central America and the Caribbean will lack the ability to grow their economies, give their youth the opportunity and incentive to move to the next generation of peace and prosperity.

And as you may know, I did serve in Congress previously from 1995 to 2001. And I served on the Foreign Relations Committee then. So I have seen my fair share of summits and regional meetings where there is plenty of talk, good intentions, lofty goals, but often too little in terms of execution and follow-through. The people of the United States have always been generous and dedicated to helping our friends and neighbors through tough times. Even in this time of tight budgets Americans are kind enough and practical enough to remain engaged and help the region. That said, Americans rarely enjoy throwing good money after bad, and we have got to make sure that what we do works.

I see our efforts in Central America and the Caribbean as important and they need to continue. I want the people of those nations to have a society that is free of corruption where law enforcement works for its people to ensure their security, where the justice system is transparent and fair, and most importantly, where young

people no longer have to turn to a life of violence gangs and drug trafficking.

I am extremely happy Ambassador Bill Brownfield is back before the committee again to tell us about INL's efforts in Central America and the Caribbean. And after our hearing on Mexico and the Merida Initiative, my subcommittee staff led a delegation to Mexico City and cities in northern Mexico where INL is working diligently to help the Mexican Government build capacity, train law enforcement, and strengthen and reform the justice sector to effectively deal with all of the problems associated with transnational criminal and drug trafficking organizations. What we learned is that there is still a lot of work ahead for us and our partners in Mexico, that this is a long-term and vital undertaking.

Ambassador Brownfield, your staff throughout Mexico is professional, dedicated and up to the task. I was happy to learn that your office in Mexico has developed a program called SAME PAGE that provides an efficient and clear way to track projects and expenditures. The taxpayer appreciates and deserves that level of accountability. I am pleased that the law enforcement trainers and other staff you have placed in the field are dedicated and hardworking Americans. Thank you. And thank them for their service.

I am grateful to both Deputy Assistant Secretary Ayalde and Mark Lopes from USAID for being here to testify. Working in tandem with INL, I am hopeful that your respective agencies can build on work already done to more efficiently and effectively tackle the worsening situation in the region. I am also looking forward to hearing from our private panel: Mr. Eric Olson from the Woodrow Wilson Center, who just returned this week from Central America and will hopefully give us a clear picture of just how dire the security situation is in the region. We also have Mr. Michael Shifter who is the president of the Inter-American Dialogue who has written extensively on this topic.

Thank you all for being here today for taking the time to discuss regional security issues and the growing threat of violence and criminality in Central America and the Caribbean. I look forward to a productive and informative hearing. And I will now recognize the ranking member for his remarks.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Salmon follows:]

Chairman Salmon Opening Statement

Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)

Good afternoon, and welcome to the second of our two part series of hearings on regional security. As you may recall, a few weeks ago we focused on the Merida Initiative and the direction in which our security cooperation with Mexico is headed, particularly with the change of leadership in Mexico. This week, we will delve into the security situation in Central America and the Caribbean Basin – and examine the programs we have undertaken in the region to deal with combating drug trafficking organizations, to help the nations of both regions combat violence and criminality, and to strengthen justice sector capacity.

The security situation in most countries of Central America and the Caribbean remains critical. Gangs and organized criminals continue to operate with impunity, prisons are substandard and overcrowded, corruption remains endemic, and the justice and law enforcement sectors simply lack capacity. Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, known as the Northern Triangle, suffer from excessive violence. San Pedro Sula in Honduras has the world's highest homicide rates, replacing Ciudad Juarez last year as the world's most violent city. Poverty, crime, public corruption, and a legacy of violence in the region have created a perfect storm that critically hampers economic growth and opportunity, luring youth into a seemingly endless cycle of crime and drug trafficking.

Interdiction alone has proven insufficient in dealing with serious problems that plague the region. Through CARSI and CBSI, the United States has led the effort in assisting the region to address the underlying causes of what seems like a regional point of no return. State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and USAID have put together a set of programs designed to help the region's law enforcement agencies contend with the creeping

presence of the Zetas and Sinaloa cartels, while enabling municipal and federal police forces to acquire the appropriate tools necessary to minimize corruption and human rights violations.

In addition, US personnel have worked diligently with regional partners in an effort to bring effective and sustainable justice sector reform to the region, while USAID has worked with local and regional Non-Governmental Organizations to enable communities to partner with the private sector to take the citizen security and prevention bull by the horns.

I do not doubt that our efforts are earnest - ***but*** I am looking forward to hearing from both panels today about whether these efforts have yielded measurable success and if the political will exists within Central American and Caribbean governments to press on with real results. The horrifying statistics from the region underscore that our efforts are needed, but we are only making a dent in the problem at this point. We need long-term and robust programming with strong-willed partners if we hope to make progress - and this cannot be done without a serious and unwavering commitment to transparency, human rights and grit from the governments of the region.

As Chairman of this Subcommittee, I maintain that working with and assisting our neighbors in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean to build the necessary capacity to deal with these challenges is in our national interest. Our region is interconnected not only geographically, but culturally and economically. At the risk of sounding like a broken record - **economic growth and prosperity in Central and South America will lead to more growth and prosperity in the United States.** ***Regional security matters!*** Without security, the countries of Central America and the Caribbean will lack the ability to grow their economies and give their youth the opportunity and incentive to move the next generation forward in peace and prosperity.

As you may know, I served in Congress previously from 1995 to 2001, and served on the House Foreign Affairs Committee back then, as well. So, I've seen my fair share of Summits and Regional Meetings where there is plenty of talk, good intentions and lofty goals, but often too little in terms of execution and follow through. The people of the United States of America have always been generous and dedicated to helping our friends and neighbors through tough times. Even in this time of tight budgets, Americans are kind enough and practical enough to know when and how to help. Americans also know that just throwing money at a problem rarely solves anything, and can actually make things worse.

I want to see our efforts in Central America and the Caribbean continue. I want the people of those nations to finally have a society that is free of corruption, where law enforcement works for its people to ensure their security, where the justice system is transparent and fair, and most importantly, where young people no longer have to turn to a life of violence, gangs and drug trafficking.

I am very happy to have Ambassador Bill Brownfield back before the subcommittee to tell us about INLs efforts in Central America and the Caribbean. After our hearing on Mexico and the Merida Initiative, my Subcommittee staff led a delegation to Mexico City and other cities in Northern Mexico where INL is working diligently to help the Mexican government build capacity, train law enforcement and strengthen and reform the justice sector to effectively deal with all of the problems associated with transnational criminal and drug trafficking organizations. What we learned is that there is still a lot of work ahead for us and our partners in Mexico - this is a long term, but vital project.

Ambassador Brownfield, your staff throughout Mexico is professional, dedicated and up to the task. I was happy to learn that your office in Mexico has developed a program called **SAME PAGE** that provides an efficient and clear way to track projects and expenditures - ***the taxpayer appreciates and deserves that level of accountability***! I am pleased that the law enforcement trainers and other staff you have placed in the field to assist their Mexican counterparts are dedicated and hard-working Americans! Thank you and them for their service.

I am grateful to both Deputy Assistant Secretary Ayalde and Mr. Mark Lopes from USAID for being here to testify. Working in tandem with INL, I am hopeful that your respective agencies can build on work already done to more efficiently and effectively tackle the worsening situation in the region.

I am also looking forward to hearing from our private panel - Mr. Eric Olson from the Woodrow Wilson Center who has literally just returned this week from Central America and will hopefully give us a clear picture of just how dire the security situation is in the region. We also have Mr. Michael Shifter who is President of the Inter-American Dialogue and who has written extensively on this topic.

Thank you all for being here today, for taking the time to discuss regional security issues and the growing threat of violence and criminality in Central America and the Caribbean. I am looking forward to a productive and informative hearing

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. And thank you to our witnesses who have been here today and thank you for your patience.

Today's discussion on the security situation in Central America and the Caribbean is both timely and long overdue. While merited efforts to combat criminal threats and reduce drug trafficking-related violence in Mexico has diverted our attention from the public security crisis that has emerged in Central America, the deteriorated state of security in the region is a byproduct of gangs, organized crime groups, drug traffickers that have spilled over from Mexico in attempts to control the drug trade, coopting local crime organizations into their network who smuggle drugs, people, illicit goods, and weapons. And while the Caribbean is not the dominant transit point of choice for the illicit drugs into the U.S., it would be naive for us to ignore the possibility that a pressure on drug traffickers in Mexico and Central America increases. The Caribbean will become a viable and attractive alternative for illicit activity.

The most basic functions for any government is to protect its citizens. With some of the highest homicide rates in the world amongst the northern triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, citizen security remains an issue. For some countries, false conflict institutional reform in the 1990s have left already weak governments with a broken justice system, corrupt police forces, and poverty stricken unequal societies. With the persistent unemployment and the lack of social mobility, many Central American youth have either emigrated to the United States or been recruited by criminal groups. As a result, a bigger Central American population now live in the United States. And for some Central American countries, remittances represent between 10–20 percent of the GDP. It is unfortunate when the choice of a young adult is to either leave one's homeland or face a life of poverty alongside constant threats to join gangs or other criminal organizations.

I have been concerned with the rise of Central American gangs into the criminal activities and the constant threat they pose to susceptible youth and weak governments, particularly El Salvador and Honduras. Homicides and drug related violence remain serious obstacles to the peace and security of Central America. According to the U.N., Mexico, a country with 112 million people, had in 2011 a homicide rate of 23.7 percent per 100,000 people. El Salvador with a population of 6 million had a rate of 69.2 and Honduras, with a population of almost 8.5 million had a homicide rate of a staggering 91.6. These facts reinforce our need to ensure that the Central American Security Initiative and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, one, broad enough to dismantle a transitional crime organization and curb illicit drug flows with crime prevention and institutional building efforts to spread to the rule of law and, two, are implemented in the coordinated manner within the U.S. agencies and partner countries. While remaining dynamic enough to address both current and potential threats as seen in the Caribbean, it will be in our best interests not to overlook security concerns in the Caribbean.

Today nearly $500 million have been appropriated for CARSI and about $200 million have been appropriated for CBSI. However, recent Government Accounting Office reports suggest that less than 28 percent of CARSI's funds and roughly 90 percent for CBSI funds have been distributed. This committee needs to understand why such funding has not been carried out in an efficient manner. I look forward to hearing from our panelists regarding the assessment of these security initiatives as well as their determination of the current state of security in Central America and the Caribbean. Transforming a generation of corrupt behavior, strengthening the rule of law, implementing long due institutional reform, and creating a more inclusive society for youth prone to illicit activities will take time and determination. However, the United States must approach these initiatives with a goal of transferring ownership to Central American leadership. Ultimately, it is the people of Central America that are responsible to get the public and the political will to take this difficult task on.

Thank you.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you. I recognize the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. And when talking about security in this hemisphere, we must not forget about Cuba, the State sponsor of terrorism 90 miles from my district. In the last 2 months, the Obama administration has granted a U.S. visa to Raul Castro's daughter and returned to Cuba a convicted spy without having him finish his sentence here in the U.S. This week, we find that the State Department is engaging the Castro regime in direct mail and migration talks. The Castro regime will not, has not, never has complied with any international agreement. In fact, just a few years ago, the regime signed two international human rights accords. Yet the tensions on the island have risen. Valiant defenders of democracy, like Las Damas de Blanco, the Ladies in White, face weekly beatings. In addition, it is the Castro regime that does not comply with the mail accords that we signed with him from years ago. Meanwhile, a U.S. citizen languishes unjustly in a Cuban prison. Cuban activists, as we speak, are risking their lives on hunger strikes. And over 70 refugees, 70 fugitives have gone to Cuba for safe haven. There are fugitives from U.S. law, including, as you know, Mr. Sires, a cop killer from New Jersey.

What is next with this administration? Enough is enough. Basta ya! The Cuban people deserve freedom and democracy just as all oppressed people do. And these talks will not help them achieve those goals.

And Mr. Chairman, during the question and answer period, I look forward to asking our witnesses about the capacity and the willingness and the capability of the Caribbean nations to fight drug trafficking and whether the Mexican drug cartels are penetrating any of these countries. We have heard a lot about the Dominican Republic having been infiltrated by them.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you.

Pursuant to committee rule VII, the members of the subcommittee will be permitted to submit written statements to be in-

cluded in the official hearing record. And without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 7 days to allow statements, questions, and extraneous materials for the record subject to the length limitation in the rules.

I would like to introduce the first panel. Ambassador Brownfield is the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Brownfield served as U.N. Ambassador to Colombia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and Republic of Chile. Pretty easy career there. Ambassador Brownfield is a graduate of Cornell University and the National War College. He also attended the University of Texas School of Law.

Mark Lopes is the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean. He was formerly the senior policy adviser/staff director for the chairman of the International Development and Foreign Assistance Committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Prior to that, he served on the State Foreign Operations and Related Programs Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. Mr. Lopes holds a BM from Berklee College of Music and an MPP from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Ms. Ayalde is a career minister serving as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, covering Cuba, Central America, and the Caribbean. She previously served as the USAID Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition Ms. Ayalde served as the United States Ambassador to Paraguay from 2008 to 2011. She holds a BA from American University in international studies and a master's degree in international public health from Tulane University. And also I understand that you have been nominated to be Ambassador to Brazil which is fantastic. We were just there. And they need a great person like you. So best of luck.

And without further ado—I keep calling him Ambassador Brownfield but we will start with you.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WILLIAM R. BROWNFIELD, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ambassador BROWNFIELD. You may call me whatever you wish, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Sires, members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss CARSI and CBSI initiatives.

Our strategic assessment is very simple. We believe the region suffers from a surge in drug trafficking and violence and all nations are affected. As efforts succeed in Colombia and Mexico, traffickers push into Central America and the Caribbean; therefore, we must pursue a coordinated strategy throughout the region. As the American people look to Central America, they see drug flows into the United States. But the peoples of Central America see violence, crime, and homicide. Our strategy must address both drugs and violence.

Between 2008 and 2012, Congress provided more than $300 million in funding to my bureau to support law enforcement and rule of law in Central America. Most Central American governments have increased their own tax and revenue base to provide more support for security and rule of law as well. What are we doing? We support police training and internal affairs units to identify and root out corruption. But reforming an institution takes a generation, and the people have a right to improved performance now. So we support special vetted units who can work high priority cases today. We link up with USAID's community development programs to support model police precincts in the poorest and most violent communities. We provide specialized training on drugs, criminal investigation, gangs, and special victims. And we provide training to prosecutors, judges, border guards, and corrections officials.

Mr. Chairman, over the past year, homicide and violence rates have gone down throughout Central America, and I will not claim full credit for CARSI but clearly it is one factor. If Central America is today's crisis, then the Caribbean is tomorrow's challenge. I have said it before and I repeat it today, as our efforts in Central America begin to bite, trafficking organizations will search for alternative routes and networks and the Caribbean will look attractive. Drug flows through the Caribbean are tiny compared to Central America, but they are growing. In 1 year, they increased from 5–9 percent of total cocaine flow to the United States.

CBSI is designed to work with Caribbean governments to reduce drug trafficking, strengthen citizen security, and improve justice. We are investing today to pay dividends tomorrow. We are building cooperation. Each country is different but our programs are regional. We train police in basic and specialized law enforcement. We train prosecutors, judges, and corrections officers. We support special units to combat drug trafficking and gangs. And the Coast Guard leads maritime exercises.

In Trinidad and Tobago, we work to expand the national police academy into a regional training hub. Law enforcement throughout the Caribbean benefits from access to the Automated Fingerprint Information System, or AFIS, in working their caseloads.

Mr. Chairman, this subcommittee has been generous in supporting our efforts in Central America and the Caribbean. There are some who call this mission impossible, insisting that we will never solve the problem. I am not one of them. I agree that it took us years to get into this situation and it will take years to get out of it. But the hemisphere is focused as never before. The OAS dedicated its general assembly 2 weeks ago to the drug issue. We are engaged. We are cooperating. And we are exploring new approaches and strategies. I believe we will have a good narrative to tell about Mexico and Central America. I look forward to telling it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I look forward to your questions.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Brownfield follows:]

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS

Prepared Statement of:

Ambassador William R. Brownfield
Assistant Secretary of State for
International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Affairs

Hearing Before the:

House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere

Regional Security Cooperation:
An Examination of the Central America Regional Security Initiative and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative"

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Chairman Salmon, Ranking Member Sires, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. Recent travel by the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State to Central America and the Caribbean demonstrates the United States' commitment to the Western Hemisphere and the common goal we share of advancing citizen security. As economies in the region become increasingly integrated, opportunities for criminal networks to take advantage of illicit markets multiply. This threat is particularly acute in Central America, where criminal enterprises engaged in the trafficking of anything that can turn a profit, from drugs, to guns, to persons, have firmly established themselves, in many cases after being confronted by government capacity in Colombia and in Mexico.

The Caribbean faces a complex set of challenges to citizen security too, exacerbated by drug traffickers who will increasingly turn to the region as pressure is applied in Central America. We recognize this shift and are ahead of the curve. We are implementing two coordinated, regional initiatives that build upon host nation efforts to disrupt criminal safe havens and strengthen the rule of law: the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI).

CARSI and CBSI, together with the Merida Initiative in Mexico, our efforts in the Andes, and complementary U.S. government security and rule of law programming, represent a holistic approach to citizen security in the hemisphere. We aim to build the criminal justice and law enforcement capacity of governments in the region, and promote the rule of law and human rights, while simultaneously addressing the root causes of crime and insecurity.

