NARCO WARS

An Analysis of the Militarisation of U.S. Counter-Narcotics Policy in Colombia, Mexico and on the U.S. Border

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Submitted for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy

Cardiff School of Law and Politics

2016

Abstract

The U.S. War on Drugs has been underway for several decades. Since it was declared by the Nixon Administration narcotics have been understood as a growing security threat to the American public, their health, economy and society. Illicit drugs have gradually become a securitised issue. From the Nixon Administration onward, the law enforcement and eventually military assets of the United States government were increasingly deployed in an effort to counter this drug threat.

While initially regarded as a minor issue, as the potency and addictive qualities of illicit drugs increased during the 20th Century, so too did the concerns of influential actors from the political and public spheres. Nixon's actions did not represent the high-water mark of U.S. counter-narcotics. There was growing violence on American streets linked to the drug trafficking cartels out of Colombia, especially in Southern Florida where traffickers battled each other for lucrative drug markets. In response to this national security threat, the Reagan Administration – followed by the successor Bush and Clinton Administrations – gradually increased the involvement of the U.S. military in counter-narcotics policy. This occurred both at home in the form of greater militarisation of police forces, and abroad in support of several Latin American countries' security forces. In 2000, drug-related instability in Colombia resulted in the launch of the Plan Colombia initiative, a dedicated package of American financial and security assistance, with counter-narcotics the primary purpose. In 2008, as drug-related violence in Mexico reached epidemic proportions and threatened to spillover across the American border, the U.S. launched the Merida Initiative in an attempt to aid Mexican counter-narcotics efforts.

This thesis uses qualitative research methods to examine the militarisation of U.S. foreign counter-narcotics policy by analysing the case studies of Colombia and Mexico and their American-backed efforts. It also examines domestic policy, by considering the historical development of U.S. counter-narcotics, the progressive militarisation of law enforcement as a consequence of the drug war, and the security situation on the southern border with Mexico. This empirical research is facilitated by the development of a militarisation analytical framework, which builds upon the securitisation framework. Based on the findings of the case studies, the processes that drive militarisation are explored, and the framework itself is further developed and refined. The research possibilities for counter-narcotics policy and future direction for militarisation research are also explored in the Conclusion.

Ultimately, this thesis offers a detailed analysis of militarisation in U.S. foreign and domestic counter-narcotics policy, the processes behind this, and develops a militarisation framework applicable to any security situation, contributing to the overall securitisation debate.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my profound thanks to friends, colleagues and family members who have helped me to keep my head during this three-year process. I would especially like to thank my mother, Pat West, whose moral support during difficult moments and periods of self-doubt proved invaluable to me carrying on.

I am grateful to those who have read my thesis at various stages of its development, or have provided sounding boards for ideas during many hours of conversation, including members of the Global Drug Policy reading group. They have all made valuable and constructive suggestions as to how it could be improved in certain areas, large and small. My thanks goes out to Pinar Kaymaz, David Riley, Kerstin Tomiak, Anne West and Emily Crick.

I would like to thank those who took the time to meet with me and discuss my topic during a research trip to New York City, namely Heather Haase, Professor Austin Long and Dr George Gavrilis of Columbia University, and Marco Reininger.

On the domestic front, I am extremely grateful to Cardiff University and the School of Law and Politics, as well as the School of European Studies prior to that, for funding my research via a scholarship for the full three years. Without that funding it would have been impossible for me to undertake my thesis research in any capacity.

The staff at the University Graduate Centre deserve thanks for suggesting useful courses to attend, and particularly for providing me with my own dedicated desk and computer for the majority of my PhD, which allowed me the space and time required.

I would like to thank the PGR administration staff at the School of Law and Politics, and their predecessors at the School of European Studies, for helping me with all my bureaucratic queries and academic travelling during my time at Cardiff.

My appreciation goes out to the academic staff at the Politics Department, particularly Dr Peri Roberts and Professor Peter Sutch, for taking the time to indulge my various requests for academic conversation and sound-boarding ideas. My secondary supervisor, Dr Steve March, was also beneficial to helping me refocus on what I wanted to do and why during the early stages of the project.

Last, though very far from least, my deepest thanks goes to my primary supervisor, Dr Christian Bueger, whose suggestions, support, guidance and patience have been essential to the completion of my thesis and my growth and development as a researcher.

List of Acronyms

AUC   United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia

BNDD   Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (predecessor of the DEA)

BORTAC   Border Patrol Tactical Unit (American special unit)

CIA   Central Intelligence Agency

CNP   Colombian National Police

DEA   Drug Enforcement Administration

DOD   Department of Defence

DTO   Drug Trafficking Organisation

ELN   National Liberation Army (Colombian guerrilla faction)

FARC   Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

FMF   Foreign Military Financing (funding programme)

GAO   Government Accountability Office (a U.S. government agency)

IDP   Internally Displaced People

INCLE   International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (funding)

NSD   National Security Directive (an executive order by the U.S. president)

ONDCP   Office of National Drug Control Policy (component of the White House)

PPU   Police Paramilitary Unit

PRI   Institutional Revolutionary Party (Mexican political party)

SWAT   Special Weapons and Tactics

UAV   Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

UNODC   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

USAID   United States Agency for International Development

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Chapter 1

Drug Warriors: Militarisation and U.S. Counter-narcotics

1.1 Introduction

The U.S. led War on Drugs has been underway for several decades. In President Richard Nixon's Special Message to Congress on June 17th 1971, he stated that illicit narcotic drugs represented a grave threat to the United States of America by negatively impacting the economy, crime rates, public health and morality (Nixon 1971). By so undermining American society and way of life, narcotics came to be regarded as posing a substantial threat, one in need of being met, challenged and eventually overcome.

In the years since its inception, the War on Drugs has grown to international proportions, with American counter-narcotics policy reaching into countries around the world. This thesis concerns the relations between the United States and two of its regional neighbours, Colombia and Mexico, in the fight against narcotics. It is a story that began domestically in the United States. Public and political attitudes towards illicit drugs gradually hardened as such substances and their damaging impact came to be seen as a threat to America, its people and society. Greater law enforcement measures within the U.S. were eventually complimented and ultimately influenced by military resources and practices. Meanwhile, U.S. counter-narcotics policy in foreign countries – especially in Latin America – progressively involved greater roles for the American military, either directly or in support of partner security forces and militaries in combatting drug trafficking. This thesis focuses on the processes that lay behind this policy. It also looks at the levels of U.S. military involvement in Colombia, Mexico and domestically on the U.S. Southern border. Ultimately, the thesis analyses how the notionally law enforcement and public health issue of illegal drugs became such a potent security concern so as to involve the strongest armed forces in history as part of a solution to the problem.

This process of militarisation cannot be studied, however, without a framework to underpin it. This thesis develops, utilises in the case studies, and then refines a militarisation analytical framework, designed to establish when a security situation has been militarised by identifying the presence of constituent elements. This framework development means that the thesis also contributes to the wider debate on securitisation, the process by which issues become the subject of security concern and eventual action. Without securitisation there can be no militarisation, the latter being an extension of the former, as this thesis demonstrates.

1.2 From Securitisation to Militarisation

The theory and process of securitisation is a major factor in explaining the development of the American attitude towards narcotics as a social and, ultimately, security threat to the U.S. Broadly, securitisation, according to Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde in their seminal text, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, "offers a constructivist operational method for distinguishing the process of securitisation from that of politicisation – for understanding who can securitise what and under what conditions" (1998, p.vii). Part of securitisation theory posits that an issue can gradually progress along a security spectrum, from being non-politicised, to becoming politicised, to eventually achieving a securitised status (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.23-24).

In this thesis, the security issue causing concern would be the social, moral, economic and public safety threats to American society posed by illicit narcotics. Whatever the exact circumstances, the general message often conveyed concerning securitisation is that, if left unchallenged, such security issues would eventually pose an existential threat, and thus it is imperative that action be taken to combat such threats.

Such a progression can be observed in the changing American attitude to narcotics during the 20th Century, which gradually evolved into a security issue as such substances become more addictive and illicit. At the turn of the century it was not unusual for what are today regarded as serious drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, to be freely available in pharmacies and mail-order catalogues, albeit in less potent form compared to modern variations (Feiling 2009, p.17). There was no real 'drug threat', hence it was a non-politicised issue. Yet, as the strength of such substances increased, and physical and mental drug addictions became increasingly common, American society, influenced by religious, political and civic security actors and their campaigns, began to take notice and concern grew around the potentially serious consequences (Epstein 1977; Behr 1998). Thus the drug issue gradually became politicised. Ultimately, it expanded beyond issues of morality and began to intrude into the social and economic realms. Concerns were expressed in the United Nations (1961), and stoked domestically in the U.S. by fears that narcotics were corrupting America's youth, undermining wealth creation through loss of productivity, and lowering quality of life by increasing crime and turning working-class neighbourhoods into ghettos for addicts (Epstein 1977; Maier 1989).

The fear surrounding drug abuse as an activity that encouraged deviant or non-conforming behaviour, in contrast to the 'correct' state of mind (Van Duyne and Levi 2005,

p.3), caused narcotics to be considered an existential threat to the fabric of American society. Increasingly, politicians and law enforcement agencies – the security actors – sought to counter this perceived threat in response to public unease. This unease was itself promoted by the speech acts of public figures, such as President Richard Nixon, continuously pointing out what a threat drugs were (Johnson and Wanta 1996, p.189). Thus a self-reinforcing cycle developed – policy responses and rhetoric designed to counter a threat that itself caused such fear and anxiety, in turn encouraged even more fear, which led to calls for greater responses. This in turn prompted the decisive securitisation of the drug issue in America. Political leaders at local, state and federal levels gradually changed policy. They moved from viewing the issue as predominantly a public health and social/moral problem that could be dealt with through treatment and education, albeit with some enforcement, towards emphasising a far tougher enforcement and interdiction-based solution to the threat.

The principal line of defence against this threat was one of tougher law enforcement (though drug treatment programs were never completely discounted), in an effort to address the problem through social as well as enforcement measures. The tone for the War on Drugs was largely set by the Nixon Administration. In the election of 1968, the Nixon campaign had promised to cut supposedly high-levels of crime across the country, and upon victory needed to boast of a record of delivery (Epstein 1977, p.64). Upon entering office, however, it became apparent that the federal government was limited in what it could do to impact crime statistics, given that law enforcement was reserved for local and state authorities. In an effort to meet its election promise, the Nixon Administration decided to try and tackle the issue from an alternative direction. By taking a greater role in drug enforcement (which was subject to federal support and involvement) overall criminality could in turn be reduced, such was the argument that narcotic addiction promoted criminality to fund users' habits – users whose sense of morality had already been eroded by drugs, it was thought. Domestic policy efforts, including expanded treatment programmes, eventually focused on enforcement-based measures as the flow of drugs into the U.S. showed no signs of abating. International partnerships were launched between the U.S. and Turkey and Mexico, to clamp down on narcotics production and transit in those respective countries (Epstein 1977). Both domestic and international efforts were strengthened by the establishment of the Drug Enforcement Administration. It was a 'super agency' that was created by amalgamating all other federal-level entities involved in drug enforcement. It was show of force, so to speak, intended to demonstrate how serious the drug threat was being taken by the U.S. government (Drug Enforcement Administration Museum 2014).

During the 1970s and early 1980s, as the flow of narcotics from South America and Central and South East Asia continued unabated, the levels of drug-related violence in American cities rose. The Southern Florida region, and Miami in particular, were witness to escalating murder rates as Latin American drug traffickers fought over the financial spoils that came with control of the smuggling routes into the U.S. (Posner 2009). With the security threat caused by drugs moving from mainly moral and socio-economic concerns, into the more immediately threatening realms of street violence and high body counts, increasingly forceful tactics to address the threat were advocated, above ordinary law enforcement. Firstly, the Reagan Administration sought to utilise the resources of the national security establishment, i.e. the military and intelligence agencies, in an effort to erode the narcotics threat posed to the U.S. The 1981 Military Cooperation and Law Enforcement Act – which allowed extensive cooperation between the Pentagon and federal, state and local police departments – provided the legislative foundation for this process to develop over subsequent years (Balko 2006, p.7). An initial effort involved attempts to boost interdiction by allowing limited military involvement in drug interception patrols, especially in the coastal waters off Southern Florida (DEA Museum 2014). Also, as per the 1981 Act provisions, the beginnings of military-grade training, weaponry and equipment provision to domestic police departments and law enforcement agencies were apparent (White House 1986; Ronald Reagan Presidential Library 2014). Later effort was also put into militarily supporting the counter-narcotics efforts of drug-producing countries, such as the availability of U.S. helicopter transport and Special Forces advisors to Bolivian security forces during raids on drug labs under Operation Blast Furnace (Abbott 1988, p.95).

The successor Bush Administration continued attempts at disrupting narcotics trafficking in source countries, predominantly in Latin America, where the cocaine and marijuana consumed in America was largely produced (White House 1989). The approach of utilising military assets in the drug war continued, as this period coincided with the end of the Cold War. The military-intelligence establishment, which had until then been occupied with traditional geopolitical and strategic matters, came to embrace the new challenge of assisting foreign security forces in tackling drug traffickers instead of communist insurgents, and received multi-billion dollar funding increases to this end (Burke 1990). U.S. Special Forces discreetly advised Colombian security forces on counter-narcotics/counter-cartel operations, and used sophisticated surveillance technology to aid the Colombians in the pursuit and killing of drug lord Pablo Escobar (Smith 2006, p.165-168).

Foreign counter-narcotics support – as pursued by Bush – and the use of military support and assets in domestic drug enforcement – as piloted by Reagan – were both boosted during the Clinton Administration. Its policy sought to shift emphasis from drug transit zones towards source countries. It aimed to improve their native counter-narcotics efforts by strengthening their security institutions, and partnered this with social and economic development, cumulatively aiming to reduce the viability and appeal of drug trafficking (White House 1993). Domestically, the 1997 National Defence Authorisation Security Act amplified Reagan's earlier 1981 Act. It created the Law Enforcement Support Program, an agency that organised transfer of excess or unwanted equipment from the military to civilian police forces to assist with counter-narcotics enforcement in their jurisdictions (Balko 2006, p.8). Between January 1997 and December 1999, the Program handled 3.4 million orders of Pentagon equipment from 11,000 police forces across all 50 U.S. states (Balko 2006, p.8). This led to a huge rise in the availability of battlefield weaponry, equipment and vehicles at the disposal of domestic law enforcement. Thus, over three successive presidential administrations did U.S. counter-narcotics policy, both foreign and domestic, take on a more militarised dimension from an initially securitised posture during the Nixon years.

1.3 Aims of the Research

From Nixon through to Clinton, U.S. counter-narcotics policy had seen increasing levels of military involvement. This has been in cooperation with American law enforcement in terms of provision of weaponry, equipment, intelligence and tactical training. The same type of assistance has also been lent to foreign governments, plus substantial financial support to develop the proficiency of their own security forces. This trend has gradually become a significant part of domestic American law enforcement and has been recognised as cause for concern. 2016 presidential candidate and United States Senator, Rand Paul, observed that:

> "Washington has incentivized the militarization of local police precincts by using federal dollars to help municipal governments build what are essentially small armies – where police departments compete to acquire military gear that goes far beyond what most of Americans think of as law enforcement […] The militarization of our law enforcement is due to an unprecedented expansion of government power in this realm." (Paul 2014)

Evan Bernick, of The Heritage Foundation, notes that the War on Drugs helped prompt such an expansion of military assets in the hands of notionally civilian institutions, with less than positive implications:

> "As crime skyrocketed during the mid-1960s and early-1970s and became increasingly associated with drugs, drug crimes became seen as a threat to national security. Democratic and Republican Administrations provided federal block grants to state and local law enforcement to fight drug crime, and state and local officials frequently used those funds to purchase military hardware […] However, when federal money and military hardware is available in bushels, many agencies and departments seek to acquire more than they need […] The resulting over-militarisation has inflicted a great deal of unnecessary harm." (Bernick 2013)

While there may be concern over this trend in the U.S., opinions regarding American military involvement in foreign counter-narcotics operations, either directly or in cooperation with partner countries, are divided. Mackenzie Eaglen, of the American Enterprise Institute, suggests that:

> "America's involvement in Colombia is a positive example of how military forces and aid can secure U.S. interests and improve the lives of local citizens […] American aid and advisers, mostly special operations forces, helped Colombian forces fight FARC rebels and their drug trafficking allies [… but] America's military actions in Latin America and in counter-narcotics operations should be thought of as ancillary and in support of law enforcement." (Eaglen 2012)

On the other hand, Eaglen's peer, Vanda Felbab-Brown, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, takes the completely opposite view, commenting that:

> "The U.S. military should rarely be used to fight crime and drug-smuggling […] Instead, a determined and systematic effort to develop police forces capable of tackling street crime via community policing (as opposed to merely setting up Special Interdiction Unit's to decapitate organized crime) and establishing capable intelligence systems would greatly enhance the effectiveness of American assistance." (Felbab-Brown 2012)

For all their varying viewpoints, what unites these lawmakers, analysts and commentators is the acknowledgment that, in domestic and foreign counter-narcotics enforcement, the U.S. military plays a role, and thus the term 'militarisation' is also frequently employed. That the American military is, to one degree or another, actively involved in the prosecution of the War on Drugs, is not contestable.

However, while there seems to be broad agreement that militarisation exists and is ongoing within counter-narcotics, what does this actually mean, both in theoretical and practical terms? For instance, how has domestic drug enforcement in the U.S. been influenced by the employment of military assets, such as weaponry and equipment, as well as practices, such as training and tactics potentially ill-suited to a civilian environment? Likewise, what levels of direct involvement or material support provided by the U.S. military are observable in American foreign counter-narcotics policy in source and transition countries, such as Colombia and Mexico? These questions and the issues they raise merit exploration of the phenomenon of counter-narcotics militarisation in far greater detail, and this constitutes the principal aim of this thesis.

Just as the securitisation of the narcotics issue has its basis in securitisation theory, so too do deliberations on counter-narcotics militarisation require a framework of analysis. While exploring counter-narcotics militarisation adds to the empirical knowledge of U.S. policy more generally, the development of a militarisation framework contributes to the broader security discourse. There are three primary elements to the militarisation framework, as will be developed in the thesis. These can determine whether a security situation can be said to be militarised or not (the alternatives being a situation remaining essentially securitised, or having escalated into violisation, i.e. warfare).

The first component is *making military*, whereby an emergency measure brought on by securitisation takes on a decidedly militarised quality. This can be through the direct involvement of a military, or the gradual militarisation of a civilian institution, where the type and standard of the equipment and resources used, the training and tactics employed, and the institutional culture espoused, are subject to significant military involvement. The second component is *institutionalisation*, when such militarisation as described above has persisted for so long that it has moved on from being an – in theory, temporary – emergency measure into becoming institutionalised practice. The third and final component is the *criteria of violence*, whereby a security threat prompts militarisation as described in the two previous elements, but where any resulting violence is neither absent nor excessive. If the balance of violence remains like this – i.e. not so minimal that it conforms to most securitised situations,

but not so prevalent that is becomes a war-like, violised situation as suggested by Iver Neumann (1998) – then a security situation would be regarded as being militarised, placed between securitised and violised on the security spectrum. Each of these terms and elements is explored in Chapter 2, but the point of key importance is that, in developing the militarisation framework to use as an analytical tool in the empirical research, it builds upon the foundations laid by securitisation theory, expands the security spectrum and suggests potential avenues for future research.

The thesis as a whole contributes to the literature involving counter-narcotics, U.S. foreign policy and security theory. For counter-narcotics, this thesis thoroughly analyses the process by which American policy, both domestic and foreign, gradually became more militarised as a deliberate response to the threat posed by illicit narcotics. In the field of U.S. foreign policy, the thesis demonstrates how certain national security issues – in this case narcotics – can dominate diplomatic and security relations between states (such as between the U.S. and Colombia, where drug policy and bilateral foreign policy became virtually synonymous). It also demonstrates how the overall influence of the Department of Defence in American foreign policy matters has either matched, or in some cases eclipsed the traditional primary role of the State Department. Finally, in the area of security theory, this thesis has contributed to the securitisation literature by proposing and developing a militarisation analytical framework for the assessment of how militarised a security situation has become. This has provided security scholars with a new analytical tool for conducting future research, as well as adding a distinct militarisation section to the security spectrum, allowing greater flexibility in classifying the status of security situations.

1.4 Thesis Overview

The thesis is comprised of six further chapters. Chapter 2 examines in detail the securitisation framework according to Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde's foundation text, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1998). It also considers supplementary arguments and points made by other scholars in the field, who suggest that context and the cultural disposition of audiences have a role in play in why and how issues become securitised (McDonald 2008; Balzacq 2011), as well as how 'security' can mean different things to different groups depending on local usages (Stritzel 2011). This provides a broad overview of securitisation before going on to systematically analyse its main elements as set out by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, namely the *speech act*; *existential threats* and *referent objects*; *security actors*; and

emergency measures. Following this, the concept of militarisation is explored. This is required to make the case that militarisation, and the associated analytical framework developed in this thesis, advance the securitisation debate. Beginning with the essential definitions of the term and how it has been discussed in academia, this is followed by exploring militarisation in the context of language and imagery. Finally, the possibilities for a broadly applicable militarisation framework are discussed, whereby, in theory, it is possible to militarise any security issue, providing the emergency measures intended to address a security threat remain within the parameters set out in the framework. Having covered securitisation and militarisation, the focus is then placed on their utility in the real-world study of U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia, Mexico and domestically.

Chapter 3 explores the research design involved in analysing the development of U.S. counter-narcotics strategy in Colombia, Mexico and the U.S. Southern Border, and the extent of any related militarisation. The justification for applying predominantly qualitative methodology to the thesis is set out. While statistics and quantitative material played an important role, determining how militarised U.S. counter-narcotics policy has become made it necessary to study the qualities of the entities and processes involved above all. The topic and the research question that direct this study are then considered in greater detail. The former was primarily driven by a gap in the knowledge in terms of the attention paid to militarisation as an extension of securitisation. Additional reasons also included the way militarisation has been addressed in security studies literature so far, its place as an important segment of the security spectrum, and above all how it plays into the historical and current development of U.S. counter-narcotics policy. The research question that emerges from these considerations is to what extent has U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia, Mexico and, to a smaller degree, domestically, become militarised? The reasoning behind the choice of a case study model and the rationale behind the selection of the cases is detailed. Finally, the research methods employed are examined, as are the reasons for utilising them.

Chapter 4 delves into the history of the prohibitive regime towards illicit narcotics in the U.S., beginning in the early 20th Century, where elements of the securitisation process can be clearly observed. Noted throughout are examples of the promotion of securitisation of the drug issue through encouraging fear of the perceived threat presented by narcotics. This trend started with religiously influenced temperance groups, who protested what they regarded as the moral peril posed by alcohol consumption and sexual promiscuity. As the potency of narcotics increased as the 19th Century gave way to the 20th and addiction rates grew, so did the previously de-politicised issue of drugs move up the political agenda. Social

concern increased, encouraged by the temperance groups and political actors seeking votes or attention, or acting out of genuine social and moral concern and being in a position to influence policy. By the mid-point of the century, narcotics had become a firmly politicised issue on the security spectrum. This early perspective serves to establish historical and cultural context for the main sections of the chapter, where this politicised narcotics issue became securitised and eventually militarised. These sections cover the beginning of the drug war under Nixon with regards to institutions created and policies pursued, and then the furthering of counter-narcotics policy into the realm of militarisation under the Reagan, Bush Sr. and Clinton Administrations. The result is a chronicle of relevant institutional and policy developments prior to the 21st Century counter-narcotics initiatives seen in Colombia and Mexico, as well as paving the way for the militarisation of U.S. Southern Border security.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the principal case studies of the thesis, that is U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia and Mexico (with a closely related section on the U.S. Southern Border in the latter) respectively. In an effort to analyse the extent of militarisation involved in these efforts, and thus address the research question, the main elements of the militarisation framework – *making military*, *institutionalisation* and *criteria of violence* – are applied. The first case study focuses on the build-up to Plan Colombia, the principal U.S. counter-narcotics initiative in that country that commenced in 2000. It begins with a historical review of Colombia's long-standing military ties with the U.S., and how this dovetailed into the development, deployment and evolution of Plan Colombia. It was an initiative designed to boost native security forces and stabilise the country in the face of drug cartel criminality, civil insurgency by leftist guerrillas and violence perpetrated by right-wing paramilitaries, the latter two groups also being heavily involved in the drug trade. Limiting the study to the current operational lifetime of Plan Colombia provides a set and focused time frame, and one which allows enough scope to analyse how militarisation developed in the U.S. counter-narcotics policy approach. The second case study focuses on the counter-narcotics relationship between Mexico and the U.S., both before and during the launch of the so-called Merida Initiative. This is a programme of American financial and training support. It is intended to help the Mexican government and – primarily civilian – security forces deal with the violent drug-related conflict that plague areas of Mexico, especially the U.S. border region with its smuggling routes. The study firstly details what counter-narcotics support the U.S. lent to Mexico prior to the Merida Initiative, followed by the origins and development of the Initiative itself and how initial military support quickly gave way to far more significant economic, social and law enforcement development goals. Given its huge importance within

the overall case study, the militarisation of the U.S.-Mexico border from the perspective of American domestic policy is also explored. This section reveals that the employment of military weaponry, equipment and expertise is as prevalent by U.S. domestic authorities as by their Mexican counterparts. This is ironic given that U.S. foreign counter-narcotics policy towards its southern neighbour has been to encourage more civil-security solutions above militarised ones.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis with an overall summation. The research question concerning the extent of militarisation in U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia and Mexico/U.S. border is addressed, as are the potential impacts on overall U.S. foreign counter-narcotics policy. This is not least due to the increased military role arguably allowing an empowered and influential Department of Defence to eclipse the reach and effectiveness of the State Department in conducting U.S. counter-narcotics and foreign policy in general. This chapter also details how the militarisation framework that has been developed contributes to the broader securitisation debate, and suggests potential avenues for future research into militarisation as a broader phenomenon. However, this section also includes substantial post-case study reflexivity, taking on-board lessons learnt from the research process to refine and add several elements, which ultimately further enhances the militarisation framework for use as an analytical tool going forward into the future.

Chapter 2

The Utility of Securitisation and Militarisation
Frameworks in U.S. Counter-Narcotics Policy

2.1 Introduction

Securitisation is one of the most significant concepts in contemporary security analysis. At heart it is a framework for analysis intended to judge what constitutes a security issue, born out of concern that there "are intellectual and political dangers in simply tacking the word *security* onto an ever wider range of issues" (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.1, emphasis in the original). It can be said to represent the fusion of two significant theoretical and conceptual innovations in the realm of security studies, that of Barry Buzan's notion of different sectors of security (military, environmental, etc.) and Ole Wæver's concept of securitisation, both of which would later come together to form the securitisation framework (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2010, p.76).

What constitutes 'security' has gradually broadened and widened, from climate change issues to economic security. This has led to the inclusion of Transnational Organised Crime into the security discourse, given the negative implications it can have on various aspects of global security. In 1994, the World Ministerial Conference on Organised Transnational Crime was convened by the United Nations in Naples. This significantly raised the threat it presented in the international and foreign policy agendas of Western countries, with both the U.S. and EU member states having already begun to forge security agendas concerning this issue (Edwards and Gill 2002, p.8).

One major subset of Transnational Organised Crime is illicit narcotics, be it their production, trafficking and distribution. It is an illegal global industry worth billions of dollars, which can have social, economic and public health consequences, as well as direct security impacts through associated violence, with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimating 183,000 drug-related deaths globally in 2012 (UNODC 2014, p.4). This is in turn met by the counter-narcotics efforts of national governments and international organisations, who also spend billions in an effort to mitigate and thwart the drug trade.

This is an issue that has become securitised, and to an extent militarised over time. In this chapter the securitisation framework that underpins the former is fully explored, along with the concept of militarisation. An analytical framework for the latter is then advanced.

With regards to securitisation, I explore the basic contentions, as well as the supplementary contributions made by other scholars in the field. This provides a necessary overview of the securitisation framework before systematic analysis of its main elements, namely; *the speech act; security actors and their audiences; referent objects and threats to their survival;* and *emergency measures*. Following this section, the concept of militarisation is addressed, beginning with the essential definitions of the term and how it has been discussed in academia, including the language and imagery of militarisation. Finally, the possibilities for a broadly applicable militarisation framework are discussed.

2.2 The Securitisation Framework

In 1995, Ole Wæver set the securitisation debate in motion with his piece, *Securitisation and Desecuritisation*, which offered discussion and reflection on the topic. He defined security as a 'speech act', whereby an actor uttering the word 'security' in relation to an issue would move that issue out of normal politics and into an area where the state could take control in an effort to deal with the issue, thus securitising it (Wæver 1995)[1]. In 1998, Wæver collaborated with two other scholars, Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde, to produce *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. This is the principal text from which this thesis draws the securitisation framework and lays the conceptual foundations upon which the later militarisation framework is built. For Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998), the main question at stake was how to define what is and what is not a security issue given the increasingly broadening understanding of security as a concept, and the widening of the security agenda as a whole (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2010, p.76). The securitisation framework was developed in an attempt to provide an answer. Buzan foreshadowed the issue that he, Wæver and de Wilde would ultimately try and address when he argued that:

> "The hazards of a weakly conceptualised, ambiguously defined, but politically powerful concept like […] security have not gone unnoticed. The concept has come to be dominated in use by the idea of national security, and many authors have criticised the excessively narrow, hollow and militarised interpretation of security to which this approach can easily […] give rise." (Buzan 1983, p.4).

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[1] This principle is an important component of this thesis. American security actors moved the illicit drug issue out of the previous political discourse it had occupied, and progressively securitised it as drugs came to be presented as an existential threat, one that required the security resources of the state to effectively deal with.

Such a traditionalist approach was hardly surprising given that security studies at the time was often equated with strategic studies, which had a fundamental military and defence policy orientation. This was much to Buzan's frustration when he expressed that "security is about much more than military capability and relations and this […] has made Strategic Studies an infertile seedbed for the further growth of the concept" (1983, p.9). Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde in their 1998 framework rejected the traditionalist's case for restricting security to one sector. They argued the case for a wider agenda and proposed that security is a particular type of politics applicable to a wide range of issues (1998, p.vii):

> "Security is a generic term that has a distinct meaning but varies in form. Security means survival in the face of existential threats, but what constitutes an existential threat is not the same across different sectors." (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.27)

Thus their conception of security was broadened beyond conventional strategic studies (while admittedly not excluding traditional military/strategic aspects) with the introduction of five sectors: military, political, economic, environmental and societal. Their logic was that:

> "If we place the survival of collective units and principles – the politics of existential threat – as the defining core of security studies, we have the basis for applying security analysis to a variety of sectors without losing the essential quality of the concept. This is the answer to those who hold that security cannot expand its agenda beyond the traditional military-political one without debasing the concept of security itself." (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.27)

They posit that any public issue can be located on a spectrum. This ranges from non-politicised (neither the state nor public exhibit concern), through politicised (the issue becomes part of public policy requiring government action, or at least commands attention), to securitised (the issue is regarded as a threat beyond the ability of normal political action to remedy and requires emergency measures to tackle) (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.23-24). As Didier Bigo suggests of the process:

> "The modalities of the securitisation process are related to emergency procedures beyond the normal realm of politics. Securitisation may thus be seen […] as a more extreme version of politicisation where the move of securitisation takes democratic

politics beyond the established rules of the game […] It reframes the options for solution by moving the scope towards quick and coercive options, often police and *military* options, and by delegitimising long-term solutions and negotiations. So in many cases what is needed is a 'desecuritisation' in order to come back to normal life and not to 'suspend' life into a time of exception." (2008, p.126, emphasis added)

This is in-keeping with the sentiments of Buzan and his colleagues, who claim that:

"Our belief […] is not "the more security the better." Basically, security should be seen as a negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics […] Because of its prioritising imperative, securitisation […] has tactical attractions […] But desecuritisation is the optimal long-range option, since it means not to have issues phrased as "threats against which we have countermeasures", but to move them out of this threat-defence sequence and into the ordinary public sphere." (1998, p.29)

The placement of an issue on the security spectrum is, in principle, open, but in practice placement varies from state to state depending on indigenous priorities (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.24), often dictated by history, culture, religion, political ideology, and so on. But how does an issue come to be seen as a security threat, and so become subject to transition from politicisation to securitisation on the spectrum? According to Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde:

"Security is about survival. It is when an issue is presented as posing an *existential threat* to a designated *referent object* […] The special nature of security threats justifies the use of *[emergency] measures* to handle them. Invocation of security has been key to legitimising the use of force, but more generally it has opened the way for the state to mobilise, or to take special powers, to handle existential threats." (1998, p.21, emphasis added)

The three terms emphasised above are key elements of securitisation. They are explored below along with other elements – namely the speech act, referent objects and existential threats to their survival, and security actors and emergency measures – in doing so analysing how the process unfolds.

2.2.1 The Speech Act: Securitising Moves and Intersubjectivity

The key to securitisation is in the transference of an issue from the political (desecuritised) to the securitised. A securitising actor (an individual or a group) with sufficient political and social capital may highlight to an audience (the collective to which the securitisation act is directed) an issue deemed to present an existential threat to a referent object of intersubjective importance. To counter this threat requires emergency measures outside of the usual political mechanisms, the acceptance of which completes the securitisation process. Taken as a whole this "process of securitisation is what in language theory is called a speech act. It is not interesting as a sign referring to something more real; it is the utterance itself that is the act. By saying the words, something is done" (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.26).

As Buzan and his colleagues concede, this can mean that "'security' is thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat" (1998, p.24). Self-referential or not, speech acts constitute what the authors deem to be securitising moves, in that a move has been made to securitise an issue but that the process is not completed until the audience accepts the argument presented, whether voluntarily or by coercion (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.25). A securitising move does not have to result in the adoption of an emergency measure, only that:

> "The existential threat has to be argued and just gain enough resonance for a platform to be made from which it is possible to legitimise emergency measures or other steps that would not have been possible had the discourse not taken the form of existential threats, point of no return and necessity. If no signs of such acceptance exist, we can talk only of a securitising move, not of an object actually being securitised." (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.25)

The concepts of speech acts and securitising moves are important to securitisation, in that it is principally about the process and not about considering a threat in objective terms. After all, defining an objective threat would make the supposedly impartial analyst resemble a securitising actor themselves. This is not an incorrect position of course, as Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde rightly point out that security is determined by actors and so is of course subjective. They also admit however that:

"The label *subjective* […] is not fully adequate. Whether an issue is a security issue is not something individuals decide alone. Securitisation is intersubjective and socially constructed. Does a referent object hold general legitimacy as something that *should* survive […]? This quality is not held in subjective or isolated minds; it is a social quality, a part of a discursive, socially constituted, intersubjective realm […] Successful securitisation is not decided by the securitiser but by the audience of the security speech act: Does the audience accept that something is an existential threat to a shared value?"

(Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.31, emphasis in the original)

In other words, security actors alone, even the most powerful individuals, cannot simply deem a security issue to constitute an existential threat by the force of their will or power of degree. To be fully securitised, a security issue has to be similarly recognised and accepted as posing a threat by a wider, intersubjective audience.

Intersubjectivity then is an important characteristic of securitisation. If an objective threat is neither possible due to inherent subjectivity (because what one side may see as a threat may not be viewed as such by another), nor desirable should the analyst wish to retain impartiality, then an intersubjective understanding of a threat by both the securitising actor and audience is the most logical outcome. Didier Bigo also highlights this quality of securitisation by observing that:

"The definition of what is security in relation to what is insecurity is a political struggle between the actors who have the capacity to declare with some authority whose security is important, whose security can be sacrificed, and why their own violence may be read as a form of protection when the violence of others is seen as a form of aggression and sign of insecurity." (2008, p.123)

2.2.2 Securitising Actors and Audiences

One driver of an issue from occupying a politicised status to becoming securitised is the security actor, who Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde describe as "someone, or a group, who performs the security speech act" once a threat to a referent object – i.e. that whose survival needs to be defended – is identified (1998, p.40). They usually come in the form of political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, pressure groups, and so on. Ultimately, they could be deemed to be the upper echelons of a society with the ability to enact policy, or at

least influence its implementation, due to the power, knowledge and influence (i.e. social capital) they possess to speak on behalf of the referent object[2]. Securitising actors nearly always speak security in terms of defending something broader, such as a society, a nation, defining principles, etc. (all three of which, it could be suggested, intertwine in the case of America).

Thierry Balzacq writes that in order to persuade an audience of the need to securitise an issue, the speaker has to tune their language to the audience's experience, so that the speaker's argument resonates appropriately (2005, p.184). It is important that efforts at persuasion also go hand in hand with credibility and maintaining a relationship with an audience, increasing the chance of acceptance. Balzacq notes that:

> "Securitising agents always strive to convince as broad an audience as possible because they need to maintain a social relationship with the target individual group. In common with the desire to transmit information, political officials are responsive to the fact that winning formal support while breaking social bonds can wreck credibility. That explains why, while seeking formal acquiescence, political officials also cloak security arrangements in the semantic repertoire of the national audience in order to win support." (Balzacq 2005, p.185)

With the possibility that an audience could be failed to be persuaded by a speaker lacking a suitably persuasive argument, of dubious credibility, or possessing a poor relationship with the audience, the power relationship between the two is not one-sided (Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka 2015, p.6). An audience must be engaged with and convinced, not simply spoken at.

Balzacq et al. object that placing an emphasis on the role of the leader, and approaching the securitisation process through the speech acts of agents, creates a focus which is far too oriented towards the discursive practices of these professionals (2010, p.2). The focus has logically been on them, since they possess the social capital to make credible securitising moves. Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde do make the point however that the notion

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[2] It is important that a security actor possess suitable credibility in order to make a convincing enough case to an audience. They cannot simply declare an issue to be a threat and expect to be taken seriously if they do not have the social or political capital, and thus traction with an audience, to back it up. Didier Bigo, for example, notes that, "a security statement, even if articulated within a specific discourse, does not in itself have illocutionary power. Delivered by any citizen or by a militant or even a politician in an individual capacity, the securitisation of an object will have no force" (2000, p.195). The earlier example of Rick Santorum is applicable to this point, for though he was not alone in his opinions, his was still a minority position, insufficient to gain support with other audiences beyond the conservative base. This highlights Holger Stritzel's observation (2007, p.363), detailed later in this chapter, about how having multiple potential audiences can raise questions as to which one is relevant, and why, and how this can complicate attempts at securitising an issue.

of 'actor' can be problematic, in the sense of being able to precisely identify the actor responsible for an act because it is possible to disaggregate any collective into subunits and on down to an individual level (1998, p.40). For instance, in the context of this thesis, who can be said to be the actor responsible for securitising drugs? On a broad level it can be said that the American nation is the actor responsible, but this would be reifying an abstract unit. The nation itself can be disaggregated between the temperance movements who lobby against drugs, to the state and federal assemblies that legislate against narcotics (or decriminalise their sale and possession in a growing number of states). There are the executives (governors up to the U.S. President) who rail against the drug threat from their bully pulpits, and the various bureaucracies and agencies responsible for enforcing counter-narcotics laws.

Regarding the matter of the securitisation and militarisation of drugs, authority to pursue those agendas lies with the American federal executive, i.e. the President, as demonstrated by the historical analysis in Chapter 4. Yet it is equally true that presidential policy and opinion is not formed in a vacuum, and is subject to checks and balances by the Congress[3]. It can also be collectively influenced by the aforementioned lobbying groups representing different national, ethnic and even moral interests[4]. The influence brought about by the political and ideological concerns of members of the U.S. Congress can have an impact, as they seek to highlight the concerns or advance the interests of their constituents and themselves (Johnson 2013). Additionally, the (arguably self-interested) recommendations of law enforcement and counter-narcotics agencies – as reflected in their evidence presented to Congressional committees on foreign and national security policy (U.S. Senate 1988) – can play a role in influencing Congress and presidents. At various times during the War on Drugs, presidents, Congress and agencies have either played the role of actor attempting to

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[3] The U.S. Constitution divides power between the three branches of the federal government: the legislative, the executive and the judicial, each intended to check the power of the other. Consequently "the Constitution has been described as an "invitation to struggle" between the President and Congress over the making of foreign policy" (Foreign Policy Association 2016). In the Constitution, the President takes the lead in making foreign policy. Article II, Section 2 bestows responsibility for the negotiation of foreign treaties and ambassadorial appointments (U.S. National Archives 2016), though national security powers have also grown since the framing of the Constitution. However, in accordance with the system of checks and balances, the Senate has the power of 'Advice and Consent' on foreign policy matters, holding the President to account, while the House of Representatives holds the "power of the purse and [an] ability to command the spotlight, plays a role in expressing public sentiments on foreign policy, and thus hold[s] the President to account" (Spring 2016). While the judiciary is duty-bound to assess the constitutionality of congressional or presidential actions, the occupants of the Presidency, Senate and House are politicians. They are thus subject to personal agendas, ambitions and legacy-seeking, as well as inter and intra political party alliances and feuds. They have equal motivations to lead or follow public opinion for political gain, or out of genuine social or national security concern. This mixture of motivations and agendas is demonstrated in the historical study of drug policy development in Chapter 4.
[4] Examples include the analysis by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt of the influence of the Israeli lobby in U.S. Middle East policy (2006), as well as the role of various ethnic interest groups lobbying on U.S. foreign policy, not least the Cuban-American community (Haney and Vanderbush 1999).

convince an audience (whether in the quest for more resources, efforts at political gain, or genuine concerns over the drug threat), or have been audiences themselves, subject to attempts at convincing and influencing them to allocate resources towards certain policies.

It is because of this issue in identifying a primary actor and audience in the securitisation and militarisation of counter-narcotics, that the main concern of this thesis is with analysing the *process* by which this phenomenon came about, not the specifics of which actors drove it and which audiences accepted it.

Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka suggest that a securitising actor is sensitive to two kinds of support from an audience – formal and moral (2015, p.7) – which while linked, should not be conflated. Formal support may be required at an institutional level to allow permission for emergency measures to be implemented, but moral support can condition this formal backing to bestow suitable approval and legitimacy on an act (Balzacq 2005, p.184). If a speech act needs to be audience-focused to solicit such moral, and thus formal, support for securitising an issue, then it should be recognised as being context-dependent, not context-absent, in order to be as widely appealing as possible. As Matt McDonald indicates later in this chapter, such a view is not given enough consideration by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde. They write "By saying the words, something is done" (1998, p.26), implying that it is the speech actor who modifies the context, rather than them being responsive to that context in order to solicit the support they need from the audience.

Holger Stritzel argues that the actor/audience relationship has not been conceptualised as clearly as it should be. In theoretical terms this relationship is straightforward. However, Stritzel points out that in empirical reality it is not always completely clear which audience is most relevant and why. This can have implications when there are several different audiences (such as within the broader public, or the multiple players at U.S. government level), and indeed Stritzel questions when it can be confirmed that an audience has been 'persuaded' (2007, p.363). These are valid points, for real audiences are not abstract masses, especially in democracies where they can vary in their interests, and thus what they regard as worthy of being deemed a security threat. Additionally, as highlighted below, some audiences can also be the securitising actors from whom formal support is required, as well as moral. This can influence the answers to the questions Stritzel raises regarding which audience, why and its relevance. For instance, if emergency measures can only be enacted with approval from a

legislature, then it could be argued that that body is the only relevant audience requiring convincing of an issue's 'securityness', regardless of what the general public may think[5].

Stritzel's concern regarding confirmation that an audience has been persuaded is also interesting, especially in light of the multiple-audiences issue. One could argue that detailed polling could indicate whether enough support has been gained to declare an audience sufficiently 'persuaded'. Failing that, the absence of mass public demonstrations or media outcry against an issue could indicate that, even if an audience/s are not wholly persuaded, they are not dissuaded enough to attempt to deter the securitising actor to any great effect. This action would only really be viable in a democracy tolerant of free-speech however, and rarely in an authoritarian climate. This ties into Stritzel's concern about the idea that a proposal can be intersubjectively held by both actor and audience, which implies that it is voluntary held. Again, this is fine for democracies, but does not address a situation of violent coercion soliciting 'silent' approval, predominantly in dictatorships (Stritzel 2007, p.363).

While Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde concede that security is very much a structured field in which some actors have the power to define security by virtue of their position of power, they argue that this power is never absolute and that no one is guaranteed the ability to make people accept a claim for securitisation or emergency measures, at least on a consistent basis (1998, p.31). Decades of subjugation by Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, leading to eventual audience disillusionment and collapse (Kuran 1991; Stokes 1993), as well as defiance of authority and outright revolutions during the so-called Arab Spring (Gause 2011; Bellin 2012), lend empirical credibility to this claim. On the other hand, simply because an audience lives under an authoritarian regime does not necessarily mean it will disagree with the securitising actor, and indeed may well lend its full support, especially in matters of a moral nature. For instance, an Arab audience may strongly object to a government's curtailing of civic freedoms, but be in moral sync with it on matters relating to alcohol prohibition or sexual morality (Arab Barometer 2013).

Whether in a democratic or authoritarian context, an executive will often appeal in populist terms for moral support against a security threat, but if both actor and audience are in moral sync, then the process of convincing the latter becomes an easier task. It should be noted though that blurred lines can exist between an audience and securitising actor. One obvious example is when the executive tries to convince the legislature to authorise

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[5] As was the case in the build-up to the Iraq War (See Roe 2008). Likewise the Eurozone crisis, where legislative bodies in debt-stricken countries on the periphery have had to agree to the requests of their leaderships to vote through painful emergency financial measures to qualify for international and EU assistance, despite opposition from their general publics.

emergency security measures or permission to make war. The president or prime minister must not only make the case to the general public, but to the members of the legislature who will consider the validity of the securitising move before deciding to act. Those members who opt to participate in the securitising move then transition from being part of the audience into becoming securitising actors themselves (Balzacq 2005, p.184-185).

With regards to functional actors, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde define them as "an actor who significantly influences decisions in the field of security [...] without being the referent object or the actor calling for security on behalf of the referent object" (1998, p.36). Examples include law enforcement, security and military bodies, which have a significant stake when an issue is securitised, as it then becomes their role to counter the threat, and the strategies employed to do so may change based on their influence (Cabinet Office 2014). However, they themselves could not be classed as being existentially threatened, nor taking an active role in seeing an issue securitised (with the exception of a national emergency such as a military invasion). The same could also be said of the media. It has the ability to influence public opinion regarding a security issue, but is – in theory – a neutral observer, again neither directly threatened nor agitating for action (though this latter point is debatable concerning tabloid or overtly ideological media outlets) (Johnson 1994). The later section that addresses the cultural aspects of militarisation, specifically the effects of language and imagery, offers a prime example of how the media in its various forms – from the news to cinema to videogames – can fulfil such a functional actor role.

2.2.3 Referent Objects and their survival

Referent objects are entities seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival. They can be anything from individuals, to societies, to states, to humankind itself. In the context of security, such objects have traditionally been the state, when sovereignty is threatened and, in a more abstract sense, the nation, when identity could be considered to be at stake. The utility of the securitisation framework allows for a broadening beyond traditional strategic areas as Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde intended. However, as mentioned above, they still wished to employ sensible checks on what could and could not be securitised, and to that end size or scale is a crucial variable in determining what constitutes a successful referent object of security (1998, p.36). At the same time, Laustsen and Wæver observe that "survival means something different to different referent objects and an appeal to a defence of something triggers different dynamics dependent on the constitution of the

referent object" (2000, p.706). In other words, an issue may or may not present an actual security or existential threat, but as long as an audience has been convinced that is does, then securitisation can follow, as has been the case with narcotics in the U.S. since the mid-20th Century.

On one end of Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde's size and scale variable, individuals or small groups can rarely establish wider security legitimacy. This, if nothing else, is because they may possess a minority view and do not have the social capital to be listened to, as evidenced by the mainstream dismissal of conspiracy theorists or extremist political parties. On the other end, at a system level, the entirety of humankind can be invoked as a security referent, but this often occurs in an abstract macrosecuritisation environment [6]. Macrosecuritisations are defined by the same basic rules that apply to other securitisations, namely that an existential threat to a reference object is identified and exceptional measures are required to deal with it (Buzan and Wæver 2009, p.257).

However, Buzan and Wæver introduced the concept of macrosecuritisation in order to cover securitisations that speak to referent objects higher than those at a middle level, such as nation states for example, but which also aim to incorporate multiple lower level securitisations (2009, p.237). For instance, the Cold War or 'Global' War on Terror were and are subject to macrosecuritsation above the nation state level, and can be grasped as presenting a threat to humanity in general (Vuori 2010, p.258-259). Even then though, these conflicts can be considered as a series of separate local or regional events with their own unique characteristics, even if they can be linked together by connecting them to the 'narrative' of their parent conflicts[7].

Scott Watson (2011) has attempted to portray the 'human' as a referent object through the prism of viewing humanitarianism as securitisation, in the sense that humanitarian concerns have demonstrably resulted in the implementation of emergency measures, be they

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[6] It is important that the lower-level, local securitisations that are part of any macrosecuritisation are successfully managed, however, to ensure that the linkage between the lower and higher level is stable and maintained. If the links between the two begin to erode, it could contribute to undermining the broader macrosecuritisation itself (Buzan and Wæver 2009, p.258). A good real world example is the gradual decriminalisation of the sale of cannabis in various American states (and therefore a lower level securitisation beneath the middle level of the nation state). It could increasingly cause questions to be asked about the logic of prosecuting the War on Drugs on a macrosecuritisation level, given that one of the supposed security threats it is attempting to address is legally on sale in many localities, even if highly regulated (Dart 2015; Ferner 2015).

[7] For instance the Korean and Vietnam Wars, the black ops of Central American guerrilla wars, and the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan all formed part of the Cold War macrosecuritisation. Yet these were also security challenges that took place at the middle level of nation states, just as Iraq, Afghanistan and drone warfare in Pakistan and Yemen do in the macrosecuritisation of the Global War on Terror. These multiple low-to-middle level securitisations were able to be 'bundled' together, in some cases with a hierarchy imposed, such as with the Cold War where everything was viewed against the ultimate East vs West conflict.

invited civil-military responses, as with the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, or imposed military intervention as with the Balkans or Libya. Human life and dignity is presented as being just as valid a referent object in humanitarian security as is state sovereignty or national identity in standard securitisation (King and Murray 2001; United Nations 2015).

However, even support for human life and dignity can be considered on a case by case basis rather than universally applied[8]. It is often difficult to apply a true system level referent such as 'humanity' other than in the most extreme security situations, such as a lethal pandemic or environmental catastrophe, due to being too subtle a referent to attract mass audience identification. The issue lies with the problem that "the absence of an Other makes it difficult to securitise the total collective Self of humankind" (Buzan and Wæver 2009, p.256). Buzan argues that if humanitarian/human security presents its referent object as the individual or humankind, then it does so by sacrificing analytical purchase on collective actors (state and/or nation) as both the main agents of security provision and as possessors of a claim to survival in their own right, for even individuals take their meaning from the societies in which they operate (Buzan 2004, p.369-370).

This leaves the middle scale of 'limited collectivities' (i.e. states and nations) as the most amenable to securitisation as durable referent objects (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.36). There is a relationship of identity and loyalty between states/nations and the audiences who wish to see these objects survive against a perceived security threat, and are thus willing to accept securitisation. As Roxanna Sjöstedt admits, the "analytical focus [of securitisation] is […] on national security, as the state is still *the* institution holding the power and capabilities necessary to handle all types of threat images" (2013, p.145, emphasis in the original).

Ultimately, a referent object has to be something that the audience of a speech act needs to feel suitably invested in, so that measures employed outside of normal politics to counter the threat are accepted and even embraced. This goes to the heart of the role that

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[8] If it were universally applied, then in theory every dictatorship or human rights-abusing regime on the planet would be subject to imposed emergency measures against it. Scott Watson acknowledges this by claiming that:

> "This ongoing debate between the different approaches to humanitarian relief is not a debate over the referent object of security (human life/dignity), but rather over what developments qualify as sufficiently existentially threatening to warrant emergency action (armed conflict, disease, poverty, large-scale human rights violations), what types of emergency measures are appropriate (relief, development, intervention, nation- and state-building), how these measures should be implemented (independently and neutrally, pragmatically), and by whom (NGOs, states, local communities)" (2011, p.7).

identity and context can play in determining what may constitute a threat to that society. They can influence the intersubjectivity between an audience and a securitising actor, for if they both hold the referent object in high regard, then even though minor differences may exist, they will still agree on securitisation and any subsequent course of action.

An issue becomes a candidate for securitisation once it has emerged as an existential threat requiring emergency action or special measures, and there has been acceptance of that designation by a significant audience (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.27). According to Buzan and his colleagues, however, existential threats can only be understood in relation to the particular character of the referent object in question, for the "essential quality of existence will vary greatly across different sectors and levels of analysis; therefore, so will the nature of existential threats" (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.21). In other words, the level of a threat is in the eye of the beholder, and this can help determine whether a referent object, such as American society (the audience being one and the same as the referent object in this instance), can be convinced that an issue – e.g. addictive, illicit narcotics – poses an existential threat. The extent of that threat may be contestable, however the 'particular character of the referent object in question' – i.e. American society, the audience who make it up, and the securitising actors who represent it – may feel that drugs do indeed present such a threat. They could do enough social harm that, left unchecked, the conceptual idea of American society could be irreparably eroded to the extent that, for all intents and purposes, it will have ceased to exist in the form that the audience and actors originally felt to be worth saving.

2.2.4 Emergency Measures

Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde state that once a securitising actor has gained approval from an audience to protect a referent object from an existential threat, they "thereby generate endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind" (1998, p.5). This entails an issue being removed "from the normal haggling of politics [… to] be dealt with decisively by top leaders" outside the normal bounds of political procedure (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.29). In the opinion of Maria Trombetta, "security implies a 'decisionist' attitude which emphasizes the importance of reactive, emergency measures. This set of practices is not necessarily codified nor can it be identified by specific rules. Instead it is more a form of rationality, a way of framing and dealing with an issue" (2009, p.558). Even when an issue is securitised, Rita Abrahamsen argues that there exists almost a

'mini-spectrum' in terms of response to a threat[9]. It ranges from the more mundane management of risk, to launching straight into emergency measures, for "security issues can be seen to move along a continuum from normalcy to worrisome/troublesome to risk and to existential threat – and conversely, from threat to risk and back to normalcy" (2005, p.59).

This perspective bears some relation to the contention of Paul Roe that securitisation can itself be broken down into two distinct stages, namely the stage of identification and the stage of mobilisation (2008, p.616). In the former, a given audience may come to an intersubjective agreement with the securitising actor with regards to identifying the 'securityness' of an issue, and therefore rhetorical securitisation is reached. In the latter stage, agreement must be reached regarding the nature of emergency measures to be mobilised, thereby achieving active securitisation. Roe contends, however, that acceptance of the 'securityness' of an issue does not automatically imply acceptance of the proposed emergency measures to deal with that situation. His main example is the public acceptance that Iraq's supposed WMDs represented a threat, but this was contrasted with the significant opposition to the proposed solution of militarily-imposed regime change.

Roe accepts that such a situation falls between two stools, since it is not an example of failed securitisation, as the audience did not reject the 'securityness' of the issue, but nor can it be regarded as a successful securitisation, as the proposed means to deal with the issue were not also intersubjectively established (2008, p.616). However, this is still compatible with Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde's conceptualisation of securitisation, which requires the acceptance of an issue's 'securityness', but does not, however, also require the actual employment of 'extraordinaryness', i.e. that emergency measures are thereby taken (Roe 2008, p.622; Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, p.25).

The distinction between rhetorical and active securitisation implies that the actual employment of emergency measures – and their type – can go a long way in determining the ultimate nature of a security issue. This is to say that a security issue can be intersubjectively accepted and thus rhetorically securitised, but that the nature of the emergency measures employed can heavily influence how that issue is then subsequently perceived. For example, the emergency measures employed against the 'threat' of alcohol were legislative and law-enforcement-based and led to Prohibition in the U.S. in 1919. By comparison the coercive, militarised emergency measures gradually employed against illicit narcotics constitute not just a struggle, nor a prohibition, but a *war* on drugs, suitably complimenting the kind of

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[9] This is to say a spectrum in and of itself, located within the confines of the securitisation section of the much wider security spectrum.

rhetoric employed by securitising actors in their speech acts on this issue. As Nicole Jackson argues, the definition of securitisation by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde and similarly minded colleagues:

"Does not include the impact of rhetoric on policy output […] Once an issue is rhetorically adopted, it must affect the development of policy for it to be effective in practice. Otherwise, the activities have only been rhetorically securitised with no practical result." (2006, p.313)

If one declares a 'war' on a threat, rhetorically or otherwise, it should not be surprising if the policy outcomes (i.e. the emergency measures employed) ultimately end up complimenting a militarised policy approach.

While rhetoric is important though, it can also be suggested that the scale of the referent object (as discussed above) also plays a role in determining audience acceptance of emergency measures. For example, based on Roe's argument, climate change has become a rhetorically securitised issue, in that there is general acceptance that – regardless of cause – it presents a security issue to 'humankind', precipitating national and international debate and legislation (Trombetta 2009, p.598). Yet the referent object of humanity is too abstract to achieve suitable identification, which has hindered national dedication to, or even initial application of, policies designed to attempt to mitigate climate change. For example, residents of the Maldives may be existentially threatened by rising sea levels and British homeowners may be concerned about that. However, the priority of the latter will be the high cost of energy due to climate change legislation, i.e. their own economic security, not the environmental security of people on the other side of the planet whom they have never met. As Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde point out, "different states and nations have different thresholds for defining a threat" (1998, p.30).

This evidences that limited scale collectivities suggest themselves as the dominant referent object, and that the type of emergency measures employed will be determined by what each unit deems to be the most effective method of dealing with a security issue. States/nations will prioritise their own security issues above the system level, as highlighted above in an environmental context. They will also put their interests above those of the individual, as demonstrated by increased data, communications and personal surveillance, of heightened asylum, immigration and border controls, and reframing the balance between

security, individual liberty and human rights in the age of the War on Terror (see Tsoukala 2006; Coaffee and Wood 2006; Salter and Piché 2011).

It therefore stands to reason that if a referent object under threat is a state or society/nation – which is often the case based on the middle scale model of limited collectivities – then the instruments designed to protect them on that level – i.e. law enforcement, intelligence agencies and a military – would be mobilised to counter the perceived existential threat. The involvement of police forces is primarily domestic, while other law-enforcement and intelligence agencies can exist in either the domestic or foreign theatres, or both, depending on the nature of the agency (and so prevalent are such agencies in the American system it is little wonder that so many cross domestic and foreign operating lines). The military, however, is – in theory – the organisation with a solely foreign remit, designed to deal with threats posed outside a state's borders. True, military personnel can be deployed domestically to assist in disaster relief or large scale social unrest, but these are the extreme examples that prove the rule. This is to say that, domestically, the military involves itself in exceptional rather than mundane security matters, the risk management of which fall under the responsibility of civilian law enforcement and appropriate intelligence agencies.

2.3 Advancing the securitisation debate

This thesis does not intend to identify gaps in securitisation discourse, but to suggest that two significant areas have not been awarded the levels of attention they merit. The first is how context, which is to say historical and cultural considerations, can determine how and whether a society comes to view a certain issue as a security threat in the first place and, if so, what scale of response this may demand to confront. For instance, Matt McDonald points out that, in the securitisation framework:

> "The context of the act is defined narrowly, with the focus on the moment of intervention only. The potential for security to be constructed over time through a range of incremental processes and representations is not addressed, and the question of why particular representations resonate with relevant constituencies is under-theorized." (2008, p.564)

Additionally, Thierry Balzacq has noted the importance of considering context:

> "The sociological view argues […] that securitisation is better understood as a strategic (pragmatic) process that occurs within, and as part of, a configuration of circumstances, including *the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience*, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction." (2011, p.1-2, emphasis added)

Audience acceptance of moves by securitising actors is a necessary requirement for an issue to be securitised. Context, based on social identity informed by historical and cultural experience, can provide the basis for why audiences may be willing to be convinced that a certain issue represents a threat, and indeed why securitising actors could be prompted to advance their claims in the first place, out of populist or genuine motives. Roxanna Sjöstedt, for instance, posits that "ideas and identity are employed as explanatory factors for the concept of a securitising move" (2013, p.146). Additionally, "identity can be the source of a threat image, affecting or even constructing the idea [… and] can also serve as a catalyst or a gate-keeper in the idea diffusion process" (Sjöstedt 2013, p.148-149).

However, context in securitisation can be regarded as problematic because it is not fixed and always changes[10]. This is empirically demonstrated by the growth over time in negative attitudes towards narcotics in Western society, from easily buying cocaine across the pharmacy counter at the turn of the $19^{th}/20^{th}$ century, to being imprisoned for selling it today. Yet this is a *specific* example of a changing context that does not necessarily invalidate the premise that *fundamental* societal attitudes can remain fixed, or at least only minimally changed. One of the reasons that narcotics became the subject of ire in the United States was because the nation's culture, morals, sense of identity, etc. has remained largely fixed in macro rather than micro terms. In other words, tolerance or intolerance to certain specific issues rise and fall, but the big picture – the overall context – remains the same. That is why, for example, attachment to the concept of family and marriage has seen same-sex unions increasingly accepted as compatible with those values, rather than counter to them[11] (Pew

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[10] Rita Taureck highlights Jacques Derrida's contribution to this thinking in her 2006 CEEISA convention presentation 'Securitisation – The Story So Far'. According to Derrida, fixed context is impossible, because every utterance and every context is subject to a diffusion of meaning, a process in which the original context changes. Thus context can never be fixed, but is always in flux.

[11] In this instance moral opposition was framed in terms of societal threat, as Rick Santorum, a member of the U.S. Senate and presidential candidate at the time, and thus a potentially influential securitising actor, trumpeted his belief that gay marriage "threatens my marriage. It threatens all marriages. It threatens the traditional values of this country." See (Sokolove 2005).

Research 2013). Thus attitudes to a specific issue/s change over time, but the key elements of a society's identity are constant. Therefore, more relevantly to this thesis, it can be argued that where once the perceived 'threats' against American society lay in sexual promiscuity or alcohol[12], these former taboos have been replaced as targets of moral concern by the threat of illicit narcotics.

This theme is explored further in Chapter 4, with a historical analysis of the development of the narcotics threat highlighting the overlooked importance of the role of history and cultural identity in securitisation. For instance, Wæver makes the point that "the securitisation approach points to the inherently political nature of any designation of security issues and thus it puts an ethical question at the feet of analysts, decision-makers and activists alike: why do you call this a security issue?" (2011, p.468). Culture and identity, as encouraged by the movements of history, can and should enter the securitisation debate as a potential answer to this question of why. Identity developed over decades, even centuries, and tied to historical experience can play a role in determining the level of audience acceptance of the transition from a politicised issue into a securitised one.

The second area subject to under-appreciation is that militarisation is not just an emergency measure brought about by securitisation, but is significant enough to warrant a place on the security spectrum in its own right. As this thesis demonstrates, securitisation of an issue needs to occur before it can be militarised, and so the two frameworks are indeed linked, with the former gradually morphing into the latter under the right circumstances, i.e. the verifiable presence of the elements of the militarisation framework. Rather than a politicised issue becoming securitised, and arguably having nowhere else to go except to become de-securitised again, it can continue along the security spectrum into becoming a militarised issue. Such a process helps us explain the gradual militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy on its southern border and in Colombia and Mexico.

A great deal of literature, from analysis of the discourse in environmental security and climate change (Trombetta 2009), to discussion about the securitisation of the Ebola epidemic (Huang 2014), still refer to the involvement of a military response as a form of emergency measure. As Iver Neumann (1998) has demonstrated with his violisation proposal (where he distinguishes between the securitised *spoken* declaration of war, and the *actual*

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[12] Possessing an underlying social bedrock of strong Christian values - on a fundamentalist level in many cases - it is not surprising that the U.S. proved to be such a fertile environment for the growth of various movements in the later 19th Century. Whether out of a sense of righteousness or social conscience, groups such as the Anti-Saloon League and the Women's Christian Temperance Union substantially influenced the political process and policy thinking of the American government. See (Behr 1998, p.45-47 & 55-56).

large-scale violent prosecution of it as being separate on the spectrum) what we may have assumed would fall under the broad umbrella of securitisation (at least if it was to lead to a war-like situation) can merit a legitimate section of its own on the security spectrum, i.e. 'violised'. I would contend that militarisation is a contender for the same recognition. Yes, it can be considered one of the emergency measures available, but when introduced it can also be regarded as representing a security status of its own.

Social identity and the related context behind it can play a role in a security issue becoming militarised, just as it does in seeing that issue become securitised in the first place. The militarisation of language and imagery in culture can both reflect and influence social identity, and thus a society (i.e. audience) historically and/or culturally comfortable with militarised attitudes may more readily accept militarised policy options and/or a militarised environment. Domestic examples of this phenomenon in the U.S., such as the militarisation of policing and civilian law enforcement agencies, is an important area to consider in order to demonstrate that the increased militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics efforts home and abroad have not simply materialised from nowhere. It has been an observable – and accepted – trend in American military-intelligence-law enforcement circles domestically since the early-1980s. Ultimately, if one of the premises of securitisation is that a security threat must be dealt with by emergency measures, or at least measures that fall outside of normal politics, then there is a case to be made that militarisation can count among such measures. This can be underlined by a culture and social identity – which is to say context – supportive of, or at least conductive to, militarisation.

It is a curious observation that Americans have taken a far more aggressive prohibitionist stance towards illicit drugs and immoral behaviour of various kinds at times in their history compared to other cultures, who either enact their own prohibitions by largely following America's lead, or can just as easily take a more laissez faire approach to certain issues. If Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde are correct that existential threats can only be understood in relation to the particular character of the referent object in question, then it is logical that the American historical experience and cultural development has shaped the nation's character. This has made securitisation of the drug issue more likely and, with that context in mind, that militarisation of the issue as an emergency measure response would be more likely than not.

The above exploration of securitisation has detailed how an issue can be seen as a security threat by being presented as such by security actors with sufficient influence and credibility to successfully convince an audience of the immediacy and severity of that threat. If successful, then a security issue transitions from being something that raises a politicised concern to becoming securitised by the employment of emergency measures. These measures attempt to remedy the security issue and relieve the existential threat posed to the survival of a referent object, a threat that has so exercised the concern of security actors and audience alike. Emergency measures could extend from introducing heavy numbers of police for a limited time, to general curfews, all the way to the imposition of martial law. All technically fall outside the realm of 'normal politics', but do so to varying degrees of severity. This relates to Rita Abrahamsen's concept of a mini-spectrum of responses (2005, p.59), with gradual escalation until the situation crosses a certain point and transitions from a securitised-level of emergency response (i.e. all measures that do not feature military involvement), to a militarised state of affairs (where a military element has been introduced to one degree or another). It is the nature of emergency measures that is the vital bridge between securitisation and militarisation of a security situation. Yet it is not sufficient to simply declare a situation has been militarised. A set of conditions must be met for this to be legitimate. Therefore development of an analytical framework is the next logical step in identifying and exploring the necessary elements that comprise such a framework. The next section examines militarisation as a potential emergency measure, its location on the broader security spectrum, and the elements of the militarisation framework.

2.4 The Militarisation Framework

This section explores the academic concept of militarisation, how it has become part of everyday language and culture to varying extents, and proposes a basic militarisation framework designed to be applicable to any security issue.

The militarisation of a securitised issue can be classed as an emergency measure, but is located towards the further end of the 'severity' scale. Militarisation warrants placement on the security spectrum, for just as securitisation can be seen by the likes of Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde as an extreme form of politicisation, so too can militarisation be viewed as an extreme form of securitisation. Iver Neumann makes a similar proposal when he advances the concept of 'violisation'. Similar to Paul Roe's distinction between identification/rhetorical securitisation and mobilisation/active securitisation, Neumann suggests that:

"The waging of war […] adds something more to the speech act of declaring war, and the crucial thing added is the use of force – that is, a violisation of politics. Waging war is by definition not only a question of speech acts, but also of actions. A crucial role is played by the action of killing, and more generally, by acts of violence." (1998)

Neumann makes his argument in the context of the difference between declaring and actually making war (or, in the absence of official declarations of war, for cases where large-scale violence is evident). He advocates reserving 'securitisation' for the speech acts which perform the tasks that Buzan and his colleagues have defined it as performing, and consequently suggests adding the category of 'violised' to the following spectrum (Neumann 1998):

Non-Politicised – Politicised – Securitised – Violised

Neumann concedes that adding a violence-specific category at the end of the continuum highlights the war and force aspects of security studies. However, this does not unbalance Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde's conceptualisation, for they did not seek to expunge these traditional interests of strategic studies, just to make them no longer the sole priority. Simply because Neumann highlights war and force does not mean that they become dominant again. Any event or security situation that Neumann would justify as being violised would likely involve militarisation to some extent. However, as argued below, the conceptualisation of the latter should not automatically be considered equal to Neumann's violisation – it is possible to have a militarised security situation without automatically involving large scale violence.

Before making that argument however, what is meant conceptually by 'militarisation'? Firstly, let us consider what the word 'military' itself actually means, for its linguistic use is important to consider due to the subtle but important differences between words that incorporate it.

Military is most often associated with its use as a noun, identifying the armed services of a state and those personnel or institutions associated with them. As an adjective though, its use broadly relates to warfare or defence, as distinct from normal civilian activity (Oxford English Dictionary 2013). Thus, use of the phrase 'making military' does not seem so grammatically strange when we consider that it is intended to describe an action that contextually relates to the involvement of warfare or defence in some capacity. If we consider the family of words associated with 'military', many commonalities can be found:

Militarisation: The action of making military in character or style; *spec.* transformation to military methods or status, esp. by the provision or expansion of military forces and other resources. (Oxford English Dictionary 2013)

Militarism: Military attitudes or ideals, esp. the belief or policy that a country should maintain a strong military capability and be prepared to use it aggressively to defend or promote national interests. Also: a political condition characterized by the predominance of the military in government or administration or a reliance on military force in political or diplomatic matters. (Oxford English Dictionary 2013)

Militarise: To make military in character or style; to convert to military methods. Also: to equip with military resources or training. (Oxford English Dictionary 2013)

Given how interrelated each term is, it should not be surprising that they can be conflated with each other to virtually all take on the same meaning when used in everyday language. Context, as has been implied, is important in such matters however, no more so than the use of language in describing such a process or phenomenon as militarisation. It is possible to take elements from each of these definitions and apply them to the way that this thesis employs the term. For instance, "transformation to military methods or status, esp. by the provision or expansion of military forces and other resources" can apply to a situation where there is a prevalence of military equipment and resources, with consequent impact on the tactics and approaches of the groups or institutions possessing those assets. "Military attitudes or ideals", "to make military in character or style", and "to equip with military resources or training" can be applied in circumstances where essentially civilian bodies, who have traditionally relied on minimal use of violence, are observed implementing a more violent posture and procedure, supported by the necessary resources to enable such moves towards a military mind-set.

In short, it is possible to selectively take the pieces one requires from these linguistic definitions and meld them into an acceptable understanding of militarisation that best suits this thesis's intentions. In the sense of its place in security studies, when 'militarisation' is referred to, it is done so in reference to that section of the security spectrum between the 'securitisation' of Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, and the 'violisation' of Iver Neumann. On a functional level, it is also a term used in reference to the role that the U.S. military plays in foreign drug enforcement, as well as the militarisation of native counter-narcotics strategy in Colombia and, to a lesser extent, Mexico and the U.S. border. It is also used in reference to

the militarisation of the law enforcement and intelligence agencies involved in prosecuting the War on Drugs, such as the increased paramilitary activities of American police forces (Balko 2006), the U.S. Border Patrol's own special forces units (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2014a), and the growth of paramilitary units in the CIA[13], along with its own drone warfare programme (Miller 2012),

However, this is still not conceptually satisfactory, for questions still remain as to how we distinguish between militarisation and non-militarisation in order to determine whether or not a security situation merits the term. In much of the literature, militarisation is used primarily in the context of resource allocation to military infrastructure or endeavours, often partnered with militaristic outlooks by societies and/or their elites. Chalmers Johnson criticises the phenomenal growth of U.S. military assets and bases around the world, coupled with institutional secrecy and the militaristic ideology of some leaders determined to seem strong and decisive, that all together generates an irreversible militarism (2004, pp.11-12 & 60-65). More broadly, Van Tuyll views the matter through the prism of militarism as a term, under which militarisation alludes to the quantity and proportion of resources devoted to military affairs, though he also makes reference to militaristic 'cultural behaviour' of individuals, groups and organisations and to 'national policy' of treaties and armed interventions (1994, p.519). Similarly, Ross found that militarisation could be viewed in the narrow political and internalised sense, meaning the rise of repressive regimes of a militaristic nature, or of the assumption of power by a military itself (1987, p.562). Alternatively, a broader strategic interpretation of militarisation is as a steady growth of the military potential of a state, usually accompanied by an increasing role for military institutions in the economic, social and political spheres of national affairs, as well as involvement in international affairs (Ross 1987, p.562). Also, a similarly strategic, albeit more diplomatic/foreign policy focused interpretation, sees militarisation as "including international justification for war, alliances, military trade and aid, and militance; dominance of militaristic elites and militaristic behaviour in domestic government, economy, society and culture" (Beer 1981, quoted in Ross 1987, p.562).

The strategic and foreign policy interpretations of militarisation are more applicable to this thesis, and there are clear means of assessing them. The growth of military expenditure, manpower and technological sophistication can be quantified and analysed and thus can indicate the level of militarisation in a strategic and military-capability context.

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[13] The CIA is perfectly open about this, as demonstrated by an open job advertisement for a Paramilitary Operations Officer. See (Central Intelligence Agency 2013)

Likewise, analysis of policy approaches, alliances and levels of military aid and support can determine the extent of militarisation at a foreign policy level. This is especially if such material and diplomatic support sustains military elites in partner states, or supports the growth in size, sophistication and professionalism of their security forces in pursing security objectives considered important to the donor and receiver states.

Considering militarisation in terms of the political, the strategic and the diplomatic helps compartmentalise it into these convenient descriptive 'boxes'. Yet, like the application of securitisation, the meaning behind militarisation is entirely dependent on the context of its use in relation to an issue, i.e. it is intersubjective. There is validity to be found in the strategic interpretation, for as has been observed since 1981, the U.S. military has operated on annually increasing defence budgets, resulting in increased size, sophistication and strategic reach due to the strategic requirements of the Cold War and subsequent War on Terror (SIPRI 2013). Such a vast military and security infrastructure cannot help but be involved in America's economic, social and political spheres, and though concerns over the extent of this penetration are often raised, constitutional checks and balances minimise fears of any possible extreme outcomes. The diplomatic interpretation also has validity based on the clear historical precedent and openly declared foreign-policy of lending American security aid to Latin American countries within an informal regional alliance under the international justification of counter-narcotics (USAID 2013). In-keeping with that same interpretation, however, it cannot be denied that past support has inadvertently (or deliberately, depending on Cold War priorities of the time) encouraged militancy and dominance of militaristic elites and militaristic behaviour in certain partner countries. However, standards are far more stringent these days in order to receive American aid and Latin America has essentially democratised to varying degrees of solidity.

2.4.1 Cultural Militarisation

Amid these geo-strategic interpretations, the cultural interpretation of militarisation via language and imagery should not be discounted. Militarised terms have crept into everyday language, despite their predominantly metaphorical use. The phrase 'go to war' can be used in the conventional sense of referring to countries engaging in conflict, but can just as easily feature in hyperbolic sports commentary between rival teams, especially in masculine and combative contact sports, where other phrases such as 'blitzing', 'sudden death' and 'destroying the opposition' are also employed among many others (Thorne 2006, p.2 & 12).

Such language can amplify an 'Us and Them' narrative, tapping into fear of, or hostility toward, 'the other' that is different from society or poses a threat to it. This may seem comparatively harmless in competitive sports. However, if we assign the same principle to actual conflicts or security issues, then the employment of such language can blur the lines between metaphorical and descriptive use, with the possibility that it can impact social attitudes and behaviour. Murray Edelman asserts that "language forms are a critical element in the shaping of beliefs; they do so in ways we do not consciously experience and so are nonobvious" and that the political significance of metaphor is as an "instrument for shaping political support and opposition and the premises upon which decisions are made" (Edelman 1971 p.67-68, quoted in Chilton 1996, p.194).

Additional analysis of metaphor comes from Carol Cohn (1987). Observing how defence specialists and military personnel would often use benign sounding terms and nicknames to describe nuclear warfare, atomic bombs and delivery missiles, she suggests that "these words serve to domesticate, to tame the wild and uncontrolled forces of nuclear destruction. The metaphors minimise; they are a way to make phenomena that are beyond what the mind can encompass smaller and safer" (Cohn 1987, p.689). If such metaphors and terminology can be used to tone down overt and threatening militaristic reality, then it would be logical to suggest that the opposite can also apply. Use of militaristic metaphors in everyday language can act to normalise the employment of coercive and potentially violent methods against security threats in place of prior peaceful civilian procedure (in other words generating support, or at least tacit approval, to take a far tougher line in place of a perceived 'soft' approach).

Deborah Tannen suggests that "military metaphors train us to think about – and see – everything in terms of fighting, conflict, and war. This perspective then limits our imaginations when we consider what we can do about situations we would like to understand or change" (Tannen 2008, quoted in Thorne 2006, p.13). Given that U.S. counter-narcotics policymakers and those bodies charged with implementing those policies are either part of, or influenced by, political-military institutions and their inherent militarised culture, it is hardly surprising that the militarised option has gained traction in the drug war, an example of a situation they 'would like to understand or change'.

Alongside language, imagery can be just as effective in promoting the securitisation and militarisation of an issue. Michael Williams raises the interesting question as to whether a securitisation framework so closely tied to language (i.e. the speech act) for its explanatory and ethical position is capable of addressing the dynamics of security "in a world where

political communication is increasingly bound with images and in which televisual communication is an essential element of communicative action" (2003, p.524). A picture is worth a thousand words, and the right imagery need not necessarily be accompanied by language to facilitate securitisation (the destruction of the World Trade Centre announcing the War on Terror in the loudest way possible), or indeed to prompt debate as to whether an issue should be demilitarised or desecuritised (the iconic image of the napalm-burned girl in Vietnam raising additional questions as to the wisdom of that war).

Further to this, Lene Hansen posits that visuals can challenge the traditional discourse of the Self and the threatening Other in two respects. Firstly, a visual's potential for circulation and ambiguity make possible the range of 'actors' that may constitute themselves capable of speaking security to an equally expanded range of 'audiences' (2011, p.58-59). Secondly, that this produces an accelerated level of 'security interaction' where visual representations that originate in one locale become the subject of securitisations in another (Hansen 2011, p.58-59). Again, the image of the burned Vietnamese child – indeed visual coverage of that conflict in general – provides a good example of Hansen's points, in that wider circulation of horrific imagery originating in a difficult locale prompted security interactions between a wider range of actors and audiences. That example applies to the beginnings of the de-escalation of a securitised issue, but certain imagery can encourage the reverse, where images of famine, genocide or attacks on fellow nationals, for example, can precipitate demands that those situations be securitised, or even militarised should a case exist for deploying military assets for humanitarian, interventionist or retaliatory purposes[14]. Both aspects of security imagery are evident in the drug war, where on one side images of gang violence, dilapidated estates and hopeless addicts solicit calls that 'something must be done'. On the other side however, imagery of herbicide-damaged environments, mass incarcerations and innocents caught in the crossfire between traffickers and authorities, may prompt the question 'we are doing something, but is it the right thing?'

The nature of popular culture, where language and imagery can combine to dramatic effect, has an important role in establishing the necessary conditions for audience acceptance of the employment of military methods and resources as emergency measures in countering security threats. This could be especially argued when the institutionalisation of such emergency measures – due to their presence for a prolonged period of time – means that, in reality, there is no longer a need to seek support from an audience for adoption of those

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[14] Hansen explores such 'strategies of depiction' further on p.59 of her article.

methods. Yet the desire to at least maintain audience permission, if not outright support, can mean efforts are made to 'co-opt' them, to make an audience feel a part of something greater. In this context there is, according to Jochen and Linda Schulte-Sasse:

> "An interest in engineering consent not so much through public debates as through the staging of events that permit the state's constituents to experience themselves as an imaginary community or unified body [… via recourse to] ahistorical images of unity and superiority, such as the flag, the war hero as point of identification, or TV images of technological, and thus national, superiority, as in shots of "smart bombs" and other forms of "surgical strike." Media images become the postmodern heirs to narratively constructed utopias." (1991, p.69-70)

World War II propaganda films and newsreels, for example, had an appropriate time and purpose, with opinion polling of the day finding that Allied troops who watched certain newsreels were more aggressively pro-war than those who had not seen them (Bourke 1999, p.24-25).

In general, militarisation themes woven through imagery and language can have a cultural impact and perhaps make acceptance of militarised policy solutions to security threats seem more attractive or natural courses of action. This trend in relation to American popular culture specifically, and the subsequent gradual militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy in the later 20th Century, is further explored in Chapter 4.

2.4.2 The primary elements of the militarisation framework

If the securitisation framework seeks to help determine what is and what is not a security issue, then the task of the militarisation framework is to determine whether a recognised security situation has or has not become subject to militarisation. The notions of militarisation, as detailed above, along with the securitisation framework, translate into what can be considered as this militarisation framework. It can be applied to the case studies of this thesis and consists of the following elements:

Making Military

The first key element of the militarisation framework is when an emergency measure brought on by securitisation takes on a decidedly militarised quality. This can be through the direct involvement of a military itself, or the gradual militarisation of what officially is a civilian

body, such as a police force or similar law-enforcement agency, in terms of the type and standard of the equipment and resources at its disposal, the tactics it employs in its operations, and the institutional culture it espouses. This generally means that more forceful or coercive attitudes emerge over time instead of prior restraint, and an emphasis on keeping the peace and pursuing a civilian strategy is eclipsed by seeing crime, or a specific threat, as something to be 'fought against' or have a figurative 'war' declared upon it. It is this heightened 'militarised quality' that means a security situation has become subject to making military. Heightened security measures exist as options alongside military involvement, and are markedly devoid of the latter, such as far greater electronic surveillance and monitoring than would normally be the case. More intensive and technologically sophisticated security scanning at airports and public buildings might feature, as would greater numbers of visibly deployed police officers, armoured vehicles, and so on. Yet these measures still fall within the general remit of a securitised situation, even if they could be still regarded as emergency measures. The direct or ancillary involvement of the military is the pre-condition for making military, and thus moving a security situation from a securitised response into a militarised one.

Institutionalisation

We can determine that an issue has moved from the 'securitised' part of Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde's security spectrum into the 'militarised' area when such militarisation as described above has persisted for so long that it has moved on from being an – in theory, temporary – emergency measure into becoming institutionalised practice. By institutionalised practice, I refer to security situations whereby a set of actions, code of behaviour, accepted priorities, ways of thinking, and so on, have been underway for such a prolonged period of time that they have become entrenched[15]. This is consistent with the institutionalisation of security as proposed by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, who state that "if a given type of threat is persistent or recurrent, it is no surprise to find that the response and the sense of urgency become institutionalised" (1998, p.27-28). The use of the military directly, or in conjunction with civilian assets, constitutes one of these emergency responses. Therefore, if 'making military', as detailed above, is observable in the policy actions and thus operational practice

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[15] The Global War on Terror is a good example in this case, where security-related entities in the U.S. – from police, to airport security to national law enforcement and intelligence agencies and the Bush Administration – introduced counter-terror measures that were to become permanent features of the post-9/11 world (Howell and Lind 2010; Fowler and Sen 2010). They were not temporary emergency measures withdrawn after the immediate security threat was dealt with, such as with the ending of internment of Japanese-Americans during WWII until Imperial Japan was defeated (Hayashi 2004).

of institutions for a prolonged period of time, then they could be said to have become institutionalised, and thus indicative of the militarisation of a security issue. Such embedded practices are accepted as, at best, legitimate and worthy, or, at worst, a necessary evil to deter something far less preferable. In other words, what were once 'emergency' measures have become so routine that they essentially constitute 'the new normal' in security measures. Once institutionalised and subject to vested interests, it is difficult to subject such measures to any de-securitisation unless the security issue in question can clearly be seen to no longer constitute a threat[16]. Didier Bigo, for instance, asserts that since securitisation emerges from 'security professionals', it is natural that their administrative practices would be, if not designed for, then at least complimentary to the management of fear in order to justify their continued existence and allocation of resources (2002, p.65).

A conventional war has a limited time and scope to it, and whether the result is victory or defeat, a climax is reached, whereby the existential threat is resolved in one way or another and an issue can be desecuritised. In the case of conflicts against abstract concepts however, such as the wars on terror, drugs, crime, etc., it is impossible to realise a definitive and clear-cut end result. Victory can of course be arbitrarily declared to save face should one wish to be extracted from an intractable or unpopular conflict. However, if a 'war' is against something seen to constitute an existential threat, then it cannot be ended without either admitting 'defeat', or until a change in attitudes demotes the threat to a manageable risk or even eventually a minor issue. As a result of institutional and cultural absorption of militarisation – and subsequent transformation of institutions and society as such militarisation becomes ingrained – it is significantly more difficult to transition from a militarised situation back to a conventional securitised status, never mind a desecuritised, political position[17].

It was possible for this to occur following the end of U.S. alcohol prohibition because the security threat was only subject to stringent law enforcement emergency measures, not military ones. The threat never transitioned out of the securitised sector of the security spectrum and so could return to the politicised sector with relative ease. Cultural attitudes towards alcohol also made this possible, for the majority of the audience came to accept that alcohol did not pose an existential threat if properly managed. The War on Terror has also

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[16] Even then it is possible for such measures to find a new 'emergency' to address, such as the shift of military resources from the Cold War to the War on Drugs, and then to the War on Terror.

[17] In North Korea, for example, the 'military-first' policy has seen the locus of political power shift from the ruling party to the military in the ideological pursuit of *Juche* (self-reliance) and *gangseongdaeguk* (a powerful and prosperous nation), as well as for the protection of the ruling elite itself. Such a policy is justified by a near-constant war footing, bolstered by propaganda and manufactured crises. See (Woo 2014).

been deescalated, though *not* desecuritised. This is due to public fatigue of foreign entanglements by the U.S. military and, also, while terror attacks on the American mainland have occurred in recent years, none have been on the scale of the 9/11 atrocities in 2001.

Criteria of violence and resulting security spectrum location

Where an issue calls for emergency measures involving the military as an institution, use of its assets, or for other bodies to 'make military' in their operational culture or practices, but where the situation *does not* escalate to the level of large-scale violence as supposed by Neumann, then this is the location on the security continuum that militarisation occupies. It applies when initial emergency measures settle into normalised, institutional practice, where military assets are employed in pursuit of addressing a security issue, but never to the extent that events cross into a full-scale war-like situation, in which case matters would have progressed along the security spectrum into violisation. Consequently the proposed spectrum can be represented thusly:

Non-Politicised – Politicised – Securitised – Militarised – Violised

As per Roe's contention, a rhetorical drug 'war' may have been declared, and assets may have been mobilised, but it has not been fought in the manner of a true war to the extent that Neumann's classification of 'violisation' suggests. Officially-sanctioned violence features in the War on Drugs, but is limited to interdiction engagements or counter-narcotics operations, at least by the U.S. if not its Colombian and Mexican partners. This is not to dismiss the carnage in certain areas, but objectively speaking this is targeted violence, not mass violence. Neumann (1998) makes the valid point that the number of people killed is almost always made a defining trait of what war is. However, the War on Drugs is essentially a counter-criminal action despite the use of the term 'war', where success is measured not by enemy killed or territory conquered, but by the tonnage of drugs seized, traffickers imprisoned or cartels broken up.

Militarisation as defined is the presence, even embracing, of military personnel, assets, or culture by outside bodies, or indeed all three in combination, but without automatic recourse to the use of violence on a mass scale. Limited, targeted violence is acceptable, for even civilian organisations can employ it without sanction in certain circumstances. If mass-violence and the full force of a military institution, assets or militaristic culture were

unleashed on a significant scale however, then an issue would cross into Neumann's violisation.

If we follow the framework it is, in theory, possible to militarise any issue providing the emergency measures intended to address a security issue remain within these parameters. So, for example, military assets could be employed to oversee endangered species, protect threatened natural environments, keep the peace in urban or rural settlements, monitor elections, and so on. Non-lethal military assets such as surveillance aircraft, transport helicopters or peacekeeping troops could all be utilised in these endeavours. Targeted violence could be employed, but this does not necessarily mean lethal force, as poachers could be apprehended, or polluting ships towed away or sunk after evacuation, for instance. The employment of military personnel, assets or operational culture, even of non-violent natures, is still enough to consider a security issue as being militarised. It is only if violence orchestrated on a significant scale occurs that an issue could then be considered to have been violised.

2.5 The Research Questions

The thesis topic concerns the progressive militarisation of American counter-narcotics policy, both domestically and towards Latin America, specifically Colombia and Mexico, employing the militarisation framework developed above. According to Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, "working with a specified subclass of a general phenomenon is also an effective strategy for theory development" (2005, p.78), though in this instance the purpose is not theory but framework development, through the process of abduction, as explored in the next chapter on methodology. It is in following this strategy that the decision was made to analyse the militarisation of counter-narcotics specifically, as opposed to militarisation in its entirety, which could range from anything, from riot control through to environmental protection. By focusing on enhancing the framework through analysing one type of militarisation (counter-narcotic), rather than spreading inquiry too thinly and widely, both the framework itself, and its claim to relevance in the securitisation debate, have been enhanced. Taking these factors into consideration, the main research question presented itself as:

- To what extent has United States counter-narcotics policy in Colombia, Mexico and on the U.S. Southern Border become militarised?

The question originated from the need to demonstrate the relevance of militarisation to practical counter-narcotics policy, as well as to the securitisation debate. An effective way of doing this was to analyse the policy and strategic direction of the drug war in Mexico, Colombia and on the U.S. border. These effectively represent the beginning, mid-point and entry gate of most illicit drug trafficking routes that pose a problem, and consider the extent of militarisation that has occurred, utilising the framework that has been developed to determine this. However, in order to effectively answer what is still quite a broad research question, a set of specific questions were formulated to make the inquiry focused. It was with a qualitative/interpretive approach in mind, related to the study of the militarisation elements detailed above, that these sub-questions had to be posited if the framework was to be used satisfactorily, and be applied to each of the case studies undertaken[18]. Each sub-question directly relates to elements of the militarisation framework, namely making military, institutionalisation and criteria of violence:

> ➢ How significant a role do the United States military and native Colombian and Mexican military forces play in counter-narcotics?

This links to the making military element of the militarisation framework, when an emergency measure brought on by securitisation takes on a decidedly militarised quality. This can be through the direct involvement of military forces, or the gradual militarisation of civilian organisations, such as the police or similar law-enforcement agencies, in terms of the type and standard of the equipment and resources available and the training and tactics employed in operations. In seeking to answer this question, it is logical to assess the extent of involvement of the American and native militaries, both in themselves and in support of other security forces.

> ➢ Has militarisation occurred in any U.S., Colombian and Mexican theatres of operations to the extent that it could be said to have become institutionalised?

In examining the case studies, can it be concluded that the actions of U.S. and native military and security forces, their codes of behaviour, accepted priorities, ways of thinking, and so on, have been appreciably militarised for such a prolonged period of time that they have become entrenched?

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[18] See Chapter 3 on methodology for more detail on why the case study method was adopted.

➢ Which part of the security spectrum does the level of violence associated with the implementation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy best conform to?

This question relates to the security spectrum. If the security situations under consideration in Colombia and Mexico can be said to have moved beyond regular securitisation and into militarisation – e.g. by the involvement of military forces or assets, and potentially on a prolonged, institutionalised basis – then we must also consider whether the levels of violence observed suggest a war-like, violised situation. If the levels of violence are more than would be expected in a conventional securitised situation, yet are less than one would expect in a violised, state-of-war type situation, then the situation conforms to the middle-way between the two on the security spectrum – i.e. a militarised situation.

The findings that resulted from these questions helped determine how extensive militarisation has become in the counter-narcotics policies in Colombia and Mexico/U.S. border, as well as the U.S. involvement in them. By comparing the findings of each of these more focused questions into three separate sections clearly marked within each case study, this helped build an empirical picture of the extent of militarisation in U.S. domestic and Colombian/Mexican counter-narcotics policy.

2.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has explored the securitisation framework, firstly be detailing how Buzan, then Wæver, then both ultimately joined by de Wilde, gradually developed the framework with the intention of answering the question as to what actually constitutes a security issue and how it can become securitised. Other scholars have agreed and disagreed with that trio's positions to varying degrees, and these have been touched on along with existing gaps in the discourse. However, the securitisation framework forms the necessary conceptual foundation for this thesis, especially in the context of how the United States came to view illicit narcotics as a significant enough security threat to warrant the employment of emergency measures. It is the nature of these emergency measures, and specifically the militarised extent of them, that this thesis explores further.

Just as Buzan and his colleagues sought to answer what counts as security, so too do I wish to establish what constitutes a militarised security situation, brought about by the employment of certain kinds of emergency measures. The second half of the chapter therefore covered militarisation, both as an academic and cultural concept, but more

importantly in its capacity as an analytical framework. It builds upon securitisation, and is therefore closely linked by virtue of being a distinct form of emergency measure. Yet it is that distinctiveness that merits its own framework, for just as securitisation takes an issue out of the realms of normal politics, so too does militarising an issue lift it out of being securitised only, and into a decidedly different, yet related, category.

This chapter therefore concludes having laid the conceptual foundations for the thesis and has proposed a framework for the assessment of the presence of militarisation in any given security situation. This thesis specifically deals with the extent of militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy, and so the main research question and the related sub-questions were also presented. In order to demonstrate how the militarisation framework, through qualitative research methods, can be applied in answering these questions, the next chapter explores the methodology required in analysing the case studies of Colombia and Mexico/U.S. Southern Border.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored securitisation and the foundation it provides for militarisation, the elements that comprise the latter, and the associated research questions. This chapter details the research design of the thesis. Specifically it explores the utilisation and development of the militarisation framework, the rationale behind adopting a qualitative approach, the decision to adopt a case study method and the choice of cases, and finally what methods were used in the research and why.

The research design – from qualitative research methods to case studies – revolves around the militarisation framework, the essential 'tool kit' required to determine the presence and extent of militarisation in a security situation. The key term here is framework; that is, the structure that underlies the concept of how a securitised issue can be deemed to have become militarised, and the elements of which aid analysis of this phenomenon. Effectively, the framework helps us to determine where to look, and what to look for, in securitised security situations that have potentially become militarised.

In his discussion regarding the concept of securitisation, Thierry Balzacq submits that securitisation (as opposed to securitisation theories) is an *ideal type*, which is to say a set of essential qualitative features which, when combined, form a logical whole (2014, p.8). Balzacq argues that, "the construction of an ideal type is carried out inductively from the extensive study of relevant materials out of which the researcher selects certain segments of empirical reality" (2014, p.9). Likewise the heuristic methodological approach, whereby one seeks to obtain qualitative depictions that are at the heart of an issue, enabling the collection of documents, narrative descriptions, correspondence, records, quotations and case histories (Moustakas 1990, p.38-39). In so doing, the researcher selects from these 'segments of empirical reality' to inform their study and ideal type construction. As a result, "the ideal type is a useful instrument in producing analytical statements about our experience of the world" (Balzacq et al. 2014, p.9)[19]. Balzacq goes on to suggest that the form of an ideal type is

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[19] Balzacq (2014, p.9) takes inspiration from Max Weber, who put it that, "an ideal type is formed by [...] one or several points of view and by the synthesis of great many diffusely existing component phenomena [...] which are sometime more and sometimes less present and occasionally absent" (Weber 1949, p.90).

general, in that its component parts (or elements) are not equally present in all things it designates (Balzacq et al. 2014, p.9).

In a similar fashion, the militarisation framework seeks to constitute an ideal type as argued by Balzacq. The intention is to design a framework made up of several qualitative features suggested by the study of empirical reality (i.e. elements such as making military, institutionalisation, etc.) that combine to form the logical whole; that is, an analytical framework for the production of analytical statements (in this instance whether a security situation is militarised or not)[20].

The militarisation framework as developed in Chapter 2 follows on from the securitisation framework, just as militarisation as a category is placed after securitisation on the security spectrum. The militarisation framework therefore does not seek to explain how the process of militarisation comes about. It is not a theory, but an analytical tool, simply one way of considering a certain area of security studies, in this particular instance counter-narcotics. It is associated with securitisation because there is a logical progression. It is a process showcased in Chapter 4, which historically details how the narcotics issue was gradually elevated up the security spectrum until it became a securitised issue for the U.S., especially in a foreign policy context. This raises the important research question and sub-questions detailed in Chapter 2, those regarding whether securitised foreign – and to a lesser degree domestic – U.S. counter-narcotics policy has progressed into becoming militarised and, if so, to what extent. It is through studying the development of U.S. counter-narcotics strategy in Colombia, Mexico and on the U.S. Southern Border that I seek to determine the answers to those questions.

3.2 The militarisation framework: utilisation and development

Militarisation is essentially an emergency measure generated by securitisation. Without securitisation as a foundation, militarisation would not be possible, as it would have nothing building up to it. Militarisation can only really be explored in reference to the process of securitisation that must come before it. The militarisation framework developed in this thesis only builds upon securitisation and does not seek to replace or separate itself from the latter. Securitisation has already provided an explanation as to why circumstances have emerged where military involvement is one possible response to a security threat. Thus, as detailed

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[20] As Balzacq suggests (2014, p.9), such a construct is meant to be general, and so its elements may not be equally present, which we later see in the case studies in how some of the militarisation indicators are more or less present in one case compared to another.

above, the militarisation framework is principally an analytical one, designed to determine the presence of the elements that make it up (i.e. making military, institutionalisation, and criteria of violence) in order to understand whether a security situation has indeed moved on from being securitised to militarised, or indeed even violised, in nature.

The militarisation framework is effectively a tool, a useful one to shed light on counter-narcotics militarisation. However, through its use in empirical study, it can also be improved for other scholars to utilise in the future. This process is known as abduction. As Jorg Friedrichs and Friedrich Kratochwil explain:

> "The typical situation for abduction is when we become interested in a class of phenomena for which we lack applicable theories […] We collect pertinent observations while applying concepts from existing fields of our knowledge. Instead of trying to impose an abstract theoretical template (deduction) or "simply" inferring propositions from facts (induction), we start reasoning at an intermediate level (abduction)." (2009, p.714-715)

Additionally, James Rosenau explains that:

> "One advances knowledge most effectively by continuously moving back and forth between very abstract and very empirical levels of inquiry, allowing the insights of the former to exert pressure on the latter even as the findings of the latter, in turn, exert pressure for the former, thus sustaining an endless cycle in which theory and research feed on each other." (Rosenau 1988, p.64 quoted in Friedrichs and Kratochwil 2009, p.707)

In other words abduction is essentially a process by which, as Rosenau indicates, the scholar moves between the empirical and the theoretical, using new insights and ideas on each occasion to improve both, and thus the whole. This is the process I undertook in relation to the militarisation framework. Upon applying it to the case studies in the thesis, I determined what could be improved in the framework to make it more flexible, accurate and nuanced. While I have not conducted an 'endless cycle' of improvements, the alternations to the original framework post-application are thoroughly detailed in the concluding Chapter 7, and remain open for future scholars to conduct their own abduction process going forward.

Friedrichs and Kratochwil ultimately summarise abduction as:

> "A comparative case study method. It starts with a research interest that relates to some relevant purpose. The specific field of research is constituted by a limited number of core concepts. A variety of conceptual distinctions is applied to divide the field into a number of domains. The researcher examines the most important or most typical cases in each domain to establish whether and how each distinction is important in structuring the field under examination. To that end, cross-case analysis is combined with within-case analysis." (2009, p.719-720)

This summation of abduction neatly lends itself to the premise and structure of the militarisation framework in general, as well as the case study method selected for its application. Let us take each element of the above passage in turn. Friedrichs and Kratochwil state that abduction is a comparative case study method, and in this thesis that is represented by a comparative analysis of U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia and Mexico/U.S. border. The research interest that relates to some relevant purpose is determining, based on the findings of the case studies, to what extent militarisation features in U.S. counter-narcotics policy. The specific field of research constituted by a limited number of core concepts, is the nature and extent of militarisation as an emergency measure in any given security situation. Meanwhile the three elements of militarisation – namely making military, institutionalisation and criteria of violence – represent the division of this field into a number of domains. I examine how applicable each of the three militarisation elements (i.e. domains) are within the case studies, thus determining their importance in structuring the field under examination, i.e. the militarisation framework. Finally, cross-case analysis combined with within-case analysis, is represented by the conclusions at the end of each separate case study chapter, and an ultimate cross-case comparative analysis in the Conclusion chapter.

 The main research question and related sub-questions have been discussed in Chapter 2, while the purpose of a framework, and the process of abduction, are discussed above. In methodological terms, the following are discussed below; the qualitative/interpretive research approach adopted, the case study format and reasons for case selection, and the methods involved in making use of primary and secondary sources.

3.3 Adopting a qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is a means to achieve a more nuanced understanding of a phenomenon. It emphasises the qualities of entities, processes and meanings which are not subject to experimental examination or statistical measurements, i.e. the traditional scientific approach. In qualitative research, it is the socially constructed nature of reality that is stressed, along with the value-laden nature of inquiry (Clough and Nutbrown 2002, p.19). As a consequence there is a great degree of subjectivity involved, a hallmark of interpretivism. In this paradigm, "the locus of understanding shifts from the quantitative/positivist focus on objectivity, to an interest in subjective worldviews" (Rossman and Rallis 1998, p.35-36), of 'thick description' over predictability. It is where humans are viewed as creators of their worlds and their role in shaping those worlds is fundamental[21].

The securitisation of narcotics in the U.S. is an example of human agency shaping the world, or more accurately shaping counter-narcotics strategy employed at home and abroad by America, as an emergency measure in response to a specific threat. In determining the extent that U.S. counter-narcotics strategy has become militarised, it was necessary to study the qualities of the processes involved and to build a 'thick description' understanding of the phenomenon. Sources featuring statistics, such as budgets allocated or personnel trained in the cause of counter-narcotics, were useful to the overall research, but ultimately were used in support of the qualitative material that revealed the evolution of the U.S. approach to counter-narcotics. It therefore seemed reasonable that this thesis pursued a qualitative/interpretative approach, as reflected in the construction of the underlying methodology and selection of methods.