Central America Regional Security Initiative

CARSI responds to the region's threats by working to produce a safer and more secure region where criminal organizations no longer wield the power to destabilize governments or challenge national and regional security and public safety. Deepening the skills and capacity to prevent the entry and spread of illicit drugs, violence, and both domestic and transnational crimes to countries throughout the region and to the United States is the primary objective. As a partnership of seven sovereign nations in Central America, CARSI was founded upon five pillars: 1) Create safe streets for the citizens in the region; 2) Disrupt the movement of criminals and contraband within and between the nations of Central America; 3) Support the development of strong, capable, and accountable Central American governments; 4) Re-establish effective state presence and security in

communities at risk; and 5) Foster enhanced levels of security and rule of law coordination and cooperation between the nations of the region. These goals underscore the comprehensive approach that the United States, Central American governments, and other international partners are taking to address the region's threats.

Facing the perfect storm of severe homicide rates, weak institutions, limited resources, and powerful transnational criminals, governments in Central America are demonstrating a remarkable will to take control back from drug traffickers and gangs, while building stronger and more resilient communities and institutions. For example, Panama has increased its national budget for citizen security. El Salvador and Costa Rica are working to improve the effectiveness of their tax collection systems, which should generate additional funding for citizen safety initiatives. Honduras developed an emergency "security tax" measure in June 2012 which uses levies on a range of financial transactions to provide funds for security sector needs including for police training and prosecutorial support. And in 2010, Guatemala enacted an asset forfeiture regime which is helping turn the tide on criminals – using their resources to fund police and justice sector actions against them.

Between 2008 - 2012, the United States government has obligated more than $468 million worth of training, equipment and technical assistance to increase the capacity of law enforcement, strengthen institutions, promote the rule of law and human rights, and address the root causes of the crisis in Central America.

Recognizing that having trusted partners is vital to combating criminal groups in the region, INL has utilized CARSI assistance to support the establishment of over a dozen specially vetted police units and joint police-prosecutor task forces. These units are comprised of host-country law enforcement officers polygraphed and mentored by U.S. federal law enforcement advisors, who receive rule of law, human rights, and specialized police training. Many of them are taught in classrooms alongside prosecutors or judges who also receive assistance under CARSI. The United States is also providing support to improve security in local communities throughout Central America, including through a combination of Model Police Precincts (MPPs) that have received infusions of training and equipment, and alternative opportunities for at-risk youth. At the same time, citizens are now demanding transparent, accountable, and safe streets from their governments and demonstrating the will to realize those goals. Our efforts are coordinated with USAID, which is implementing complementary

violence reduction and at-risk youth programming throughout the region and frequently within or adjacent to our MPPs.

CARSI Case Example – Model Police Precincts:

CARSI programs support MPPs to provide intensive training and equipment to host nation law enforcement, mayors, and communities on the principles of community-based policing, while also leveraging violence prevention programs and outreach to youth-at-risk. Over the past four years in the MPP program, the Salvadoran community of Lourdes has experienced a 70 percent reduction in homicides and the Guatemalan municipalities of Villa Nueva and Mixco have experienced 14 percent and 27 percent reductions in homicides respectively. We are now planning to expand this successful model to other communities in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

CARSI Case Example – Anti-gang Programs:

Under CARSI, the State Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) established transnational anti-gang units (TAGs) in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, which investigate groups like MS-13 and M-18 that span national borders in Central America and have a significant presence in U.S. cities. Since its inception in 2008, the El Salvador TAG has more than doubled its annual investigative leads, an essential component to building criminal cases against transnational gangs. Information and partnerships from existing TAGs have also led to arrests in criminal cases in the United States, including a homicide in Oklahoma City, felony extortions in Annapolis, and the arrest of an FBI top ten most wanted fugitive who surrendered to the FBI in Denver after being identified by the TAG unit in El Salvador in connection with criminal charges.

CARSI Case Example – International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA):

Increased training capacity for our partner law enforcement agencies in Central America is an important component of CARSI. Through ILEA in San Salvador, the United States trained approximately 900 Central Americans in calendar year 2012. Since 2005, ILEA San Salvador provided training and mentoring for thousands of participants on important topics

such as financial investigative techniques, anti-gang activities, human rights, basic crime scene investigations, gender violence, and community policing

These examples demonstrate that capacity building efforts, when combined with political will, can be successful in reducing crime and violence. However, to have a sustained impact, CARSI also focuses on reforming justice sector institutions that have long been plagued by corruption.

Our institution-building programs, which account for the vast majority of INL-administered CARSI programming, include providing training for thousands of police, prosecutors, and judges. The State Department, along with the Department of Treasury is working in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica to train prosecutors, investigators and judges on complex organized crime and money laundering cases, and with expert law enforcement advisors from the Department of Justice and U.S. state and local police detectives to reform the curriculum at police academies throughout Central America.

In Costa Rica and Panama, where capacity building efforts are farthest along, INL CARSI programming has delivered a key technological tool to map crime and identify problems. The Computerized Statistics (or COMPSTAT) system helps governments to understand the criminal terrain they must contend with and more strategically deploy personnel and resources to address those recognized trends. This is a similar technology to the one that the NYPD pioneered in the early 1990s, which drastically reduced crime and has since been adopted by major cities throughout the United States. More than 7,000 Panamanian and 2,200 Costa Rican law enforcement personnel now benefit from the crime analysis that the COMPSTAT system provides. This new system, along with new internal affairs procedures, is helping to build a more professional, more accountable, and more effective justice sector in Central America.

The Central American isthmus faces a serious, long-term security threat from gangs, a phenomenon exacerbated by international drug trafficking. INL's CARSI programming focuses on providing immediate assistance to trusted, vetted law enforcement to reduce crime, building accountable justice sector institutions, and collaborating with communities and groups at-risk. There is no silver bullet solution to these problems. INL is working to accelerate assistance programs, including standing up INL sections at our embassies in San Salvador and Tegucigalpa to increase our programming capacity and oversight. Nonetheless, we

are preparing for the tide of criminality to turn increasingly towards the Caribbean. Like CARSI, we are seeking to address both the short-term needs and the long-term requirements for sustaining citizen security through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI).

Caribbean Basin Security Initiative

CBSI is a partnership among the United States and 13 partner nations in the Caribbean to address threats to citizen security. CBSI takes a collaborative and holistic approach to addressing citizen safety and encouraging regional cooperation, by working together to 1) substantially reduce illicit trafficking, 2) increase public safety and security, and 3) promote social justice. As with CARSI, our efforts are coordinated with USAID, which is implementing crime prevention programs with at-risk youth, justice sector strengthening, and anticorruption activities.

Through CBSI, the United States is training thousands of Caribbean law enforcement officials on topics such as basic crime scene and homicide investigations. Within the Dominican National Police (DNP), CBSI programs are strengthening the institutional capacity of the DNP by supporting train-the-trainer activities within their mobile training units. In 2012, approximately 2,500 police officers throughout the country received training in basic police intervention techniques.

With U.S.-bound trafficking in cocaine through the Caribbean increasing from 5 percent of the total in 2011 to 9 percent in 2012, CBSI efforts to strengthen the capacity of partner nations to combat narcotics trafficking has become increasingly important. CBSI counternarcotics programs focus on support to vetted officers and units in countries like The Bahamas and the Dominican Republic, as well as training to enhance the capacity of law enforcement K-9s for the detection and interdiction of illicit goods. These targeted efforts are coupled with enhanced regional cooperation to combat the flow of illicit narcotics. For example, in May 2013, the State Department coordinated with the United States Coast Guard to launch a maritime exercise that trained Caribbean partners on appropriate law enforcement responses to illicit maritime trafficking.

CBSI programs are also building the capacity of Caribbean partners to investigate complex financial crimes, manage forfeited or seized assets, and prosecute criminals. For example, the State Department's Regional Legal Advisor in the Caribbean, a prosecutor from the U.S. Department of Justice, has mentored a

violent crimes task force in St. Kitts and Nevis, which helped contribute to a 41 percent reduction in homicides last year.

In a region dominated by vast maritime territories and small island states, regional cooperation is critical to combating shared security threats. CBSI has accordingly prioritized the regionalization of expertise. In Trinidad and Tobago, for example, CBSI programs are working to expand the police academy into a regional training hub accessible to other Caribbean law enforcement officials. And in Grenada, police report clearing 50 percent of their cold cases through hits in the Automated Fingerprint Information Systems (AFIS) provided by the United States, which cross-checks data among Caribbean countries and becomes more effective as regional installation continues. This advancement in criminal investigations and prosecutions would not have been possible without U.S. training and technical assistance under CBSI.

Conclusion

To some, the situation Central America and the Caribbean is hopeless; the problems are too daunting. It is true that there are challenges facing the region and host governments and more work is ahead of us. Even so, whether measured by citizens demanding that their governments take action, numbers of law enforcement and prosecutors trained and deployed, drops in homicide rates, or youth enrolled in after-school programs, the United States and our partners in Central America and the Caribbean are making progress. There are no easy fixes to the challenges Central America and Caribbean nations face. We will continue to evaluate our efforts, strengthen our programs with the support of our partners in the region, and seek innovative solutions that lead to a sustainable, secure, and prosperous hemisphere.

Mr. SALMON. Ms. Ayalde, I would like to recognize you. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF MS. LILIANA AYALDE, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ms. AYALDE. Chairman Salmon, Ranking Member Sires, members of the committee, it is truly a privilege to join you here today. I appreciate the invitation and the subcommittee's continuous support for the administration's efforts to partner with our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere to increase citizen security particularly through the Central American regional security initiative, CARSI and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. I wish to focus my comments today on the administration's efforts to meet pressing challenges in this region and to galvanize the international community to work effectively to ensure that our combined efforts are impactful. The security needs, rule of law capacity deficits, and requirements for improved quality and quantity of basic government services for citizens of Central America and the Caribbean are beyond the capability of any single nation or donor. Therefore, an international approach to coordinating and leveraging our efforts is essential. The administration has highlighted this message at the highest levels at various international forums in recent months. President Obama visited Costa Rica in May where he met with the seven heads of state of the Central American Integration System, SICA, and the Dominican Republic. He emphasized to them the importance of shared partnership and our commitment to continue working with the region on issues related to security. He also emphasized the critical link between security and economic opportunity and prosperity. The President stressed that our aim is to reinforce security and opportunity in every sense, not only combating crime but ensuring that human rights are respected and communities are secure in their access to food, energy, education, health care, social services, and financial and economic opportunity.

Vice President Biden also championed this message when he met with the Caribbean leaders in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago last month. Just last week, Secretary Kerry traveled to Guatemala where he participated in the annual general assembly of the Organization of American States, the OAS. Secretary Kerry countered the misperception that U.S. counternarcotics policy is primarily focused on law enforcement by highlighting our comprehensive plan that addresses demand, prevention, and treatment.

In April, as part of our effort to strengthen multilateral approaches to supporting Central America, the Department held the first North America-SICA Security Dialogue in Washington. Canada, Mexico, the United States and the seven SICA countries participated. The dialogue provided an opportunity to discuss enhancing regional coordination on security programming and it specifically focused on the themes of precursor chemicals and violence prevention. It provided a forum where we were able to discuss these issues and begin a process of bringing additional resources and commitments to specific problems faced in both Central and North America.

We have reinforced our message with much needed support through the CARSI and CBSI initiatives that have been generously funded by Congress, and we are seeing the fruits of these efforts as partner nations demonstrate increased political will and the prioritization of their most pressing citizen security, rule of law, human rights, and prevention challenges.

The Guatemalan Government, for example, achieved a 20 percent increase in the number of murder cases brought to trial in Guatemala City over the last 2 years. In Salvador, the government's commitment to reducing urban violence has exposed over 6,000 students to the gang resistance education and training program. In the Caribbean, Dominica recently passed a comprehensive civil asset forfeiture law with a dedicated forfeiture fund to ensure that seized illicit proceeds are used to strengthen law enforcement, prosecution, and drug abuse treatment and prevention. This is the first such law passed anywhere in the eastern Caribbean.

The Government of Jamaica has embraced a comprehensive police anticorruption program that includes an anticorruption branch of the Jamaican Constabulary Force. We are watchful that success against the criminal enterprises in Mexico, Colombia, and Central America could drive them increasingly to the Caribbean for new opportunities and trafficking routes.

With CBSI assistance, we have an opportunity to address vulnerabilities in the infrastructure, build government and law enforcement capacity, and engage at-risk youth before transnational and other criminal elements can take hold. It is only through our continued support, the support and expertise of other donor nations, and the commitments of our partners in the region that we can prevent an increase in crime in the Caribbean.

As a partner of Central America and the Caribbean, it is the goal of the United States to continue to support these regional and national efforts and to utilize our diplomatic and political resources as well as foreign assistance to foster enhanced levels of sustained dialogue and collaboration to turn today's citizen security challenges into a catalyst for building a more secure and prosperous future for the hemisphere.

Thank you again for this opportunity to discuss these issues with you, and I look forward to the questions.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ayalde follows:]

Statement of the Honorable Liliana Ayalde
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Hearing Before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives
June 19, 2013, 2:00 P.M.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Salmon, Ranking Member Sires, members of the committee, it is a privilege to join you today. I appreciate the invitation and this subcommittee's continued support for the Administration's efforts to partner with our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere to increase citizen security, particularly through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI).

I wish to focus my comments today on the Administration's and Department's increased efforts, both diplomatic and programmatic, to meet pressing challenges and to galvanize the international community to work more effectively across the region to ensure that our combined efforts are impactful, sustainable, and ultimately successful in thwarting external threats to security, countering local and transnational criminal activities, and strengthening law enforcement capabilities while providing the full range of economic, social, and preventive services to communities at risk. The challenges of crime and violence in the region directly impact U.S. interests

and our own security. We believe that the security needs, rule of law capacity deficits, and requirements for improved quality and quantity of basic government services to citizens of Central America and the Caribbean are beyond the capability of any single nation or donor and that the international approach to coordinating and leveraging our efforts with other donors and multilateral institutions is the best path forward.

My colleagues, Assistant Secretary Brownfield of the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and U.S. Agency for International Development Deputy Assistant Administrator Lopes, will speak on CARSI, CBSI, and related citizen security law enforcement, rule of law, and crime prevention programs we are implementing in the region in concert with partner nations. We believe this coordinated approach is critical to the overall success of CARSI and CBSI.

Secretary Kerry recently traveled to Guatemala where he participated in the annual General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS). The theme of this year's OAS General Assembly, "Drug Policy and the Fight Against Drugs in Latin America," helped to highlight the fact that drug trafficking and its corrosive impact on citizens extends beyond Central America, and represents a challenge to all governments and a threat to citizens throughout the hemisphere. At the OAS General Assembly, the

recently released baseline review of current hemispheric drug policies and options for policies pertaining to illicit narcotics was the focal point of discussions.

Secretary Kerry, who was accompanied by Assistant Secretary Brownfield and Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Gil Kerlikowske, emphasized our common ground with countries of the region in tackling this problem. Secretary Kerry was able to highlight the U.S. successful efforts to reduce our demand for drugs, including our 50 percent reduction in cocaine consumption over the past five years, our commitment to promoting cooperation on supply reduction and demand reduction policies, and our openness to continue the hemispheric dialogue on effective drug policy reform. The drug issue is a subject of importance in our bilateral and multilateral relationships with countries throughout the hemisphere and we look forward to continuing our longstanding efforts on this vital issue.

This idea of shared partnership was also at the heart of President Obama's visit to Costa Rica in May, where he met with the seven Heads of State of the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Dominican Republic. The meeting reinforced the commitment of the United States to continue working with the region on issues related to security, highlighting CARSI and the $492 million in U.S. cooperation it has channeled to the

region since 2008. It also built upon our CARSI engagement to emphasize areas that we had not typically included in our citizen security engagement in the region, by highlighting, for example, the connection between security and economic opportunity and prosperity, a critical dynamic that is frequently absent in discussions about challenges facing Central America and the Caribbean.

The United States stressed that the relationship between economic opportunity and security underpins our partnerships across all sectors of society in the region. Our aim is to reinforce security and opportunity in every sense – not only combating crime, but ensuring that human rights are respected and communities are secure in their access to food, energy, education, health care, social services, and financial and economic opportunity. Vice President Biden reinforced this message when he met with Caribbean leaders in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago last month

This was the first time the United States has participated at the Presidential level in a SICA meeting since we were granted observer status in 2011, and I believe the meeting reemphasized our commitment to partnership in the region and tackling the issues of insecurity through joint cooperation.

In April, as part of our effort to strengthen multilateral approaches to supporting Central America, the Department held the first North America – SICA Security Dialogue in Washington between Canada, Mexico, the United States, and the seven SICA countries. The dialogue provided an opportunity to discuss enhancing regional coordination on security programming and specifically focused on the two pragmatic themes of precursor chemicals and violence prevention. It provided a forum where we were able to discuss these two issues and begin the process of bringing additional resources, expertise, and commitment to specific problems faced in both Central and North America.

This Security Dialogue is part of our larger engagement as a member of the Group of Friends (GOF) of Central America. Launched in 2011, the Group of Friends comprises donors, and international financial and multilateral organizations providing citizen security assistance in the region and supporting SICA's Central American Security Strategy. The United States has been active in the Group of Friends process, bolstering our bilateral engagement by ensuring that CARSI and related U.S. government citizen security efforts are aligned with, and responsive to, the SICA Security Strategy's goals. Within the GOF, the U.S, with Colombia and Mexico, chairs the Security Experts Group (SEG), supporting SICA's

Combating Crime Pillar. USAID is working with Germany, the Inter-American Development Bank, and World Bank, among others, supporting the coordination of prevention programming across the region.