In line with broader securitisation and militarisation research, I worked within qualitative methods utilised by other scholars in the field. For instance, Jonathan Fisher and David Anderson (2015) used qualitative case studies of four African states and their interactions with four major international donor countries to explore authoritarianism and the securitisation of development aid to Africa[22]. In studying the securitisation of international public health, Alexander Kelle (2007) adopted a qualitative historical and policy-based

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[21] Even if some scholars are of the view that interpretivism constitutes a wholly different paradigm, where the search of meaning takes precedence over the experimental search of law, scientific method is not incompatible with it, as the "distinctive contribution of science is to present a set of procedures for discovering the answers to appropriately framed descriptive and causal questions" (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, p.37). Analytical frameworks such as militarisation aim to be the procedures for discovering such answers.

[22] This highlights the importance of the case study format, which I have utilised in my study, albeit a comparative approach featuring Colombia and Mexico and their respective interactions with the United States and its foreign counter-narcotics policies.

analytical approach. He took an overview of the deliberate spread of disease in the form of biological warfare, bio-weapon arms control policy, general international public health policy, and the emergence of bioterrorism as a security threat, thus demonstrating the importance of a broad narrative and policy overview[23]. In his study of the securitisation of non-deliberate infectious diseases in Vietnam, namely HIV and avian flu, Jonathan Herington (2010) studied both qualitative and quantitative primary and secondary sources[24]. He made use of government policy documents, legal instruments and budgetary allocations obtained from national and international sources to explore the securitised policy response to the security threats these diseases posed to society. I took a similar approach to the study of counter-narcotics policy[25].

Also, in studying militarisation, qualitative, quantitative and interpretive methods have generally been the favoured methods. Peter Kraska and Victor Kappeler's (1997) analysis of the extent of militarisation in domestic American policing employed a quantitative method in the form of a survey mailed out to hundreds of departments. This allowed them to construct a picture of the number of Police Paramilitary Units (PPUs) in operation and the level of their activity. However, such statistical information then allowed a qualitative/interpretative analysis to be conducted as to the extent of normalisation of the use of these units, and the direct links between them and the U.S. Department of Defence. I also made use of statistical sources, such as budget allocation charts and weapons and equipment transfer data for example, to ultimately inform my qualitative analysis regarding the extent of military involvement in and/or support of domestic and foreign counter-narcotics enforcement[26].

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[23] In my own study this has been realised through a historical overview of U.S. drug control policy and its increasingly securitised and eventually militarised nature in response to the emergence of related security threats, such as violent drug cartels.

[24] I discuss in greater detail below how both primary and secondary sources aided in answering the sub-research questions, and by doing so cumulatively helped to answer the main research question.

[25] Likewise, Herington also made use of local and international media sources to acquire further data and information about the phenomenon in general, and to also establish the social context in which this securitisation was taking place, i.e. the attitudes and reactions of the public to the perceived threats. Making use of media sources was a prevalent method in my own study, both for the social context they helped provide, but also to provide primary material that I did not have the ability to acquire myself. For example, for her study of the militarisation of Rio De Janeiro's favelas by paramilitary Police Pacification Units in the build up to the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, Charlotte Livingstone (2014) adopted qualitative interviews and observational field work to establish the extent and nature of such militarisation and its social consequences. While primary interviews and field work did not feature in my overall research, secondary versions of such sources found in the literature and news media proved to be extremely informative in exploring the type and extent of counter-narcotics militarisation efforts actually in effect on the ground, as opposed to purely on the pages of policy proposal documents.

[26] In developing her concept of green militarisation (i.e. the use of military and paramilitary actors, techniques, technologies and partnerships in the pursuit of conservation), Elizabeth Lunstrum (2014) also demonstrated a

While it was informative to consult what securitisation and militarisation scholars are doing in other areas, it was also useful to study the approaches taken by counter-narcotics scholars, especially those researching similar topics to mine. For instance, Johnathon Rosen's (2012) in-depth study of the origins and progress of Plan Colombia adopted a process tracing approach. It made use of mainly qualitative methods supplemented by quantitative research where appropriate, and focused on critical junctures of the initiative rather than a complete history detailing every nuance. The study is similar to my own in that it takes a chronological perspective of how a major counter-narcotics initiative developed and how policy and strategy altered over time, yet his single case study approach allowed him the luxury of space that my two case studies did not. That said, his is a broad study while mine focuses on militarisation, and one of his main goals was to assess the effectiveness of the initiative and to suggest policy recommendations. I do not aim to judge the effectiveness, merits or otherwise of militarisation, nor recommend future action, but to gauge the extent of counter-narcotics militarisation, through the prism of the militarisation framework.

On the reasoning behind the U.S. support of the Merida Initiative, Johnathon Hunter (2011) adopted analogical reasoning to explain how the interpretation and perceptions of policymakers (especially in regards to a belief in being able to 'transplant' the Plan Colombia model to Mexico) guided their decisions[27]. Elements of this are seen in my own later analysis of Mexico, whereby the U.S. initially supported militarisation in the counter-narcotics approach to Mexico, but eventually came to realise that the situation called for a different,

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qualitative approach by using the geography of Kruger National Park to illustrate how geographical factors shaped the militarisation that was taking place, where and how it unfolded, its impacts, and its justification. While geography played a small role in my own research, there were elements that were of use, such as the correlation between the location of U.S. counties on major drug trafficking routes from Mexico and the amount of weaponry, vehicles and equipment they had acquired from the Department of Defence in support of their local counter-narcotics efforts.

[27] Analogical reasoning is a human cognitive trait. According to social psychologists Richard Nisbett and Lee Ross, "objects and events in the phenomenal world are almost never approached as if they are sui generis [unique] configurations but rather are assimilated into pre-existing structures in the mind of the perceiver" (1980, p.24–25). David Houghton describes "the essence of analogical thinking [as] the transfer of knowledge from one situation to another by a process of mapping – finding a set of one-on-one correspondences (often incomplete) between aspects of one body of information and aspects of another" (2001, p.25). Thus Aiden Hehir determines that analogical reasoning can play a role in foreign policy decisions, for:

> "Humans […] do not continually assess oncoming situations as unique, requiring concerted examination; rather, they recognize similarities, at least perceived similarities, and revert to behavioural patterns based on lessons learned from past events and thus pursue a course of action based on historical data rather than the characteristics of the contemporary situation."
>
> (Hehir 2006, p.72)

This suggests that when formulating a counter-narcotics strategy for Mexico, the U.S. looked at Colombia and what could be perceived as some successes, and attempted to replicate the Plan Colombia model. As revealed in Chapter 6, however, the initial emphasis on militarisation faded when it was realised that the two situations, while both still involving narcotics, were not entirely similar and thus required different strategies to be adopted.

law enforcement strategy compared to Colombia. Additionally it was encouraging to see that, while Johnathon Hunter (2011) looked at Colombia and Mexico and their individual situations, the case study itself was based on the overall initiative, a similar model to the one this thesis employs[28].

Case studies analysing counter-narcotics have often focused either on one country, such as Colombia or Mexico, as with the examples above, or have made comparisons between countries on an operational level, with the intention of forming policy or strategic recommendations for military and political decision makers[29]. Nevertheless, it was encouraging to see that in all of them both qualitative and quantitative methods could be put to effective use, and that the narrative format adopted in my own work had past form. That many cases concentrated either on 'big picture' issues, or in instances when they were focused did not involve my specific field of enquiry, also enhanced the originality of my study, while at the same time I did not radically depart from the approaches from others in the field.

3.4 The case study format and case selection

Why was the United States and its counter-narcotics policies selected as the main case in this study? As indicated in Chapter 1, the U.S. has been at the very forefront of the international prohibition regime on illicit narcotics, as well as the gradual utilisation of military assets in the enforcement methods of that regime. It was therefore appropriate to centre the study on the U.S. counter-narcotics policy approach, and its interaction with Colombia and Mexico, the two principle operational areas where counter-narcotics and American foreign and national security interests coincide. It is true that other countries take an active role in counter-narcotics enforcement, either in their national or international interests, but would have led to very different studies had these countries been selected instead of the United States.

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[28] On the issue of Mexico, in attempting to understand why the country's drug war has only recently erupted into violence when it has been a long-term player in the trafficking of illicit narcotics, Viridiana Rios (2011) took a quantitative approach instead. Using detailed datasets relating to the gender, age, location and dates of drug-related homicides since violence flared up in 2006, as well as statistical data related to drug-industry trends, she was able to test her models against several cases, namely a selected set of areas in Mexico. While the analysis of militarisation in my own research could not be fully quantified in such a manner, the *extent* of it could be by referring to figures for military aid, deployments, budgets, and so forth, for the case studies in this thesis.

[29] Examples of single-country and comparative case studies outside of Latin America, include the Centre for American Progress report on Guinea Bissau's role in the South Atlantic cocaine trade (Hoffman and Lane 2013), and the Brookings Institution's comparative look at drug trafficking and counter-narcotics policies in Mali and Guinea (Gberie 2015).

For instance, the British seek to interdict narcotics shipments in the West Indies and West Africa (Royal Navy 2015). NATO, as a larger international organisation, cooperates with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to provide counter-narcotics training in Central Asia and Afghanistan (NATO 2015). Also, in recent years, Russia has inserted itself into the general drug war discourse, proposing various initiatives to counter the global drug trade that, much like the U.S., it believes constitutes a national security threat to its society and public health (Marshall 2014). These are a few examples, and could be worthy of study on their own merits. Yet the United States by far commands the biggest military asset contribution and budgetary allocation to counter-narcotics in general, than any other country or organisation in the world. This reaffirms the logic of selecting it for study as the main policy actor in this thesis, especially in the context of applying the militarisation framework.

In order to establish exactly why narcotics present a security issue for the U.S., and why it devotes so many resources towards enforcement, an overarching historical context was provided, principally in Chapter 4. This was in order to both demonstrate the importance of considering context in securitisation, as indicated in Chapter 2, and also to help explain how and why U.S. counter-narcotics policy at home and abroad developed in the direction that it has. Such a development ultimately led to involvement in Colombia and Mexico, and the eventual greater securitisation and militarisation of the U.S. Southern Border linked to the insecurity in the latter country. Therefore, the historical overview of Chapter 4 lays the foundation for the subsequent case studies by exploring the history of U.S. counter-narcotics; initiated in the early 20th Century, the effective declaration of the drug war by the Nixon Administration, the beginnings of militarisation by the Reagan Administration, and the subsequent gradual but noteworthy growth in this strategy by Bush Sr. and Clinton Administrations.

An argument could be made to produce separate historical case studies out of the three Administrations in office from 1981-2001. However, I decided against this because throughout this period there was never a dedicated and organised operational initiative launched against the illicit narcotics trade in Latin America. There were many small efforts and authorisations for U.S. military and intelligence assets to lend support to Latin American partners, but these were essentially piecemeal efforts that, while far from inconsequential, never fell under consistent 'banner' operations, such as those selected for the case studies.

King, Keohane and Verba consider the case study to be essential for the generation of the kind of thick description fundamental to social science (1994, p.44), while George and Bennett describe a case study as "a well-defined aspect of a historical episode that the

investigator selects for analysis, rather than a historical event itself" (2005, p.18). This supported my rationale for employing the case study model for Colombia and Mexico/U.S. border. Counter-narcotics can encompass social, health and economically-based measures, as well as a sprawling narrative, but the decision was taken to concentrate on purely military/security matters, as they are most relevant to the study of militarisation.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, U.S. foreign counter-narcotics efforts in Colombia and Mexico have been focused through the prism of two major initiatives – Plan Colombia and the Merida Initiative. As the name suggests, Plan Colombia was intended to be a form of 'Marshall Plan' for the country. It provided U.S. aid for counter-narcotics operations and parallel economic and social development. While it has been subject to various strategic changes (such as increased military support following 9/11), its remit remains essentially the same today, though far decreased from its security peak as Colombian forces step up with greater resources and professionalism. The Merida Initiative was formulated in response to the spiralling violence caused by drug cartels in Northern Mexico in the first decade of the 21st Century, and is a security cooperation agreement between the U.S., Mexico and Central American countries. The declared aim of the Initiative is that of combating the threats of drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and money laundering. Passed into law by the U.S. Congress in mid-2008, it remains active[30].

That these are the two primary U.S. initiatives, constituting its leading foreign counter-narcotics efforts, with specific mission remits and areas of operation, has made them ideal for the case study approach. Studies with a potentially greater emphasis on statistics risk 'conceptual stretching' by considering many cases, perhaps dissimilar, to acquire larger samples. Case studies, on the other hand, allow for conceptual refinements with a higher level of validity over a smaller number of similar, concentrated cases (George and Bennett 2005, p.19). That the cases that have been selected for this thesis have also been subject to the structured, focused comparison questions raised in Chapter 2, has made it possible to reasonably gauge the extent of militarisation that has occurred in each.

Compared to the slightly scattershot approach of the 1981-2001 period, these initiatives were launched in accordance with significant and specific narcotics-related security concerns. While the efforts against FARC in Colombia can be conflated with counter-terrorism as much as with counter-narcotics (Vauters and Smith 2006, pp.171-172),

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[30] While not a 'named operation', increased militarisation on the U.S.-Mexican border is directly tied to the Mexican drug conflict and therefore also significantly features in that case study, even if it is not the primary object of enquiry.

Plan Colombia was launched to prevent the country from becoming a failed narco-state, as explored in Chapter 5. The Merida Initiative was launched to try and address the slaughter of the drug cartel wars of Northern Mexico as instability risked bleeding across the U.S. border along with copious amounts of narcotics. It is also for this reason that U.S. border security has taken a more militarised, defensive approach, as is also explored in the Mexico case study in Chapter 6.

These case studies are interlinked. The pressure that Plan Colombia placed on the native drug cartels and traffickers saw the Colombians outsource transportation to the Mexicans, who in turn decided to grow their own power bases and market share. This resulted in escalating drug violence in Northern Mexico as cartels fought each other for lucrative trafficking routes into the U.S. (Beittel 2013. p.8; Lee 2014). This prompted the development and launch of the Merida Initiative and increased U.S. border militarisation. The unintended consequences – be they positive or negative – of one initiative have led to the creation of a subsequent one to address new narco-security issues. The essential question is whether, and how much, militarisation has occurred in these initiatives, and so that is why a case study analysis of each was an efficient and justified approach to take.

The initiatives the case studies focus on are still ongoing in one form or another, and so there is no end point that makes them self-contained. Yet this is not a major disadvantage, as the extent of militarisation can still be effectively indicated based on the amount of time that has expired so far in each initiative. After all, the purpose of the research was not to assess the results or effectiveness of these operations had they concluded by now, but to assess the extent of militarisation exhibited in them.

It should be noted that Colombia and Mexico are not the only cases with U.S. foreign counter-narcotics policy involvement. There were alternatives that cover similar territory. One of the primary examples is the current American counter-narcotics support and operations in Central America, under the umbrella of Operation Martillo (Spanish for hammer) which commenced in 2012 (United States Southern Command 2015). In addition to being underway for only a few years – meaning that archival material and document/budget sources were generally unavailable compared to other operations – Martillo also primarily covers the Central American region, rather than just one country, inclusive of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. As such, each country would either have be become the subject of a comparative case study along with its neighbours, or Martillo itself would have to be a single large case study that made up the entire thesis.

Further complicating matters regarding Operation Martillo is that the U.S. is not the only military and/or security contributor. While the U.S. is still the most significant regional actor due to the security assets at its disposal and its geographical proximity, allies such as Canada, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, also contribute to the initiative (United States Southern Command 2015). As a result, it would be multi-national foreign counter-narcotics policy that would be subject to analysis, not just American.

By contrast, Colombia, Mexico and the closely associated U.S. border have been security issues for far longer, going back to the 1980s with Colombia, and so far more sources exist to facilitate research. Also, U.S. counter-narcotics efforts are by far the most dominant in these theatres of operation and, other than the involvement of partner governments, is generally undiluted by other allied contributions, meaning that solely U.S. and U.S.-influenced militarisation can be analysed.

Other potential case studies for analysis outside of the Western Hemisphere were considered. Western Africa has become one of the new major drug trafficking routes, with Latin American cocaine crossing the Atlantic and up through to Europe's porous Mediterranean coastline. This is facilitated by easy passage through lawless areas in the region and the complicity of organised crime and terrorist groups seeking funds, such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, which recently held sway over vast tracts of Mali (Csete and Sánchez 2013). The United States, working with European partners and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has worked to strengthen drug enforcement strategy in the region[31]. However, like Operation Martillo, this is a relatively new policy endeavour, and so the same lack of available material and a continuously changeable operational environment meant that it would be less appropriate as a case study.

One significant U.S. foreign policy engagement where access to substantial amounts of material would have been unproblematic is the recent war in Afghanistan, where militarisation is clear and unambiguous. There was a recognition that the opium trade in Afghanistan was a contributor to instability in the country, and at times efforts were made against it by both U.S. civilian and military agencies, specifically the DEA and U.S. Special Forces assisting the Afghan military and police in eradication efforts (U.S. Senate 2010, p.2). There was, in short, a potentially wide array of sources to draw upon, and the study of the

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[31] The U.S. contributed $50 million through the West Africa Coast Initiative, also known as the West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative, to combat drug trafficking. This helped prop up a regional law enforcement training centre, provided support to Liberia's Drug Enforcement Agency, helped develop specially-trained, DEA-vetted counter-narcotics investigative units in Ghana, and facilitated anti-corruption training in Sierra Leone (Gberie 2015, p.4; Rosen 2015, p.17).

extent of the militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Afghanistan could have easily merited a case study or even a whole thesis dedicated to the subject. However, I decided against this for two reasons. The first was that Colombia, Mexico and the U.S. Southern Border all form part of a chain, and are intimately linked together by cocaine trafficking. Introducing Afghanistan as a case study would have been to potentially divert attention from the overall grand narrative of counter-narcotics policy initiatives that the U.S. has embarked upon in Latin America since at least the early-1980s. Also, the smuggling of cocaine and marijuana into the U.S. from this region is on a far larger scale – and thus a more potent issue – than Afghan heroin imports (U.S. Department of Justice 2009a; UNODC 2015a). Secondly, the war in Afghanistan was primarily about counter-terrorism and nation-building, with the security implications presented by the drug trade all too often overlooked or under-appreciated (Schweich 2008). By contrast, U.S. foreign policy and counter-narcotics policy in Colombia have virtually become synonymous, while drug-related violence in Mexico and on the U.S. Southern Border have driven American security interests in those two areas high up the political agenda. America's building-up of native security forces and the development of institutions in Afghanistan may be similar to efforts in Colombia and Mexico, but in the former it is directed at suppressing terrorism and insurgency, while in the latter two it is primarily aimed at combatting the drug trade in the direct U.S. national interest.

3.5 The methods and sources employed during research

The amount of time available to conduct research played an important role in the efficiency and viability of the qualitative research methods and sources that were selected to analyse the case studies discussed above. Secondary sources consisted of literature analysis, such as studying general and specialist texts on U.S. foreign and domestic counter-narcotics policy, and media analysis, principally reviewing news media sources. The main primary sources were found in online archives, and consisted of policy memos, budget allocation data and congressional reports, amongst other period and present-day documentation.

3.5.1 Literature and Media Analysis

Consulting dedicated academic literature on the topic was an obvious course of action, though specialist literature on the region, U.S. foreign counter-narcotics policy, and so on, was available both in the form of texts intended for consumption by the general public, as well as dedicated news media. General texts by experienced journalists and regional

specialists, such as *The Last Narco* by Malcolm Beith (2010), *The Candy Machine* by Tom Feiling (2009), *Amexica* by Ed Vulliamy (2010), and *El Narco* by Ioan Grillo (2010), explored the organisation, personnel and various minutia on both sides of the drug war in Latin America. These authors often have direct access to, and primary experiences of, the phenomenon. The information and interviews found within these texts, in addition to the statistics and data used to support their analyses, were useful in providing valuable context and nuanced understanding sometimes absent from academic articles or official policy documents.

Yet, there was a need to exercise a degree of caution that the research was not subject to too much influence from such sources, as it was clear that they were secondary and not primary. As Ian Lustick argues, "the work of historians is not […] an unproblematic narrative from which theoretically neutral data can be elicited for the framing of problems and the testing of theories" (Lustick 1996, quoted in George and Bennett 2005, p.95). This is to say that such sources can be subject to the author's personal feelings and methodological choices, as well as personal politics and the broader political climate at the time a text is written. Therefore, while such sources were important, I was careful not to confine the scope of my reading too narrowly.

Similar to these texts, news media sources, in the form of newspaper and news magazine articles and reports, also provided useful information, often far more contemporary than books which were written at a certain time. Small but relevant articles in the American press about the outcome of an interdiction operation by U.S. or partner forces, for example, indicated how a counter-narcotics initiative was progressing, or at least how its effectiveness was being sold to the public. Feature and investigative articles in both UK and U.S. broadsheet newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, as well as news magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek* and *The Economist*, revealed previously unknown factors in the drug war. One example was the support of the CIA in allowing Colombian forces to launch targeted killings of FARC leaders using U.S. made military technology; notionally a counter-narcotics campaign but utilising techniques developed during the War on Terror (Priest 2013). As with Lustick's caution regarding secondary sources though, I had to be mindful of any overt bias on the part of the journalists authoring the articles and reports, considering whether the tone was neutral and a straight presentation of the facts, or if those facts supported a pro or anti-drug war stance.

Such readily available physical and electronic sources by major established national newspapers and news magazines, were complimented by additional sources from the likes of

CNN and the BBC that related to the region and U.S. counter-narcotics efforts. These constituted important sources in the composition of the historical Chapter 4, and for the initial construction of the case studies and early, broad analysis of the extent of militarisation before inquiring deeper with primary sources. Drawing on such contemporary or relatively recent media accounts may not be a substitute for locating a declassified strategy or budget document when analysing the substance of a policy. However, they are important in recognising the social context of the time (and context, as I have suggested, is worth considering in securitisation) for even classified policy decisions are not made in a contextual vacuum, with policymakers either driving or reacting to the public or state priorities of the day (George and Bennett 2005, p.97). In the opinion of Deborah Larson, political scientists value causal variables such as domestic public opinion, images of the opponent, beliefs and ideology, analogical reasoning, or trust (Larson 2001, p.337), precisely because they help establish context, and some of the best windows into those variables comes in the form of media sources. However, Larson also emphasises the importance of primary – i.e. archival – sources to construct a policy analysis that is not unduly influenced by outside interpretations (Larson 2001, p.327 & p.342).

3.5.2 Archival Research

The sources noted above, derived from the literature and media, were important for establishing context and building a narrative, but are nevertheless classed as secondary sources. The main primary sources for the research were to be found in archives, albeit digital ones due to time constraints not allowing for physical visits. Online archiving and document scanning allowed ready access to important policy briefings, presidential memos, budgetary allocation documents, congressional reports, and the like, and so this increased the speed and efficiency of the research undertaken. These sources were important in helping to answer the research sub-questions linked to the three elements of militarisation, namely making military, institutionalisation and criteria of violence. It is worth highlighting a few examples to illustrate the point.

For instance, in helping to answer the making military sub-question – i.e. how significant a role do the United States military and native Colombian and Mexican military forces play in counter-narcotics – I was able to analyse the original texts of several presidential national security directives relating to the increased involvement of U.S. military and intelligence assets in prosecuting counter-narcotics policy (White House 1986; 1989; 1993). Likewise, reports by the Congressional Research Service and Government

Accountability Office concerning U.S. military involvement in counter-narcotics efforts in Latin America, and support for native forces, helped detail the scope, scale and policy intention of such initiatives (Beittel, J. 2013; U.S. Government Accountability Office 1998; 2003; 2005; 2008). From a raw statistical perspective, various budget allocation breakdown documents, tables and charts produced by government departments under successive administrations offered an insight into the financial and logistical support the U.S. provided to Latin American partner states (U.S. Department of Defence 1998; 2010; USAID 2009), as well as to domestic law enforcement and federal agencies (Giratikanon, Parlapiano and White 2014; U.S. National Guard 2014). Native government sources also contributed, such as figures relating to the numbers of new military and security personnel trained for counter-narcotics purposes in Colombia (Government of Colombia 2014).

While its origins were in the twilight years of the Clinton Administration, the George W. Bush presidency saw the acceleration of Plan Colombia in terms of funding and support (in no small part due to the fallout of the 9/11 attacks), as well as the commencement of the Merida Initiative (launched in response to the drug violence in Northern Mexico). Therefore the electronic documents of the George W. Bush presidential museum and library in Dallas, Texas were utilised, with specific documents relating to counter-narcotics strategy accessed online, where declassified. The National Archives in Washington DC were also accessed online, in order to view material that related to general government activities relevant to the study. Additional material was also secured through broader internet research, with a focus on strategy documents, budget allocations and directives issued by the White House, the State Department and the Department of Defence, as well as Congressional reports for the purposes of oversight, all of which were accessible from publication or because they had been declassified.

Regarding the sub-questions relating to institutionalisation and criteria of violence, both primary and secondary sources were used. The primary sources were as above, principally reports and statistics that built up a picture of whether militarised support and practice was sufficiently entrenched as to be regarded as institutionalised. For example, this could be in the form of budget tables showing annual allocation of monies to finance military and counter-narcotics spending over a number of years (Beittel, 2012). However, analyses in secondary sources that made use of such statistics and archival sources to interpret longer-term trends, were equally valuable. These often came in the form of think-tank papers regarding the drug-related security situations in Colombia and Mexico, such as analyses

published by the Washington Office on Latin America (Meyer, 2014a; Isacson 2012) or the Woodrow Wilson Centre (Wilson and Weigend 2014).

Likewise for the criteria of violence element, it was often the case that raw data concerning number of deaths, civilians displaced, and so on, were useful in establishing just how bloody the Colombian drug conflict was versus the Mexican one, and how complicit native military and security forces were in such matters. Bodies such as Human Rights Watch (2011; 2013) and Justice in Mexico Project (2013) were rich sources of both mortality, kidnapping and displacement statistics, but also for accompanying analysis as to the real-world social and policy consequences of those figures. It was in researching the violence associated with the drug conflicts in Colombia and Mexico, as well as certain areas on the U.S. Southern Border, that secondary sources such as media reports, feature articles and interviews also aided understanding and appreciation of the situation on the ground. Indeed, secondary sources were important for helping to establish a broader narrative and aided in understanding the perspectives of the time. This applied to both the historical chapter as well as contemporary case studies, especially sources from several years or even decades previously, from the outset of the War on Drugs.

Ultimately, the types of primary sources mentioned above were important for collecting essential information. This included the official policy rationale for the deployment of military personnel or assets, the numbers of foreign troops trained, the amount of weaponry and equipment utilised for counter-narcotics purposes in the U.S. and abroad, and the levels of expenditure committed year on year to realise these policy decisions, as well as the potential institutional and violence side-effects of these policy decisions. Without these sources and the qualitative and quantitative data acquired from them, the task of establishing the extent of militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy – in relation to all the elements involved in the framework – would have been far more difficult.

For all the advantages of utilising archival research, there were limitations in certain areas, mainly relating to security or the passage of time surrounding some sources. For instance, while they would have provided some valuable insights, documents concerning activities and operations by specific agencies, such as the CIA, were inaccessible for obvious security reasons, though the involvement of such agencies was sufficiently chronicled in journalistic reports and literature. While the issue of security classification of various sources was not an overwhelmingly problematic one, it nevertheless frustrated efforts to find more contemporary information about the state of U.S. foreign counter-narcotics support and involvement, with CIA-sanctioned assassinations of FARC leaders being one example that

only came to light following journalistic investigation. Likewise, the passage of time – or more specifically, lack of – had an impact on the number of viable case studies. For example, it would have been of interest to include Operation Martillo in this thesis as the natural and most recent successor initiative to Plan Colombia and the Merida Initiative. However, there were simply not enough new and readily accessible sources to produce a case study equal to the others, due to current ongoing operations at the time of writing.

The main restriction on the archival research method was that, in comparison to other past conflicts and security initiatives, the Colombian and – especially – Mexican case studies are simply too recent for there to be vast troves of material waiting to be 'discovered', that could result in new perspectives. The oldest, Plan Colombia, is still technically ongoing and only commenced in 2000, while the Merida Initiative has been active for an even shorter period, since 2008. That said, there has still been sufficient time for enough useful material to become available, such as government and defence policy documents, statistics, congressional reports, expenditure charts, and so on. It has been in the interest of democratic transparency and promotion of the counter-narcotics agenda to make these resources accessible, and so there was still enough worthwhile material of historical and contemporary relevance to Colombia, Mexico and the U.S. Southern Border to make viable case studies.

3.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have clarified that militarisation constitutes a framework and how it can be developed through abduction. I have explained why primarily qualitative/interpretive research methods were better suited to this study, but how quantitative sources of information have also added value. The logic behind choosing the case study model has been examined, along with why potential alternative cases were rejected in favour of the ones that were selected. I have also described the methods employed in this study, namely the utilisation of primary archival material as well as secondary literature, journalistic and media sources.

Having explored the methodological foundations and research design of the thesis, the following Chapter 4 represents the beginning of the core study. It explores the essential history of U.S. counter-narcotics policy leading up to the two initiatives that comprise the case studies, those of Plan Colombia in Chapter 5 and the Merida Initiative in Chapter 6.

Chapter 4

The Emergence of the U.S. 'War on Drugs'
and the Militarisation of Counter-Narcotics

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have explored the frameworks of securitisation and militarisation, and the methodology involved in examining militarisation in the two case studies. This chapter serves as a bridge, seeking to link the securitisation of American counter-narcotics policy with the employment – or not – of militarised policy in Colombia, Mexico and the southern U.S. border. To this end, this chapter is a historical examination of the securitisation process concerning narcotics in the U.S., beginning at the turn of the 19th/20th Centuries. Noted throughout are examples promoting the securitisation of the drug issue through the encouragement of fear of the narcotics threat. This serves to establish context for the main portion of the chapter, which explores the launch of the drug war under the Nixon Administration with regards to the institutions created and policies pursued. Subsequent sections explore the furthering of that war into the realm of militarisation under the Reagan, Bush Sr. and Clinton Administrations, which chronologically lead to Plan Colombia. Firstly, however, we shall briefly explore how underlying American cultural inclinations could have helped advance the securitisation and gradual militarisation of counter-narcotics policy at home and, eventually, abroad.

4.2 Cultural Considerations

In formulating their securitisation framework, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde wanted to ensure that if "security issues are to count as security issues then they need to meet strictly defined criteria" (1998, p.5), in order to prevent a situation arising where anything can be securitised. Yet, as Holger Stritzel points out, the risk of only counting issues as securitisable if they meet these 'strictly defined criteria' is that they risk ignoring "the various ambivalences of multiple local usages in the actual socio-political fields of security" (2011, p.347). Stritzel supports this claim by referring to how:

> "The meaning of security as 'national', 'military' and/or 'state security', along with the notion of a 'state of exception', expresses a deliberate *political intervention* in U.S. post-World War II discourse that then became temporarily stable as a hegemonic

understanding and practice of security – yet arguably only in specific *locales*, such as (parts of) the U.S. security discourse." (2011, p.347, emphasis in the original)

The thrust of Stritzel's point is a questioning of the universality of the criteria for securitisation when more nationally or culturally specific considerations may be significant factors. Whether Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde approved of supposed universality or not, that was the prevailing discourse, and so they had to retain this position if they ever hoped to reconcile traditionalist security thinking with application to a wider range of issues as they had called for. However, Stritzel's point, while aimed at critiquing on an abstract theoretical level, does inadvertently support the notion that something specific to American identity, brought about by historical experience and cultural development, has helped determine its outlook as to what constitutes 'security' and has thus influenced the securitisation process in the U.S. The consequence is that illicit narcotics are perceived as a security threat requiring emergency measures to counteract.

If drugs are largely seen as a threat to American society, then perhaps it is not surprising that the gradually militarised response to that threat arguably has, if not its origins in American cultural attitudes, then at least a source of unconscious support underpinning it. Chapter 2 explored the cultural interpretation of militarisation via language, such as, but not limited to, the employment of war-like language and metaphors in sports, especially in aggressive forms such as American football and ice hockey. Deborah Tannen suggests that "military metaphors train us to think about – and see – everything in terms of fighting, conflict, and war. This perspective then limits our imaginations when we consider what we can do about situations we would like to understand or change" (Tannen 1998, quoted in Thorne 2006, p.13)[32].

The prevalence of military-style language and ethic in the U.S. – and arguably mass admiration for, and deference to, the military as an institution (Malt 2012; O'Connell 2012) – is a curious phenomenon. Despite involvement in medium to small scale wars since 1945, no conflict has posed an existential threat that required the mass mobilisation and propagandising of American society, yet arguably militarised 'media' has only increased in scope and scale. For example, sophisticated war toys exist today, but are not a recent phenomenon.

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[32] Given that U.S. counter-narcotics policymakers and those bodies charged with implementing such policies are either part of, or influenced by, political-military institutions and their inherent militarised culture, it is hardly surprising that the militarised option has gained traction in the drug war, an example of a situation they 'would like to understand or change'.

"By the late 1960s, parents could buy Green Beret dolls, records, comic strips, bubble-gum, puzzles and books for their children […] Montgomery Ward's Christmas catalogue promised to send a Green Beret uniform and, for an additional six pounds, they would throw in an AR-15 rifle, pistol, flip–top military holster and a green beret." (Bourke 1999, p.22-23)

Ironically such merchandise was available at the height of the Vietnam War and significant disillusionment with American military efforts, and was accompanied by the jingoistic John Wayne 1968 film, *The Green Berets*, featuring such language as "the only good Vietcong is a dead one". In examples of the spill-over between militarised popular culture and social and cultural attitudes, in 1971 the Marine Corps League named John Wayne the man who best exemplified the word "American", and a U.S. fighter ace was proud to sport the tactical sign of 'Duke', after John Wayne, because he said he respected Wayne's 'American ideals' (Bourke 1999, 25-26).

Movies have always exercised a hold on the popular imagination, and the cooperation exhibited between filmmakers and the Pentagon has at times reached such a degree that the term 'Military-Entertainment Complex' could be justifiably used. As Keegan suggests:

"Over the decades, the relationship between Hollywood and the military has served the needs of both sides: Filmmakers gain access to equipment, locations, personnel and information that lend their productions authenticity, while the armed forces get some measure of control over how they're depicted […] important not just for recruiting but also for guiding the behaviour of current troops and appealing to the U.S. taxpayers." (2011)

Videogames have arguably eclipsed traditional audio-visual media in the amount of attention commanded by young people. 'Shooter' franchises easily out-earn even the most popular Hollywood films and are played by millions across America, while only 70,000 young people joined the actual U.S. Army in 2009 (Singer 2010). Such has been the popularity of this form of entertainment, that the Department of Defence even created its own free-to-access game *America's Army* for recruitment and training purposes, which has become one of the most downloaded games of all time (Singer 2010; Power 2007, p.273).

Indeed, the rise of the videogame as a – perhaps *the* – dominant form of entertainment for a youthful generation within the realm of modern popular culture, has seen the pastime being declared a professional sport. Cyber athletes compete for significant prizes, watched by

hundreds of thousands in stadiums or online, presided over by presenters and commentators (Tassi 2012). Such tournaments usually involve games with militaristic or violent dimensions, whether the object be the elimination of opponents or conquest of territory. Consequently, perhaps the kind of sports commentary previously referred to, such as 'destroying the enemy' or 'blitzing the field', is no longer hyperbolic metaphor in eSports, but is actually suitably descriptive.

Examining this phenomenon is not to make a moral judgement, but is simply intended to demonstrate the gradual saturation of militarised imagery and conduct within significant sections of American popular culture. As highlighted above, leisure activities with militaristic associations have been present for years, from tales of glory and adventure in popular literature, to the passive viewing of military-oriented cinema and television, to the active schoolyard games of Cowboys and Indians or 'playing army'. There have been cases in some U.S. school systems where attempts have been made to stamp out 'militarised' behaviour in young boys. However, it is believed that such 'heroic' play featuring 'good guys' and 'bad guys' is important to the social development, imagination and moral compasses of young males (Sommers 2013). To debate whether an 'acceptable' level of militarisation can be found in a society is best left to social scientists and psychologists. The essential point is that, in the same way that context – whether involving a country's history, culture or traditional approaches towards security threats – is worth considering in the securitisation process, so should cultural militarisation, especially in America, also be considered when discussing the implementation of militarised policy in the drug war as a form of emergency measure.

America's global predominance makes its strategic and diplomatic militarisation inherent even in times of peace due to its superpower status. The securitisation of an issue, however, effectively grants license for these assets to potentially be unleashed on the security threat in question. This is why the process of securitisation does not simply end when an issue is securitised. Whether militarised American popular and institutional culture has played a role, or that U.S. strategic supremacy has meant that militarised solutions are increasingly favoured (in accordance with Mark Twain's comment 'if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail'), the impact of such factors on foreign policy formulation has translated into practical strategic action in Latin and North America. These include initial small scale training deployments, to Plan Colombia, through to Merida Initiative cooperation in Mexico and the militarisation of the U.S. side of the southern border. It is a process that began with the growing calls for a prohibitive regime for narcotics in the early 20th Century.

4.3 A Threat to the 'Correct State of Mind'

At the turn of the 19th/20th Centuries most of the illicit drugs that today are regarded as the biggest threat were perfectly legal, or at least unregulated. Cocaine in various forms, from medicinal solutions designed to stimulate energy, to coca-based wine, to even syringe-and-sample packages, was legally purchasable across the counter or by mail-order catalogue (Feiling 2009, p.17). However, advances in the chemical refinement of opiates and cocaine by the mid-19th Century yielded heroin and concentrated cocaine powder respectively. The concurrent increase in addictive quality saw medical and moral concerns grow for both the physical and spiritual health of individuals and the impact that this would have on American society.

Though the inherent moral driver of American establishment distain for illicit drugs would have played a role – as trailed by the banning of opium in the U.S. controlled Philippines (Bewley-Taylor 1999, p.11) – the first broadly international counter-narcotics initiative piloted by the U.S. was the Shanghai Opium Commission in 1909[33]. However, this and the Hague Opium Commission held three years later in 1912, were more regulatory than prohibitive. They sought to restrict the use of opium to medical and scientific purposes, and there were no serious measures to make production or use of such drugs illegal (Bewley-Taylor and Jelsma 2012, p.73). Gradually, however, the focus moved to illicit rather than licit drug markets and the 1936 Conference for the Suppression of Illicit Drugs, held in Geneva, was the first to make drug trafficking an international crime (Bewley-Taylor and Jelsma 2012, p.74).

Domestically, in December 1914, the U.S. Congress passed the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act. This attempted to control the manufacture and distribution of opiates and cocaine in the U.S. through licensing and special taxation rather than outright prohibition or enforcement. However, several abuses where some clinics simply became wholesale narcotics distributors to supply all-comers resulted in the Supreme Court declaring such clinics illegal, whatever the medical intent, leading to the closure of some forty facilities and the arrest of 25,000 doctors between 1914 and 1938 (Epstein 1977, p.30 & p.104). While drug treatment would always be part of the counter-narcotics policy mix in later years, it would often be dwarfed by an emphasis on enforcement, as predicted by this episode, thanks

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[33] It was also a shrewd way for the U.S. to gain commercial access to the Chinese market by helping it to oppose the opium trade, which had caused China so much social damage by dramatically increasing the number of opium addicts in its population.

to the growing view that narcotics vice was something to be combatted rather than managed or indulged.

In the U.S., temperance and fear played significant roles in the politicisation and ultimate securitisation of that vice, principally consummation and use of alcohol and illicit drugs, before the former was de-securitised while the latter remains so[34]. Possessing an underlying social bedrock of strong Christian values, it is not surprising that the U.S. proved to be such a fertile environment for the growth of various interest movements in the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Whether out of a sense of righteousness or social conscience, groups such as the Anti-Saloon League and the Women's Christian Temperance Union, played a role in influencing the political process and policy-thinking of the American government through their lobbying activities and overt campaigns (Behr 1998, p.45-47 & 55-56).

A good example of the influence of the temperance movement comes in the form of Captain Richmond Hobson, an elected political figure whose reputation was already enhanced by his status as a military hero of the Spanish-American War. Hobson launched a moral crusade against heroin from the mid-1920s, aided by the temperance groups mentioned above, as well as other entities such as the Moose, the Kiwanis, the Knights of Columbus and various Masonic orders (Epstein 1977, p.28). Hobson created the World Narcotic Association and Narcotic Defence Foundation to 'defend society' against the perils of narcotic addiction. In addition to distributing substantial amounts of educational material to schools and media, he took to the radio waves to lecture millions of Americans. All of this, in the absence of concrete scientific studies at the time, "created for a large segment of the American public the stereotype of an addict as a vampire-like creature with an insatiable appetite for crime and destruction and a need to infect with his disease all who came into contact with him" (Epstein 1977, p.29).

Such encouragement of fear would be repeated for political effect several decades later by actors in the same vein as Hobson, seeking to legitimise emergency measures by securitising such a threat. The policies of various presidential administrations are discussed below, but another prominent example of an influential actor with a visible platform was Nelson Rockefeller, Governor of New York from 1959 to 1973 and future Vice-President under Gerald Ford. Using his vast family wealth, political savvy, and experience as a

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[34] Alcohol prohibition in the U.S. during the 1920s was a prime example of an issue becoming politicised and securitised, at least in the realm of law enforcement. I have chosen not to explore this phenomenon and instead focus on the kinds of illicit narcotics that have developed negative social connotations, i.e. opiates, cocaine, and the like. Alcohol may also be a potentially addictive substance with the capacity for social harm, but its consumption has been a generally accepted social practice in Western society for centuries, and even if frowned upon in certain circumstances, does not meet with the same taboo, fear and hostility as solicited by drugs.

propagandist in Latin America during World War II, he was able to latch onto the supposed epidemic of heroin addicts in his state to encourage public fear. Embracing the earlier view of drug addiction as an infectious disease spread by addicts, Rockefeller declared that the problem had "reached the proportions of a plague and was threatening the lives of middle-class children", and he "demanded an all-out war on drugs and addiction" (Epstein 1977, p.38-39). This involved rushing through emergency measures providing for the involuntary confinement of addicts for up to five years of treatment, even if they had not been found guilty of a crime[35], and despite the fact that no effective treatment or rehabilitation actually took place (Epstein 1977, p.38-39). 1966 was an election year and such measures burnished Rockefeller's law and order credentials that aided his re-election. Subsequent statistics were suitably flexible to encourage public security concerns on some occasions (e.g. rocketing increases in addicts to demonstrate the need for greater police measures and more judges) or to show that such measures were working (e.g. the number of addicts plummeting when referenced in important public speeches) (Epstein 1977, p.40-41).

Examples such as Hobson and Rockefeller demonstrated the inherent hard line taken by the American political establishment against activities and mind-sets that deviated from the perceived 'correct state of mind' (Van Duyne and Levi 2005, p.3). Such pursuits, when encountering the intolerance of a temperance position, or portrayed as a threat to middle-class values and youth, will solicit a form of fear, prevalent in the securitisation of an issue, for:

"Fear is a state of mind which can be aroused, strengthened, nursed and maintained, not as a self-propelling autonomous process, but by interested parties, like the church, the bureaucracy and the ruling elites (if any) which are their main stakeholders. An example is fear of deviant or non-conforming behaviour or attitudes […] considered a subversive challenge to social stability." (Van Duyne and Levi 2005, p.1-2)

Returning to the international response to such perceived threats, it was the UN Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs in 1961, heavily influenced by U.S. input, which highlighted the moral and social motivators that underlie American drugs policy. In its preamble, the parties involved expressed their concern "with the health and welfare of mankind" and recognised "that addiction to narcotic drugs constitutes *a serious evil* for the individual and is *fraught with social and economic danger* to mankind" (United Nations 1961, p.1, emphasis

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[35] Similar emergency measures exist today, as with the forcible roundups of crack addicts for enforced treatment in Brazil, which could rightly claim to be experiencing a crack epidemic, whereas evidence for Rockefeller's claims was far more contentious. See (BBC 2013a).

added). The use of the word 'evil' renders the text with a quasi-religious, moralising tone, portraying illicit drugs and associated trafficking and addiction as a threat to the health and welfare of mankind. Protecting people and society went to the heart of its reasoning for prohibition. The Single Convention went further than its predecessor treaties had, coming close to establishing a fully-fledged international prohibition regime, had negotiations not allowed for national authorities to decide on their own which narcotics to ban, or allow for medical purposes (Bewley-Taylor and Jelsma 2012, p.80). Indeed, the consequences of the Single Convention would extend down the decades, for it also introduced:

> "Widely accepted penal obligations for signatory states to criminalise, under their domestic law, unlicensed production and trade and extended the pre-existing control regime to the cultivation of opium poppy, coca and cannabis. In this way, the Convention *provided the international legal basis for the 'war on drugs' approach* against drug-related crops and farmers that developed later."
>
> (Bewley-Taylor and Jelsma 2012, p.80, emphasis added)

The approach would focus on producing countries, which preserved the American perspective that supply was the main issue above that of domestic demand (Crick 2012, p.410). It was a view that would heavily influence counter-narcotics strategy towards Latin America when the drug war gradually began to militarise from the Reagan Administration onwards. Firstly, however, the drug war had to be declared.

4.4 The Nixon Administration and Successors 1969-1981

One of the main policy platforms of the successful 1968 Nixon election campaign was the issue of law and order, and that a Nixon Administration would 'get tough' to reduce nationwide levels of crime. As a consequence there was clear political incentive to demonstrate to the electorate in the next 1972 election a record of crime reduction (Epstein 1977, p.64). However, the main flaw in this ambition was that, beyond Washington D.C., the federal government had neither the jurisdiction nor power to combat crimes such as homicide, assault, burglary and the like, which fell to state and local authorities. With no direct way of eroding the national crime figures, alternative approaches were sought.

A solution presented itself with the realisation that one of the major areas of criminal activity where federal agencies could have immediate and dramatic impacts on crime statistics was in narcotics enforcement. The main argument was that crime statistics could be

lowered by dealing with the problem of addicts – who it was believed became criminally minded or deranged after consumption of drugs, or at least resorted to crime to fund their habits. Also, higher arrest figures for traffickers and distributors would demonstrate the reality of the 'get tough' approach to crime, a potentially win-win situation, statistically at least (Epstein 1977, p.77). A nationwide methadone (heroin replacement) treatment programme was developed to attempt to break the addiction of addicts, and thus their 'need' to commit crime[36]. At the same time the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD), and the Bureau of Customs, conducted drug enforcement domestically and internationally, while the State Department and National Security Council were charged with overseeing it abroad on more diplomatic levels, combatting the supply of heroin into the U.S. at the source (Epstein 1977, p.78).

Latin America saw some notionally successful counter-narcotics efforts clash with broader foreign policy priorities, as demonstrated by two events in Mexico and Panama. Operation Intercept in September 1969 saw two thousand U.S. customs and border-patrol agents deployed along the Mexican border, where during a three-week period over five million travellers were searched for illicit narcotics, yielding little in the way of contraband but generating positive publicity for Administration policy (Epstein 1977, p.83-84). Growing public complaints and protests from the Mexican government saw the initiative quietly shelved under State Department pressure, though the Administration claimed the main goal of encouraging the Mexican government to step up its own efforts at drug interdiction had been achieved, aided by a $1 million grant for the purchase of light aircraft for such purposes (Epstein 1977, p.83-84). In Panama in February 1971, where delicate negotiations were underway regarding sovereignty over the Canal Zone, the BNDD snatched a senior Panamanian official suspected of facilitating the shipment of narcotics. While the BNDD had fulfilled the orders of White House strategists that it was "expected to arrest and bring to trial at least one major international trafficker to give the entire foreign [counter-narcotics]

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[36] Initially developed as a substitute for morphine during World War II, later research in the U.S. found that methadone could block the euphoric effects of heroin and be introduced as a substitute in an effort to wean addicts off it, or at least regulate their intake with a controlled alternative. City and state authorities, supported by the federal efforts of the Nixon Administration, introduced methadone treatment clinics, especially in New York City. Far from being a potential silver bullet to address the heroin problem however, methadone predominantly turned out to be a stop gap for most addicts until the price of heroin came down, or it was used interchangeably with other drugs rather than gradually weaning addicts off their habit. Despite some small successes, the statistics speak to the general failure of the programme, or at least its original intention to radically reduce addiction levels: in the mid-1960s there were 60,000 heroin addicts in New York City, but by 1989 there were more than 200,000 (Maier 1989)

crusade credibility" (Epstein 1977, p.96), it had done so at the expense of sparking a diplomatic incident that had risked U.S. control of the Panama Canal.

Whatever the perceived successes and failures of these initiatives, they needed public and political support[37], as per the requirement of the successful securitisation of a threat, or as Epstein describes it:

> "Before a heroin crusade could be properly launched, public attention had to be focused on the drug menace […] If Americans could be persuaded that their lives and the lives of their children were being threatened by a rampant epidemic of narcotics addiction, Nixon's advisors presumed that they would not object to decisive government actions, such as no-knock warrants, pre-trial detention, wiretaps, and unorthodox strike forces – even if the emergency measures had to cross or circumvent the traditional rights of a suspect." (1977, p.138 & p.165)

Prior to a planned June, 1971 address to Congress, in which Nixon declared a national emergency, American ambassadors were recalled from various countries over the drug issue to begin stoking the fires of publicity and public concern. Much was made of the 'success' of Operation Intercept, and radio and television networks became eager to donate advertisement time to public information campaigns about the drug threat, to incorporate drug themes into their dramas, or even to create new dramas that focused on drug enforcement (Epstein 1977, p.165-172).

The public awareness campaign cumulated in Nixon's Special Message to Congress on June 17th, 1971, where language indicative of a speech act/securitising move included:

> "We must now candidly recognize that the deliberate procedures embodied in present efforts to control drug abuse are not sufficient in themselves. The problem has assumed the dimensions of a *national emergency*. I intend to take every step

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[37] Some initiatives remained 'off the books' however, such as one suggested strategy which sought to channel millions of dollars into a clandestine slush fund for the purposes of 'destroying or immobilising the highest level of drug traffickers', a euphemism for assassination. The effort was run through the BNDD, though the intention was never to make it accountable, and a CIA colonel with experience of coups and assassinations was recruited as the bureau's head of strategic intelligence. Egil Krough, a senior White House official with responsibility for organising and overseeing the Administration's counter-narcotics campaign, claimed that the only narcotics assassinations were in South East Asia as the CIA lured various traffickers into traps set by rivals, though other assistants indicated that some action was taken against the Latin American connection (See Epstein 1977, p.141-146). Whatever the actual outcome of the initiative, if assassination was considered to be a legitimate tool, then while this does not reflect a growing militarisation of counter-narcotics, it does indicate that foreign espionage and potentially lethal techniques were introduced into what had mainly been a domestic law-enforcement and foreign-diplomatic strategy towards combatting narcotics, opening a door that would make it easier for militarisation to ultimately step through.

necessary to deal with this *emergency* […] Despite the magnitude of the problem, despite our very limited success in meeting it […] we nevertheless have thus far failed to develop a concerted effort to find a *better solution* to this increasingly *grave threat* […] To wage an *effective war* against heroin addiction, we must have international cooperation. In order to secure such cooperation, I am initiating a *worldwide escalation* in our existing programs for the control of narcotics traffic." (Nixon 1971, emphasis added)

Shortly after his message, Nixon drove home the point to a meeting of media executives by declaring that, "drug traffic is public enemy number one domestically in the United States today and we must wage a *total offensive*, worldwide, nationwide, government-wide, and […] media-wide" (Epstein 1977, p.178, emphasis added). Such securitising rhetoric by officials, amplified and enhanced by a helpful media, achieved the purpose of raising awareness of the drug threat in the public consciousness[38]. Private polling by the White House showed that citizens in cities which had few if any heroin issues still believed drugs to be a leading threat to their safety (Epstein 1977, p.172), paving the way for acceptance of the required emergency measures.

In addition to making emergency measures such as Operation Intercept acceptable, the speech acts and securitising rhetoric used by Nixon and previous likeminded public figures allowed for institutional changes to be made, which would entrench drug enforcement domestically and abroad. A prime example was the gradual evolution of federal organisations, which saw their budgets and resources steadily grow thanks to a Congress unwilling to be seen as weak on crime by denying law enforcement the tools to do the job. The Bureau of Customs successfully made the case for the quadrupling of its narcotics interdiction budget between 1969-1970. It invested in a computerised system for collating intelligence on global narcotics traffic, as well as helicopters, drug dogs and an expanded force of agents to pursue international investigations (Epstein 1977, p.113). Yet the Bureau of Customs was one of multiple agencies and bodies dedicated to drug enforcement, and the increasing fragmentation and turf-wars over responsibilities needed addressing. In his Special

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[38] Alternatively, Thomas Johnson and Wayne Wanta (1996) suggest that, rather than Nixon driving public concern, he was merely responding to it. Using a path analysis model, they suggest that real world conditions set into motion the process of agenda-building during the early drug war (p.189). Increased drug arrests in the real world were picked up by the press. The press in turn devoted more coverage to the drug issue, which increased its salience in the minds of the public. Finally, the Nixon Administration reacted to this public concern by paying increased attention to drugs in policy and public statements. This was possibly in an effort to capture the support of middle-class voters worried about their family's and community's susceptibility to drugs, or to later compensate for growing negative views of Nixon as the Watergate scandal unfolded (p.189).

Message to Congress, Nixon not only sought to elucidate the narcotics threat, but to pave the way for fundamental institutional change. He declared that:

> "Our efforts have been fragmented through competing priorities, lack of communication, multiple authority, and limited and dispersed resources. The *magnitude and the severity* of the *present threat* will no longer permit this piecemeal and bureaucratically-dispersed effort at drug control. If we cannot *destroy the drug menace* in America, then it will surely in time *destroy us*." (Nixon 1971, emphasis added)

Consequently, in 1973, Nixon sent Reorganisation Plan No.2 for Congressional scrutiny. Upon approval, an Executive Order in July of that year drew the numerous agency threads together and created the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), a 'super agency' at the Department of Justice. It combined and streamlined the BNDD, U.S. Customs Drug Investigation, the Office of National Narcotics Intelligence, the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement, and the Narcotics Advance Research Management Team (Drug Enforcement Administration Museum 2014). It enjoyed a significant budget, staff and offices around the globe.

The DEA's growth into the hugely resourced, internationally connected agency it is today reflects the exponential growth of the drug war since Nixon's declaration. Its budget for 2014 was $2.87 billion, while it has over 222 domestic offices in the U.S., 86 offices in 67 countries around the world, and collectively employs more than 9,300 staff (Drug Enforcement Administration 2014a). This is in comparison to 1,470 staff and $74.9 million budget the DEA had at its disposal when it was formed in 1973 (Drug Enforcement Administration Museum 2014). It was a growth that did not necessarily guarantee militarisation. Initiatives from domestic methadone treatment, to intensive border inspection with Mexico, to involuntary extradition in Panama, bore little if any trace of overt military involvement, resource or cultural practice, despite the use by Nixon and various officials of words such as 'war', 'crusade' and 'offensive'. Such rhetoric aside, if examined in its entirety, it can be reasonably claimed that the initial, early-stage 'war on drugs' was essentially metaphorical, and that the forces deployed in it were predominantly law enforcement-based, supported in a secondary capacity by medical treatment. It would take presidencies after Nixon to progressively overtly militarise counter-narcotics policy,

especially in Latin America, as that region came to be seen as the most potent source of the drug threat.

Nixon's two immediate successors essentially held the line when dealing with the narcotics issue. Under President Ford, a 1975 White Paper on Drug Abuse confirmed "the validity of the basic Federal strategy of a balanced attack on both the supply and demand for drugs" (Cannon 1975). It highlighted the growing emphasis on international drug enforcement and disrupting supply – especially with regards to Latin America – by recommending that "a higher priority be given to development of international cooperation in preventing illicit production of drugs and that special attention be given to Mexico as the major source country for U.S. markets" (Cannon 1975). Ford endorsed this foreign counter-narcotics policy in his 1976 message to Congress, when he stated that "we must continue to provide technical and equipment assistance through cooperative enforcement efforts with U.S. agents stationed overseas, all aimed at strengthening drug control organizations within foreign countries" (Ford 1975).

It was a policy goal that could easily be stated today, and one that manifested itself diplomatically in Ford's dialogue with the leaders of Mexico and Colombia, the U.S. Attorney General's discussions with his Mexican counterpart concerning drug control problems, and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's engagement with senior officials throughout Latin American on the narcotics issue (Ford 1975). Under President Carter the status quo approach essentially remained, with various domestic laws toughened up, including the right of law enforcement to seize assets from arrested traffickers and distributors[39]. However, in a gradual shift that was to have repercussions for the focusing of the drug war mainly onto Latin America, the late 1970s saw cocaine emerge as a serious issue, along with associated violence.

Concerns about drug use, especially of marijuana by youth, abounded, with one-in-ten 18 year olds reportedly indulging in it each day, and two-thirds of 18-25 year olds admitting to having tried some kind of illegal drug, including 22 million Americans admitting to cocaine use (Feiling 2009, p.38). Such numbers meant high demand, and thus significant profits to be made. By 1979, cocaine ranked as one of Florida's biggest imports, totalling $10

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[39] Eric Blumenson and Eva Nilsen (1998, p.40-41) contend that such laws generated the perverse incentive for law enforcement agencies to increasingly turn to asset seizures and drug-enforcement-related federal grants in order to compensate for budgetary shortfalls. This, as a consequence, helped produce self-financing law-enforcement agencies, whether local, state or federal, that were divorced from any meaningful legislative oversight.

billion a year, and the competition between Colombian and Cuban traffickers saw a drug-related murder in Miami every day (Feiling 2009, p.38-39). Violence spilled over into regular life, with one notorious incident featuring cartel assassins murdering two competitors in broad daylight at the Miami Dadeland shopping mall, spraying automatic weapons fire indiscriminately as they fled (Posner 2009). It portended a record increase in the Miami murder rate – 349 in 1979; 569 in 1980; 621 in 1981 – as the Colombian Cali and Medellin organisations violently displaced Cuban rivals and then turned on each other. It was a spiral of violence that fed media interest, which in turn promoted fear. The likes of *Time* magazine declared Miami to be America's 'crime-capital', supported by statements such as "I've been through two wars and no combat zone is as dangerous as Dade County", uttered by one prominent businessman (Posner 2009).

If drugs were regarded as a moral and social concern, measured in crime figures and numbers of addicts, then the trade behind them quickly came to be viewed as a greater security threat. It had turned certain cities and areas of the U.S. into battlegrounds that posed a direct threat to public safety and law and order. The pendulum had swung from a market for heroin to a taste for cocaine. The dominance of Latin America in the production of that drug, and of spawning cartels that trafficked it and waged war over its proceeds, meant that a forceful and proactive response was required to meet this emerging threat.

4.5 The Reagan Administration 1981-1989

In 1986, President Reagan invoked a specifically militarised period of American history to highlight the nation's tradition of combatting evil, in this case the threat of illicit drugs:

> "My generation will remember how we swung into action when we were attacked in World War Two. This war was not just fought by the fellows flying the planes or driving the tanks, but also at home by a mobilised nation. Well, now we're in another war for our freedom, and it's time for all of us to pull together again." (Feiling 2009, p.64)

If Nixon had declared what was essentially a metaphorical War on Drugs, then Reagan would begin the process of transforming such rhetoric into action and introduce militarised elements into what had primarily been a law-enforcement and diplomacy-focused campaign[40].

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[40] Diplomatic avenues were still important, even with an increased emphasis on enforcement. Within months of the Reagan Administration taking office, the 1979 extradition treaty between the U.S. and Colombia was finally

Federal authorities estimated that by 1980, 70 percent of all cocaine and marijuana entering the country passed through South Florida (Posner 2009). In response to drug-fuelled violence in Miami, Reagan highlighted the problem and identified the possible solution:

> "Massive immigration, rampant crime, and epidemic drug smuggling have created a serious problem. It is my belief that the Federal Government has a special responsibility to […] do what it can to reduce and, hopefully, eliminate these problems." (Ronald Reagan Presidential Library 2014)

Shortly afterwards, in January 1982, the South Florida Drug Task Force was formed and steered at a Cabinet level under Vice President George Bush. The task force combined personnel from several different agencies, including the DEA, FBI, Customs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS). It was designed to squeeze the cartels logistically through enforcement and interdiction, as well as financially, and provided a template for similar task forces in other troubled areas. Most relevantly, the task force marked the first time that the U.S. military − albeit on a small scale − were actively deployed with the objective of drug interdiction, with elements of the Army and Navy mobilised to patrol the South Florida coast and surrounding waters (DEA Museum 2014).

Such initiatives highlighted the potential for military or associated assets to be used in counter-narcotics on an operational level, but the floodgates of domestic drug war militarisation were opened in 1981 with the passage of the Military Cooperation and Law Enforcement Act. This allowed extensive sharing of drug interdiction intelligence, training, tactics, technology and weaponry between the Pentagon and federal, state and local police departments (Balko 2006, p.7). In allowing such measures, as justified by the securitised threat of illicit narcotics and, increasingly, the groups responsible for trafficking them, the Act began eroding the Posse Comitatus Act, a Civil-War era law that prohibited the use of the military for civilian policing. Military personnel were technically still absent from domestic law enforcement, with the exception of the drug patrols of the National Guard and Coast Guard, allowed by the loophole of them being state rather than federally controlled. However, when increasingly paramilitary police forces were gaining access to the kind of intelligence, training and weaponry as used by the Pentagon, then the lines between civilian

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ratified, raising the possibility of drug traffickers being tried and serving harsh sentences in the U.S. Such fears would later spark violent campaigns in Colombia by the likes of Pablo Escobar in an attempt to force the Colombian government not to extradite. Though they resulted in the annulment and banning of extradition in Colombia for a time, such campaigns only added to the security issues that prompted the militarising of the drug war.

enforcement and military force became increasingly blurred, especially when the Clinton Administration later accelerated the policy.

During Reagan's second term, the drug war was still a major priority but remained unresolved. Arguably, the issue of illicit narcotics originating in Latin America was getting worse. By the mid-1980s cocaine was no longer the preserve of those who could afford it, for crack cocaine, a potent and far cheaper alternative, was flourishing. Poor communities and inner-cities were being devastated just as during the earlier heroin scare, especially in New York City, where an estimated one million of the nation's five million cocaine users resided (Gross 1985). A phenomenally addictive substance, the hunger for crack meant a demand for more cocaine powder to produce it, thus the need for increased supply and trafficking[41].

A consequence of the government trying to address the problem was the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, one of the most punitive legislations of the drug war (U.S. Congress 1986). Title 1 was named 'Anti-Drug Enforcement', and set the tone for the entire act. Domestically, hundreds of millions of dollars were set aside for new prisons and drug education and treatment, and its most consequential domestic action was the introduction of mandatory minimum sentences for drug offences, whatever the context or rationale. Of particular interest is the content of Title 3, 'Interdiction', particularly in relation to efforts in foreign theatres. Its principal findings state that, as well as domestic efforts:

> "A balanced, coordinated multifaceted strategy for combating the narcotics drug
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> abuse and trafficking in the United States should include […] source country drug
>
> eradication […] increased emphasis on stopping narcotics traffickers in countries
>
> through which drugs are transhipped […and] increased emphasis on the interdiction
>
> of drugs and drug smugglers at the borders of the United States, in the air, at sea, and
>
> on the land."   (U.S. Congress 1986)

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[41] However, the perception that high murder and crime rates were as a result of psychological disturbance caused by drugs was disputed when 218 'drug related' murders in New York City in 1988 were examined. Only five were found to have been caused by the psychoactive effects of crack cocaine, in comparison to 21 which were caused by alcohol consumption, with the remainder attributable to 'turf wars' among rival drug gangs (Baum 1993, p.71). Likewise, the government assertion of the time that cocaine was an instantly addictive substance was undermined by figures produced by its own Government Accountability Office, which found that of the more than 6 million Americans who used cocaine in 1990, one-tenth used it weekly and only 5.4 percent of all users consumed it daily (Baum 1993, p.71). Such findings challenged the attitude both of the time and during previous years by the likes of Hobson, Rockefeller and Nixon's advisors, that drug consumption precipitated a direct moral decline in a user or addict, or that they became crime-embracing slaves to drugs. In other words, empirical evidence started to suggest that the predominantly morality-based motivator for the prohibition of drugs was neglecting the true social and economic complexity surrounding the issue. Nevertheless, the predominance of a morality argument and the presence of a threat to the 'correct state of mind' persisted beyond the Reagan Administration, with ONDCP director William Bennett, for example, declaring in 1989 that "[Drug use] makes a mockery of virtue" (Baum 1993, p.72).

Such recommendations not only established the template for foreign counter-narcotics objectives for the following three decades, but also endorsed a more proactive role for the U.S. military in such operations. Further findings stated that:

> "The Department of Defence and the use of its resources should be an integral part of a comprehensive, national drug interdiction programme […and] since the amendment of the Posse Comitatus Act in 1981, the Department of Defence has assisted in the effort to interdict drugs, *but they can do more*."
>
> (U.S. Congress 1986, emphasis added)

The appeal for, and approval of, increased and proactive involvement of the Department of Defence (henceforth DOD) was crucial in the militarisation of the drug war. Even if U.S. military resources were not fully unleashed in a true 'war' on drugs, the act nevertheless allowed a green light for the Reagan Administration and its successors to actively involve the U.S. military and intelligence establishment in counter-narcotics without fear of congressional complaint or sanction. In the spirit of the DOD 'doing more', while the legislation was passed in October 1986, the Reagan Administration had sought to make early headway on the participation of the military, and justification thereof, with the issuing of National Security Decision Directive 221 the previous April, which deemed that:

> "The expanding scope of global narcotics trafficking has created a situation which today adds another significant dimension to the law enforcement and public health aspects of this international problem *and threatens the national security of the United States*."
>
> (White House 1986, p.1, emphasis added)

To deal with such a threat, the policy implementation section charged the Secretary of Defence, in conjunction with the Attorney General and Secretary of State, to:

> "Develop and implement any necessary modifications to applicable statutes, regulations, procedures, and guidelines to *enable U.S. military forces to support counter-narcotics efforts more actively*, consistent with the maintenance of force readiness and training."
>
> (White House 1986, p.3, emphasis added)

In addition, the resources of America's intelligence community were also mobilised with the directives that:

> "The Director of Central Intelligence, in consultation with the Attorney General and other relevant agencies, and acting in accordance with E.O. 12333[42], *should enhance, where appropriate, support of the drug enforcement effort targeted against international drug traffickers*" and that "The Director of Central Intelligence should ensure that the intelligence community *gives special emphasis […] on all aspects of the international illicit drug trade*."   (White House 1986, p.4, emphasis added)

As can be seen with repeated references to the Attorney General and the language used, the involvement of military and intelligence resources was intended to be in support of the law-enforcement establishment, notionally the principal security actor against illicit drug trafficking, as well as with foreign governments and their native security forces. It was because law-enforcement was supposed to take the lead, that elements of the defence establishment took issue with the idea of the military going beyond a supporting role and becoming a de-facto lead counter-narcotics agency. In 1988 the Secretary of Defence himself, Frank Carlucci, publicly stated that while the military should be supportive, he was "very much against giving the military arrest authority or getting them into law enforcement"[43], a sentiment that echoed the position of the preceding Defence Secretary, Casper Weinberger (New York Times 1988)[44].

As a demonstration of such supporting operations – with non-arrest caveats intact – Operation Blast Furnace set the tone. Three months after NSDD 221, a contingent of U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopters were deployed from their station in Panama to Bolivia to provide air transportation to native counter-narcotics police in an effort to locate and destroy cocaine labs. Under the direction of civilian DEA personnel, the army provided the means for

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[42] Executive Order 12333 was intended to strengthen the effectiveness of intelligence agencies and promote better information sharing between them - especially the CIA - and other federal agencies. The full text can be found at: http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12333.html

[43] This rebuke was in response to another Administration official, Education Secretary – and future ONDCP director – William Bennett's suggestion that the U.S. consider "a broader use of military force against both the production and shipment of drugs" (New York Times 1988). This was an example of how, often, politicians would take a more militant stance towards counter-narcotics than the military itself preferred. In 1988, presidential candidate and Republican Senator, Bob Dole, had also called for using "the full force of our military" in the drug war (New York Times 1988).