In the Caribbean, the United States has partnered with Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and other donor nations to form the Caribbean Security Donors' Group. The aim of this Group is to provide a forum for donor nations to discuss best practices for security assistance in the region and coordinate efforts in order to increase effectiveness and eliminate duplication. The United States has already partnered with Canada and the UK on security assistance programs in the Caribbean, and our Embassies in the region regularly coordinate with other donor nations on the ground in the region.

However, it is not just donor nations that are increasing coordination in an effort to combat insecurity. We are also seeing partner nations demonstrate increased political will and the prioritization of their most pressing citizen security, rule of law, human rights, and prevention challenges, both nationally and regionally. President Chinchilla of Costa Rica has asked the Costa Rican legislature to amend its laws to permit the extradition of Costa Rican citizens involved in organized crime cases. The Guatemalan government, largely through Attorney General Paz y Paz's

work to build the government's investigative and prosecutorial capacities, achieved a 27 percent increase in the number of murder cases brought to trial in Guatemala City over the last two years and an increase of almost 14 percent in general convictions nationwide. Honduran President Lobo has declared 2013 the Year of Prevention and is working to support job training for at-risk youth, community policing, the establishment of safe urban spaces, and juvenile justice reform. In El Salvador, the government's commitment to reducing urban violence has exposed over 6,000 elementary and junior high school students to the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T) program. During 2013, the Government of Panama planned to increase its overall citizen security related spending by nearly 6 percent, with funding for the police, border service, air and naval service, and investigative police increasing by 16.2 percent.

Recently, Dominica passed a comprehensive civil asset forfeiture law with a dedicated forfeiture fund to ensure that seized illicit proceeds are used to strengthen law enforcement, prosecution, and drug abuse treatment and prevention. This is the first such law passed anywhere in the Eastern Caribbean. The Government of Jamaica has embraced a comprehensive police anti-corruption program. This includes the reorganization in partnership with the international community of the Anti-Corruption branch

of the Jamaican Constabulary Force which conducted 188 operations last year resulting in criminal charges against 88 police officers and civilians and the dismissal of another 57 police officers for corruption or ethics violations in 2012.

While these efforts represent a good start, without a sustained effort and commitment by both citizens and leaders to continue their progress, they could be fleeting. As part of our partnership with the region, and in recognition of the significant budgetary challenges we face here at home, we expect to see additional partner nation efforts that will establish the underlying foundations upon which the sustainability and success of our efforts will be built. We must see nations develop professional and accountable police forces that respect the rule of law and human rights; judges and prosecutors free from corruption and with the desire to end the culture of impunity; and political leaders committed to improving the lives and opportunities available to the most vulnerable among their populations.

Through CBSI we have an unprecedented opportunity in the Caribbean. We have the chance to address vulnerabilities in infrastructure, build government and law enforcement capacity, and engage at-risk youth before transnational and other criminal elements take hold. As our efforts in Mexico, Colombia, and Central America are increasingly effective, there is a

real threat of an increase in drug trafficking and associated crime in the Caribbean. It is only through our continued monetary and institutional support, the support and expertise of other donor nations, and the fiscal and policy commitment of our partners in the region that we can prevent an increase in crime in the Caribbean.

As countries in the region take increasing ownership of their citizen security challenges, the United States will continue to work closely together with each partner nation, multilateral organizations such as CARICOM and SICA and within the Group of Friends of Central America and the Caribbean Security Donors' Group to increase the pace of implementation of our assistance programs in the region, seeking to marshal the resources of other nations and multilateral institutions, leveraging our respective efforts, reducing duplicative programming, and ensuring that we do not overwhelm the limited capacity of the region to absorb increased levels of assistance.

As a partner of Central America and the Caribbean, it is the goal of the United States to continue to support these regional and national efforts, and to utilize our diplomatic and political resources, as well as our foreign assistance, to foster enhanced levels of sustained dialogue and collaboration to turn today's citizen security challenges into catalysts for building a more secure and prosperous future for the Hemisphere.

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Lopes.

STATEMENT OF MR. MARK LOPES, DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. LOPES. Thank you, Chairman Salmon, Ranking Member Sires and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

USAID's work in security is focused on addressing the root causes of crime and violence not only because of the implications for U.S. national security but because high levels of crime and violence threaten to stall economic and democratic progress as well. The heart of our work in this area is through prevention programs designed to complement and reinforce government efforts to improve the rule of law, strengthen the capacity of municipalities to prevent crime, and create additional educational and employment opportunities for youth most susceptible to joining gangs.

To ensure that we have the greatest impact on the most people, our efforts are largely focused in high crime urban areas of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Governments in the region are largely abandoning the previous decade's failed mano dura or "iron fist" crime fighting tactics in favor of more prevention-based approaches. We welcome this change.

For example, the Government of Honduras declared 2013 the year of prevention. The Government of El Salvador recently launched a new municipal crime prevention policy that we think is a healthy framework within which to operate. USAID is employing several novel approaches, a couple of which I will mention here. First, because no single actor involved has all the answers, we are aggressively working as a broker to share lessons from places that have had success. Countries like Brazil and Colombia have much to offer in this respect. Also, through an agreement that we signed with the City of Los Angeles, USAID is adapting L.A.'s proven gang reduction message in identifying youth susceptible to joining gangs and organized crime. We are also connecting city officials in the region with our counterparts in places like Arlington, Texas; Santa Ana, California; Pinellas County, Florida and tailoring successful models accordingly.

Second, given the size and scope of these challenges, donor investments are not enough. Countries must generate and invest their own resources. For this reason, we are testing models that allow them to bring in more money, particularly at the municipal level. And in El Salvador and Honduras we launched a revenue challenge competition to increase the collection of unpaid fees. Cities that do this well will get a modest subsidy to reinvest in crime reduction programs. The idea behind this is to invigorate local government ownership, increase resources for prevention and thereby build their capacity to play a greater role in the solution.

Third, governments and donors are not the only stakeholders, and therefore USAID is increasingly engaging with the private sector. Through partnerships with Chevron, Hanes brands and Starbucks we are working to physically transform more than 150 schools in the region. We also work with telecom operators and mobile phone companies who provide free Internet access in our out-

reach centers and who develop the mobile crime system that enables law enforcement in five municipalities to track, report, and analyze real crime data. The innovations brought by these companies are as valuable if not more valuable as their financial contributions.

And lastly, our programs under CARSI would have little impact if they were not embraced by youth in the region. Most of them have a mother, a brother, a sister, a cousin who they can help galvanize around violence prevention. USAID is proud to support the Central American Youth Movement Against Violence, which now has chapters in all seven Central American countries, and in February 40 of these youth presented their ideas to the Presidents of Central America at a gathering in Costa Rica. In the Caribbean our programs are similar in spirit to those in Central America but focus more on crime rate prevention, including education and government capacity building, working in close partnership with national and regional governments.

Mr. Chairman, we also work across a range of other sectors under the premise that it takes more than prevention and law enforcement to advance durable security and prosperity. By keeping children in school, training young people for jobs, connecting farmers to markets, lifting rural poor out of poverty, preserving natural resources, and reaching out to historically marginalized groups, we contribute to a broader effort to make the region more peaceful and more prosperous.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our programs with you, and I look forward to sharing your guidance.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lopes follows:]

Testimony of Mark Lopes

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean

U.S. Agency for International Development

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

June 19, 2013

"Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)"

Chairman Salmon, Ranking Member Sires, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am grateful for the Subcommittee's interest in the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) contribution to the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) and pleased to have this opportunity to hear your advice and counsel.

Mr. Chairman, with many of the countries with the world's highest murder rates, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) ranks as the world's most violent region.[1] USAID is focused on addressing the root causes of this condition, not only because of its implications for U.S. national security, but because the high levels of crime and violence threaten to stall economic and democratic progress in some countries. Analyses conducted by USAID and the Inter-American Development Bank confirm that crime and violence constrain growth by diverting investment away from productive sectors.[2] Drug trafficking through the region fuels the corruption of state institutions, and attacks by organized crime suppress press reporting and, when enabled by corruption and impunity, violate human rights.

In Central America, the heart of USAID's work is in support for crime and violence prevention programs designed to complement and reinforce the efforts of the region's governments to: improve rule of law; strengthen the capacity of municipalities to support youth and prevent crime; and create educational and employment opportunities for youth most susceptible to joining gangs and other criminal endeavors. To ensure that we can have the greatest impact on the most people, our CARSI efforts are largely focused in the high-crime regions and cities of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, with smaller programs along Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. To be sure, we are not working in a vacuum -- the more traditional

[1] The region suffers from the highest homicide rate in the world, reaching over 25 deaths per 100,000 people, tripling the global average. (see Levy, Santiago "Advancing Citizen Security in Latin America and the Caribbean" presented at the IDB event "The costs of crime and violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: methodological innovations and new dimensions," held in Washington D.C. from January 24-25, 2013.)

[2] *Idem.* Eight studies commissioned by the IDB and presented at the above-mentioned event reveal the dimensions to the economic costs of crime in Latin America and the Caribbean.

law enforcement and interdiction activities of interagency partners such as the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs complement our efforts.

We are encouraged that the governments of Central America are largely abandoning the previous decade's failed *mano dura* or "iron fist" crime-fighting tactics in favor of prevention-based approaches. For example, the Government of Honduras declared 2013 the "Year of Prevention" and the Government of El Salvador recently launched a new Municipal Crime Prevention Policy that we think is a helpful framework within which to operate. Also, we were pleased to see that the Central American Integration System (SICA) included prevention as one of the four pillars of its regional security strategy.

To support such commitments on the part of stakeholders in the region, USAID is employing several novel approaches. First, because no single actor involved in this issue has all the answers, we are sharing with Central Americans lessons from cities around the region that have successfully reduced crime and gang activity. We are looking at countries like Brazil, Colombia and Mexico to understand what can be learned from their experience. Also, through an agreement signed last year with Los Angeles, USAID has been adapting the city's proven gang reduction and youth development tool in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico to more effectively target our resources towards those youth most susceptible to joining gangs and organized crime. We are also helping city officials learn from the experiences of their counterparts in places like Arlington, Texas; Santa Ana, California; Pinellas County, Florida, and tailor successful models accordingly. To help communities resolve conflicts before they escalate into violence, we are supporting the training of violence interrupters in high-crime communities in Honduras by members of Cure Violence, a non-profit organization that has led successful mediation programs in Chicago and Baltimore.

As the family of international donors to the Western Hemisphere security grows, it is more important than ever to coordinate our respective efforts. USAID works closely with other donors to share information about our respective programs, agree on target areas/regions, and ultimately avoid duplication.

Donor investments are not enough to bring crime and violence under control and expand opportunities for Central America's youth. To make sustained progress, countries must generate and invest their own resources. That is why we are testing different models to stimulate increased revenue generation, particularly at the municipal level. In El Salvador and Honduras, where municipal governments are struggling to find resources to battle gangs and drug trafficking organizations, we have launched revenue challenge competitions among cities and towns. Those areas that significantly increase the collection of unpaid fees and other revenue streams receive modest subsidies from USAID to reinvest in crime reduction programs. Being self-sufficient is not only a cornerstone of long-term sustainability, it also invigorates local government ownership and capacity to play a greater role in community security.

Governments and donors are not the only stakeholders on security and therefore USAID is increasingly engaging the private sector. To create safer community spaces and provide productive and educational opportunities for students, we are partnering with Chevron, Hanes Brands and Starbucks to physically transform more than 150 schools across Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. In Honduras, Toms Shoes is providing needy youth with shoes so that they can attend school, and local telecom operator Tigo is offering free internet access to USAID-supported outreach centers.

The innovations spearheaded by these companies are as valuable to USAID as their financial contributions. In El Salvador, we are taking advantage of Qualcomm's mobile technologies and expertise to develop a wireless mobile and web-based crime system that enables law enforcement in five municipalities to track, report and analyze real-time crime data. We hope to replicate and scale up this system in other parts of Central America.

To ensure the sustainability of our efforts, USAID is relying more and more on local entities to implement prevention programs. In so doing, we build up their capacity to support at-risk youth and keep their own communities safe. Just recently, five of El Salvador's largest foundations joined USAID in our largest-ever alliance with a local organization. Its purpose is to combat insecurity and strengthen municipal responses to crime and violence in 50 high-crime communities. In Guatemala, we have joined forces with local organizations to provide jobs for talented youth from hard-hit areas, matching private sector needs with skilled people.

Our local capacity-building efforts go beyond organizations; we are also reaching mayors and other municipal officials and community leaders. To empower communities to share and implement their ideas for improving prevention, we support local Municipal Crime Prevention Committees comprised of local and national stakeholders who are charged with developing crime prevention plans. Ultimately, these plans serve as blueprints for the investments of governments, the private sector, and international organizations.

An effective judicial system is key to the success of our efforts to improve security. Crime and violence thrives in environments where corruption and impunity are allowed to fester. To help make El Salvador's criminal justice system more open and efficient, we are supporting its transition from a closed inquisitorial criminal justice system to a more transparent oral and accusatorial one. In Guatemala, where the legal system is overtaxed by heavy caseloads, USAID helped establish 24-hour courts and introduced alternative dispute mechanisms to speed up resolution of minor offenses and reduce pretrial detention. Since opening its doors in November 2012, one of these 24-hour courts, specializing in cases related to sexual and gender-based violence, has led to 125 arrests. And in Honduras, where juvenile offenders are often placed in adult prisons with hardened criminals, we are exploring ways to set up restorative justice programs to provide first-time juvenile offenders an alternative to incarceration.

Our programs under CARSI would have little impact if they were not embraced by youth eager to play a role in helping their countries return to a state of stability. To help them galvanize their peers, families and neighborhoods to help prevent violence, USAID supports the Central American Youth Movement Against Violence, which boasts chapters in all seven Central American countries. Its members advocate for peace and promote youth-oriented violence prevention policies and programs at home and abroad. In February of this year, 40 representatives of the regional movement were summoned by the Central American Presidents in Costa Rica to share their recommendations for a Central American violence prevention policy.

Collaboration with national authorities is crucial as well. In Honduras, we have helped revolutionize the Government's urban planning strategy through a methodology known as crime prevention through environmental design to identify crime hotspots and propose solutions to reclaim gang-controlled public spaces and improve perceptions of insecurity in communities. In Guatemala, to put muscle behind the Police Reform Commission's adoption of community policing, we have provided direct training on the model to police officers and designed the Police Academy's first university-level degree in community policing. And in El Salvador, we have directly supported the implementation of the Government's Municipal Crime Prevention Policy by strengthening Municipal Crime Prevention Committees and training police officers in community-based policing.

Our interventions through CARSI are already starting to bear fruit. A mid-term impact evaluation of USAID's CARSI-funded programs in El Salvador found that residents in communities benefiting from USAID programs reported witnessing and suffering from less crime, were more likely to report crimes to the police, and had higher levels of trust in local government, than people in communities without prevention programs. Close to 90,000 young people susceptible to recruitment into gangs and other criminal organizations in Central America have benefitted from our at-risk youth programs in Fiscal Year 2012 alone. And as we expand our network of Outreach Centers in tough neighborhoods, tens of thousands more young people have safe places to seek refuge from violence. In Honduras, more than 10,000 youth have taken advantage of these centers.

In the Caribbean, USAID works within the framework of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), a partnership between thirteen Caribbean states and the U.S. USAID leads the effort in four areas: education and workforce development for at-risk youth and vulnerable populations; juvenile justice reform; community-oriented policing; and anti-corruption. Our Caribbean partner countries have much in common with Central America, such as high youth unemployment and a significant illicit trafficking problem, but in general they also have more mature governance structures and more resources to invest in their own development. Their overall crime levels also tend to be lower than Central America's.

Due to these differences, USAID programs under CBSI are similar in spirit to those in Central America, but focus more on primary prevention, including education, and government capacity building, working in close partnership with national and regional governments. In education, we fund A GANAR, a successful youth workforce development activity with strong national government support; for example, the Government of St. Kitts has taken on project implementation and promised to fund it once our funding has ended. In the area of governance, we work with Jamaica's Tax and Customs officials to stem trafficking and illicit financial flows by promoting a system-wide revision and targeted audits. The project, funded with $7.3 million in a combination of CBSI and bilateral funds, has been instrumental to collecting debt arrears and increasing compliance from large taxpayers; in just one quarter of 2012 it increased revenue collection by over $100 million. USAID also supports a global best-practice police reform initiative in Jamaica through a force-wide, change-management-focused community-oriented policing approach that has greatly improved the relationship between the police and communities.

Mr. Chairman, USAID continues to steadily devote increased assistance to the countries of Central America and the Caribbean across a range of sectors. That is because we believe that it will take more than an improvement in prevention or law enforcement alone to advance security in these countries. By keeping children in school and training out-of-school youth for work, connecting small farmers to markets, lifting rural poor out of poverty, preserving natural resources and reaching out to historically marginalized groups, we contribute to a broader effort to make the region more peaceful and prosperous.

Mr. SALMON. I would like to yield myself 5 minutes to ask a question. And then I will go to the ranking member and the other members on the panel here today. This question is for both Ambassador Brownfield and Deputy Assistant Secretary Ayalde.

There have been concerns about the Honduran Government's efforts to confront corruption and criminality in its police force and about State Department's Fiscal Year 2012 certification of Honduras. In your estimation, has the Honduran Government met the conditions for certification? And can you explain State's rationale in reaching that decision to certify? Second, what is the impact on your programs and progress from the Senate holding up the funding?

Ambassador Brownfield.

Ambassador BROWNFIELD. Do you want to start on certification? I will follow up.

Mr. SALMON. Yes, that is fine.

Ms. AYALDE. We have not issued the report yet. We are following the situation very carefully. Obviously we are, like others, concerned with some of the issues of impunity and human rights. But we believe that our commitment is to the Honduran people, and we are looking for ways that we could continue to do so while adhering very closely to the legal restrictions.

Ambassador BROWNFIELD. Mr. Chairman, from a programmatic perspective, the impact on our ability to conduct our programs is this: First, we try to have programs that directly attack the problem, the problem being evidence of corruption and call it misbehavior or abuse of authority in law enforcement and security elements. We attempt to address the problem by training at base level or basic level for those in the police and security forces and, second, by supporting the establishment of internal affairs divisions that are able to identify the corrupt or abusive individuals and eventually remove them from service.

Second, we are applying the strictest possible vetting standards to those units and individuals with whom we work, by which I mean we use the community that assesses these matters, the human rights community, the legal community, the policy community both here in Washington and in the field in Honduras to determine which individuals and which units are reasonably believed to have committed these abuses in the past or are continuing to commit them in the future. And those individuals and units, we will not work with. We will find, in some cases we apply a lesson by which we have two degrees of separation. For example, if a particularly senior official is found to have committed these abuses, we not only will not work with that official, we will not work with anyone that reports to that official. We will be at least two steps below that individual before we would work with anyone in that institution.

What has been the impact of the Senate hold? Mr. Chairman, there is currently $10.3 million on hold. This funding would be used to support the ability of the Honduran national police to conduct interdiction, drug interdiction operations, particularly in the isolated northern region of the country. The impact of the hold at this point is our inability to deploy or support the deployment of Honduran national police in that area. That in and of itself is not

a disaster. The problem of course is just as you and I realize this, so do the drug traffickers. And as they realize that this is a zone where the police cannot reach, it obviously for them becomes a very inviting area through which to traffic their product.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you. I am going to yield back the balance of my time and recognize the ranking member.

Mr. SIRES. You know, I read before where nearly $500 million had been appropriated for CARSI and about $200 million had been appropriated for CBSI. Recently, the Government Accounting Office reports suggest that less than 28 percent of CARSI and roughly 90 percent of CBSI funds have been distributed. Can you expand upon that why? It just seems that we could have done a better job of appropriating more money.

Ms. AYALDE. Yes, sir. It did take a while to get started. In the Caribbean, we are working with 13 different governments with different levels of capacity. And we have to ensure that there were institutions that were going to be good partners in working that. I think it took a while to get started but we are at the right pace right now where we are cranking up a number of activities. So only to say that we recognize the slow start but we had to be comfortable and assured that there would be transparency in the use of funds and that the partners would be able to carry out their commitments. So we are at that place. In fact, it is unique to see that the governments of the region have taken the framework of CBSI as theirs. We believe that this is very positive. Other donors, including the Canadians who are helping us coordinate among all the donors that are participating in the Caribbean, are coordinating under the leadership of Canada, and they are also using the framework of CBSI.

So it took a while to get started but I think that we are at the right moment right now. So we recognize that slowness.

Ambassador BROWNFIELD. Congressman, if I could add a little bit of gloss from my side. And I will run the specific figures by you. The GAO report was assessing a period of time that concluded with Fiscal Year 2011. Since then, we have gone through another whatever number of months we have since then, another 18 months. Things have happened in that period of time. Between 2008 and 2012, the INL account, which I am responsible for for CARSI Central America was $305 million. Of that $305 million, $294 million is now obligated. The remaining $11 million that is unobligated is the $10.3 million that I just described to Chairman Salmon and another couple of hundred thousand on another program. Of that sum, more than half has actually been spent. In other words, the obligation is us reaching agreement with the governments on how it will be spent. And the spending, which is a separate process, has actually moved forward to well over 50 percent as opposed to the 20 percent number that you had.

In the Caribbean, the figure is between 2010 and 2012 for our INL funds. Ninety-five million dollars total of which eighty-three million dollars has been obligated, a figure of just under 90 percent. I expect that remaining $12 million to be obligated before the end of this fiscal year. Our liquidation rate has been a bit slower in the Caribbean than in Central America for the reasons that Liliana just indicated, which is to say we are starting up. We are

coordinating with many different governments. This is not the Plan Colombia or Merida where we are coordinating with just one government. We are coordinating with 13 in the Caribbean or seven in Central America. The coordination takes time. And finally to be absolutely honest with you we were starting at very close to .0 in terms of the personnel and staff that we had in the field. And I had to beef them up. I had to add additional staff to our sections in three of our six working Central American Embassies. And we are adding additional personnel in the Caribbean. I think the story from this point on will be much better for you.

Mr. SIRES. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you.

I recognize Mr. Duncan.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And the timeliness of this hearing is ironic. It was almost a year ago today that the Committee on Homeland Security Oversight Subcommittee that I now chair had a hearing on a very, very similar topic, on June 21 had a committee hearing titled U.S.-Caribbean Border: An Open Road for Drug Traffickers and Terrorists. The witnesses were the Honorable Luis Fortuño of Puerto Rico and Rear Admiral William Lee, Director of Operations Policy and Capability of the United States Coast Guard. So during that hearing, we talked about the Caribbean region being possibly a potential to become an unlocked back door to the continental United States not only for drug traffickers but terrorists as well. And given the confluence of actors in the region, namely drug cartels, terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, antagonistic Latin American leaders like the former Hugo Chavez, the Caribbean has a potential to become a region hostile to the United States. What is more, given the Caribbean's geographical proximity to the United States mainland, this threat is even more unsettling. And during that hearing, we talked about the Caribbean being astride to major shipping lanes from South America, North America and even Europe, how appealing that is to drug traffickers moving cocaine from South America and Mexico.

So I say all that saying that this hearing is great as a follow-up so to what we learned there. And then shortly thereafter, I traveled to Bogota and met with the Colombians and really learned about what we were doing with the Colombian Government and helicopter training and a lot of other training to the tune of about $10 billion I think over a decade. And so the question I have is, do you see a segue to build on that Colombian experience? And then how do you see Colombia working in this? And I will ask Ambassador Brownfield there because I certainly enjoy his testimony in Congress. He has come several times. And I think he is very knowledgeable. How do we see Colombia as possibly being an ally in the region to train maybe the Hondurans or the Guatemalans, Salvadorians and they may not go to U.S. for training, but they may go to an ally within Latin America for training. So are they a willing partner? Do you see the benefit of that? And how may that help in the Caribbean nations as well?

Ambassador.

Ambassador BROWNFIELD. Sure. Let me start, Congressman, and then yield to the good Dr. Ayalde or good Dr. Lopes if they wish to add on. I think it is an excellent question and even better, it is

an opportunity for me to make a couple of points about Colombia, a country with whom I have had some considerable experience, including I would like to think 3 years during which we were trying to lay the groundwork for exactly what you have just described.

I believe Colombia plays a very useful role in two senses. One, lessons that we have learned there, frequently, the hard way between January 2000 when Congress first appropriated funds to support Plan Colombia and today. Lessons in terms of how you do these sorts of programs, how you cooperate and collaborate. How you engage other partners. How you try to bring together the security side of a program with the developmental side of the program. How you sequence it. How you figure what your end game is so that we are not asking Congress to support a program forever. There are a lot of lessons that we have learned in Colombia that we can apply in Central America or the country to the immediate north of Central America or among the 14 countries of the Caribbean.

The second important fact—and I use the word "fact" to talk about in the Colombia sense—is how Colombia itself plays as a service provider and supporter in these programs because let me be absolutely frank and blunt. Right now the Colombian national police is training more police and law enforcement in Central America than all of U.S. law enforcement put together. Now, some of it is supported by us. So it in essence it is CARSI funding, Plan Colombia funding, or some cases, even Merida funding that does this. And it does it because it is cheaper for us to have the Colombian national police provide this training than us doing it ourselves. Sometimes it is the Colombians themselves providing that training. They are at this point training in four of the seven countries in Central America. They are providing training and support in the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean. They are open to further engagement. I actually believe we get excellent value either by Colombians training in third countries or by us bringing law enforcement personnel from those third countries to train in many of the Colombian training institutions that we helped support and set up during Plan Colombia from the year 2000 to 2010. I think we actually should be looking forward and looking for ways to engage Colombia more and more effectively in this effort. From my perspective, it is a dividend that we get for our more than $9 billion of investment in support for Plan Colombia over the last 13 years.

Mr. DUNCAN. That is exactly the points I wanted to be brought out. I appreciate your service there. And my time is about out. But ma'am, you act like you want to chime in, if the chairman will allow it.

Ms. AYALDE. Just very quickly to complement what the Ambassador has mentioned. Colombia is also very eager to be engaged. We have included Colombia as a member of this North America-SICA Dialogue because of their interest at not only at the operational levels such as training and technical assistance but also in providing some strategic guidance. For instance, whether there is a reform of the police—and to give an example, in Honduras, whether there would be some value added in providing some guidance because of the experience. And we see that as a big plus. They have also expressed an interest and are engaged in the forums that

we hold to coordinate strategic directions in the Caribbean. So just as a complement to what has been said.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you so much. Those are the points I wanted to make. I appreciate it. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you.

I recognize Mr. Radel.

Mr. RADEL. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a question for Mr. Lopes. Can you tell me if the programs in Central America have any kind of a list of individuals that we trained with our CARSI funds? So what I am getting at here, I am curious with our taxpayer dollars being spent, do we have a quantitative measure on who, how many people we are training and maybe more importantly how many we retain?

Mr. LOPES. Certainly. Thank you. I will touch on our outreach centers which I am not sure is where your question is going. But then maybe I can ask a follow-up. I think we have got a range of programs in Central America focused on at-risk youth and municipal capacity building. Some of that has a training element. Some of that has an outreach element. We have got 100 centers throughout the northern triangle countries as well as in Panama. Combined, those efforts in 2012 have reached about 90,000 people. As I mentioned in my opening statement, there is a lot of secondary benefits to individuals who are involved in these outreach centers. Sometimes these are youth at risk. We have also got more structured training programs in terms of employment opportunities and job generation work that we use to target in particular areas where people are vulnerable to engaging in either illicit activities or gang activities. In terms of impact, we have seen encouraging results. We have also looked in a scientific way—and I know that this committee is concerned with impact rather than just output. And we as well are concerned not just in the region but around the world that as USAID we have got a treatment and control group of communities whereby we look scientifically according to a series of factors with a baseline and a mid term. That study is not over yet but that mid term evaluation has shown statistically significant impact in terms of the treatment communities doing better than those control communities.

Mr. RADEL. So those are kind of qualitative measures. Do we have lists—correct me if I am wrong here. But we pay people, right, that have roles that play within this. Do we have knowledge lists of who these people are and whether we retain them over a certain amount of time that continue to do the work?

Mr. LOPES. Certainly. I mean, we would be happy to follow up in terms of whether it is individuals or profiles and whatever information that would be helpful.

Mr. RADEL. Okay. So it would be clerks, judges, police.

Mr. LOPES. In terms of the justice reform programs and the work in terms of training for judicial officials, we can certainly provide you with details on exactly who these individuals are.

Mr. RADEL. And police officers.

Ambassador BROWNFIELD. If it is police, Congressman, the reason Mark is ducking that question, if it is police, I do it. And yes, we do do it and we can provide those sorts of numbers for you.

Mr. RADEL. Okay. Great. We will get that then in writing.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE WILLIAM R. BROWNFIELD TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE TREY RADEL

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) maintains a record of International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) student alumni, including those who received training funded under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) and Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). Each ILEA management staff is tasked with maintaining ILEA alumni training information.

Law enforcement professionals from Central America and the Caribbean receive training funded under CBSI and CARSI at ILEA San Salvador. Since 2005, approximately 4,400 alumni from Central America and the Caribbean received training at ILEA San Salvador. This total includes 203 alumni from Belize, 371 from Costa Rica, 1759 from El Salvador, 617 from Guatemala, 514 from Honduras, 180 from Nicaragua, 365 from Panama, 23 from Antigua and Barbuda, 70 from the Bahamas, 51 from Barbados, 15 from Dominica, 15 from Grenada, 7 from Guyana, 67 from Jamaica, 12 from St. Kitts and Nevis, 14 from St. Vincent, 21 from St. Lucia, 45 from Suriname, and 42 from Trinidad and Tobago.

In addition to providing high-quality training for ILEA participants from Central America and the Caribbean, the ILEA Program conducts six-month post course evaluations as part of the six-week Law Enforcement and Leadership Development (LELD), or Core Program. This is the first year we have conducted six-month evaluations for the LELD Program, and we will utilize this data to gauge alumni knowledge retention and make necessary adjustments to improve course delivery. The LELD six-month evaluation does not track whether or not ILEA-trained officials remain in their positions.

INL works closely with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to ensure all candidates who attend ILEA courses are vetted in compliance with Department and Leahy vetting requirements, and this includes alumni who return for additional coursework. ILEA does not continue to vet alumni after graduation, but we have no information indicating that any officials trained at the ILEA have later been implicated in human rights abuses or have been prosecuted for corruption.

Mr. RADEL. Thank you. I appreciate your time.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you. We would like to get to the next panel. But before I do, I have a question I would like to just ask and have you submit in writing. I know you have already been detained way too long. But my question would be, Ambassador Brownfield, CARSI aid is divided among seven countries. Actually all three of you, if you could submit any relevant answers to this. The CARSI aid is divided among seven countries as well as regional programs. How much funding has been allocated to each country? And how are those allocation decisions being made? Are any of the countries not receiving any or certain types of CARSI aid at this time? And if so, why not? And finally, to what extent is CARSI aid tied to demonstrations of political will by partner governments? And do we have an idea of how much the region spends on their own security for every dollar the United States contributes? And I want to thank you very much. And I will have staff provide those questions to you as well. But if you could respond back, I would really appreciate it. And thank you so much for your patience today. And thank you so much for your wonderful testimony. And it is always a pleasure.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE WILLIAM R. BROWNFIELD, MS. LILIANA AYALDE, AND MR. MARK LOPES TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE MATT SALMON

The Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) is a whole-of-government multi-year program that responds to security threats in Central America and supplements strategies and programs the nations of Central America are implementing on their own and in cooperation with other countries. The $496.5 million in U.S. CARSI assistance committed to date (FY2008–2012) supports: law enforcement and counternarcotics efforts; rule of law and capacity building, including police and judicial reform and anti-corruption; and community-based violence and drug prevention to address the root causes of crime and violence and build more resilient communities. CARSI funds are allocated across all seven countries in the region. Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, the three northernmost countries, receive the majority of CARSI funding given their particularly high levels of crime and weak rule of law institutions, and the remaining funds support regional and national programs in the rest of the region.

We prioritize our citizen security assistance, including the allocation of resources and programming, in the nations that are most severely affected by transnational organized crime, including narcotics trafficking and gangs. We work with our international partners through the Group of Friends of Central America donor coordination process, our embassies, interagency partners, host nations, and the Central American Integration System (SICA) to determine the scope of the threat to citizen safety in each nation and the needs and deficiencies of host nation law enforcement, rule of law, and prevention capacity and institutions. Then, based upon limited U.S. resources, the actions of other donors, and host nation capacity to absorb U.S. assistance, we determine the assistance for each nation. In Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, we are focusing on replicating programs that have proved successful in other countries and that can make short-to-medium-term impact, including municipal crime prevention planning, critical youth-at-risk services, model precincts and community policing in crime-ridden municipalities, and border interdiction programs. In Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama, we are supporting host-nation efforts to reduce growing levels of insecurity and to rebuild the capabilities of their rule of law institutions.

Governments in the region have come a long way over the years in acknowledging the scope of the security threats, taking responsibility for addressing them, and undertaking serious institutional and policy reforms to improve citizen security. Governments are passing new laws to generate taxes and revenue supporting investment in citizen security programs, extradition, judicially authorized wiretapping, and asset forfeiture. They are also developing community-based approaches to reduce violence and taking steps to address difficult issues, including internal affairs and police reform. This growing political will is evident at the regional level.

Through SICA, the nations of Central America are showing an unprecedented level of transnational cooperation on security. This is essential, because drug traffickers and criminal networks do not respect national boundaries, and no single country can defeat these criminals alone. We must work together to address this shared regional threat. We have much more work ahead of us, and we have encouraged the region's leaders to devote more resources to these challenges and to continue to combat corruption and impunity.

Fiscal year 2012 CARSI allocations, through both Economic Support Funds (ESF) and International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Funds (INCLE), were as follows:

		$ FY12
REGIONAL	ESF	10,700,000
	INCLE	43,500,000
BELIZE	ESF	500,000
	INCLE	2,650,000
COSTA RICA	ESF	1,000,000
	INCLE	5,150,000
EL SALVADOR	ESF	9,800,000
	INCLE	6,200,000
GUATEMALA	ESF	10,500,000
	INCLE	13,550,000
HONDURAS	ESF	16,500,000
	INCLE	8,300,000
NICARAGUA	ESF	1,000,000
	INCLE	0
PANAMA	ESF	0
	INCLE	5,650,000
	TOTAL	135,000,000

ESF TOTAL	50,000,000
INCLE TOTAL	85,000,000

Mr. SALMON. We will have one more question. I am sorry.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry about sneaking in there. In my Financial Services Committee we had some votes going on. But I did not want to miss the opportunity to ask a few questions of this distinguished panel that we have before us on topics that are most important to me.