[44] This was a few years prior to the end of the Cold War, and before the Bush Administration entered office, with both events swinging the argument in favour of more military intervention, due to either exploiting military resources to take on new challenges after the fall of communism, or a more pro-active counter-narcotics stance by Bush Administration officials. See the below section on the Bush Administration 1989-1993.

under-resourced and undertrained Bolivians to disrupt cocaine manufacturing for the four months they were deployed. Yet, as soon as they left, production and export returned to normal, in addition to the corruption and complicity observed in many Bolivian officers while the U.S. military were in theatre (Abbott 1988, p.95). Ironically, as this operation unfolded, NSDD 221 began to take effect and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act navigated its way through Congress. Investigations also commenced into the involvement of the CIA and State Department in aiding drug traffickers to fund the Contras in their anti-Sandinista revolt in Nicaragua. This demonstrated that – just as with Mexico and Panama during Nixon's time – broader foreign policy priorities could still eclipse drug war concerns when geo-strategically convenient (Scott and Marshall 1991, p.8-9).

Towards the end of the Reagan Administration, international diplomatic efforts were also revisited and revised, and reflected the evolution of the drug war into a struggle between the state and an organised criminal enemy. The latter had become a more solid and definable threat, that in theory could be physically beaten through enforcement, rather than dealing with the more abstract and health-related issue of drug addiction. The 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances toned down the moralising of 1961 and instead took a more sober assessment of the threat the drug trade presented, declaring recognition of:

> "The links between illicit traffic and other related organized criminal activities which undermine the legitimate economies and *threaten the stability, security and sovereignty of States*" and how "transnational criminal organizations […] *penetrate, contaminate and corrupt the structures of government,* legitimate commercial and financial business, and society at all its levels."
>
> (United Nations 1988, p.1, emphasis added)

While concern for the health and wellbeing of society was still apparent, such language made clear that it was now the state itself that was threatened by the consequences of the drug trade, in economic, security and governmental terms, not just moral or societal. The issue had become effectively securitised. Emily Crick argues that the shift towards a state-based way of thinking allowed room for the war-metaphor regarding combatting drugs to enter into the discourse (2012, p.411), and for that rhetoric to be translated into action in the form of gradual militarisation. As repeated references in presidential speeches to threats against 'national' security suggest, the state was a recognisable entity entitled to protection, and

traditionally the armed forces of a nation state (and intelligence agencies) have been the principal guarantors of such defence. In the post-war world the threat of communism had preoccupied these institutions, but as that had dwindled, a growing alternative threat to the state in the form of narcotics and its traffickers was ready to assume prominence.

4.6 The Bush Administration 1989-1993

In 1989, with the Cold War ending, the attention of the U.S. national security establishment increasingly turned towards the drug war, as demonstrated by the early rhetoric and initiatives of the George H.W. Bush administration. Bush, as Vice President, had overseen the South Florida Drug Task Force and had often called for greater participation of the military and CIA in drug interdiction (Scott and Marshall 1991, p.2). He was supported in this stance by Richard Cheney, his Secretary of Defence, who emphasised the threat against the state. He branded drugs "a direct threat to the sovereignty and security of our country", and aimed to challenge this by ordering commanders to develop plans to provide operational support to counter-narcotics missions in Latin America, and vowed a "more aggressive and robust" U.S. presence in the Andean region (Scott and Marshall 1991, p.2). To facilitate these activities, National Security Directive 18 was issued in August 1989, declaring that:

> "One of the *principal foreign policy objectives* of this Administration is to reduce, and if possible eliminate, the flow of illegal narcotic substances to the United States. The impact of illegal narcotics use on our society *has been and continues to be devastating*. (White House 1989, p.1, emphasis added)

Under NSD 18, the Bush Administration placed the war on drugs on the centre stage of its foreign policy priorities. Like Reagan's past directive, it sought to effectively mobilise the U.S. military and intelligence community in the service of drug interdiction, directing that:

> "The Secretary of Defence, in conjunction with the Secretary of State, shall revise DOD policy directives and procedures *to expand DOD support of U.S. counter-narcotics efforts and to permit DOD personnel to conduct training* for host government personnel and operational support activities anywhere in the Andean region. DOD personnel will not accompany host government forces on actual field operations" and that the "Director of Central Intelligence, coordinating with the

counter-narcotics intelligence community, *shall similarly develop detailed intelligence programs."* (White House 1989, p.3, emphasis added)

Administration policy quickly came to have a direct strategic impact. The 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama in Operation Just Cause was primarily about securing America's interests in the region. However, the fact that the Panamanian dictator, General Manuel Noriega, had been complicit in cocaine trafficking for years with the Colombian Medellin cartel (despite at the same time being allowed to indulge in it due to his support for Contra operations in Nicaragua) was offered as one of several reasons for his ouster (Feiling 2009, p.202).

More covert counter-narcotics support by the military was provided in the Andean region as per the direction of NSD 18, specifically in Colombia, the most problematic country at the time and the world's largest cocaine producer. U.S. Green Berets were deployed to Colombia as trainers for native counter-narcotics forces. Though officially they did not accompany forces on field operations, as per the stipulations of NSD 18, practical necessity meant that U.S. forces would sometimes accompany the Colombians on raids in order to ensure that training was proving effective and to monitor levels of corruption (Smith 2006, p.164).

At the same time Pablo Escobar, head of the Medellin drug cartel, was in open warfare with other drug barons and the Colombian state, and his capture became a priority. With U.S. military training and strict security vetting, a native Colombian unit known as *Bloque de Búsqueda* (Search Bloc) was created to track Escobar down, and was substantially aided by U.S. military intelligence. A special American unit known as the Intelligence Support Activity (ISA), was deployed to utilise their intelligence gathering and surveillance expertise. Their airborne monitoring and cell-phone triangulation technology allowed for the capturing and gradual erosion of the Medellin hierarchy before locating Escobar himself, who was killed by Colombian forces in 1993 (Smith 2006, p.165-168).

In 1989 the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) was created as part of the Executive Office of the U.S. President. Its remit was to establish policies, priorities and objectives to eradicate illicit drug use and trafficking, criminality, violence and health issues (White House 2014). Led by the Director of National Drug Control Policy, referred to as the 'Drug Czar' by politicians and the media, the office advised the president on drug policy and coordinated drug-control activities and related funding across the Federal government (White House 2014). The director oversaw both international and domestic anti-drug efforts, a role that was deemed important enough to be raised to cabinet-level a few years later.

The differing experience of each subsequent director is indicative of the evolution of U.S. counter-narcotics towards a more enforcement-based approach. The first director, William Bennett, came from academia and served as Education Secretary under Reagan (New York Times 1989). He was succeeded in 1991 by Bob Martinez, a former governor of Florida during Miami's cartel wars, who had emphasised law enforcement and prison expansion (New York Times 1991). As the Clinton Administration entered office, Martinez was succeeded in 1993 by Lee Brown, a career police officer who had led departments in Atlanta, Houston and New York (Treaster 1993). Then, in 1996, General Barry McCaffrey (who had led U.S. Southern Command and so had experience in utilising military resources to combat Latin American drug trafficking) assumed the directorship until Clinton left office (Zoroya 1996). From academic, to politician, to law enforcement officer, to military commander; those who occupied the post of ONDCP director reflected the progressively securitised then militarised enforcement-oriented approach to U.S. counter-narcotics policy.

Such a process was well in train when, in 1990, as part of an additional $1.2 billion request to fight the drug war – on top of the $8.8 billion anti-drug budget that already existed – President Bush recommended a 50 percent increase in military spending. This raised the Pentagon's counter-narcotics operations budget to $1.2 billion a year, up from $800 million, a third of which was to be used for U.S. programs to help the cocaine producers of Latin America, namely Colombia, Peru and Bolivia (Burke 1990)[45]. Along with greater active military involvement in counter-narcotics, this demonstrated a growing emphasis on attempting to curb narcotics trafficking by improving the security situations in the producer countries. Such a strategy was to come into its own towards the end of the Clinton Administration.

4.7 The Clinton Administration 1993-2000

Remaining on the course set by its predecessors, within the first year of the Clinton Administration, Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-14 was issued, focusing exclusively on Latin America and cocaine. It echoed rhetoric going back to Captain Hobson's day by lamenting that, "the scourge of illegal narcotics is severely damaging the social fabric of our society" (White House 1993), and consequently the U.S. would:

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[45] Despite this increase, some politicians still felt not enough had been done to utilise military capability in drug war operations. Democratic Senator Joe Biden was an outspoken proponent of U.S. efforts against drugs, and a September 1992 report by the Senate Judiciary Committee, which he chaired, argued that the Bush Administration had failed to grant sufficient money and power to the U.S. military to shift its mission to fighting illegal drugs (Baum 1993, p.74).

"Treat as a *serious national security threat* the operations of international criminal narcotics syndicates, requiring an *extraordinary* and coordinated response by civilian and *military agencies* engaged in national security."

<div align="right">(White House 1993, emphasis added)</div>

Yet the Directive also marked a change in emphasis, shifting from efforts mainly targeting interdiction of drug traffic, towards a strategy that distributed effort across three programs (White House 1993):

- Expanded assistance to partner countries for the strengthening of their native security institutions and the encouragement of broad economic growth and equity in an effort to erode the attraction of, or reliance on, the drug trade.

- The destruction of narco-trafficking organisations through law-enforcement, erosion of funds by squeezing money laundering, and the control of precursor chemicals essential for drug manufacture.

- The continuation of interdiction efforts by U.S. agencies, but a gradual shift of emphasis from transit zones towards source countries, complemented by U.S. support for regional nations' own interdiction efforts, both civilian and military.

Though there had been previous instances of direct or covert assistance by U.S. military and intelligence assets (Operation Blast Furnace in Bolivia, or ISA operations in Colombia), such a strategic shift marked the beginnings of a move towards sustained counter-narcotics initiatives of the kind that have been selected as case studies. This strategy focused on eliminating, or at least mitigating, drug trafficking by taking the fight to source countries. There was also recognition that a vital component was the enhancement of the security institutions of those countries, alongside the traditional approaches of disrupting/eliminating traffickers and improving interdiction.

The 1997 National Drug Control Strategy, overseen by ONDCP director and former military officer Barry McCaffrey, sought to establish the foundations for such initiatives by calling for a flexible and long-term strategic vision of a ten-year commitment to combat illicit narcotics. The document sustained the recommendation for a broad strategy, including the admission that drug education, treatment and demand reduction were the 'number one priority', but putting equal weight on supply reduction by eliminating coca cultivation,

supporting source countries' counter-narcotics efforts, and stepping up interdiction in transit zones (McCaffrey 1997).

Yet at the same time as foreign counter-narcotics policy increasingly focused on support for source countries, the process of domestic police militarisation that began with the 1981 Military Cooperation and Law Enforcement Act was supercharged by the 1997 National Defence Authorisation Security Act. The act created the Law Enforcement Support Program, an agency that organised transfer of excess or unwanted military equipment to civilian police forces to assist counter-narcotics in their jurisdictions (Balko 2006, p.8). This led to a huge rise in the availability of battlefield weaponry, equipment and vehicles at the disposal of not just large police forces, but even rural county sheriff's departments. Between January 1997 and December 1999, the Law Enforcement Support Program handled 3.4 million orders of Pentagon equipment from 11,000 police forces across all 50 states (Balko 2006, p.8). At the same time, it was found that 90 percent of cities with populations of 50,000 or more had at least one SWAT team which, given that such small towns and cities often lack the budgets to form such teams independently, suggested that Pentagon support was instrumental to many such teams' existence (Balko 2006, p.9).

Another study which highlighted police militarisation was conducted by Peter Kraska and Victor Kappeler (1997). They found that, by 1997, of the police departments participating in the study, during the initial setup and training of their Paramilitary Police Units (PPUs, i.e. SWAT teams) 46 percent had drawn expertise from police officers with past special operations experience in the military, and 43 percent had trained with active-duty military experts in special operations (Kraska and Kappeler 1997, p.11). This meant that almost half of surveyed police departments had been heavily influenced by past or present military training and culture during the formation of their PPUs.

Additionally, when asked about the training that their PPUs continued to receive *after* their formation, 30 percent of departments reported that officers with past special operations experience in the military were involved, and 46 percent admitted to training with active-duty special operations experts (Kraska and Kappeler 1997, p.11). Therefore, not only were militarily-experienced individuals involved in moulding the institutional culture of newly formed PPUs, but their influence endured well into the continuous training of unit personnel. Such arrangements and cultural cross-pollination could be traced back to the early efforts at civilian and military institutional cooperation, such as the South Florida Drug Task Force, where elements of the armed forces cross-trained and co-deployed with their law enforcement counterparts. With the more proactive attitudes towards counter-narcotics of the

Reagan and Bush Administrations, the number of search and/or arrest warrants involving drugs surged, and responsibility for executing such warrants increasingly fell to PPUs. The result was that by the second term of the Clinton Administration, a typical unit could be called out on between 200-700 drug raids annually (Kraska and Kappeler 1997, p.7).

The statistics relating to the resources police departments received from the Law Enforcement Support Program, as well as the influence wielded by military-minded trainers and members of PPUs, were indicative of the para-militarising of U.S. law enforcement efforts to combat the drug trade. If PPUs were more actively involved in drug enforcement than ever before, and had become far more militarised in resources, training and institutional culture, this constitutes a prime example of militarisation. Though the above examples concern domestic U.S. drug enforcement, the importation of military resources and cultural practices into civilian institutions established a precedent that would become observable in the kind of support eventually granted to, and encouraged within, the specialist police and military counter-narcotics units of Latin American countries.

Meanwhile, in Colombia, though the Medellin Cartel's Pablo Escobar had been killed in 1993 and the leaders of the rival Cali Cartel had, by 1995, all been arrested, the security situation was still serious. Conflict perpetrated by smaller successor cartels, right-wing paramilitaries and Marxist FARC guerrillas all contributed to pushing the country towards being a failed state. Whether overly simplistic or not, it was widely felt that the drug trade perpetuated conflict and instability by providing funding for the warring parties, as well as being a lucrative trade to fight over in its own right, regardless of combatants' broader objectives.

In one of his last foreign trips, Clinton visited Colombia in August 2000, bringing $1.3 billion of aid and sixty military helicopters, including $200 million to promote democracy, judicial reform, human rights and economic development (Hancock 2000). The allocation of funding for civil development was an important fig-leaf for U.S. politicians wary of becoming militarily involved in Colombia's civil war. Yet if the drug trade was felt to be an integral part of that civil war, and the long-term policy had been to provide military support in combatting that trade, then it was difficult to envision how U.S. support in Colombia's civil war and drug war[46] could be so easily kept separate and compartmentalised. Whatever the complications that would ensue as policy aspiration met pragmatic reality, the

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[46] Clinton described the U.S. approach as "pro-peace and anti-drug" (Hancock 2000)

first truly sustained and comprehensive U.S. foreign counter-narcotics initiative in Latin America was underway: Plan Colombia.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the historical context for the case studies that follow, and has demonstrated that the gradual emergence of the War on Drugs, and its gradual militarisation, are applicable to sections that comprise the security spectrum, where progression is observable. From the non-politicised early sale and consumption of what would become illicit narcotics, through to the gradual politicisation of the issue from the early-to-mid 20th Century, to the securitisation of narcotics beginning with Nixon, and the first steps into militarisation from Reagan onwards, we are able to see the evolution of the security status of narcotics, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Non-Politicised	Politicised	Securitised	Militarised
Medical/retail use of narcotics	Temperence and health concerns	Growth in law enforcement	Military support and resources
Late 19th & Early 20th Centuries	1910s to 1960s	1970s onwards	1980s onwards

What was initially considered a minor problem was gradually brought into focus, as growing temperance movements and public health concerns presented narcotics as a moral and social problem on par with alcohol and vice. Early institutions such as the (small and undermanned) Bureau of Narcotics were set up to offer a token response to the drug problem. However, general consumption was at such a minimal level that the 'problem', such as it was, hardly registered on the radar compared to broader post-war concerns regarding the economy, communism, crime, race-relations, and so on.

It was the growth of drug-taking during the 1960s, particularly of heroin, and the accompanying political encouragement of popular fears, that helped precipitate the securitisation of the narcotics issue. By making the case that drugs and addicts posed a threat to society, rather than just being a niche problem that could be ignored or locked away, that threat then demanded emergency measures, hence the growth of counter-narcotics institutions

and resources under Nixon. With the issue firmly securitised by Reagan's time, but little progress seemingly made in addressing it, a more bellicose solution was invited. Such a response was supported by the fact that violent cartel wars were actively breaking out in South Florida, and whether introducing a military aspect was correct or not, the violence was not questionable government spinning, as with statistics concerning addicts, but observable, bloody fact.

The creation of multiple drug agencies or initiatives, their ultimate merger into the DEA, the continuation of other powerful agencies such as U.S. Customs, and the crucial introduction of a military component (with the approval of DOD involvement in counter-narcotics with the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act), are all demonstrative of the kind of institutional expansion that would see it increasingly difficult to de-securitise the narcotics threat. Measurable success would arguably justify cutting budgets and resources, which most bureaucracies and agencies are resistant to, and so as it grows, the beast needs to be fed more, which prompts further growth, and so on. Eric Blumenson and Eva Nilsen observe that if the war on drugs may be deemed irrational as a public policy, then it is perfectly rational as a political and bureaucratic strategy, where the potential rewards at stake are finance and prestige (1998, p.39-40). If questions concerning their scale and purpose cannot be ignored, then institutions may seek to redefine their worth and justify budgets by demonstrating their utility in other areas of national concern. This arguably occurred in calls for the U.S. military and intelligence agencies to redirect some attention to the drug war once the Cold War concluded. They sought new worlds to conquer at the risk of losing their armies.

The principal point is that there are certain historical and social reasons why prohibition of drugs has become so important in the U.S. This essentially moral crusade, born of self-interest in protecting the American citizen and thus society from the scourge of drug abuse, has been coupled with America's geopolitical dominance and consequent ability to influence global policy through direct nation-state relations, or the umbrella measures of various UN conventions. Cracks have begun to appear, such as the temporary withdrawal of Bolivia from the 1961 Single Convention (Washington Office on Latin America 2013). Nevertheless, whether by coercion or willing cooperation from others, the U.S. has established a consensus on prohibiting the drug trade and coming down hard on illicit trafficking and the threat to national security and society it is perceived to represent.

Combatting the international drug trade has increasingly utilised military resources and methods, either by involving the military directly in overt or covert supporting roles, or of the militarisation of civilian and intelligence agencies. Concerns were raised about a

creeping law enforcement role for the DOD. However, the small but pivotal introduction of direct military support in foreign counter-narcotics operations by presidential directive, along with Congressional legislation authorising and encouraging such support, pointed towards the growing militarisation of counter-narcotics policy. This was in addition to initiatives from Reagan to Clinton that saw military culture, training, resources and weaponry increasingly at the disposal of domestic American law enforcement agencies and police forces.

The following chapters analyse the extent of this phenomenon in U.S. foreign counter-narcotics, in Colombia and Mexico respectively.

CHAPTER 5

U.S. Counter-narcotics Militarisation and Colombia 2000-2013

5.1 Introduction

Colombia is one of the largest drug producing states in the world, and while marijuana and heroin account for some of its illicit drug output, cocaine dominates. While tonnage production of fresh coca leaf has halved since 2005, from 555,400 that year, it still stood at 231,700 in 2012, with a potential result of 309 tons of pure cocaine (UNODC 2014, Annex 1 p.iv). From the early-1980s onwards, Colombian cocaine, and those who trafficked and distributed it, eventually became a national security priority for the United States. American policy towards Colombia increasingly became defined by counter-narcotics. The emphasis gradually switched away from interdiction by U.S. military and law enforcement at the American border or coastline, towards tackling the problem at source and eliminating the production and trafficking of cocaine in the Andean region.

As internal security in Colombia declined towards the late-1990s, coupled with a failure to significantly degrade the cocaine trade, the Colombian government, in close partnership with the U.S., embarked on Plan Colombia. It was a comprehensive initiative designed to re-establish state security and combat the cocaine trade. As the largest financial and military contributor, the U.S. and its counter-narcotics policy strongly influenced Colombian policy. The nature of the relationship effectively means that the study of the militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy also entails looking at how Colombian policy became militarised under U.S. direction and support. This was often embraced by the Colombian military despite initial reservations, as well as a security establishment and government desperate to improve internal security.

This analysis focuses on the build-up to Plan Colombia, exploring Colombia's long-standing military ties with America, and the subsequent development and employment of Plan Colombia itself, followed by Plan Patriota and the Consolidation phase. This provides a set and focused time frame, allowing enough scope to analyse how U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia became militarised according to the elements of the militarisation framework, i.e. making military, institutionalisation, and criteria of violence. These sections cumulatively explore how U.S. – and by implication, Colombian – counter-narcotics policy developed.

5.2 U.S. military and counter-narcotics support pre-Plan Colombia

The United States and Colombia shared a military relationship for many years prior to American policy becoming influenced by the War on Drugs, and subsequent expansion and deepening of military ties. In the post-1945 global political environment, Colombia's relative prosperity, as well as an essentially democratic system, made it, in the view of the U.S., a standard bearer for the kind of reliable, capitalist, anti-communist ally it wished to encourage in Latin America. It was a beacon of economic growth for four decades (even if dubiously distributed) and one which honoured its foreign loans as many neighbours defaulted in the 1980s (McLean 2002, p.124).

Such positive relations extended to the military sphere. Colombia was the only Latin American country that contributed troops to the Korean War, and the remainder of the 1950s saw U.S. military relations with Colombia strengthen. Following the signing of a "Military Assistance Agreement" between the two countries in 1952, the U.S. established army, navy and air force attaché offices in Bogotá (Crandall 2008, p.21). Involvement was further extended when, in 1961, the U.S. sent its first Military Training Team (MTT) to help train the Colombian military in a broad range of areas. Such effort was prompted by the assessment of a CIA team visit in 1958, who determined that a significant nation-building package was required to mitigate and eventually end the effects of a low-level civil war called *Le Violencia* that had been underway for a decade (Sweig 2002, p.122). Absence of state authority in rural areas, inequitable land distribution, and widespread lawlessness and poverty needed addressing, with suggested solutions involving strengthening the judiciary, significant land reform and the elimination of the rural guerrilla insurgency (Sweig 2002, p.122).

The diagnosis of Colombia's problems in 1958 – which played a significant role in the rise of the drug trade – were not dissimilar from analyses conducted in the late-1990s, and in neither case was the recommended nation-building pursued by policy-makers. Yet, like the U.S. response to the drug trade in the late 20th Century, in the early-1960s security-based solutions were emphasised instead. While MTTs did instruct the Colombian military in civic-project themed supply, engineering and sanitation efforts, direct military training concerning intelligence, counter-insurgency, psychological warfare and special operations was of equal if not superior priority (Crandall 2008, p.21). Such initiatives, along with the permanent military presence of the attachés, was indicative of the U.S. desire to see Colombia sustain the positives associated with being a regional ally, as well as increasing its own capacity to promote hemispheric security.

So important was Western hemispheric security to the U.S. that for several decades military support to the countries of the region had been institutionalised through a variety of legislation, programs and schemes. The Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961 put most DOD spending on foreign military aid under the supervision of the State Department, the two departments that would eventually play the leading roles in Plan Colombia (Isacson 2005, p.17). However, it also allowed Congress to place limits on such assistance based on certain oversights, such as budgetary matters or human rights and civil democratic compliance by Latin American forces (Isacson 2005, p.17). Operating under the umbrella of the FAA were three direct military support programs. The Military Assistance Program (MAP) had provided the bulk of military aid until, in 1976, the educational component was separated out, creating the International Military Education and Training program (IMET). Thereafter the educational expenses were met for virtually all Latin American military cadets and officers who attended the U.S. Army's School of the Americas, while MAP continued to supply grants of money and weaponry to regional partners until it was phased out in the late-1980s (Isacson 2005, p.18). Subsequently, weapons transfers as well as some services and training were channelled through the Foreign Military Financing program (FMF), and taken altogether between 1980 and 1991, MAP and FMF contributed more than $2 billion to Western hemisphere security forces, while IMET contributed another $110 million (Isacson 2005, p.18).

As illustrated in Chapter 4, it was the growing threat posed by the drug trade to broader Western hemispheric security, as well as to U.S. national security itself, that saw counter-narcotics grow in importance in the civil and military relationship between the U.S. and Colombia. American foreign policy and drug policy towards Colombia effectively became synonymous. By the end of the century, the U.S. expressed serious concerns regarding Colombia's capacity to control the drug threat and remain a functioning state. According to a report compiled by Senator Bob Graham and retired General Brent Scowcroft (2000, p.13), the resulting U.S. support meant that Colombia had become the third largest beneficiary of U.S. security assistance in the world, behind only Israel and Egypt (U.S. Congress 1999a).

U.S. counter-narcotics assistance to Colombia only formally began in 1973 when the two countries signed a bilateral agreement officially allowing counter-narcotics funding and aid to be transferred. Within five years, however, what had been an important but relatively secondary concern had increased in prominence so rapidly that the U.S. diplomatic and policy establishment responsible for the region, and the issue of drugs, could not help but be

surprised. Robert Drexler, a former Foreign Service officer, summed up the situation at the time:

> "By 1978 […] the drug syndicates had grown so powerful that the Colombian authorities had insufficient strength to overcome them […] We had not foreseen it three or four years earlier […] American authorities had become concerned with drug trafficking in the early 1970s [but] there was no sense of crisis […] and the narcotics issue was only one of several diplomatic problems facing the embassy […] never the most important one." (Crandall 2008, p.22)

Indeed, the American Ambassador at that time, Viron Vaky, corroborates this observation:

> "It [the drug issue] was there. We had DEA guys in the embassy but it was not a central element of our policy. At that time [the early 1970s] there were no cartels and little to no involvement in the cocaine trade. No one saw it [U.S. drug policy] reaching the proportions it did." (Crandall 2008, p.22)

As the 1970s gave way to the 1980s, so too did it appear that Colombia's institutions were giving way to the power of the cartels, principal among them the Medellin and Cali organisations. High-profile individuals willing to speak out against the cartels and call for action were marked for death or successfully assassinated. Such individuals included Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla in 1984[47], police colonel Jaime Ramirez in 1985, and Luis Carlos Galan, a Liberal party politician who stood a strong chance of becoming Colombia's president, in 1989 (McLean 2002, p.126). The Medellin cartel especially, under Pablo Escobar's leadership, undertook what could be described as narco-terrorism. It resorted to both targeted murders of politicians, judiciary and police, and mass casualty actions against civilians such as car and airline bombings, in efforts to resist challenges to its primacy and to dissuade the Colombian government from extraditing traffickers to the U.S. The campaign against the latter reached a highpoint in November 1985, when cartel-sponsored guerrillas attacked Colombia's Supreme Court, burning as many extradition documents as possible, and leading to the deaths of half the justices in the ensuing rescue attempt (McLean 2002, p.127).

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[47] Lara Bonilla was assassinated on the orders of Medellin traffickers following a successful joint Colombian-DEA operation that captured ten metric tons of cocaine and destroyed 101 coca-processing laboratories (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.103).

It was against this declining security situation in Colombia, and the drug-related social and security concerns within the U.S., such as in Southern Florida, that convinced the Reagan Administration to take a tougher, militarised approach. The U.S. encouraged the administration of President Julio César Turbay (1978-1982) to toughen the Colombian stance against its native drug trade, including the huge quantities of marijuana the country was producing in addition to cocaine. Colombia began a fumigation programme against marijuana, the beginning of one the most utilised counter-narcotic methods employed in the drug war.

However, Turbay went further by ordering direct military involvement in the campaign. Despite being as initially reluctant as their U.S. counterparts had been in becoming involved in counter-narcotic – essentially counter-criminal – enterprises while the potent issue of fighting guerrillas still dominated the security landscape, the Colombian military launched an operation involving 10,000 troops. They targeted marijuana production in the northern Guajira peninsula, and despite seizing or destroying thousands of tons of the crop, as well as hundreds of transport vehicles, progress was short lived as production moved elsewhere in Colombia or returned to Guejira once the campaign was over (Crandall 2008, p.23).

Just as with Operation Blast Furnace, the influx of American military personnel and equipment may have yielded short term results, but also impacted on the longer-term dynamics of the drug war. The military-led counter-narcotics intervention alienated tens of thousands of rural inhabitants involved in the drug trade, primarily to make a living, sowing the seeds of mistrust in central authority. Additionally the producers and traffickers of marijuana switched focus towards more lucrative cocaine, and changed tactics to make their processing and transport operations more mobile, smaller in scale and harder to detect and destroy (Crandall 2008, p.24).

Despite the efforts of U.S. and Colombian counter-narcotics initiatives, by the mid-1980s the flow of illicit drugs northwards remained constant and growing. In 1986 the Reagan Administration issued National Security Directive 221, granting direct permission for the utilisation of U.S. military and intelligence assets and personnel in the fight against illicit drug production in Latin America, albeit in a supporting capacity (White House 1986, p.1). Following Operation Blast Furnace in 1986, which was mainly confined to Bolivia and was conducted for a limited time, Operation Snowcap was launched in 1987. It was a seven year, broad Andean initiative, initially targeting Bolivia and Peru, before extending into Colombia

in 1989 (Crandall 2008, p.27-28)[48]. With the DEA taking the lead, supported by several leased DOD Huey helicopters, the native police and military forces of the Andean countries were supported and instructed in counter-narcotics efforts, especially the police in Colombia as security deteriorated.

In fact, from the early-1980s when they established the first of the special anti-narcotics units, up until the late-1990s before Plan Colombia took militarisation to a higher level, the Colombian National Police (CNP) had been as equally a favoured agency for U.S. counter-narcotics support as the Colombian military, perhaps more so. As much as 90 percent of aid went towards the CNP for interdiction and fumigation efforts as late as 1997 (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.101 & p.105). Though the close military ties forged during the Cold War meant that the U.S. was inclined to work with the Colombian armed forces on the drug issue[49], the Americans were still troubled by corruption, ineptitude and human rights allegations regarding the Colombian military (Crandall 2008, p.24 & p.36).

It should be noted however that the CNP are not purely a civilian agency, but along with the Colombian Army, Navy and Air Force, form the Public Force under the control of the Ministry of Defence, and possess ranks, structures, uniforms, equipment and so forth, that would be considered essentially paramilitary in nature. This dates back to 1953 when, after seizing presidential power in a coup, Lt. General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla issued Decree 1814, incorporating the Army, Navy, Air Force and Police into the Ministry of War, later the Ministry of Defence (Herring 1956, p.704; Colombian National Police 2014). Therefore U.S. training, support, financing and equipment directed towards the CNP could be said to indicate gradual militarisation − in terms of assets and institutionalisation − of the counter-narcotics effort during this period, even if the beneficiaries were not the Colombian military directly. Indeed the height of U.S.-CNP cooperation came in 1994-95 when, thanks to U.S. pressure, General Rosso José Serrano was transferred from a Washington posting to command the CNP. He fired corrupt senior officers and thousands of rank and file personnel and, with intelligence support from the CIA and DEA, followed the model used to bring down Pablo Escobar to do the same to the Cali cartel leadership. The operations employed 6000 CNP special forces operatives to hollow out the cartel and associated criminal enterprises in over two hundred raids by targeting their personnel (Crandall 2008, p.91-94). However, the

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[48] The $24 million budget for the entire operation was minor compared to the $850 million allocated to Colombia alone in 2000, an indicator as to how much the U.S. would increase its counter-narcotics efforts with Plan Colombia (Crandall 2008, p.28).

[49] There were additional practical reasons for this, such as the greater scope for certain kinds of direct support for militaries rather than police forces due to FAA stipulations, plus the military's ability to police remote drug-producing and transit zones more effectively (Isacson 2005, p.24-25).

dismantling of both main cartels would have unforeseen consequences of making the drug war even more intractable, as explored later.

Despite the successes of the notionally civilian CNP, the U.S. was still moving in an increasingly militarised direction in its counter-narcotics policy towards Colombia and the region. Following World War II, a regional command structure incorporating all the U.S. armed forces had coalesced, but was solidified when U.S. Southern Command (Southcom) was declared in 1963, which assumed responsibility for the Latin American and Caribbean area of operations (United States Southern Command 2014)[50]. Though the smallest of the regional commands, Southcom always enjoyed a significant presence in Latin American affairs given the amount of U.S. military support, cooperation and activity in the region. By the beginning of the 21st Century, when the War on Terror had started and Plan Colombia was well underway, journalist Dana Priest noted Southcom's importance when she observed that:

> "More people work there dealing with Latin American matters than at the departments of State, Commerce, Treasury and Agriculture, the Pentagon's Joint Staff, and the office of the Secretary of Defence combined." (Isacson 2005, p.20)

It was little surprise that the primary regional command for the U.S. military in the region should take such a prominent role. In 1988 the DOD itself had been declared the 'single lead agency' for detecting and monitoring illegal drugs transitioning to the U.S. by air or sea. Under this authority, the DOD was able to utilise its enormous budget to pay for narcotics interdiction efforts, such as radar sites located around the region, surveillance flights, naval and Coast Guard maritime patrols, and intelligence gathering (Isacson 2005, p.28)[51]. That Southcom played an active and enthusiastic role in arranging and overseeing such efforts could be traced to its search for purpose as the Cold War ended. With the U.S. due to withdraw from the Panama Canal in 1999, other than dealing with natural disasters, illegal migration and engaging in civil and military partnership projects with the countries of the region, Southcom was in need of greater justification for its existence. The increased focus on the drug war as the Cold War ended, and the drug-fuelled instability in Colombia, provided just such a reason. As one former Southcom commander-in-chief, General Maxwell

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[50] Mexico, the topic of the following chapter, is covered by U.S. Northern Command.
[51] Interdiction was one area where significant U.S. military resources and personnel could *directly* be brought to bear against traffickers, rather than having to take a hands-off supporting role with native security forces when it came to tackling land-based drug production and trafficking, where matters of sovereignty and legislative barriers prevented direct U.S. military participation – overtly at least.

Thurman, said of the drug war in the region, "[it's] the only war we've got" (Isacson 2005, p.28).