And I just want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, also though for your focus on regional security concerns you know as a top priority for this subcommittee. I think it is exactly the right place. But let me not dilly-dally. Let me just go straight to a couple of questions that I don't believe were asked. My staff was listening and they told me which questions were and which were not. Mr. Sires may have asked everything but I didn't ask at all.

So in regards to the—overall, dealing with the Caribbean drug transshipment, overall the use of the Caribbean as a transshipment point for illicit drugs from South America to the United States I am told has diminished over the past 10–15 years as drug traffickers have shifted primarily to using Mexico and Central America corridor. What is your assessment of the current status of drug transshipment through the Caribbean and have you seen any increase recently due to law enforcement efforts in Mexico and Central America? Let me add on to that, to what extent is the Caribbean equipped to contend with an increase in the use of the region for drug transshipments and to what extent has the CBSI helped increase the interdiction and law enforcement capacity of the Caribbean nations to contend with the increase in illicit drug trafficking?

Just a few questions.

Ambassador BROWNFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I am sure I speak for the entire panel when I say we would be deeply disappointed were we not to have received any questions from the distinguished gen-

tleman from Queens. I will be delighted to offer at least the start of an answer on these and let my friends Drs. Ayalde and Lopes follow up as they think appropriate.

What have we seen by way of trends of drug shipments moving through the Caribbean? Here is my simple answer to that question, Congressman: We see drug transshipments through the Caribbean as still a tiny percentage of that which moves through Central America and Mexico but it is growing. In between 2011 and 2012, the last year for which we put together reasonably good statistics so far since traffickers do not report their business to official government institutions, we calculate that the amount that has been transshipping through the region has jumped from 5 percent to 9 percent of the total that is coming to the United States of America. Nearly doubling. The overwhelming majority of that flows through the island of Hispaniola, the Dominican Republic and Haiti and probably the majority of that that flows through Hispaniola flows through the Dominican Republic. The trend therefore is obviously moving in an upward direction.

And I would add a second point. It is perfectly logical that that happen. The logic is as follows: In the early 2000s, we squeezed them in Colombia and a lot of them moved their operations to Mexico. Beginning in 2007–2008 we started to squeeze them in Mexico and they moved into the Central American region. Starting around 2009, we began to squeeze them in Central America. What are they going to do? One option is that they all go out of business, open beach cabanas, and live happily ever after as entrepreneurs. The other is they will look for an alternative and cheaper place to do business. And when they start that search, the Caribbean and those old networks that we took down in the 1980s and the 1990s are going to look very attractive.

And that, Congressman, is what CBSI from my perspective is all about. We are investing in the future. We are trying to build both the capabilities and the cooperation among the 13 cooperating governments of the region so that they will be prepared to address this reality that I see coming down the road. We are talking about many States that are very small, vulnerable because they do not have the resources and the personnel to perform this mission who require this degree of cooperation and support from us in order to be able to do it. If we do our job right today, this is not a story in 2 years time. We will know in 2 years whether we have done our job right.

Ms. AYALDE. If I may, sir, just to add to that, everything that is being done is done through the optics of institution building. To give an example, we have two advisers from ATF that are posted in the Caribbean to provide technical assistance on trafficking of small arms. It is a big issue in the Caribbean, and they are overwhelmed with how to deal with it. The adviser has been placed in a regional institution. They are being encouraged to share information which is not very natural to them. But the idea is that they will get the procedures, the way things are done to try to track these small arms. They are being trained and they will have the know-how of where to go with this information and what to do with it.

So again, it is about institution building, making sure that what we do is not just for today but for tomorrow.

Mr. MEEKS. Let me just ask this if the chairman wouldn't mind, also, let me just ask about—we did Plan Colombia. We also had a part of dealing with economic development in the area so that the locals would not have to resort to selling drugs, et cetera, when that happens. So are we still doing the same thing here? Are we doing enough to encourage the economic and as you talk about institutional development while we work on security also?

Ms. AYALDE. I have to admit that that is an ongoing challenge because these are small states. In many cases they are struggling with their fiscal health. You may be very familiar, for instance, with Jamaica and how much we worked with them to try to get them to sign the IMF agreement and some of the very hard choices they have to make. So we have to look at it. And this is what President Obama has been saying, the investment in the economy and that prosperity is essential to the sustainability of anything we do in security.

It is a challenge in the case of the Caribbean because they are small states, they depend a lot on tourism. And we have limited resources. AID is present in a very limited way and so we don't have as many tools. But what we do have is more creative ways of working with the business sector. For instance, I am traveling to Barbados in about a week to launch the American Chamber of Commerce there to be working in the eastern Caribbean, and we are encouraged to be able to attract more business and investment.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Chairman, I was a little late, but could I ask unanimous consent to submit my opening statement for the record?

Mr. SALMON. Absolutely. Without objection.

Thank you very much for your testimony. We really appreciate it. Thanks again for your patience.

Mr. RADEL [presiding]. We would like to go ahead and welcome our second panel. Thank you so much for being here. Let's go ahead and run through the bios real quick here.

Eric Olson, a member of our second panel here, is the associate director of the Latin American program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. His research and writing is focused primarily on security issues and the impacts of crime, organized crime and violence on democracies. He has also written about reform of police and judicial institutions as a vehicle for addressing the problem of rapidly expanding crime in the Americas, which is what we are dealing with here today. Prior to joining the Wilson Center he was a senior specialist in the Department for Promotion of Good Governance at The Organization of American States from 2006 to 2007.

Mr. Olson also holds a BA from Trinity College in history and secondary education and a Master's Degree in International Affairs from American University. Again, thank you for being here.

Over to Mr. Michael Shifter. Mr. Shifter is the President of the Inter-American Dialogue. Since 1993, Mr. Shifter has been an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, where he teaches Latin American politics, which is a little complicated from time to time. Prior to joining the Inter-American Dia-

logue, Mr. Shifter directed the Latin American and Caribbean Program at the National Endowment for Democracy.

Mr. Shifter holds a BA from Oberlin College in Sociology and political science and a Master's Degree in sociology from Harvard University.

We will go ahead and go along with the testimony and I will start with Mr. Olson. You are recognized.

STATEMENT OF MR. ERIC L. OLSON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, LATIN AMERICA PROGRAM, WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS

Mr. OLSON. Thank you so much, and I appreciate your staying on and overseeing this hearing, and thank you also, Mr. Meeks. I know he spent a lot of time looking at issues of democracy and security in Latin America, particularly in the Andes region, so thank you for being here as well.

I have submitted some written testimony to the committee already so I would like to, with your permission, just make some summary remarks on that.

I just came back from 10 days in Central America in the northern triangle of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, so much of what I say reflects that 10-day travel to the region. But I also lived in Honduras for 2 years in the 1980s and have repeatedly traveled to the region over the last 20–25 years.

And while I consider myself an optimist at heart, hopeful by nature, I have to admit that I feet a bit of sense of dj vu listening to our panel before us, all wonderful people that I have enormous respect for. But some of what we have been talking about here today is the same things we were talking about 20 years ago, building institutions, strengthening capacity, so on and so forth. So there is a time at which one has to ask oneself, are we really being successful, are we really doing the right things? And I don't question the goal. The problem is not the goal, it is the method to getting there, and I do have to say that I have some serious questions about how we are going about it simply because it is not producing the results we would like to see, and, to be honest, what the people of Central America want to see and deserve to see. So that I just offer as a preface.

I would just say in a word that the security situation in the northern triangle in particular, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, is dire. I don't want to call it a crisis, but it is dire. Organized crime and trafficking is rampant. And we are no longer talking just about drug trafficking, we are talking about human trafficking, trafficking in minerals, gold increasingly, other minerals, petroleum products. I mean, you name it, there is trafficking going on. And what that means is that the income from those businesses is phenomenal and the coercive effects of that kind of trafficking is tremendous.

Gains, especially in El Salvador and Honduras, are a daily reality for people in big urban areas. And although there has been a truce declared in El Salvador and the homicide rates have gone down, extortion is still rampant. People are afraid of taking buses because they get held up consistently and regularly. So that is an issue.

One of my missions on this trip was to begin an assessment of the borders in Central America. You can only imagine the number of problems. To say it is porous and open borders is to say the obvious. There are eight official crossings between Guatemala and Mexico and 122 estimated informal crossings. And I am not talking about foot paths. These are areas where trucks drive across rivers and where boats traverse rivers without any kind of control.

Conversely and ironically, at the official ports of entry there is enormous inefficiency for commerce, legitimate commerce, where there is high levels of corruption and trucks and people bringing products in are stuck for days on end.

So the situation again is dire. There are areas of the countries where there is no effective state presence—I am sorry, areas of the region where there is no effective state presence, and even in areas where there are authorities who are elected, many times, and I don't want to overstate it, but many times those authorities are on the payroll or themselves engaged in trafficking. And this is particularly troublesome along Honduras and the Guatemalan border where there is really very little state presence.

I wanted to just go ahead and say a couple more things. I see two problems in Central America that need to be addressed. First of all, success in Central America depends essentially on the Central Americans themselves and their capacity and willingness to make the tough decisions, and, unfortunately, in many cases that has not been done. Oftentimes there is a promise of reform, initiatives to reform, there is purging and vetting, but the fundamental kinds of reforms that create greater transparency and greater accountability, and I think you were actually getting at this issue as well, we are training people, training people, but we don't have a clear sense of what that outcome is, how is that really turning things around. I think it is an indicator of how we need to adjust our strategy in Central America to make it more effective, have better outcomes, not just better inputs.

I also think that one of the problems is that since we focus so much on drugs, we tend to reduce every problem in Central America as primarily a drug problem, and I think frankly while obviously drugs and drug trafficking are a big problem, we need to have a broader approach to the region. Let's not just focus on drugs and getting the drug cartels, but to also do, as some of you have implied, look at the economic situation, look at the health care system, look at the education system, because if you don't start from a broader perspective and start to reestablish the capacity of the state at many levels, I think the likelihood and hope for change in that region goes down quite a bit.

I would focus anything we were to do going forward on building or defining basic benchmarks for transparency and accountability. Again, simply training people is not going to solve their problem. We have been investing in rule of law and justice reform in Central America for probably 20 years, at least, and we are still with the situation of a justice system in Honduras that basically doesn't work.

We have police forces in Central America and particularly in Honduras where last Monday while I was there the Minister of Security said that he found over 400 people on the police rolls who

didn't exist, he called them ghosts, people who were collecting salaries and doing no police work. So without greater transparency on all of these fronts, I think we can continue to train people, we can continue to send equipment, we can continue to provide information, but that is the kind of fundamental building blocks that we need to start with in the region.

Obviously in 5 minutes I can't cover it at all. I will leave it there. I am happy to answer any of your questions and I think there is a lot more information in my written testimony. Thank you very much.

Mr. RADEL. Mr. Olson, thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Olson follows:]

Statement By

Eric L. Olson

Associate Director, Latin American Program

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

June 19, 2013

Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) And the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)

Good afternoon, Chairman Salmon, Ranking Member Sires and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee today on behalf of the Woodrow Wilson Center.

I have just returned from a 10-day trip through Central America's Northern Triangle – Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador with a particular focus on the security situation and borders. This trip was the first in a series of research trips I hope to take over the next two years that will enable me to draw more specific conclusions but, for now, I came away with some important impressions.

1) The security situation remains dire throughout the region and is at a crisis level in Honduras. Central America continues to be an important link in the trafficking chain northward from the Andes to the US. While drugs, and especially cocaine, are still the most lucrative product being trafficked we know that smuggling of migrants, extortion and ransom, and natural resource smuggling – such as lumber, precious metals and stones, and petroleum products - are also major sources of revenue. The region is also experiencing a major increase in firearms and bulk cash smuggling and has become a center for money laundering.

2) While there is some evidence that homicides have dropped slightly from their historic highs in El Salvador, most likely due to a year-old gang truce, and Guatemala – possibly due to improved police and prosecution work, there is no evidence of improvement in Honduras. Organized crime in all its many manifestations – transnational drug traffickers; criminal transportation networks; and even youth gangs - continue to prosper, enjoy widespread impunity, and distort the economies of these countries, their financial systems, and the functioning of government.

3) Efforts to strengthen institutions, ultimately the best approach, have produced few identifiable and concrete benefits. Prisons remain dangerous, overcrowded and too often inhumane places for holding criminals, many of which are minors. Sadly, in the case of Honduras, the Embassy rightly decided to withhold additional prison assistance when officials did not take even minimum steps to reform the system including failing to segregate inmates or ensuring prisoners did not have access to cell phones. Judges and prosecutors are still largely ineffective. Impunity rates of 90% and higher are commonplace. At present, the Honduran Attorney General is effectively suspended, and police's criminal investigative unit (DGIC) of roughly 1,200 officers is also in some kind of limbo category because the government cannot figure out how to legally fire them. As far as I could tell no one is conducting criminal investigations in Honduras at the moment.

Despite widespread corruption and ineffectiveness within many state institutions, there are small glimmers of hope in each country. The courageous work of Guatemala's Attorney

General Claudia Paz y Paz stands out. She has irritated the political and economic establishment in the country because of her attempts to prosecute former strongman Efraín Rios Montt for genocide against the Maya Ixil people, but even her detractors recognize that she has done a good job of investigating and prosecuting criminals involved in trafficking and violence.

In El Salvador, despite political polarization, law enforcement institutions are relatively better trained and capable than in other countries, and some of the basic tools of law enforcement such as searchable databases and uniform crime reports allow the National Civilian Police to track prisoners and deportees and to check criminal records when they detain someone. Unfortunately none of this is possible in Honduras where there is no unified crime reporting system and no national searchable databases.

In Honduras, glimmers of hope are harder to find and those that exist are incipient. For example, the new security minister reported to the Honduran congress last week the findings of an internal audit which discovered that there are hundreds of "ghosts" on the police force collecting salaries; significant equipment including 162 vehicles that cannot be located and about $25,000 in communications equipment that has never been used. Meanwhile the process of poly-graphing the police found large numbers of officers unfit to serve. While this is a good first step the fact that the Attorney General is currently suspended and there is evidence of widespread corruption within the ministry suggests that prosecution for any of the corruption identified in the police is unlikely.

3) Borders. With a few exceptions, Central America's borders remain mostly underdeveloped, isolated, difficult to access and therefore hard to patrol or protect, and easily penetrable by migrants, criminal groups, licit and illicit commerce. This is especially true in the Northern Triangle.

For example, there are 8 official crossings between Guatemala and Mexico but only 4 are consistently open and supervised by Guatemalan authorities, while there are an estimated 125 informal crossings large enough to accommodate small truck traffic and utilized by those involved in smuggling everything from contraband to humans to firearms and money; as well as, individuals migrating northward.

I am particularly alarmed by the situation between Honduras (North) and Guatemala (East) - an area well known for not just criminal activity but criminal control with no effective state presence. Even when the U.S. mounts surprise joint operations with a vetted unit of the Honduran Border Police the operation is rendered meaningless within 15 minutes because of the criminal intelligence networks operating there. For example, the Honduran government can only enter some areas of the State of Copan with large armored contingencies and, if done,

the result is usually a major battle. Apparently they enter infrequently. The area is famous for local mayors and politicians reputably with close ties to traffickers that use local police as their protection.

I would consider this area largely under the control of criminal networks and benefiting from the collusion of Honduran and Guatemala officials.

Ironically, Guatemala's efforts to strengthen border enforcement are focused on the other side of the country and its border with Mexico. I don't know why this has been the priority since one would think there would be more effort to keep criminals out than stop them from leaving.

The situation in El Salvador seems somewhat different. First, while plagued by a large presence of violent street gangs such as the MS 13 and the 18th Street gang, the country has not yet become a major trafficking route for drugs. This is not to say that drug trafficking does not occur in El Salvador, but that traffickers still seem to prefer the relatively easy passage through Honduras, Guatemala, and into Belize or Mexico. Instead, El Salvador is increasingly a place for money laundering and bulk cash smuggling in part because of its dollarized economy and because of the strong migrant ties between El Salvador and the U.S.

Based on these observations I have drawn the following tentative conclusions.

1) Strengthening the capacity of Central American countries to tackle crime and violence is essential. Only through partnership and collaboration with the region can public security and the possibility of greater economic opportunity for all be achieved.

2) Nevertheless, this process is not simply about giving the region more resources or equipment to fight drug trafficking. State capture by criminal groups and the lack of independent mechanisms of accountability and oversight mean that well intentioned aid is often misused, stolen, and can be turned against the very people we are trying to help when police and military forces are linked to criminal activity and, worse, human rights violations such as executions or what is euphemistically called "social cleansing."

I would argue that transparency, oversight, and accountability are the basic building blocks for any effort to fight crime whether in the US, Central America or the Caribbean and we see far too little of it in the Northern Triangle

3) Violence prevention programs are likewise important and are often not prioritized. Much of the violence in Central America is the result of conflicts in the retail drug markets, extortion, kidnapping, and street gangs rather than the trans-national trafficking of drugs and humans. The U.S. needs to be concerned about these domestic issues, even if it does not affect us directly, because this kind violence is what is terrorizing society and weakening the state.

Dealing more effectively with local crime will enable each country to more effectively face larger criminal organizations.

4) Border security, monitoring and protection have not been and are not likely to become priorities for the Northern Triangle countries. With limited resources and major violence in urban areas, the peripheries have often been overlooked by central governments. It would be a mistake for the U.S. to try to pressure these countries to use scarce resources and personnel to patrol the spaces between ports of entry, especially when these are largely inaccessible to law enforcement and armed forces. Instead, the focus should be on making the official points of entry more efficient, less corrupt and abusive, and capable of being a brake on organized crime. Additionally, depending on the outcome of the immigration debate in Congress there may be new incentives for migrants to use legal routes and means to enter the United States making them less vulnerable to organized crime and abuse by authorities. Meanwhile, legitimate commerce is being held up sometimes for days although no basic measures of border wait times are available.

5) CARSI – The broad outlines and goals of the program seem appropriate. Reducing street-level violence, strengthening state capacity, and efforts to re-establish state presence and control throughout the region and increase coordination and cooperation between Central American countries should be top priorities. Unfortunately progress on most of these has been very limited, and in some cases nonexistent. For example, re-establishing effective state presence in at-risk areas has not happened in most cases in part because it would require the state itself to be transformed.

The challenges and problems are not at the goal setting level but in the delivery of those goals. Penetration of the state and political systems by organized crime makes efforts to reform and strengthen democratic institutions essential but extraordinarily difficult. To strengthen the state the focus of policy needs to be less on equipment transfers and training, and much more on establishing the building blocks of transparency and accountability. In many instances countries don't know how many agents they have on the payroll, how many prisoners are in their jails, how many criminal cases have been opened much less investigated, prosecuted or sentences handed down. Without transparency and accountability, corruption and abuse run rampant and effective law enforcement is impossible.

6) The United States' dilemma. The United States wants to prevent illegal drugs from entering our country but it faces two countervailing realities. First, every "success" is met with a shifting tide of drugs. Because of demand in the United States, drug trafficking is like a river that simply moves around whatever impediment is placed in its way.

Second, preventing or prohibiting drugs from entering the U.S. may be akin to attempts to prohibit prostitution – they are rarely successful. While important, there are limits to what law enforcement and the military can do stop the flow of drugs. A policy too focused on stopping drugs in Central America may be doomed to failure. Instead a policy that emphasizes strengthening civil society and governmental institutions – law enforcement as well as education and health systems – will be more successful in the long run that a narrow focus on drug trafficking.

Ultimately, a more realistic option for the United States and Central American nations may be to redirect drug trafficking to less damaging places thereby reducing its most egregious impacts on society and government long enough to establish and strengthen the building blocks of a democratic society. These are long term goals that require a long-term approach with judicious investments, but the alternative may be even worse – wasted money that strengthens criminals and their allies in the state while producing paltry results.

Thank you for your attention and I welcome your questions.

Mr. RADEL. We now go to Mr. Shifter.

STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL SHIFTER, PRESIDENT, INTER–AMERICAN DIALOGUE

Mr. SHIFTER. Thank you very much, Congressman Radel, and thank you, Congressman Meeks. It is good to see you.

The security situation in Central America and the Caribbean is very serious. It varies from country to country, it has different explanations in each country, but over all the trend is worsening and very worrying. Criminal violence poses a great challenge to the rule of law and to fragile democracies. The situation can and should be addressed by countries in both regions and by the regional organizations such as SICA and CARICOM. But the United States has enormous responsibility and also the capacity to assist.

The economic and demographic ties to both regions are profound and are growing. The U.S.'s own strategic interests are at stake. Skepticism about whether the U.S. can help is understandable but should be put in perspective. I recall testifying before Congress 13 years ago about Plan Colombia and everyone asked the question, is there any precedent for the U.S. providing sustained support to another country in the world that has helped strengthen the capacity of the state and led to reduced violence? Back then there were no good answers to that question. Today it is possible to cite the example of Plan Colombia itself. U.S. cooperation did not solve Colombia's problems, but it did contribute to reducing the security problem in an important and positive way.

Two thousand thirteen is not two thousand and there are so many differences between Colombia and Central America and the Caribbean today. But the core problem of governance and lawlessness applies to both situations. Both CARSI and CBSI are useful and important steps, but the programs are not enough. Despite the cooperation, crime and violence in a number of countries are worsening, not improving. In Honduras, murder rates increased by some 50 percent between 2008 and 2012, precisely the time period in which these programs were implemented. And even where violence has dropped, U.S. support has been too modest and could be more effectively targeted.

CARSI and CBSI are comprehensive and wide ranging cooperation programs. They combine traditional counternarcotics activities with institution building and crime prevention measures. There has been a welcome shift in resources toward the latter, but the counternarcotics control and law enforcement still account for a significant share of the assistance.

Over the long term the best investment, the wisest investment, is in institution building. Drug trafficking is a key element in spreading violence and weakening institutions. It needs to be addressed. But levels of cocaine seizures, the main metric used to measure success in U.S. security aid, are not directly correlated with homicide rates. Even when the share of cocaine trafficked to the Caribbean has been reduced, the murder rates have more than doubled over the last decade.

It is critical that resources be delivered in a timely manner and that they be commensurate with the huge challenges. According to the GAO, disbursements both in CARSI and CBSI have been de-

layed. It is commendable that in this difficult fiscal environment there will be more resources are for CARSI in next year's budget. Resources are not everything, but they are important, and the U.S. should see this region as a high priority and be prepared to even increase funding should circumstances warrant.

The U.S. should not limit its policy to Central America and the Caribbean to security cooperation programs. Diplomatic instruments and political pressures should also be brought to bear to engage other governments in the region to be more helpful. The role of Mexico and Colombia, and Colombia was referred to in the last panel, are especially critical, but other governments as well in the region need to be helpful and supportive.

Central America is also sensitive to U.S. domestic policy issues. The U.S. should seriously engage in a review of drug policy, should manage deportations to the countries in the region with greater sensitivity to how they affect security, and it should do more to stop illegal arms from entering the region. The U.S. should recognize that there is a great opportunity for collaboration in the region. President Obama and Vice President Biden's recent visits illustrate the goodwill in both Central America and the Caribbean, and Colombia shows that sustained U.S. support can make a difference.

Thank you very much for this opportunity. I look forward to any questions you might have.

Mr. RADEL. Thank you, Mr. Shifter.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Shifter follows:]

Statement of Michael Shifter
President, Inter-American Dialogue

Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere

"Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)"

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Chairman Salmon, Ranking Member Sires, and members of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, I very much appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to share some thoughts on US security cooperation through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI).

The dire security situation in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean should be of utmost concern to the United States. With over three million Central Americans living in the United States and over $40 billion of trade in both directions, US ties to the countries of Central America are historic, profound, and will surely deepen in coming years. The United States is similarly bound to the Caribbean by strong demographic and commercial linkages.

As the United States' "third border" and the transshipment point for over 15 million containers destined for our shores each year, the security capacity of the Caribbean nations is intimately connected to the US's own wellbeing. The substantial presence of transnational criminal organizations, gangs, and other illicit actors in both of these regions poses severe challenges to the rule of law and democracy, and in so doing, to the United States' own strategic interests.

It is easy to be skeptical that the United States has a constructive role to play in assisting its neighbors to reverse these worrisome tendencies of spreading criminality. Similar skepticism was expressed by members of the US Congress and many opinion makers in the country some 13 years ago, when Plan Colombia was being considered. I recall the question was asked: "Is there any precedent for the US providing sustained support to another country, which helped it assert the authority and strengthen the capacity of the state?"

Back then, there were no ready answers to that good question. But today we can point to Plan Colombia itself as an example that security cooperation over a sustained period can actually make a difference. The security situation in Colombia, though still challenging in many respects, has vastly improved from a decade ago. Plan Colombia could not have worked without the commitment of the Colombians, but there is little question that some $8 billion of US support contributed to a positive outcome in Colombia, and helped advance US strategic interests in Latin America.

Today we are in a different environment. The fiscal outlook of the US is not what it was when Plan Colombia was being reviewed. Central America and the Caribbean present substantially different conditions than Colombia, which was, and still is, involved in an internal armed conflict.

But the fundamental problem of governance and rampant lawlessness apply to both situations. The good news today is that most of the Central American and Caribbean leaders are interested in pursuing stronger cooperation with the United States to deal with criminal violence and insecurity. That disposition was clearly displayed during President Obama's recent visit to Costa Rica with Central American presidents and Vice President Biden's trip to Trinidad and Tobago. At both stops the President and Vice President met with leaders of regional organizations—SICA in the case of Central America, CARICOM in the Caribbean—that will need to play a critical role in marshaling resources and coordinating efforts to bring violence under control. Indeed, the governments and societies in both sub-regions deserve credit for having taken steps to more effectively tackle the enormous challenges they confront.

Assessing CARSI and CBSI

US security cooperation, chiefly through CARSI and CBSI, has been useful and important in assisting our troubled Central American and Caribbean neighbors. That is why every country is seeking continued US support. But these programs are clearly not enough. The data show that crime and violence in a number of the countries are worsening. In Honduras, for example, murder rates increased by some 50 percent between 2008 and 2012.[1] True, conditions would likely be even more severe absent US cooperation. Even where violence has dropped, US assistance has been too modest and could be more effectively targeted. But the overall sobering situation and outlook should prompt serious questions about the focus and scale of US assistance and Washington's overall approach to Central America and the Caribbean.

The Obama administration emphasizes that CARSI and CBSI are wide-ranging and comprehensive efforts to security challenges in both regions. Both combine traditional counter-narcotics operations with institution-building and crime prevention measures. While the administration deserves credit for shifting more resources to institution-building and crime prevention measures than in the past, figures for both CARSI and CBSI reveal that support for international narcotics control and law enforcement (INCLE) and foreign military financing (FMF) continue to account for a disproportionate share of the budget. According to the GAO, INCLE and FMF assistance represented over two-thirds of the money committed or disbursed through CARSI between 2008 and 2011[2], and over three-quarters of the money committed or disbursed through CBSI between 2010 and 2012.[3]

There is little question that drug trafficking is a key element and driver for spreading criminal violence in both regions. Transnational criminal organizations have a corrosive effect on state institutions and threaten to displace government authority in many zones, particularly in Central America's "Northern Triangle." But evidence shows that after decades of spending on interdiction and defense cooperation, levels of cocaine seizures—the main metric used to measure success when it comes to US security aid—are not directly correlated with homicide

[1] See a compilation of homicide statistics for Central America's "Northern Triangle" countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras from 2000 to 2012 at, Mike Allison, "Homicide Statistics in Central America," *Central American Politics Blog*, January 6, 2013, available at http://centralamericanpolitics.blogspot.com/2013/01/homicide-statistics-in-central-america.html.
[2] United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), "Status of Funding for the Central American Regional Security Initiative," January 30, 2013, p. 3, available at http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/651675.pdf.
[3] United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), "Status of Funding, Equipment, and Training for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative," March 20, 2013, p. 3, available at http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/653173.pdf

rates. In the Caribbean, for example, even though the share of cocaine being trafficked has been reduced to just five percent[4], murder rates have more than doubled over the past decade.[5]

However important US counter-narcotics assistance may be—and it is more important in some countries, for example, Honduras, than in others—the overriding goal of US security cooperation should be to reduce levels of violence and protect Central American and Caribbean citizens. It is crucial to have that fundamental focus in mind. To accomplish this aim, it is further essential to strengthen national institutions, particularly the judiciary and police forces. This echoes a call by Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto to concentrate on reducing violence within the Merida Initiative. The main lesson of Plan Colombia is that US cooperation was most effective not when it was used to eradicate coca production or interdict drug shipments, but when it emphasized the building of state capacities to protect Colombians.

It is further essential that US resources directed to both Central America and the Caribbean be delivered in an efficient, timely fashion, and that they be commensurate with the challenge, and what is at stake for the region, and for the United States. More needs to be done to expedite the delivery of already apportioned funds. According to the GAO, for example, as of January 2013, only 28 percent of total CARSI funds from 2008 to 2011 had been committed or disbursed, while an additional 58 percent had been obligated.[6] A similar report on the CBSI from March 2013 found that just over 13 percent of funds allocated between 2010 and 2012 had been disbursed.[7] Without a more agile and well-coordinated release of funds, efforts will remain stalled.

The Obama administration has noted that, in a very difficult fiscal environment with declining budgets, resources for CARSI will increase in 2014. This is good news. But the question is whether even the increased level is adequate, given the depth of the problems. It is true that the region's institutions have limited absorptive capacity and that more money is not necessarily the answer. Still, resources do matter, and the US should be prepared to regard this region as an urgent priority and increase funding even more, if necessary.

It is important to recognize that, however important the CARSI and CBSI programs may be, they do not and should not constitute the overall US policy towards the region. To be effective, the cooperation needs to be reinforced by other political and diplomatic instruments of US policy. It is especially critical for Washington to use its leverage and position to encourage greater coordination between Central America and the Caribbean and other hemispheric countries, especially Mexico and Colombia. Much of this is already taking place, but it can be further enhanced and should be sustained over time.

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[4] United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, *Preventing a Security Crisis in the Caribbean*, September 2012, p. 9, available at http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/files/serve/?File_id=90bb66bc-3371-4898-8415-fbfc31c0ed24.

[5] On the whole, the homicide rate in the Caribbean jumped from 14 to 25 murders per 100,000 inhabitants between 2000 and 2009. See, Sheridon Hill, "Gang Homicide in the Caribbean," *Symposium on Gangs and Gang Violence in the Caribbean at American University*, February 17, 2012, available at http://cvpcs.asu.edu/sites/default/files/content/events/Hill%20presentation.pdf.

[6] United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), "Status of Funding for the Central American Regional Security Initiative," *op. cit.*

[7] United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), "Status of Funding, Equipment, and Training for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative," *op. cit.*

US Policy Issues

The countries of Central America and the Caribbean are sensitive to a number of US domestic issues that policymakers should take into account in crafting an approach to security cooperation in both regions. While the CARSI and CBSI assistance packages and their programs on institution-building, crime prevention, and counter-narcotics are important, their positive effects could be neutralized if the US does not address a number of challenges within our own borders.

First, in the spirit of shared responsibility, it is important for the US to be even more actively engaged in a serious debate and review of drug policy. The recent study conducted by the Organization of American States[8] offers some useful ideas on a variety of related questions such as the criminal justice system and victims of drug abuse. The Obama administration has pursued a more balanced approach but more needs to be done to reduce demand and consumption in the United States. It is also worth exploring how to scale up relatively low-cost treatment programs in the US, such Hawaii's Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE), which has been successful in rehabilitating heavy drug users. And the experiments in Colorado and Washington State should be carefully monitored and studied.

The second question on the domestic agenda that has far-reaching consequences for Central America and the Caribbean nations is deportations. Under the Obama administration, the number of deportations of individuals in the United States illegally have well-exceeded one million, placing a particular strain on the already fragile governance structures of Central America and the Caribbean. To reduce the negative effects of criminal deportations, ICE and FBI officials need to do far more on information sharing with regional governments to provide details about who is being returned and their criminal backgrounds. Officials in both Central America and the Caribbean cite the lack of exchange of information as a major factor in expanding levels of criminal violence.

Finally, any US approach to combating criminal violence in Central America and the Caribbean must take into account the impact of dangerous arms flowing from the United States into the region. While much attention has focused on this issue regarding the Mexican case, recent research shows that it also affects Central America and the Caribbean, where controls are even weaker.[9] According to a 2009 AP report, for example, 80 percent of traceable illegal arms recovered in Jamaica originated in the United States.[10] To be sure, the arms used come from variety of sources and are hard to control. But more serious US efforts to stop illegal arms from entering the region, and further complicating an already volatile mix, would be widely welcomed and send a powerful, positive signal to our neighbors.

Concluding Thoughts

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[8] The OAS Report on the Drug Problem in the Americas can be accessed at http://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-194/13.

[9] See, Colby Goodman, *U.S. Firearms Trafficking to Guatemala and Mexico: A Working Paper*. Woodrow Wilson Center, April 2013, available at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/US%20Firearms%20to%20Guatemala%20and%20Mexico_0.pdf.

[10] "U.S. guns fuel Jamaica's gang wars," *NBC News*, June 21, 2009, available at http://www.nbcnews.com/id/31474297/ns/world_news-americas/t/us-guns-fuel-jamaicas-gang-wars/#.UbjbNuf2ZQg.

Escalating criminal violence in neighboring Central America and the Caribbean today has deleterious effects on the social, political, and economic systems of the countries directly affected. It also puts at risk key US strategic interests in the Western Hemisphere. Fragile institutions and governance structures with inadequate human and material resources in both regions should be of deep concern to this Congress.

But alongside the daunting challenges, there are also encouraging opportunities for US collaboration. Central American and Caribbean governments are eager for greater cooperation with the United States, as illustrated during the recent meetings between President Obama with the Central American and Dominican heads of state in Costa Rica and Vice President Biden with CARICOM leaders in Trinidad. As Colombia showed, success, though not easy, is indeed possible. The key is having regional governments open to external collaboration, and the United States being prepared to be proactive and sustain resources and attention to institutional construction and renewal.

Mr. RADEL. I now yield myself 5 minutes to ask some questions.