Figure 2 - Andean Initiative-Assistance for Colombia, Fiscal Years 1989-1994 (U.S. $ mil)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	Total
Military	8.6	40.3	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5	290.9
Economics	0	3.6	50	50	50	50	203.6
Law Enforcement	10	20	20	20	20	20	110
DEA Support	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	26.2
Total	22.8	68.3	134.9	134.9	134.9	134.9	_

(Crandall 2008, p.31)

As Figure 2 demonstrates, over the five year period that the Cold War was winding down and the drug war against the Medellin and Cali cartels was ramping up, U.S. counter-narcotics assistance to Colombia under the Andean Initiative was heavily balanced towards security-related support. Combined military and law enforcement support came to just over $400 million, almost double the economic aid Colombia received over the same period, indicating that U.S. counter-narcotics policy priorities lay in a militarised and security-focused direction.

From 1994 to 1998, Ernesto Samper was Colombia's president. The period was notable for the decline in bilateral relations, principally due to the U.S. suspicion, later proven, that Samper's election campaign had received donations from the Cali cartel (New York Times 1995). Ironically, the period proved to be one of the most productive for U.S. counter-narcotics efforts. Samper sought to undermine any suspicions by implementing significant counter-narcotics efforts, such as Operation Condor, which utilised thirty-eight helicopters and twenty-one aircraft in a huge aerial eradication campaign against illicit crops (Crandall 2008. P.102). Nevertheless, the U.S. increasingly froze Samper out and dealt directly with the Colombian military and CNP, as evidenced by the trust and support it provided General Serrano. While security relations remained strong, diplomatic ones deteriorated to the extent that Samper was one of the few heads of state in history to be refused an entry visa into the U.S. (Gedda 1996). Colombia was also decertified as a partner country twice, in 1996 and 1997, for supposedly failing to undertake suitably effective

counter-narcotics efforts. The self-defeating decision was taken despite the initiatives that were already in place, and that decertification arguably reduced the effectiveness of Colombian efforts even further by reducing aid, such as the delay or cancellation of $35 million worth of counter-narcotics assistance (U.S. GAO 1998)[52].

The U.S. eventually realised that its campaign to undermine Samper risked being counterproductive, weakening the Colombian state at just such a time that it needed maintaining and strengthening in the face of increasing drug cultivation and insurgent violence. Thus the U.S. quickly moved to support Samper's successor, Andrés Pastrana, and his early peace initiative with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), explored below. Even then however, there were moves to consolidate the security relationship between the U.S. and Colombia, as a Bilateral Working Group was established in 1998 to deepen cooperation between both countries' militaries (U.S. Congress 1999a). It would become an increasingly important relationship as the Colombian military, with U.S. training, funding, support and supervision, took a growing and ultimately primary role over the CNP in counter-narcotic operations during Plan Colombia.

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[52] A fact that was perhaps recognised with the inclusion of national security waivers in Plan Colombia legislation, which allowed certain concerns to be overridden and support to quickly proceed.

5.3 From Plan Colombia, to Plan Patriota to Consolidation

Map 1 - Map of Colombia

(Central Intelligence Agency 2015)

Colombia's geography, as well as socio-economic issues, has presented a significant challenge to central governments in extending their remits across the country. While a broad range of ethnicities comprise the population, having Spanish as the official language and Catholicism followed by 90% of the population has helped give rise to a common Colombian culture[53]. Yet the country is divided by three mountain ranges, with significant portions of the east comprised of the plains and jungles of the Amazon basin, home to only one-fifth of the population, while the rest reside along the western plateaus and the valleys between mountains and the Caribbean coast (McLean 2002, p.124-125). Infrastructure, whether in the form of transportation links or substantial and permanent governmental presence, had traditionally experienced poor penetration in these hard-to-reach areas. This has generated significant inequality, which allowed guerrillas and later drug cartels to take advantage and establish a presence, made all the easier by lack of central political and security authority.

As was demonstrated with the capture or killing of the Medellin cartel leadership and the CNP dismantling of the Cali cartel, a successful kingpin strategy was employed by

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[53] The ethnic makeup of the country breaks down to: mestizo 58%, white 20%, mulatto 14%, black 4%, mixed black-Amerindian 3%, Amerindian 1% (Central Intelligence Agency 2015).

Colombian security forces with the logistical, financial and training support provided by the U.S. The unforeseen consequence of destroying the top two cartels was that the drug trade atomised into smaller organisations known as *cartelios*. This made the problem broader rather than deeper, and thus required more resources to tackle multiple medium and smaller entities, rather than larger, single ones. These smaller organisations lacked the ability to operate transnationally, to source coca from other neighbouring Andean countries as their predecessors had done (notwithstanding the crackdown on coca production in these countries), and so turned to cultivating coca locally in Colombia, where processing could be conducted closer to the source (U.S. Congress 1999b). As a consequence, Colombia's National Narcotics Directorate reported a total of 43,000 hectares of coca cultivation in 1994, 67,200 in 1996, and 79,500 in 1997, at which point Colombia assumed the position of largest coca producer in the Andean region (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.105).

Therefore, by the end of the 1990s, the cocaine trade was only growing despite the best efforts of U.S. counter-narcotics policy. In fact, the increased cultivation resulted in the production tonnage of coca leaf in Colombia rocketing, from 45,422 in 1993, to 71,958 a year later in 1994, and then on to 165,934 tonnes by 1998, almost matching the production of Peru and Bolivia *combined* (UNODCCP 1999, p.42). United Nations figures showed that over the course of the 1990s, total coca leaf production in the three Andean source countries had been reduced, from a total 319,200 tonnes in 1990, to 287,000 tons by 1999 (UNODCCP 2000, p.28). On the surface this constituted a success for U.S. policy.

However, while in 1990 Colombia only accounted for 16 percent of that year's total, by 1999 it accounted for 68 percent of the total (UNODCCP 2000, p.28). Where once Colombia's cocaine industry had depended on large shipments coming in from Peru and Bolivia, this increased self-sufficiency in its own, indeed more potent, coca crop led the CIA and DOD to estimate that such hectares of production ultimately yielded 65 metric tons of cocaine produced in 1993, 80 tons in 1995, 165 tons in 1998 and 250 tons in 1999 (U.S. Congress 1999a; Golden and Myers 1999). These figures demonstrated that while U.S. counter-narcotics policy in the region had, to a relatively successful degree, squeezed production in Bolivia and Peru, production had instead shifted into home grown Colombian coca, accounting for the significant increases in its domestic output over such a short period of time, even if overall regional output had shrunk.

In addition to helping clear a path for the smaller drug trafficking entities, the breaking of the cartel monopolies and the significant increase in coca production also allowed

guerrillas and paramilitaries[54] to take advantage of revenues from the drug trade to a far larger extent than they had been able to previously. The 'balloon effect' of coca production moving to Colombia after the squeeze in Bolivia and Peru, presented the guerrillas and paramilitaries as useful an opportunity to exploit as had clearing the field of cartel rivals, especially when major coca production moved to the guerrilla-controlled areas bordering Ecuador (Crandall 2002, p.160). With a significant portion of Colombia's coca being produced in FARC-controlled areas of the country, it was estimated that up to half of the organisation's income, some $200-400 million, was derived from trafficking, revenues which went into improving FARC's military capabilities, in terms of paying recruits, purchasing weaponry, supplies, and so on (U.S. Congress 1999b; Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.106).

President Pastrana attempted to reach a negotiated settlement with FARC and the smaller left-wing National Liberation Army (ELN), to the extent of granting FARC an area the size of Switzerland in which to operate free of government forces, a *zone de despeje* (demilitarised zone), and a far smaller *zona de convivencia* (live-and-let-live zone) for the ELN (Rabasa and Chalk 2001, p.73-78). Negotiations dragged on, stopping and starting as FARC launched occasional attacks, or government forces threatened to move in on the zone only to pull back as negotiation deadlines were continuously extended, though little was ever achieved from the extra time granted and FARC was able to operate with impunity.

Writing at the height of Colombia's security crisis, and echoing how the difficulty in imposing central authority facilitated such instability, Gabriel Marcella and Donald Schulz paint a grim picture of the security situation that Colombia faced:

> "Integration of Colombia's many regions into a coherent nation-state has been the principal challenge since independence. It is even more so now […] The rate of killing in Colombia far exceeds the amount of ethnic cleansing that went on after the breakup of Yugoslavia. Both the paramilitaries and the guerrillas take over areas and displace thousands of people. The nation's capacity to deal with this turmoil has been sharply declining, due to the weakening of most state institutions and the fragmentation of the social fabric." (1999, p.3)

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[54] These paramilitary groups were formed to push back against left-wing guerrilla incursions onto private landholdings. However, the operations of drug traffickers were also put at risk by guerrilla activity (since they were often landowners too), and so drug money went towards supporting the paramilitaries, who eventually came under the umbrella of the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) in 1997. Such paramilitary groups also turned to drug trafficking on their own to fund themselves, just as FARC had done and the ELN eventually resorted to (BBC 2013b).

In addition to the links between the guerrilla movements and cocaine for the purposes of financing operations[55] (such as the increase in cocaine production in the FARC-dominated department of Putumayo), FARC took advantage of peace talks to consolidate gains and launch new offensives, while the ELN undertook an airline hijacking and mass kidnapping in Cali. Taken together, this convinced the U.S. that the negotiation strategy favoured by Pastrana was increasingly futile. Such sentiments only strengthened after FARC's kidnapping and murder of three American indigenous rights activists (Crandall 2002, p.161-162).

With the peace process collapsing, Colombia's civil conflict showed no sign of abating, and was reaching new levels of chaos and violence due to the influence of the drug trade. Increased hectares of cultivation and bumper harvests of coca leaf meant there was more base material for the manufacture of cocaine than ever before, cocaine that continued to find its way in the U.S. market and beyond. This generated potentially enormous profits, not only for the smaller legacy *cartelios* that had replaced the once dominant Medellin and Cali organisations, but also funding for the coffers of the guerrillas and paramilitaries taking part in the broader civil conflict that threatened the stability of Colombia as a functioning state.

Consequently, Colombia became a 'crisis' case in U.S. foreign policy circles (Crandall 2002, p.162). In an echo of how U.S. policy makers were only vaguely aware of the growing problem posed by Colombian cartels in the 1970s until the issue erupted, so too did Colombia's internal security issues rapidly rise up the foreign policy agenda as the situation deteriorated. National Security Advisor, Samuel Berger, stated at the time that "[Colombia] is a third-order issue that is going to become a first-order issue" (Golden and Myers 1999).

The former head of U.S. Southern Command, and Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, General Barry McCaffrey, pushed for increased aid to the Colombian government. This was to improve its security forces' ability to combat guerrillas, and to adequately train sufficient counter-narcotics forces to erode the Colombian drug trade that helped sustain said guerrillas and smaller cartels. In testimony before a Congressional committee in August 1999, McCaffrey was clear about the threat presented:

> "The explosion of coca cultivation […] in Colombia undermines the U.S. source-zone strategy and Colombian democratic institutions. The growth of drug cultivation, production, and trafficking has added substantially to the war chests of the guerrilla and paramilitary groups, which protect and/or control various aspects of the drug

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[55] Some American intelligence reports estimated that guerrilla profits from the drug trade were between $30-100 million a year, a lot less than many figures public officials had cited, but still a significant amount for insurgent operations in poor and underdeveloped rural heartlands (Golden and Myers 1999).

industry […] In Colombia, the melding of guerrilla movements, or in some cases, paramilitary groups, and international drug trafficking organizations has created an unprecedented threat to the rule of law, democratic institutions, and the fabric of society." (U.S. Congress 1999b)

McCaffrey was supported in his assessment by Under-Secretary of State Thomas Pickering who, after a visit to Colombia in August 1999 (the most senior U.S. diplomat to visit in years after the acrimony surrounding the Samper Administration) became convinced that more needed to be done to "stop the bleeding" (Crandall 2002, p.162).

The intended primary recipients of the advocated aid were the Colombian security forces, with McCaffrey citing a "drug-related emergency" to justify the concentration of a proposed $1 billion increase in aid on the military and police. This included $360 million to allow the army to push into contested cocaine producing areas of southern Colombia, and a $120 million to increase the interdiction of drug flights (Golden and Myers 1999). Such calls for increased militarisation may have chimed with members of Congress of both parties who were hawkish on the drug issue[56]. Yet elements of the Pentagon, State Department and National Security Council were wary about becoming involved in a protracted civil conflict. They pressed to broaden the U.S. agenda in Colombia, arguing that "a modest rise in military aid should be balanced by support for social-development projects, the economy and a negotiated settlement to the war", with more support for Colombian police and judiciary in pursuing anti-drug operations (Golden and Myers 1999).

In July 2000, the U.S. Congress approved a special supplemental appropriation of $1.3 billion for Plan Colombia, of which $860 million was designated for Colombia itself. Despite Pastrana's original envisioning of Plan Colombia as more of a socio-economic aid package with a smaller security component (Crandall 2008, p.123), the ultimate version that was approved by Congress had 75 percent of Colombia's $860 million – some $642.3 million – going to the police and, predominantly, the military (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.108). 'Plan Colombia' was to remain the identifier of the main counter-narcotics initiative in Colombia, neighbouring countries and areas of the Caribbean, despite funds officially being

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[56] In late-1998, the Clinton Administration was caught off-guard when Republicans in Congress drafted an emergency spending plan to immediately increase military and counter-narcotics aid to Colombia by $287 million on top of what was already allocated. It has been suggested that the extra support called for by the Administration in 1999 was an effort not to be outflanked again, to avoid appearing 'weak' in the prosecution of the drug war and the provision of the resources to fight it, a charge that Democrats as well as Republicans were keen to avoid. Even then, Republicans still wished to appear even tougher than Clinton by proposing their own wish-list of support, including one Representative's call for $930 million in completely new aid in addition to what was already on offer (Golden and Myers 1999).

provided under the rubric of the Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) from 2002. Also, far from being a blank cheque, funding was to be provided on an annual basis only, subject to Congressional approval through the foreign operations appropriations process and related supplemental appropriations legislation (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.109). This ensured that Congress retained conditional oversight and that mission creep into an outright counterinsurgency operation did not occur, such was the sentiment at the time for supporting a counter-narcotics initiative, but making sure it *stayed* as such[57].

Important qualifiers and criteria were applied to ensure this remained U.S. policy. The two principal U.S. departments to lead the Plan Colombia initiative were DOD and State, and their mutual responsibilities with regards to supporting the counter-narcotics efforts of the Colombian military and police were clearly focused and defined, with no element of overt counter-insurgency, as made clear in Figure 3.

Figure 3
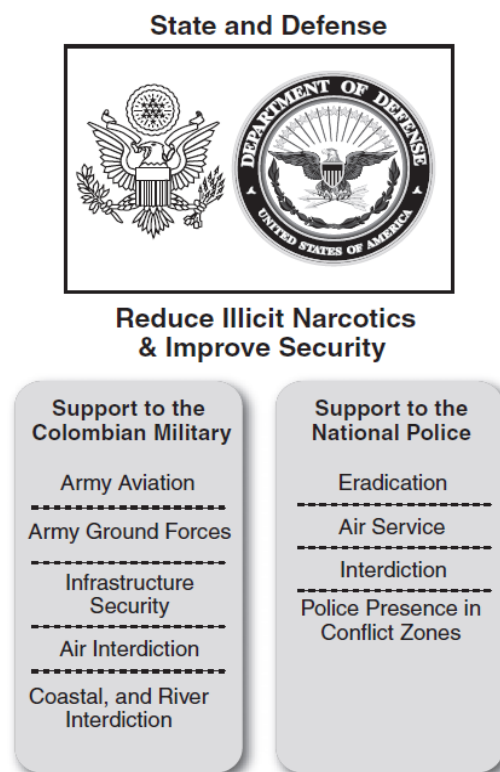
(U.S. GAO 2008, p.12)

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[57] This was clear in the legislation, with one point stating that "funds appropriated […] shall be utilised for the procurement of and support for two UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters for use by the Colombian National Police which shall be utilised *only* for counter-narcotics operations in southern Colombia" (U.S. Congress 2000, p.7, emphasis added). This was despite southern Colombia being a hotbed of guerrilla activity, which meant that any counter-narcotics operations would have been difficult to separate from counterinsurgency. It was a consistent problem encountered until the Bush Administration deliberately chose to conflate both counter-narcotics and counterinsurgency post-9-11 as two sides of the same war on terror, thus 'solving' the problem of the conditionality of U.S. military assistance being solely for counter-narcotics.

Additionally, "The Purpose Statute" is an important U.S fiscal law which requires that funds appropriated by Congress must be used for the purpose for which they were appropriated. Thus, all training, support and equipment that was provided to the Colombian security forces as a result of Plan Colombia funding (such as police helicopters or resourcing the Counter-narcotics Brigade for example) by law had to be used for counter-narcotics operations only. Guidelines made it clear that any Plan Colombia-funded aviation or military unit could not even pre-plan nor conduct any non-counter-narcotic operation (USAID 2009, p.3-4). However, by mid-2001, such guidelines were increasingly meeting untidy reality, where unplanned engagements with FARC and ELN forces increasingly blurred the situation. What may have started as purely counter-narcotics missions could effectively become counter-insurgency actions as soon as guerrillas were met in combat, even if said guerrillas were trafficking drugs. As a result, there was increasing operational pressure to be able to have the flexibility to utilise counter-narcotics assistance and equipment against such armed groups as the situation demanded (USAID 2009, p.4).

Such attempts at distinction between counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics dissolved after the September 11th attacks and the launch of the War on Terror. While there had been recognition that illegal armed groups in Colombia were inextricably linked to the cocaine trade, there was now acceptance that they thus constituted legitimate targets for Colombian security and counter-narcotics forces supported by the U.S. In 2002, President Alvaro Uribe was elected with a strong mandate to restore internal security and adopt a hard line against illegal armed groups, the FARC and ELN especially (Forero 2002). A meeting of minds occurred between his administration and the George W. Bush White House on the issue of treating the War on Drugs and War on Terror as one and the same in Colombia. This meant that the military aspects of Plan Colombia – especially weapons and equipment transfers, DOD support and interdiction support – were solidified and strengthened in conjunction with Uribe's Democratic Security policy, which sought to greatly expand the Colombian military and police (Isacson 2012, p.3).

Figure 4 - U.S. Counter-narcotics Assistance to Colombia, FY2000-FY2006 (millions $)

	ACI		FMF	IMET	NADR	DOD	Total
	Interdict.	Alt. Dev.					
FY2000	686.4	208.0	—	0.9	—	229.2	1,124.5
FY2001	48.0	—	—	1.0	—	190.2	239.2
FY2002	243.5	136.4	—	1.2	25.0	119.1	525.2
FY2003	412.0	168.2	17.1	1.2	3.3	165.0	766.8
FY2004	324.6	159.3	98.5	1.7	.2	122.0	706.3
FY2005	310.7	152.1	99.2	1.7	4.1	200.0	767.8
FY2006	310.9	158.6	90.0	1.7	4.1	122.0	687.3
Total	2,336.1	982.6	304.8	9.4	36.7	1147.5	4,817.1

NADR = Non-proliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs

(Veillette 2006, p.6)

In summary, as Figure 4 highlights, throughout the initial Plan Colombia period of its original 2000-2006 remit, while alternative development (and initiatives under that banner such as judicial reform, human rights, etc.) received almost a billion dollars in U.S. funding, it is dwarfed by the expenditure on military and security related support. $2.3 billion went into interdiction alone, with DOD support contributing over $1.1 billion, and weaponry and equipment transfers through FMF accounting for over $300 million. It is no coincidence that this period of time saw a significant expansion and resourcing of the Colombian military and police, alongside a sustained counter-insurgency campaign which now effectively included counter-narcotics in its remit – counter-narcoinsurgency, so to speak.

The Democratic Security policy formed the basis for Plan Patriota, an initiative where the progressively larger and better trained and equipped Colombian forces – thanks to U.S. support – sought to not only mitigate drug trafficking, but to expand state authority into ungoverned and guerrilla controlled spaces to deny the drug trade and insurgency space to operate (Isacson 2012, p.3-4). Commencing in late-2003 and early-2004, tens of thousands of Colombian troops, backed by U.S. support, intelligence and guidance, pushed into the predominantly FARC-controlled remote, rural, coca-cultivating southern areas of the country (Isacson 2012, p.4). While the Colombian military was able to score easy initial victories, it encountered continuing resistance from FARC, especially when attempting to eradicate coca fields and cocaine labs. A 2006 cable from U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, William Wood (2003-2007), illustrated the progress and the challenges of counter-narcotics operations

during Plan Patriota, and how any remaining notional divide between these operations and counter-insurgency efforts had essentially dissolved:

> "After months of intense campaigns, the Colombian Army has occupied former FARC strongholds and harried key FARC cocaine trafficking fronts […] Because of its strategic importance, [FARC's] Eastern Bloc has defended these areas against encroachment by the Government of Colombia (GOC). In December 2005, the FARC killed 29 soldiers in Macarena, prompting the GOC to turn to manual coca eradication. Police suffered heavy losses guarding eradicators, leading to army reinforcement of police security […] FARC attacks [in Eastern Macarena] led to the deaths of seven civilian eradicators, 13 police and 15 soldiers [causing] the GOC to suspend manual eradication in August 2006 in favour of spraying."
>
> (U.S. State Department 2006)

This demonstrated how the Colombian military was closely operating with the CNP and eradicators in counter-narcotics efforts, in main part because its prior counter-insurgency priority and counter-narcotics had become a one-and-the-same campaign. However, the active involvement of the military, indeed the arguably predominant role it had assumed, was proving problematic in itself in translating short-term security gains and counter-narcotic successes into lasting social and economic stability. Again, Ambassador Wood reported his concerns to Washington:

> "For the Colombian military, installing bases in a former 'no-go' zone is a big step forward, but holding more territory stretches military resources while not defeating an elusive enemy […] supplanting a FARC narco-dominion with legitimate state governance and a legal economy will be a tougher challenge than the military victory […] Victory requires the Colombian army to occupy more territory, leading it to convert mobile brigades into units of fixed area control and reducing offensive capacity […] To achieve lasting success, the military's efforts must be followed by programs to replace terrorist control and a coca-based economy with government security, legitimate economic activities, and effective social programs."
>
> (U.S. State Department 2006)

It became clear that, while the military could effectively take and hold territory, governing these areas was a different matter that required a different approach.

It was with this in mind that a Consolidation phase was introduced. It aimed to entrench security gains into longer-term economic and social advances, promote governance and stability in previously ungoverned or guerrilla-controlled rural regions and, via this cumulative social and security progress, deny the drug trade and insurgencies space and opportunity to operate. The initiative emerged – with substantial input from the U.S. embassy and Southern Command, recognising Ambassador Wood's concerns – from the Colombian Ministry of Defence under Defence Minister Juan Manuel Santos, in cooperation with the Colombian Presidency in order to ensure a civilian component (Isacson 2012, p.5).

The result was the Centre for Coordination of Integrated Action (*Centro de Coordinación de Acción Integral*, or CCAI), which was given legal standing to request support from all Colombian government departments as necessary to achieve the aims of Consolidation in each troubled region, where it set up regional centres. The aims were essentially 'clear, hold, build' initiatives whereby the military secured the area, then police, judiciary and development workers moved in to establish a state presence and deliver quick impact development and infrastructure projects. Ultimately the benefits of state authority would be recognised by the populace, where stable governance, police presence and social funding would improve local services and the economy, and the resulting stability would free up the military to move onto the next region (Isacson 2012, p.5).

Such a concentrated program helped address U.S. concerns that successful immediate counter-narcotic operations were not accompanied by longer-term efforts to reduce coca cultivation, as well as stabilise the country to an extent that the U.S. could be satisfied its initial reasons for launching Plan Colombia had been met.

Figure 5 - U.S. Assistance for Plan Colombia, Fiscal Years 2000-2013 (millions $)

	ACI/ACP	ESF	FMF	IMET	INCLE	NADR	Air Wing	DOD	Total
FY2000	60.1	—	—	—	—	—	38.0	128.5	**226.6**
P.L. 106-246	832.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	100.7	**932.7**
FY2001	48.0	—	—	—	—	—	38.0	190.2	**276.2**
FY2002	379.9ᵃ	—	—	—	—	25.0	38.2	117.3	**560.4**
FY2003	580.2ᵇ	—	17.1	1.2	—	3.3	41.5	164.8	**808.1**
FY2004	473.9	—	98.5	1.7	—	.2	45.0	178.2	**797.5**
FY2005	462.8	—	99.2	1.7	—	5.1	45.0	155.3	**769.1**
FY2006	464.8	—	89.1	1.7	—	—	45.0	140.5	**741.1**
FY2007	465.0	—	85.5	1.6	—	4.1	37.0	129.4	**722.6**
FY2008	244.6	194.4	55.1	1.4	41.9	3.7	39.0	119.9	**700.0**
FY2009	230.1	196.5	53.0	1.4	45.0	3.2	12.4	127.9	**669.5**
FY2010	ᶜ	201.8	55.0	1.7	243.9	4.8	12.9	129.4	**649.5**
FY2011	—	184.4	47.9	1.7	204.0	4.8	3.6	110.4	**556.8**
FY2012 (est)		179.0	37.0	1.7	160.6	4.8	8.3	97.9	**489.3**
FY2013 (req)	—	155.0	30.0	1.6	142.0	3.3	N.A.	85.6	**417.5**
Total	**4,241.4**	**1,111.1**	**667.4**	**17.4**	**837.4**	**62.3**	**403.9**	**1,976.0**	**9,316.9**

(Beittel 2012, p.38)

As Figure 5 demonstrates – and as is explored further below in the 'Making Military' section – a substantial portion of Plan Colombia assistance was allocated to military and security related expenditure. However, not all funding was directly militarily related. International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) accounted for almost $840 million during the period, and over $1.1 billion went towards Economic Support Funding (ESF). It is no coincidence that the table shows that these sources of funding, complimentary to establishing stability (more police and alternative development), became part of Plan Colombia support when the Consolidation phase began and the U.S. started seeking ways to nationalise the issue. By this it was meant that the U.S. wished to maintain support where needed, but to begin to draw down its previous heavy commitment with the confidence that the Colombians were on their way to being able to independently manage the drug and insurgency issues.

The consolidation phase was further refined into the National Consolidation Plan pursued by former Defence Minister Santos when he succeeded to the presidency after Uribe in 2010. While he has emphasised the security gains made in the preceding decade, Santos's presidency has generally focused more on social, legal and economic development issues. Consolidation has been a signature policy, along with attempts to restart peace negotiations with a weakened FARC, and the 2011 Victims' Law, which allows damages to be paid to

relatives of those killed in the civil conflict and the restitution of land stolen by armed groups from rightful owners (BBC 2011a; Human Rights Watch 2011). While the table above shows that U.S. military-related and law enforcement assistance has still been substantial in recent years, U.S. policy has been to support the broader nation-building remit of Consolidation in the hope that the drug trade can be tackled through soft, as well as hard power application. The U.S. institutionalised such support with the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI), effectively a new framework that has replaced the old, more security focused Plan Colombia model, and described as:

> "An inter-agency approach that provides U.S. assistance across a full spectrum of activities: eradication and interdiction; capacity-building of the national police, military, and prosecutor units; strengthening state institutions at the local level; creation of viable economic options for communities, particularly in the agricultural sector; support for land reform and victims' reparations, and assistance to vulnerable populations."   (U.S. State Department 2012)

In 2012, however, the Colombian Ministry of Defence launched a new strategy called *Espada de Honor* (Sword of Honour), which focused more on disrupting FARC structures and drug trafficking operations in contested zones as opposed to placing an emphasis on securing civilian populations. Regional analyst, Adam Isacson, argues that the newer strategy, while more a compliment to Consolidation than a replacement, returns to older models of more military-oriented counter-narcoinsurgency operations:

> "Unlike Consolidation, it does not include a civilian governance component. Joint military-police task forces (with U.S. advisors), largely made up of elite personnel, are carrying out mobile operations with a strong emphasis on intelligence and air power. There is no effort to ensure civilian coverage of territory, nor is "holding" and "building" there a priority receiving significant resources." (Isacson 2012, p.19)

This strategy highlights that – while a greater social and economic component has entered broader, long-term counter-narcotics strategy of late, coupled with a desire by the U.S. to nationalise the issue – when it comes to directly tackling drug trafficking, a militarised approach has effectively become institutionalised thanks to over a decade of such support via U.S. policy.

The next three sections further break down this militarisation of U.S. and Colombian counter-narcotics policy into its component framework elements – that of making military, institutionalisation, and criteria of violence.

5.4 Colombia: Making Military

Before Plan Colombia's legislation enacted in 2000, there were moves by the U.S. to facilitate the militarisation of counter-narcotics operations in Colombia. In 1998 Secretary of Defence William Cohen met with his Colombian counterpart, Rodrigo Lloreda, to confirm U.S. support for the creation of a 1000 man counter-narcotics battalion. This was to assist the CNP against guerrillas and drug traffickers, with operational effectiveness commencing in the first half of 1999 (U.S. Department of Defence 1998). In one of his press conference responses following the meeting, Lloreda stated that:

> "The U.S. cooperation is in the area of counter-narcotics, and to the extent that this cooperation increases, the army will be more effective in helping the police in efforts of eradication, crop substitution, and in going after the small cartels that we have in Colombia. So to the extent that we are effective in dealing with the drug traffickers we will be effective in dealing with the insurgents because they derive support from drug traffickers. So, although the United States is not directly supporting Colombia in this effort, one of [the aid's] secondary effects is that insurgency in Colombia will be undermined."   (U.S. Department of Defence 1998)

This meeting, and Lloreda's statement demonstrate three important points. Firstly, that a U.S. military aid strategy was well underway before the Clinton Administration requested additional emergency funding under the Plan Colombia initiative to expand and continue it. Secondly, that this aid was initially seen as increasing the direct role of the Colombian military in counter-narcotics, albeit initially as an effective compliment to CNP counter-narcotics, what with the police being seen as the lead agency in the matter. Nevertheless it was still a clear boost to military effectiveness and involvement rather than channelling resources into the police exclusively. Thirdly, though the U.S. was keen to avoid any suggestion that it was becoming involved in Colombia's counterinsurgency issues, Lloreda's statement openly concedes that, albeit indirectly, some aspects of drug policy would ultimately impact on the civil conflict against the guerrillas. Lloreda however is clearly careful to follow the U.S. line that it is not 'directly' supporting counterinsurgency efforts. As

indicated previously, the attempt to erect a conceptual barrier between U.S. involvement in counterinsurgency and counter-narcotics for the sake of political sensibilities was always a delicate balancing act. It was a difficult one to maintain given the degree of overlap between the two in Colombia, though it was a barrier that essentially dissolved following 9/11.

When the Clinton Administration did approach Congress for emergency appropriations in 2000, just under $645 million out of the total initial funding allocation to Colombia went towards military aid, 75 percent of the total. Such funding was designed to facilitate the founding of a Counter-narcotics Brigade (as opposed to just one battalion) within the Colombian army by providing for the addition of two more counter-drug battalions to the one set up earlier, as announced by Cohen and Lloreda. Together with forty-five helicopters, improved light-infantry training and the arms, ammunition and intelligence gathering and communications equipment necessary for operational effectiveness, it was intended that this specialist 2,300 man battalion would help clear the way for mass coca eradication in Putumayo province (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.108).

The shift in U.S. policy towards overt militarisation and counterinsurgency support came in February 2002, in the wake of 9/11. The Bush Administration included in its budget proposal for 2003 a request for $98 million in foreign military financing to create an elite Colombian counterinsurgency battalion, alongside the earlier efforts towards creating dedicated counter-narcotics battalions, like the First Army Counter-narcotics Brigade and the Navy Riverine Brigade (Crandall 2008, p.139; Isacson 2005, p.25). Funding and, importantly, overt training and support from U.S. military personnel for the purposes of improving the counterinsurgency capability of the Colombian military, and not just its counter-narcotics potential, demonstrated the confluences of counter-narcotics and counterinsurgency in the eyes of both U.S. and Colombian governments.

For example, in late-2002 the U.S. Congress approved a $99 million programme to help the Colombian army protect the oil pipeline in the province of Arauca, an economic asset to the local and national Colombian governments (as well as to U.S. energy interests) that had been subjected to hundreds of guerrilla attacks and sabotage over the years (U.S. GAO 2005). By mid-2003, despite delayed deliveries of helicopters and other specialist equipment until 2005, dozens of U.S. Special Forces personnel were operating in the province, training the Colombian army's 18th Brigade and new 5th Mobile Brigade, not just in passive defensive operations, but aggressive offensive operations. This was confirmed in an interview given by Southcom's chief of operations, Brigadier General Galen Jackson, who admitted that, "these brigades […] will be very offensively oriented. That is, focused on the

enemy, as opposed to a static defence around the pipeline" (U.S. GAO 2005; Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.110).

This is demonstrative of two things. First, the active involvement of the U.S. military and the encouragement of an overtly offensive 'take out the enemy' operational mind-set - two clear indicators of 'making military'. Secondly, while in theory such Colombian personnel could be turned to counter-narcotics operations, the fact that this was not a precondition to what was essentially counterinsurgency support meant that, as a result of the War on Terror, militarily supporting counterinsurgency was no longer taboo. It was in fact regarded as counter-terrorism, the whole point of the War on Terror, after all. This confirmed the dissolution of the notional barrier separating counter-narcotics from counterinsurgency in Colombia. For all intents and purposes they had essentially become the same problem in the eyes of the U.S. and the like-minded Uribe Administration, and so could both be solved by increased military and security support.