In committee hearing after committee hearing, Colombia always is this bright shining example of what we can do when we work together, fostering an economy, work on security, national security issues, et cetera, where we go from what was almost a failed state to what we now have in Colombia, the GDP booming, growing. But, Mr. Shifter, you pointed out how you cannot have one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to these types of issue and you noted some of the differences between Colombia and present day Central America.

I would ask you, could you expand on that a little more? What are the differences and how can we better direct resources based on that?

Mr. SHIFTER. Well, thank you. I think Colombia has an internal armed conflict, is a major difference. The political conflict is now a peace process in Colombia. Colombia clearly is one country as opposed to small countries, as Ambassador Brownfield underscored. It is a major coca producer. Plan Colombia was directed at eradicating the coca production in southern Colombia. So I think there are enormous differences. And this is mainly a problem of trafficking. Really this is the transit routes that go through. So I think there are some real, real differences.

But the problem in Colombia, Colombia was called on the brink of a failed state and now some of these countries are called failed states. So there are similarities in terms of basic structures of governance, and questions of accountability, transparency, corruption. These issues were brought up in the context of Plan Colombia always well.

So I do think that you tackle a very, very similar kind of problem. What I think is needed is a much more engaged approach even than we had in Colombia. Colombia is a country with a strong democratic tradition, stronger than many of the Central American countries. So they were a partner that you can work with, and I think in Central America I think really ultimately the responsibility is with the Central Americans themselves. But I do think beyond just security assistance programs, there needs to be a much more engaged and focused and targeted approach by the United states.

Mr. RADEL. And that is where we get back to institutional support, versus just, gee, how many kilos of cocaine have we seized today.

Mr. Olson, if you would want to expand on that, that is kind of what you were getting at as well, right, that institutional support, whether we are talking the justice system, education, things like that?

Mr. OLSON. I totally agree with what everyone has said, that institutional support is essential. What I am trying to get at is in some ways we have been trying to do that for a long time and not terribly successfully. So what I am suggesting is maybe we need to take a little bit different approach to it; that the focus not be so much on training, not that I am against training, but that not be the main focus of what we do and we instead try to start with issues of transparency and accountability.

Let me give you a couple examples. Again, Minister Corrales in Honduras discovered that there were 400-plus police officers that didn't exist receiving salaries; 162 missing vehicles; expensive communication, brand new, never taken out of the package. That kind of problem you don't solve by training more people because they are coming into a system of corruption, of penetration, of capture of the state.

So what I am trying to say is that maybe the first building block here is to push them to have more transparent procedures. Nobody in Honduras can tell you how many cases have been opened, how many have been investigated, how many have been prosecuted and how many have been sentenced, basic information so that you could judge whether there is any progress. We keep training and training and training, but the system stays basically the same.

And, no, it is not a question of institution strengthening or not. It is how you are going to do the institution strengthening that makes a difference. And I think that is the key to me.

Mr. RADEL. Mr. Olson, I thank you for your time. I am the eternal optimist like you. I hope we can have a brighter future in this in implementing. Again, I go back to those kind of qualitative and quantitative measures to address what you have discussed. I think it is important that this committee too recognize if there are issues like that, if our funds are being directed or mismanaged in any way, tied into some of these issues that you have brought up, I hope that we can address that.

At this point I will go ahead, and my time has expired, Mr. Meeks, you are recognized.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you. I was going to call you Mr. Chairman but I see the chairman is back, so I don't want him to think there is anything funny going on here.

Mr. RADEL. You can still call me Mr. Chair.

Mr. MEEKS. Let me again thank you for your dedication and your focus on issues of concern, especially in Latin America and Central and South America. I am wondering, going back to the conversation that we were just having and oftentimes Colombia is a subject matter which we bring up, now, it seems to me maybe one of the fundamental differences has been, and you tell me, is leadership, from the top going down getting the word out that I want transparency. Because if the leadership doesn't say I want transparency, then wherever the money goes it is going to be gone without having transparency.

So talk to me about leadership in some of the key areas where we are investing money or where we should not invest money and how do we do that so we can make sure that there is accountability, eventually transparency and get on a pathway, as we did in Colombia.

Mr. OLSON. I was going to defer to the chairman over here. I mean, I think that is a very valid point and a good point. And, again, like Michael said, each country is different. I think the Millennium Challenge Account has made transparency in governance a central part of its program and there has been progress in that in El Salvador, for instance. I think there has been progress in Guatemala because Guatemala has had the good fortune of having

an attorney general who herself is courageous and has held people accountable.

But I frankly am pessimistic about what I have heard and seen in Honduras, and part of it is there has been a revolving door. They have had three public security ministers in just over 3 years, and each one of them comes in with a new agenda and a new reform plan and is really going to shake things up. And more power to them, but it never takes hold and we never quite make it beyond that.

So that is why looking at sort of the systemic part of this, the transparency part is really important. And, you know, if there were that kind of leadership committed in the long term, then I would say there is even more hope.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Shifter?

Mr. SHIFTER. Thank you. I think you make a great point, Congressman. In Colombia what happened was they basically said this country is no longer viable if the situation continues the way it has been going, so in that context leadership emerged that kind of tapped into something that was out there. And we haven't quite seen that yet in Central America.

Part of the problem is that there is a very difficult challenge in coordinating efforts. Each one is a different situation. There is some mistrust frankly among the governments and you really have to have somebody that really plays—no one has really stepped forward yet to really assume that role of coordinating the region because everything is on the line. And that is really what happened in Colombia. It is easier to do it in one country than it is in many, especially when there are such different circumstances.

But I think in terms of U.S. policy there are reformers in each of the countries. I think Honduras, as Eric said, is the most problematic, the most troubling. If you had to single out the most difficult one, I think it would be Honduras. But in Guatemala you have an Attorney General and in other countries you have people in leadership positions that I think you can be supporting, you can work with, and I think effort should just be to focus and to strengthen those individuals in leadership position, if not the President then at least in the judicial branch or Congress or in other institutions that are key.

Mr. MEEKS. Well, let me ask, I have always been curious, those individuals that we may have in various institutions in various countries that seem to be moving in the right direction, where do they come from? How do we find them? Is it civil society if it doesn't come from the top? What do we do to make sure that there more of them, that we are creating more of them, that we are educating or teaching more of them so we will have more of them coming from the groundswell up as opposed to leaving a vacuum?

Mr. OLSON. I think that is a great point, and that is why I say we can't have just such a narrow focus on fighting drugs. We have to look more broadly, because we have to identify leaders with possibility that can move this forward. And they may come from unexpected places.

Again, trying to be optimistic even about Honduras, the one bright light I see in Honduras is actually the university. A university that traditionally has been abandoned, underfunded, corrupt,

you name it, now has a rector who is viewed as an honest person, who is doing new and innovative things at the university. She has created an observatory on violence that is actually creating documentation schemes of who is getting murdered where. The government is not doing that. She is doing it.

So there is somebody that is not in government and that is on the outside and maybe the periphery, but I think she is beginning to create a space in Honduras that is legitimate and maybe we can build something there.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you. I see my time has expired.

Mr. RADEL. Thank you, Mr. Meeks. I now recognize the chair.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you. Either of you can answer this question. Actually, it is a couple of questions. How has DOD supplemented the assistance provided through CARSI and what have been the principal accomplishments for DOD support for Central America thus far; how will the budget cuts affect the interdiction and training efforts moving forward; and what are the major challenges for interagency cooperation; and how would you respond to concerns that U.S. assistance is being provided to militaries that still experience widespread impunity for human rights violations and criminal activity?

Thank you.

Mr. OLSON. I am not sure I have an exact answer for you. I would like to be able to respond in writing. I mean, I take it by DOD you mean their counternarcotics assistance, because there is a DOD presence or a State Department presence in Honduras at the Soto Cano base, but that is not a counternarcotics function.

SOUTHCOM has numerous programs in the area that are counternarcotics-focused. I am beginning to look at this issue of border and border security, and I know SOUTHCOM is doing quite a bit in Belize, in Guatemala, to try to increase the capacity of the militaries in those countries to patrol the borders. I don't have numbers around that and I don't know much more than that, but I do know they have a presence.

What the sequester impact will be on all these programs, I just couldn't tell you in honesty.

Mr. SALMON. This is my last question, and either one of you, I will be happy to have you answer. How would you respond to than concerns that U.S. assistance is being provided to militaries that still experience widespread impunity for human rights violations and criminal activity?

Mr. SHIFTER. Well, I think this is a concern. I mean, Central America as you know has a very troubling history and one of the achievements in Central America is precisely the reduction of the military over the recent period. And the worst thing the United States could do would be to strengthening those military forces for non-military purposes for what should just be law enforcement purposes. But the problem is the police are not adequate to the task and there is a lot of public pressure for order. And if the military is the only institution that can do that, that is a real dilemma, that is a real problem. So I think that is a very, very strong concern.

I guess I would respond with a question that if the United States doesn't provide support to those militaries, those countries, those militaries are going to do it anyway, and this at least gives the

United States some leverage and ability to try to constrain those abuses. Because these situations are out of control, no other institution can provide order, and I don't think the U.S. wants to sit by and say well, we are not part of this, but look what they are doing down there.

I think this was the Colombian case. Again if you go back to Colombia, human rights has been a central part of that program and there has been a reduction in human rights abuses in parts thanks to the pressure applied from Washington.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you. Prisons throughout Central America are overcrowded and in substandard conditions. Moreover, they have become recruitment centers for criminal gangs, further complicating the security situation in the region. What are the governments of these countries doing to address these serious problems?

Mr. OLSON. I know that in the case of Honduras the U.S. had I believe it was about a $10 million program to help reform and strengthen the prison system there because not only was it grossly overcrowded, but the prisons were actually platforms for organized crime and we had these horrific examples of prison fires and riots where hundreds of people were being killed. So there was a real interest in dealing with this problem here. And the U.S. said before we give you this money, we have a few conditions: No more cell phones in the prison, segregate the prisoners, keep minors out of the adult population, some basic, basic criteria.

And the government was unable to meet those basic criterias so the U.S. said we are not giving you $10 million. As much as it is needed, as important as it is, if you can't make some basic standards, you don't have the will to do some basic things, we are not giving you the money. So it is a real dilemma because the problem as you say is extreme.

Now there are better prisons, they have improved prison conditions in El Salvador, they have improved prison conditions in other countries. But when a country doesn't have the basic fundamental commitment to make some minimal changes, one has to ask oneself is this the right way to invest our money? I think they did but the situation has not improved.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Mr. RADEL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you both gentlemen. It has been very productive. I think it gives us a little clarity moving forward on the realities of this, the cultural realities to this, which is a theme that just keeps coming up. You can only do so much. People want to have to want to help themselves. And as stewards of taxpayer dollars, it is imperative that we look at this very critically, especially given our own economy and our own budget here in the United States.

Gentleman, thank you both. There being no further business, this subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:30 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-6128

Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere
Matt Salmon (R-AZ), Chairman

June 12, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held by the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at www.foreignaffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Wednesday, June 19, 2013

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

SUBJECT: Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)

WITNESSES: Panel I
The Honorable William R. Brownfield
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
U.S. Department of State

Ms. Liliana Ayalde
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
U.S. Department of State

Mr. Mark Lopes
Deputy Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
U.S. Agency for International Development

Panel II
Mr. Eric L. Olson
Associate Director
Latin America Program
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Mr. Michael Shifter
President
Inter-American Dialogue

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *the Western Hemisphere* HEARING

Day *Wednesday* **Date** *06-19-2013* **Room** *2172 RHOB*

Starting Time *2:50 p.m.* **Ending Time** *4:25 p.m.*

Recesses ____ (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Matt Salmon, Rep. Trey Radel

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☑
Executive (closed) Session ☐
Televised ☑
Electronically Recorded (taped) ☑
Stenographic Record ☑

TITLE OF HEARING:

"Regional Security Cooperation : An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)"

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Matt Salmon, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Jeff Duncan, Rep. Trey Radel, Ranking Member Albio Sires, Rep. Gregory Meeks,

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

N/A

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☑ **No** ☐
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Chairman Matt Salmon - QFR
Rep. Trey Radel - QFR
Chairman Matt Salmon - Additional QFR

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *4:25 p.m.*

Mark O. Walker
Subcommittee Staff Director

House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere

Congressman Albio Sires (D-NJ)
Ranking Member

Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)
Wednesday June 19, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good Afternoon and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

Today's discussion on the security situation in Central America and the Caribbean is both timely and long overdue. While merited our efforts to combat criminal threats and reduce drug trafficking related violence in Mexico has diverted our attention from the public security crisis that has emerged in Central America. The deteriorated state of security in the region is a byproduct of gangs, organized crime groups, and drug traffickers that have spilled over from Mexico in attempts to control their drug trade, co-opting local crime organizations into their networks to smuggle drugs, people, illicit goods, and weapons. And while the Caribbean is not the dominant transit point of choice for illicit drugs into the U-S it would be naïve for us to ignore the possibility that as pressure on drug traffickers in Mexico and Central America increases, the Caribbean would become a viable and attractive alternative for illicit activity.

The most basic of functions for any government is to protect its citizens. With some of the highest homicide rates in the world amongst the northern triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, citizen security remains an issue. For some countries, post-conflict institutional reforms in the 1990s have left already weak governments with broken justice systems, corrupt police forces, and poverty-stricken, unequal societies. With persistent unemployment and lack of social mobility, many Central American youth have either immigrated to the United States or been recruited by criminal groups. As a result, major Central American populations now live in the United States. And for some Central American countries, remittances represent between 10-20 percent of their GDP.

It is unfortunate when the choice of a young adult is to either leave one's homeland or face a life of poverty alongside constant threats to join gangs or other criminal organizations. I have been concerned with the rise of Central American gangs into other criminal activity and the constant threat they pose to susceptible youth and weak governments, particularly in El Salvador and Honduras. Homicides and drug related violence remain serious obstacles to the peace and security of Central Americans. According to the U-N, Mexico, a country with over 112 million people, had in 2011 a homicide rate of 23.7 per one hundred thousand people; El Salvador, with a population of over 6 million, had a rate of 69.2 and Honduras with a population of almost 8.5 million, had a homicide rate at a staggering 91.6.

These facts reinforce our need to ensure that the Central American Security Initiative (CARSI) (CAR-SEE) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (C-B-S-I) are one, broad enough to dismantle transnational crime organizations and curb illicit drug flows with crime prevention and institution-building efforts to strengthen the rule of law; and two, are implemented in a coordinated manner within U-S agencies and partner countries, while remaining dynamic enough to address both current and potential threats as seen in the Caribbean. It would be in our best interest to not overlook security concerns in the Caribbean.

To date, nearly 500 million dollars have been appropriated for CARSI (CAR-SEE) and about 200 million dollars have been appropriated for C-B-S-I; however, recent Government Accounting Office (G-A-O) reports suggest that less than 28 percent of CARSI (CAR-SEE) funds and roughly 19 percent of C-B-S-I funds have been distributed. This committee needs to understand why such funding has not been carried out in an efficient manner.

I look forward to hearing from our panelists regarding their assessments of these security initiatives, as well as their determination of the current state of security in Central America and the Caribbean. Transforming a generation of corrupt behavior, strengthening the rule of law, implementing long-due institutional reforms, and creating a more inclusive society for youth prone to illicit activities will take time and determination. However, the United States must approach these initiatives with the goal of transferring ownership to Central American leadership. Ultimately, it is the people of Central America that are responsible to subject the public and political will to take on these difficult tasks.

Thank you.

Congressman Gregory W. Meeks

Statement for House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing "Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)"

Thank you Chairman Salmon and Ranking Member Sires, for convening this hearing today to discuss regional security issues in the Caribbean and Central America. I look forward to hearing the remarks of the witnesses today, and I thank them for their testimony. I am pleased that regional security concerns are a top priority for the Subcommittee. In the Subcommittee's last Hearing, we focused exclusively on the impact of the Merida Initiative in Mexico. I made a point in my remarks to reinforce the importance of approaching security policy towards our southern neighbors as a regional issue, not an exclusively bilateral issue with Mexico. In fact, I specifically mentioned the significance of CBSI and CARSI. These are vital initiatives that bolster U.S. efforts to tackle trans-border crime. When we examine our engagement with the Caribbean, we must consider it within the context of programs also aimed at Mexico, Central and South America. We do not want drug trafficking through the Caribbean to increase simply because pressure has been applied to Mexico and Central America. Violence in the Caribbean, due to the prevalence of gangs and organized crime, has spiked in the last 20 years. The rate of homicides has risen despite the fact that only 5% of

drugs are currently smuggled through the Caribbean. Vulnerable nations, such as Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua, struggle with poverty and weakened institutions and rule of law. In fact, in January, I joined my colleagues in sending a letter to Secretary Kerry, requesting a thorough investigation into abuses by the Honduran police and military officials. The letter, references acts of violence, murder and intimidation against the Afro-Indigenous community.

As we discuss the impact of security initiatives in the Hemisphere, we should also consider the broader social, political and economic implications. The United States should complement our security agenda with an equally robust economic relationship. Legitimate economic revenue is necessary to diminish the prevalence of the illicit drug trade. Programs that increase trade capacity, and contribute to the creation of viable economic alternatives to criminal networks need to be pursued alongside security initiatives. Thank you again for your testimony today, and I look forward hearing your insights.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Brownfield, Deputy Assistant Secretary Ayalde,
and Mr. Lopes by
Representative Matt Salmon (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 19, 2013

Question:

Of the funds appropriated thus far, how much has been obligated and how much has been disbursed or delivered to each participating country in CARSI and CBSI? What are the principal obstacles to quicker deliveries?

Answer:

CARSI and CBSI are parts of a multi-faceted regional effort that improves citizen security by helping countries across Central America and the Caribbean strengthen the rule of law, prevent crime, and build safe communities for their citizens. Providing U.S. assistance through this regional approach to counter shared threats is in our national interest.

Because many CARSI and CBSI programs are broad regional efforts, the U.S. Department of State does not regularly track the assistance expenditures on a country-by-country basis across all assistance streams. However, we do regularly track expenditures by sector, or appropriation account, and on a quarterly basis, for all accounts. As of spring 2013, of $146.00 million appropriated for CARSI Economic Support Funds (ESF), which support prevention assistance, $129.13 million has been obligated and $57.19 million expended. For International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE), which supports counternarcotics, police, and rule of law assistance, of $316.3 million appropriated, $294.72 million has been obligated and $119.21 million expended. For Foreign Military Financing (FMF), which supports military assistance, of $28.00 million appropriated, $25.90 million has been obligated and $19.50 million expended. For Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR), which supports antiterrorism assistance, of $6.20 million appropriated, $6.19 million has been obligated and $5.40 million expended.

Under CBSI, ESF and Development Assistance (DA) support rule of law and prevention assistance - of $48.00 million ESF and $6.00 million DA appropriated, $46.66 million ESF and $6.00 million DA has been obligated and $12.96 million ESF and $2.63 million DA expended. For INCLE, which supports

rule of law and law enforcement, of $94.76 million appropriated, $80.11 million has been obligated and $17.15 million expended. For FMF, which supports maritime interdiction, of $45.97 million appropriated, $45.97 million has been obligated and $15.90 million expended. For NADR, which supports anti-terrorism assistance, of $8.40 million appropriated, $6.63 million has been obligated and $3.18 million expended.

The Department is making significant progress in delivering CARSI and CBSI assistance and we expect to see a continuing increase in the pace and breadth of the delivery of our assistance through the end of the calendar year.

We have put the infrastructure in place to effectively deliver this assistance. We have executed letters of agreement with host nations, developed interagency agreements with our U.S. government implementation partners, and signed implementing documents with NGOs and related training providers.

We continue to work with our chiefs of mission, country teams, and implementing agencies to proactively identify real or potential obstacles to the expeditious delivery of assistance, and ensure that we have the staffing and related administrative support infrastructure required to facilitate the flow of assistance.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary William R. Brownfield by
Chairman Matt Salmon (#2)
House Foreign Affairs Committee – Western Hemisphere Subcommittee
June 19, 2013

Question:

How much does each of the Caribbean countries spend on security for every dollar the United States provides in assistance? To what extent have Caribbean governments taken ownership of, or replicated successful U.S.-funded programs?

Answer:

The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) is a regional civilian security program that includes both bilateral and regional components. Although each country classifies its security spending in different ways, the 13 partner nations in CBSI spent $2.8 billion on security in 2012. When compared to the $64 million appropriated for CBSI for that same year, for every dollar of CBSI assistance, Caribbean nations as a group spent $43 on security.

Although CBSI implementation only began late in fiscal year 2010, Caribbean nations are taking ownership of programs started under CBSI. The Government of Jamaica gave $1.7 million to USAID to continue its CARANA Pride Tax Administration and Customs Reform programs through 2015. The Government of Guyana initiated security sector reforms, hiring a consultancy firm to assess progress in implementing the police force's five-year strategic plan and to design a plan to address key concerns, such as the introduction of a recruitment and retention policy for new hires. In Trinidad and Tobago, the police academy has taken over the teaching of the basic criminal investigation course, the interview and interrogation course, the instructor development course, and the basic firearms certification course, previously taught by U.S. instructors with U.S. funding.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Brownfield, Deputy Assistant Secretary Ayalde,
and Mr. Lopes by
Representative Matt Salmon (#3)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 19, 2013

Question:

How does CARSI dovetail with U.S. economic efforts in the region? How has the Department of Defense supplemented CARSI assistance?

Answer:

U.S. efforts in Central America to promote economic growth and those to increase security are inextricably linked. Insecurity inhibits economic growth in Central America; slow economic growth corresponds to limited employment opportunities for vulnerable populations and constrains resources available for government expenditure on security and social development programs. The Department and interagency partners take a broad approach to advancing security in Central America, devoting assistance in an array of sectors, including economic growth.

The Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) incorporates targeted economic measures in its whole-of-government approach to reduce violent crime, strengthen justice sector institutions, and promote economic growth. CARSI programs foster job creation in low-income areas and engage business leaders in the funding and operation of youth centers, education, and job-training. USAID's economic development assistance includes initiatives to connect small farmers to markets, lift rural poor out of poverty, strengthen revenue collection, and contribute to a concerted effort to make the region more peaceful and prosperous.

We reinforce citizen security programming in Central America by promoting regional economic growth, infrastructure modernization, and collaboration. Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas promotes economic and social inclusion through small business empowerment and customs modernization. Connecting the Americas 2022 works toward universal access to affordable, reliable electricity through the development of a regional electricity market.

Effective state management of revenue collection, education, energy, and cross-border trade will improve investment climates, develop stronger institutions, and allow investment in longer-term growth. Through the Domestic Finance for Development initiative, the United States helps El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua increase government revenue, promote fiscal transparency, and fight corruption. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compacts in Honduras and El Salvador focused on improving infrastructure and market access. Trade figures from the CAFTA-DR partners show regional trade has grown 56 percent between 2005 and 2011, demonstrating the benefits of intraregional integration. The entry into force of the U.S.-Panama Free Trade Agreement in 2012 has increased reciprocal trade and the expansion of the Panama Canal in 2015 is expected to significantly increase global trade through the region's key transportation hub.

CARSI is complemented by other U.S. government citizen security efforts that are developing the capacity of host nation security and rule of law institutions. These include: the State Department's Foreign Military Financing and International Military Education and Training programs, assistance by the Departments of Labor and State to combat child labor and human trafficking in El Salvador and Guatemala, and the Department of Treasury's technical support to assist countries in identifying and prosecuting financial crimes.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Brownfield, Deputy Assistant Secretary Ayalde,
and Mr. Lopes by
Representative Matt Salmon (#4)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 19, 2013

Question:

What has the U.S. government done to leverage private sector support for CARSI and CBSI programs? Have any efforts been done in that regard outside El Salvador?

Answer:

As the Central American Integration System (SICA) and Central American nations develop their citizen security strategies, the United States, along with other donors and multilateral and international financial institutions, has stressed to Central American governments the importance of broad citizen and private sector participation in reviewing security strategies and implementation plans that promote visibility and credibility.

We are also working through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) to foster private sector engagement on citizen security efforts. USAID has particularly encouraged public-private partnerships for prevention programs, including support for at-risk youth, education, and job-training. Recently, USAID signed its largest-ever Global Development Alliance (GDA) with local organizations in the hemisphere. Six of El Salvador's leading foundations allied to prevent crime and violence in four key hotspot municipalities that will receive $20 million in USAID assistance, which is expected to leverage an additional $22 million from the private sector.

USAID allocated $10 million in FY 2011 and FY 2012 CARSI assistance in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to collaborate with and leverage national and local government and private sector funding and resources for programs that address the risk factors identified in USAID-supported municipal crime prevention plans. USAID allocated $4.3 million in FY 2013 CARSI assistance for the same end.

United Way in Panama is implementing a $495,000 CARSI grant to benefit 22 youth outreach centers and is partnering with 11 private sector donors who will match U.S. funds for the centers during the next two years.

In Guyana, our at-risk youth project built a private sector advisory group that identifies private sector alliances and employment opportunities for at-risk youth beneficiaries. Representatives from the private sector helped design a work readiness curriculum that will transfer employment skills to at-risk youth and increase access to employment and success in the workplace. Private sector representatives, including the chairman of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and senior directors and owners of major Guyanese businesses (Banks DIH Ltd., Bounty Farms, John Fernandes Group, and Mings Enterprises), offered jobs, as well as guidance in identifying sustainable employment for youth.

In the Dominican Republic, USAID co-sponsored a labor market survey with Fundacion Inicia, Action for Basic Education, and Business Initiative for Technical Education and is including the private sector in developing a vocational education and life skills program for youth. USAID is also strengthening partnerships between local civil society and the private sector to increase public demand and engagement on key security matters such as police reform and community crime prevention.

In Jamaica, over 700 students participated in a Junior Achievement Jamaica meeting that featured approximately 70 business professionals, entrepreneurs, and corporate executives. Volunteers from several Jamaican businesses, including local banks CIBC-FCIB and RBC Royal Bank, General Electric, and Affiliated Computer Services, mentored students on how to start and run their own companies.

USAID/Jamaica has teamed up with the Grace & Staff Community Development Foundation to reduce violence and crime in at-risk communities by increasing youth leadership through education and leadership training and to improve coordination of government agencies and other private service providers in identifying at-risk youth. Grace & Staff's contribution includes donation of space as well as providing labor for installation of equipment, and all the staff working in the homework centers.

In St. Lucia and Antigua and Barbuda, USAID's at-risk youth programs worked in partnership with the local hotel associations to place youth graduates of the vocational and life skills training programs into jobs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Brownfield, Deputy Assistant Secretary Ayalde,
and Mr. Lopes by
Representative Matt Salmon (#5)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 19, 2013

Question:

How much funding has the U.S. government spent supporting SICA and SICA dialogues since FY2008? What have been the results of those dialogues? Can you describe what SICA has done to implement the 8 key regional projects it agreed to implement as a part of the SICA summit- Group of Friends project?

Answer:

The United States contributed almost $352,000 over the past five years to support technical discussions to develop a common Central American regional security strategy. Since 2008, this convening leadership demonstrated by the United States has served to better integrate and refine the Central Americans strategic thinking. Discussions focus on developing new international partners for Central America and cooperation among the seven Central American states on trafficking in arms, drugs, criminal gangs, and effective prevention programs. We are working with SICA to hold more technical meetings. The U.S. financial contribution to the Central American Integration System (SICA) and SICA dialogues has resulted in the following outcomes:

- Group of Friends (GOF) of Central America: The GOF first met February 2011 to coordinate donors and multilateral and international financial institutions that provide citizen security assistance and support SICA's Security Strategy and eight projects contained within the strategy's four "pillars." GOF coordination has increased the international community's collective impact in Central America. Within the GOF, the United States, Colombia, and Mexico chair the Security Experts Group (SEG), which supports the Combating Crime pillar. SEG members coordinate assistance programs on border management, land and maritime interdiction, control of firearms, and crime and violence

prevention. The SEG met in 2011 in Washington and in 2012 in Mexico City. It is an important forum for coordinating technical assistance and sustaining donor momentum and ensures that bilateral and regional assistance is well-coordinated. Colombia will host the next SEG meeting in 2013.

- The April North America – SICA Security Dialogue brought together representatives from the SICA member states, the United States, Mexico, and Canada to strengthen regional cooperation on citizen security and to promote effective and measurable results in combating transnational crime and violence. It merges separate security dialogues that Mexico, Canada, and the United States maintained with SICA into one regional mechanism. The inaugural dialogue focused on best practices on crime, violence prevention, and narco-trafficking, including issues related to chemical precursors for synthetic drugs in Central America. As a result of the dialogue, Canada and the United States partnered on providing ballistic imaging systems to the region, avoiding duplication of effort.
- The GOF and SICA process is contributing to improvements in the region. The governments of Central America are taking actions to improve citizen security. Honduras and Costa Rica adopted special taxes to fund security spending following Colombia's war tax example; Costa Rica and Panama increased government spending on security significantly; and Honduras joined Belize, El Salvador, and Guatemala in allowing the extradition of its nationals. In September, a technical experts meeting will consider an effective Central American approach to the emerging security challenge of the unrestrained flow of chemical precursors to Central America.

The engagements with SICA, the SICA member states, and the donor community helped communicate the SICA priorities to the donor community, enabled donors to leverage each other's expertise and funding, and reduced overlap. We continue to press SICA and the SICA member states to take further action on implementation of the security strategy.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Brownfield, Deputy Assistant Secretary Ayalde,
and Mr. Lopes by
Representative Matt Salmon (#6)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 19, 2013

Question:

To what extent has the Honduran government effectively implemented the many policy reforms it has announced over the past three years? Why was CARSI funding for the police cleanup effort in Honduras cut off? Does the U.S. government continue to provide other assistance to the Honduran police force despite the failure of the cleanup effort? If so, why?

Answer:

We remain concerned about high levels of impunity and corruption in Honduras. We work in partnership with the Honduran government and civil society to address these challenges, advance citizen security, build capacity within rule of law institutions, and protect human rights. As required by U.S. law, the United States stringently vets members of the Honduran police and military who receive U.S. assistance.

We support Honduras in reforming and professionalizing the Honduran National Police (HNP). Investing U.S. assistance to address shared security challenges is in our national interest. Strengthening and reforming Honduran law enforcement institutions are critical to protecting human rights, combating corruption and impunity, improving citizen security, and ensuring that the Honduran people can trust the institutions that are meant to protect their safety and uphold the rule of law. Reform of institutions and changing cultures requires time, and we continue to push for more progress to be made.

Teams of U.S. and international advisors worked with the HNP to develop comprehensive police reform in Honduras. These objectives include: reforming the HNP organizational structures and procedures, such as internal controls, disciplinary procedures, and a more streamlined process to remove officers from service; advising on the HNP legal framework; establishing and revamping HNP

doctrine on such topics as criminal investigations and police patrols; enhancing police education through support to police academies and reviews of academy curricula; and improving police technological capabilities. The Honduran government has also improved its integration of human rights into its law enforcement and investigative training curricula, though we encourage more expansive and widely-available training in the future.

After his appointment in May 2013, the Honduran government charged Security Minister Arturo Corrales with managing the police reform. We are working with the minister to finalize the police reform plan so that we can move towards its implementation. The Department is especially interested in continuing to help with the planning and implementation of internal affairs policies and procedures tailored to the Honduran National Police. USAID has been working in parallel to strengthen the relationship between the HNP and communities in an effort to facilitate better collaboration in reducing violence. Lasting reforms require good planning, sustained efforts, and time to change cultures and revamp institutions.

The Department recently determined certain leadership and institutional reforms are necessary before the Directorate of Investigation and Evaluation of Police Careers (DIECP in Spanish) can fulfill its functions and therefore suspended U.S. assistance to the DIECP until further notice. The Department strongly encourages continued vetting of police personnel and appropriate disciplinary action for those personnel who fail to pass vetting processes.

Question for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Brownfield
Representative Matt Salmon (#7)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 19, 2013

Question:

Mexico has pledged to increase support and coordination with Central American countries, particularly in regards to border security. How do you envision that support manifesting itself and how will it be coordinated with U.S. assistance?

Answer:

The Mexican government acknowledges the importance of strengthening security cooperation with its southern neighbors. Mexican President Pena Nieto has discussed security with his Central American counterparts. In July, the Mexican government unveiled its southern border strategy, which increases opportunities for U.S.-Mexico cooperation. As Mexico fleshes out and implements its strategy, we will continue leveraging the Merida Initiative and the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) to encourage consultation and cooperation on border security between Mexico and its Central American neighbors.

Mexico's effort to improve security and combat illicit trafficking along the southern border includes the construction of 12 permanent naval bases along its southern river borders. The Mexican National Migration Institute is strengthening immigration verification and controls across points of entry and internal checkpoints, including the southern border. Through the Merida Initiative, we support this effort and provide training and equipment to improve Mexican customs enforcement for its southern border. U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command jointly sponsored workshops for Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize to improve information sharing, increase knowledge of the border environment, and develop protocols to enhance operations against transnational organized crime in the border region.

In regard to regional security cooperation, Mexico supports the Central America Integration System (SICA) regional security strategy. Since 2011, the Group of Friends (GOF) of Central America has coordinated donor assistance to

the SICA security strategy. The United States, Colombia, and Mexico chair the Group of Friends security experts group (SEG), which supports SICA's combating crime pillar. SEG members coordinate assistance for border management, land and maritime interdiction, control of firearms, and crime and violence prevention. The SEG met in 2011 in Washington and in Mexico City in 2012 and is expected to meet in Colombia in 2013. These meetings ensure U.S. assistance is coordinated with the efforts of our regional partners.

Question for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Brownfield
Representative Matt Salmon (#8)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 19, 2013

Question:

Ambassador Brownfield testified that Colombian officials currently train more Central Americans than all U.S. agencies combined. Are the same human rights and other standards that are required of training provided by the U.S. government required of CARSI-funded training provided by the Colombians?

Answer:

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs adheres to requirements of the Leahy law and upholds the same human rights standards and standards of training provided by the U.S. government for our work with Colombia, including Leahy vetting of all Colombian instructors and vetting of training participants in Central America.

Colombia is sharing its expertise in police and law enforcement with a number of other countries, and in most cases does so with its own resources. In fact, the Colombian National Police (CNP) provided training to 14,427 international students between calendar years 2009 and 2012.

However, there are areas where our interests intersect and, where modest support is appropriate, we realize certain economies of effort. In FY 2012, International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funding provided under the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) supported police reform and training activities and did so in part by leveraging Colombian expertise. Often, INCLE funding provided little more than support for logistics, such as plane tickets and per diem.

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