**Figure 6 - U.S. Assistance for Plan Colombia, Fiscal Years 2000-2013 (millions $)**

	ACI/ACP	ESF	FMF	IMET	INCLE	NADR	Air Wing	DOD	Total
FY2000	60.1	—	—	—	—	—	38.0	128.5	**226.6**
P.L. 106-246	832.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	100.7	**932.7**
FY2001	48.0	—	—	—	—	—	38.0	190.2	**276.2**
FY2002	379.9[a]	—	—	—	—	25.0	38.2	117.3	**560.4**
FY2003	580.2[b]	—	17.1	1.2	—	3.3	41.5	164.8	**808.1**
FY2004	473.9	—	98.5	1.7	—	.2	45.0	178.2	**797.5**
FY2005	462.8	—	99.2	1.7	—	5.1	45.0	155.3	**769.1**
FY2006	464.8	—	89.1	1.7	—	—	45.0	140.5	**741.1**
FY2007	465.0	—	85.5	1.6	—	4.1	37.0	129.4	**722.6**
FY2008	244.6	194.4	55.1	1.4	41.9	3.7	39.0	119.9	**700.0**
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FY2010	[c]	201.8	55.0	1.7	243.9	4.8	12.9	129.4	**649.5**
FY2011	—	184.4	47.9	1.7	204.0	4.8	3.6	110.4	**556.8**
FY2012 (est)		179.0	37.0	1.7	160.6	4.8	8.3	97.9	**489.3**
FY2013 (req)	—	155.0	30.0	1.6	142.0	3.3	N.A.	85.6	**417.5**
Total	**4,241.4**	**1,111.1**	**667.4**	**17.4**	**837.4**	**62.3**	**403.9**	**1,976.0**	**9,316.9**

(Beittel 2012, p.38)

As Figure 6 demonstrates for the period of analysis in this chapter, from 2000 to 2013, of the over $9 billion of U.S. assistance towards Plan Colombia, the lion's share has been towards military and security support. $4.2 billion was dedicated to counter-narcotics funding, out of which was provided training, support and resources for Colombian military and police

interdiction and eradication efforts. In addition to this, almost $670 million of direct weaponry and equipment transfers to the Colombians took place via the FMF program. Over $400 million supported Air Wing operations, one of the most important tactical resources at the disposal of the military and CNP in adopting swift and effective counter-narcotics and counterinsurgency strikes. Almost $2 billion went towards Department of Defence funding and involvement in the Plan Colombia initiative. Additionally, Figure 7 below shows that military and police assistance has made up the bulk of U.S. support during Plan Colombia's lifetime, peaking during the initial launch in 2000, before falling briefly and rising again after 9/11 and in support of the Plan Patriota assault on the narco-insurgency.

Figure 7

(Isacson 2012, p.3)
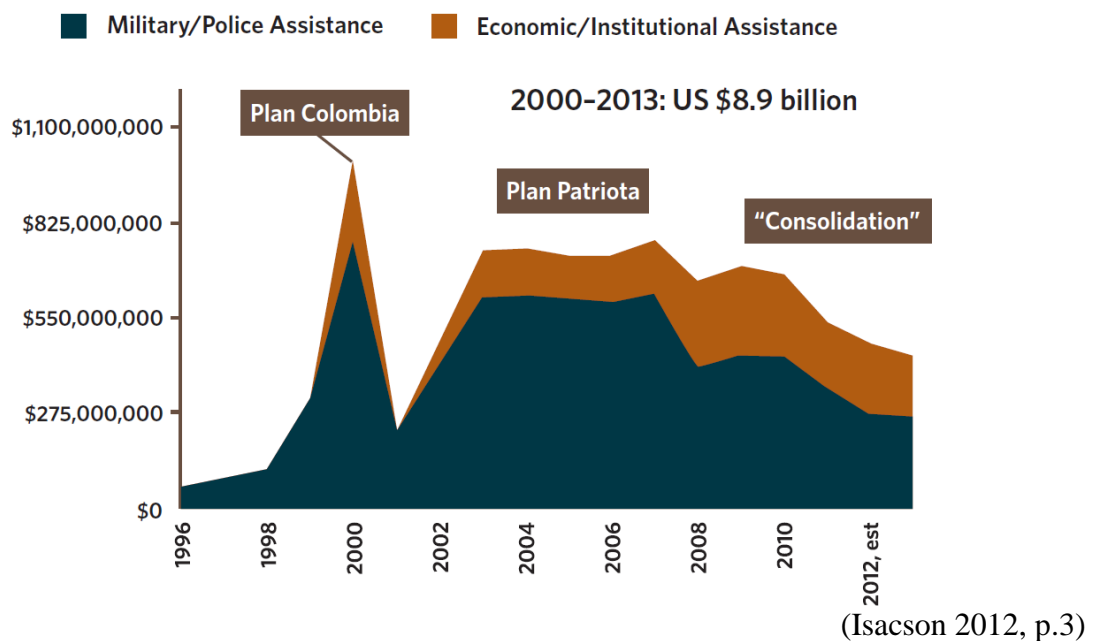
Military and police support has fallen as a proportion of U.S. support in recent years, and economic and social assistance has seen a relative rise in concert with Consolidation. However, this is not to suggest that U.S. and Colombian counter-narcotics are demilitarising in any way, as highlighted by the emphasis on U.S. assisted military and police mobile forces in the *Espada de Honor* strategy. On the contrary, U.S. support may be gradually reducing as it seeks to nationalise the conflict, but that is because the U.S. has greater confidence in Colombian forces thanks to institutionalisation of militarised counter-narcotics and security approaches.

5.5 Colombia: Institutionalisation

The institutionalisation of U.S.-influenced militarisation in Colombian counter-narcotics received a major boost from Plan Colombia. However, this simply helped consolidate a long-running trend. The embedding of the Colombian military's power in state security and against the drug trade had begun long before. During *La Violencia*, the military had initially refused to be drawn into partisan conflict between the factions. Following this period, in exchange for accepting civilian control of the government, the military was granted effective authority over national security policy (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.123). During the counterinsurgency campaigns of the 1960s to 1980s, the executive branch regularly invoked a state of siege and the military's power grew further. Under such decrees, legal rights were suspended, though constitutional guarantees remained, and eventually the military were granted *de facto* jurisdiction over civilians, made *de jure* with the 1978 Security Statute (itself informed by the U.S. National Security Doctrine) (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.123).

Further decrees strengthened the military's hand in counter-narcotics operations, with Presidential decrees 3655 and 3671 of December 1986 respectively increasing the military and police roles in prosecuting the drug war, and granting the military jurisdiction over civilians accused of drug offences, effectively reaffirming that the population was subject to martial law (Menzel 1997, p.48). However, in 1987 the Colombian Supreme Court declared that military jurisdiction over civilians was unconstitutional, and further that counter-narcotics should be led by the Anti-Narcotics Police and the Administrative Department of Security (dissolved in 2011 and replaced with the National Intelligence Agency), freeing up the military to deal with the primary threats of FARC and the ELN (Menzel 1997, p.48).

Though the army was satisfied that the ruling meant avoiding prosecuting both drug and counterinsurgency wars, another executive decree followed in August 1987. Number 1630 attempted to keep the military engaged in counter-narcotics by confronting the emerging phenomena of drug trafficker-sponsored assassins (*sicarios*) and paramilitaries, though the latter were also becoming traffickers themselves (Menzel 1997, p.48). Despite the constitutional safeguards and legal ruling, the institutionalisation of the military in counter-narcotics was still further enhanced in the judicial realm with the 1988 Defence of Democracy Statute. This included drug trafficking as a national security (and thus military) concern, and also allowed for the creation of special judicial procedures for drug traffickers and guerrillas, which remained in place until the mid-1990s, with a new Constitutional Court confirming the earlier rulings of the Supreme Court (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.123-124).

While these examples are more legal and judicial in nature, they demonstrate an institutionalisation of militarisation even before Plan Colombia and the U.S. policy of enhancing the direct role of the Colombian military in counter-narcotics operations. This emphasis by the U.S. was equally embraced by the Uribe Administration from 2002, which saw a greater role for the Colombian military in taking on both counterinsurgency and counter-narcotics in order to strengthen national security.

Under the Democratic Security policy and the subsequent Consolidation phase, Colombian budget allocations to the security sector grew to 5.2% of GDP by 2003 and total spending on defence rose to $6.9 billion in 2006 (USAID 2009, p.10). By 2007, the Colombian army had grown by 78,000, and new military units were deployed, including 2 divisions, 6 brigades, 12 new mobile units and 6 mountain battalions. The armed forces acquired mobility assets, including over two-dozen helicopters, and the U.S. also assisted in provision of technical and signals intelligence. Additionally, the extension of police presence to every municipality in the country under Consolidation, built on the advances of Plan Patriota. It was an effort to introduce a stable state presence in previously ungoverned regions and encourage economic growth in areas that were most susceptible to guerrilla activity and coca cultivation in the absence of legitimate alternatives (USAID 2009, p.10; Isacson 2012, p.6). Figure 8 highlights how military support for counter-narcotics became institutionalised as the highest proportion of aid to Colombia during the decade encompassing the launch and most active phase of Plan Colombia, before the Consolidation phase began.
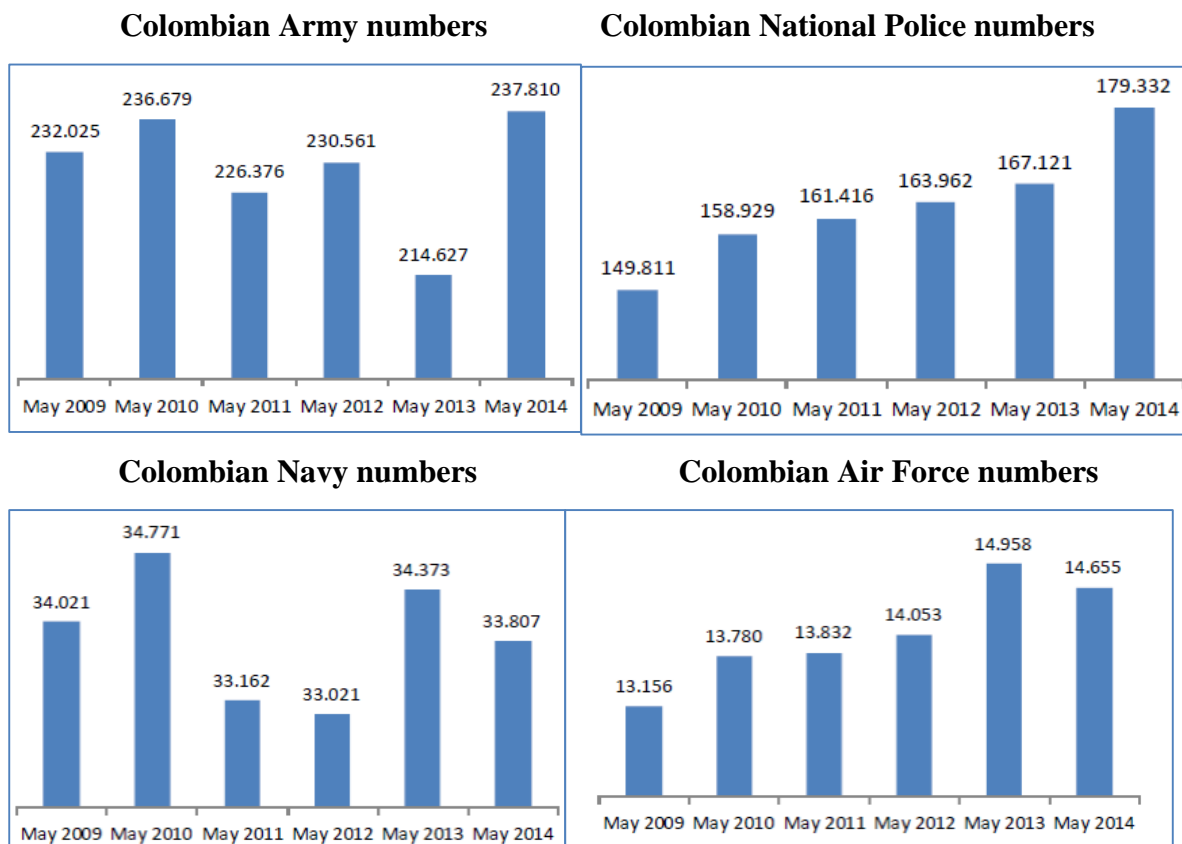
Figure 8 - Public Spending by the GOC on Defence, Security, Justice, Alternative Development and Assistance to Victims of Conflict (in millions of U.S. dollars)

U.S. Assistance to Plan Colombia	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2.008
Defense and Security	306.98	817.8	232.8	395.9	607.9	617.7	585.6	587.3	591.1	423
AD and Conflict Victims	8.75	80	0.5	109.9	125.7	126.5	124.7	130.4	139.7	194
Justice		121.1	0.9	15.8	27	9	7.3	10.5	7.8	39
Total	315.73	1018.9	234.2	521.6	760.6	753.2	717.6	728.2	738.6	657
Public Spending by the Colombian Government										
Defense and Security	1.865	2.350	2.360	2.516	2.582	2.932	3.908	4.164	6.318	8.214
AD and conflict victims	42	33	80	67	81	212	321	450	360	360
Justice	851	1.011	1.012	951	866	892	1.229	1.511	2.152	2.551
Total	2.758	3.394	3.452	3.534	3.529	4.036	5.458	6.125	8.830	11.126
GOC+USG										
Defense and Security	2.172	3.168	2.593	2.912	3.190	3.550	4.494	4.751	6.909	8.638
AD and Conflict Victims	51	113	81	177	207	338	446	581	500	555
Justice	851	1.132	1.013	967	893	901	1.236	1.521	2.160	2.591
Total	3.074	4.412	3.686	4.056	4.290	4.789	6.176	6.853	9.569	11.783

(USAID 2009, p.13)

The four tables of Figure 9, below, also highlight several factors. Firstly, the numbers of personnel in the four Colombian security services at the end of the time frame of this analysis are substantially higher than at the beginning. Even as Consolidation sought to build on the gains in national security by shifting more attention towards social, judicial and economic development, this substantial growth indicates that there will be no roll back. The increased size, operational scope and institutional practice and culture prompted by U.S. counter-narcotics support is now institutionalised. Secondly, while in some years there are fluctuations in the numbers of security personnel from all three main military services (these drops are relative to each service's overall size however, e.g. the smaller air force would see the loss of only a few hundred personnel as a noticeable dip), they quickly recover, consolidating security gains and maintaining counter-narcotic operational effectiveness. Thirdly, of all services, the CNP have experienced the most consistent increase in personnel over the years, highlighting the government strategy of making far more use of this militarised civilian force to project state authority and provide a consistent counter-narcotics presence and deterrence in every municipality.

Figure 9

Colombian Army numbers

Colombian National Police numbers

Colombian Navy numbers

Colombian Air Force numbers

(Government of Colombia 2014, p.70-71)

It must also be emphasised that the Consolidation strategy originated in the Colombian Ministry of Defence. It enjoyed significant conceptual input from U.S Southern Command, and indeed given that the CCAI's had no independent budget of their own, the biggest internal Colombian government department donor was the Defence Ministry (Isacson 2012, p.5-6). This highlights its significant role in the conception and execution of the strategy, and the institutionalisation of the military and security establishment in even a notionally more civilian-focused effort.

Taken together, the increase in budget, resources, manpower and deployment in the name of internal security and narcotics enforcement would indicate that this is not a temporary state of affairs, but a long-term commitment to 'democratic security' for the foreseeable future. Given that such measures have largely been reliant on Making Military, as demonstrated above, the unlikely rollback of such measures in the face of concerns about Colombia slipping back into insecurity would strongly indicate that these initiatives have become institutionalised.

5.6 Colombia: Criteria of Violence

When considering the thousands of civilians and combatants killed, substantial refugee issues for the former, and the outright armed-combat between the latter, the nature of Colombia's civil conflict complied with the criteria for a violised security situation. However, as initial U.S. policy in Plan Colombia tried to maintain, the civil conflict and the counter-narcotics conflict were, in theory, separate, but in reality intertwined. As the U.S. became more involved in the country with the launch of Plan Colombia, and eventual policy post-9/11 deliberately conflated counterinsurgency and counter-narcotics campaigns (Vauters and Smith 2006, pp.171-172), the U.S. attempted to ensure that the human rights violations of the civil conflict did not also automatically become entwined with counter-narcotics operations. As a result, the initial emergency appropriations bill that launched Plan Colombia contained provisions outlining the conditions for military assistance. Three principle points were that:

> "The head of the Colombian Armed Forces has been granted and is exercising authority that is identical to that held by the head of the Colombian National Police to summarily dismiss Colombian Armed Forces personnel for gross violations of human rights;

The Colombian Armed Forces are cooperating with civilian authorities in investigating Colombian Armed Forces personnel where credible evidence exists of gross violations of human rights, and, if those investigations result in indictments, the Colombian Armed Forces are cooperating with civilian authorities in prosecuting and punishing such personnel in the civilian courts;

The Colombian Armed Forces are developing and deploying in their field units a Judge Advocate General Corps to investigate Colombian Armed Forces personnel for gross violations of human rights."

<div align="right">(U.S. Congress 2000, p.10)</div>

These stipulations reflected the preceding 1997 Leahy Law on Human Rights, commonly known as the Leahy Amendment. Its chief sponsor, Senator Patrick Leahy, sought to ensure that no funding contained in future foreign aid appropriations acts went to military or police units that included members alleged to have committed human rights violations (U.S. Code 1997)[58]. Vetting was conducted through the State Department, though this has had its own issues, as explored below. Additional funding (via the State Department counter-narcotics program and administered by USAID) was allocated towards programs to strengthen civil and human rights awareness (U.S. GAO 2003, p.22), and both governmental and non-governmental institutions, including units of the Colombian attorney general's office, the inspector general and the public ombudsman. Additionally, the Early Warning System (EWS) was set up as an interagency program coordinated by the Office of the Public Ombudsman, designed to protect civilians from massacres, forced displacement and other rights violations (although, as explored below, its effectiveness was mixed) (U.S. GAO 2003, p.10; Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.131).

It was not without reason that the stipulations had been included in the Plan Colombia legislation, that the Leahy Amendment's influence was felt in it and successive acts, and that support had been included for human rights institutions. In 1999 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights reported that the "situation of human rights in Colombia – which involves massive and continuous violations of the most fundamental human rights – is currently one of the most difficult and serious in the Americas" (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005,

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[58] An example of when the Leahy Amendment proved effective in Colombia came in 2002, when the U.S. suspended aid to the 1st Air Combat Command of the Colombian Air Force, a unit that was involved in a rocket attack on the village of Santo Domingo when clashing with the FARC in December 1998 (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.129).

p.122). In the same year, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia reported 402 massacres, mainly committed by paramilitary units, but with testimonies pointing to the involvement of some Colombian military personnel with such paramilitary units (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.128). At the same time, largely as a result of the jurisdictional *carte blanche* the military had under frequent states of siege, the rates of impunity for all crimes committed by military personnel reached 90 percent; almost 100 percent for human rights crimes (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.128)

Given that counter-narcotics and counterinsurgency policy became so entwined following the 9/11 attacks, the issue of human rights in Colombia's civil conflict also became reflective of human rights issues resulting from counter-narcotics policy. Therefore, while criteria of violence is an important element to explore, in the context of the amount of force and lethality employed against drug traffickers, narco-guerrillas, and their operations, it is also important to consider the significant role of human rights considerations. These were emphasised in an effort to ensure that targeted violence did not exceed the boundaries demanded by U.S. policy, even if in the early stages of Plan Colombia such good intentions were honoured more in the breach by Colombian security forces.

Human rights not only refer to the direct physical treatment of people, but also their ability to conduct sustainable livelihoods – threatened by the mass displacements resulting from the combined impacts of counter-narcotic and counterinsurgency operations – as well as their recourse to official and impartial means of justice to seek redress. In the early stages of Plan Colombia, when military involvement was being emphasised following 9/11, Julia Sweig observed that:

> "The U.S. effort to build regional support for a military campaign in Colombia will be further complicated by scepticism about Washington's motivation for expanding its already significant military presence […] In Latin America, the U.S. armed forces are widely regarded as having been complicit in years of repression. Given the extreme weakness of democracy in the region, legitimate fear exists across society that if Washington makes stronger ties to local militaries a priority, it will only strengthen the very institutions that are most associated with the authoritarian rule of recent decades." (2002, p.139)

Aside from a brief interlude of direct military rule, Colombia is Latin America's longest established democracy, and thus could not be regarded as authoritarian in the same capacity

as other regional dictatorships. Nevertheless, the human rights record of the Colombian security forces (and by extension an understanding of what level of violence the U.S. was willing to tolerate in pursuit of counter-narcotics goals) could not be said to comply with the expectations of conventional democratic standards, and the U.S. recognised this when it came to formulating counter-narcotics policy.

Early indicators that human rights were of growing consideration in this regard – even before stipulations in Plan Colombia legislation – came from Myles Frechette, U.S. Ambassador to Colombia and an outspoken supporter of taking a hard line on the drug issue. He elucidated fears of becoming involved in overt military counterinsurgency operations in Colombia, given the negative fallout from the U.S. experience in Central America the previous decade, when thousands of tortured, dispossessed, killed or disappeared persons in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua tainted the U.S. by association. In a 1997 diplomatic cable, he wrote that "the issue raises too many human rights concerns and has been a searing experience for us in Central America" (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.107). A year later, Frechette made a farewell speech in which he singled out the Colombian military's Twentieth Brigade (also known as the 20th Intelligence Brigade) for human rights abuses, not least housing a death squad (Schemo 1998). Shortly after, it was announced that the Brigade was to be dissolved, its intelligence gathering responsibilities divided amongst the other services of the Colombian military, and its officers reviewed and vetted for alleged abuses, though the move was approached with caution from human rights watchdogs, who feared more of a PR exercise to dilute the problem rather than effectively tackling it (Schemo 1998).

It was in this context that the Leahy Amendment was intended to be applied, as outlined above. Yet though this did provide greater safeguards against U.S. policy supporting foreign armed forces with dubious human rights records, national security waivers allowed them to effectively be watered down. For example, the very next point that followed the three primary human rights stipulations listed above was a waiver, stating that "The President may waive [these limitations] if the President determines that the waiver is required by extraordinary circumstances" (U.S. Congress 2000, p.11). In other words the President had the ability to waive such human rights concerns in the interests of U.S. national security, as President Clinton did in August 2000 (Serafino 2001, p.15). A further critique in this vein is that the State Department facilitated approval of certification in the early stages of Plan Colombia by relying on narrow, albeit technically correct, legalistic interpretations on how actions by the Colombian armed forces constituted compliance with human rights criteria. For example, State Department documents highlighted the numbers of military personnel

who had been arrested, dismissed or prosecuted for alleged human rights abuses and/or collaboration with paramilitaries as evidence that the Colombians were complying. Yet the same document stated that:

> "Although the Secretary has determined that the Colombian Armed Forces' efforts justify certification at this time, the U.S. and Colombian governments recognize that the Colombian government and military need to do more to protect human rights and to sever military-paramilitary ties." (U.S. State Department 2002)

Further analysis reveals that between October 1995 and December 2001, only 125 military personnel suspected of gross human rights violations were subjected to preventative detention orders (U.S. State Department 2002). This leaves the impression that as long as tangible evidence existed of the Colombian military making efforts to meet its commitments (i.e. arresting *some* personnel), then certification could be approved, even if such commitments were not met in totality (it can be suggested that 125 cases in six years did not represent the entire catalogue of alleged human rights abuses that could conceivably have been assembled).

It was perhaps not unexpected that significant numbers of the officer class of the Colombian armed forces would be accused or prosecuted for human rights violations, given that many had been educated at the School of the Americas during the Cold War period. Established in 1946 with the aim of improving ties between the U.S. and Latin American militaries, and educating them in the virtues of democratic civilian control over armed forces, the School of the Americas was not without controversy. In reality, training – even codified in an official SOA manual in 1987 – included instruction in interrogation techniques bordering on torture, as well as psychological warfare, mainly targeted at confronting the threats posed by leftist guerrillas and political movements in Latin America in the 1980s. Among its 60,000 or so graduates were Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, Argentinian Junta leader Leopoldo Galtieri and Roberto D'Aubuisson, the organiser of many death squads in El Salvador's civil war (New York Times 1996). The School moved from Panama to Fort Benning, Georgia in 1984 and, following the exposure of its educational practices and the ensuing controversy, was reformed and rebranded in 2001 as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (Campbell 2002). It has since proceeded with an avidly pro-human rights curriculum as the U.S. sought to repair its image-by-association and have policy match Plan Colombia's legislative and moral stipulations. Currently, all prospective students are vetted and a Board of Visitors, including members of Congress, representatives

from the Departments of State and Defence, academics and clergy, provide regular external and independent oversight (WHINSEC 2014). However, SOA Watch, an organisation that has, since 1990, campaigned for the closure of the institute under whatever name it operates, has deemed the reforms as purely cosmetic (SOA Watch 2014). Additionally, a series of 2004 academic interviews saw some staff argue that, while torture and brutality were unacceptable in the 21st Century, the old SOA manuals were part of a broader, legitimate U.S. counterinsurgency strategy necessary for combatting enemies in a different era when certain actions were more permissible (Blakeley 2013, p.161).

It may be the case that U.S. attitudes and policy have evolved since the end of the Cold War. However, as demonstrated above, for all the influence the U.S. wields through funding, training and support, it cannot necessarily dictate or minutely oversee the operational actions of the Colombian counter-narcotics forces it supports, especially given restrictions on the direct involvement of U.S. military and civilian personnel on anything other than training missions.

Further evidence came to light with the 'False Positives' scandal, which broke as late as 2009, when almost 1200 members of the security forces were investigated, indicted or prosecuted across Colombia for over 900 cases where over 1500 civilians were killed and then dressed to look like narco-guerrillas killed in combat, thus contributing to positive campaign statistics (McDermott 2009; International Criminal Court 2012, p.3). As with earlier State Department certification approvals, the fact that Colombian military personnel involved in both counter-narcotics and counterinsurgency are being held to account is a positive factor, but the fact that there are still ongoing violations to be held accountable *for* are cause for concern. A recent ICC interim report on the situation in Colombia stated that:

> "While numerous members of the armed forces have been investigated and disciplinary measures, criminal convictions and prison sentences issued, the proceedings have not focused on the responsibility of those at senior levels for the occurrence of such crimes." (International Criminal Court 2012, p.57-60).

Despite over a decade of initiatives, the U.S. has still not been able to completely expunge human rights abuses bordering on violised levels of violence.

A sub-category of the human rights/levels of violence issue is that of displacement of populations (Internally Displaced Peoples, or IDP), due to guerrilla, paramilitary or state military incursions related to Colombia's civil conflict, but just as often fuelled by counter-

narcotics operations. Violence, armed conflict, drug trafficking and the search for better living conditions all came together at the height of Plan Colombia, with the numbers of IDP running into the hundreds of thousands. A microcosm example was the province of Putumayo where, according to the Social Solidarity Network (the Colombian government agency responsible for providing aid to displaced people) in 1999 415 people were displaced as a result of political violence, but by late 2003 IDP numbers had reached 56,000 after coca fumigation operations had been launched (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.118). If Colombia as a whole during this period is analysed – as shown in Figure 10 – while the numbers of IDP were still high in 2000 when Plan Colombia launched, likely caused by the civil conflict, their numbers increased significantly in relation to greater fumigation that reduced coca cultivation levels.

Figure 10 - Number of IDP and coca cultivation, 2000-2004
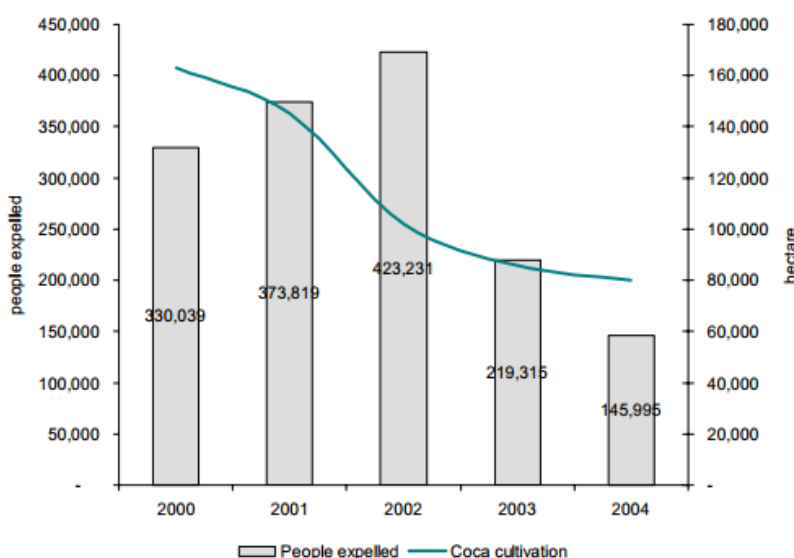
(UNODC and Government of Colombia 2005, p.39)

The principle reasons for these displacements were the damage to livelihoods and the environment caused by spraying coca crops, partnered with civilians being caught in the crossfire between guerrillas, paramilitaries and Colombian forces, and thus being driven out for reasons of economic necessity or personal safety. While such displacements are the indirect consequence of counter-narcotic activity, rather than the direct intent, it cannot be said that IDP are victims of *deliberate* violence perpetrated against them, other than of course those victimised by the land grabs of guerrillas or paramilitaries. These groups are not under the influence of U.S. counter-narcotics policy and so their actions cannot be factored in when judging criteria of violence in this case study. Their actions are a consequence of the civil conflict in Colombia rather than the counter-narcotics campaign, and especially U.S. sanctioned counter-narcotics policy.

U.S. policy cannot be completely regarded as benign however. While the official U.S. and Colombian position is that eradicating crops removes the incentive for armed groups to

fight over territory, thus displacing civilians, the Colombian Human Rights and Displacement Consulting Office (CODHES) and the Ombudsman's Office suggest that there is a direct link between eradication and the increase in internally displaced persons (Veillette and Navarrete-Frías 2005, p.20). Though the U.S. could be accused of deliberate naivety in adopting this position regarding the consequences of its policy, the indirect nature of these consequences must again be emphasised in contrast to deliberate, targeted violence as perpetrated by illegal armed groups and, on occasion, Colombian forces. It can be shown that U.S. alternative development funding and measures were put in place to offset the negative displacement-encouraging effects of loss of coca revenue on poor farmers and rural communities (Veillette and Navarrete-Frías 2005, p.20-21). However, for the majority of the period analysed, such funding was dwarfed by military spending as statistics throughout this chapter have highlighted, though social spending has grown as a proportion of overall U.S. aid in recent years during the Consolidation phase (Isacson 2012, p.3).

Due to the ban on direct participation of U.S. military and security personnel in undertaking counter-narcotics operations, this section has inevitably been dominated by the criteria of violence in relation to Colombian counter-narcotics forces. However, in the same why that U.S. personnel lent valuable practical assistance in the past that led to the death of Pablo Escobar (lethal, yet still targeted violence), so too have U.S. assets recently been employed in the targeted deaths of guerrilla leaders, in a case where again the lines between Colombia's civil war and drug war blurred.

Operating under a covert programme authorised by George W. Bush following FARC's seizure of American hostages in 2003, and continued under President Obama (and falling outside the approved Plan Colombia support package), the CIA was able to assist the Colombian military with intelligence and, eventually, equipment to facilitate the killing or capture of FARC commanders (Priest 2013; Guardian 2013). The CIA set up a special intelligence cell in the U.S. embassy in Bogota, where they were able to collect and assess intelligence on the FARC leadership and pass it on to Colombian forces, facilitated by U.S. Special Forces trainers. Lethal, direct military support was introduced when – after legal approval was granted – the CIA were authorised to provide the Colombian air force with the Enhanced Paveway II, a relatively inexpensive guidance device that could convert a standard 500 drop-bomb into a targeted smart bomb. It was this combination of actionable intelligence and lethal ordinance that allowed the Colombian military to locate, attack and kill almost two-dozen guerrilla leaders since 2007, further compounding FARC's strategic troubles (Priest 2013; Guardian 2013).

This is an example of the kind of limited, targeted violence that complies with militarisation, and one in which U.S. counter-narcotics policy was directly involved. In order to ensure that the use of such ordinance remained under U.S. control and was strictly limited and targeted, the CIA liaisons to the Colombian forces maintained possession of the encryption codes necessary to activate the smart bomb conversion equipment, freeing them up only with permission from above and when legitimate targets were confirmed (Priest 2013; Guardian 2013). This demonstrates that, when the U.S. military and intelligence had a direct participatory role in counter-narcotics operations and Colombian forces were wholly reliant on U.S. oversight and support, it was possible to enforce a policy of targeted violence. This was in contrast to incidents where Colombian forces indulged in indiscriminate violence bordering on, if not crossing into, violisation, where U.S. funding, support and training have been provided but could not guarantee complete Colombian compliance in perpetrating what the U.S. might have considered acceptable levels of violence.

Ultimately there has been progress within the criteria of violence applied to U.S.-influenced counter-narcotics in Colombia. Where the U.S. has been directly involved – as with targeted FARC assassinations – the presence of militarisation via the provision of military equipment, intelligence and lethal practice, has been balanced with limited violence against specific groups and individuals. Where there has been fault, it lays with the Colombian security forces and individual and group actions, such as the indiscriminate violence of the False Positives incidents, where the loss of life could be classed a complying with a violised security situation. While the U.S. may have substantial influence thanks to its military and counter-narcotics aid, Colombia is still a sovereign country and its armed forces are not beholden or subordinate to the U.S. military. Therefore, in the absence of being able to take a direct command role – or at least vital participatory oversight as with the smart-bombing of FARC – U.S. counter-narcotics policy is limited in the control it can exert on the associated levels of violence. The human rights stipulations attached to counter-narcotics aid provision in congressional legislation is the closest the U.S. can come to directly influencing the conduct of Colombian forces. While progress has been made in arrests and prosecutions of human rights violators, and the situation has markedly improved since the days of Colombian military impunity, it is still not a perfected situation.

Therefore, when all factors are considered, U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia – at least its consequences, as *indirectly applied* by its partners – has had mixed success to date in respect to maintaining strictly militarised rather than violised criteria of violence. However, U.S. counter-narcotics policy *itself* – leaving aside Colombian partners – is

independently *designed* and *intended* to minimise human rights abuses while prosecuting the drug war, not to support or facilitate such abuses to the extent that they cross over into the violisation section of the security spectrum. Based on this interpretation, U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia complies with a criteria of violence indicative of militarisation.

5.7 Results and Chapter Summary

It can be reasonably concluded that U.S. counter-narcotics policy, during the time-scale of Plan Colombia, has been militarised. Evidence produced throughout this chapter supports this position.

The long-standing military ties between the U.S. and Colombia prior to the drug conflict, be it training or funding programs with anti-communist aims, made increased military support, if not inevitable, then certainly accepted with greater ease than in Mexico, as explored in the next chapter. Before the strengthening of ties between the U.S. and the Colombian military in prosecuting counter-narcotics, American faith and funding was placed with the Colombian National Police. This was still a paramilitary organisation, and so American counter-narcotics support was already taking a decidedly militarised direction, even without principally supporting the Colombian military, as Plan Colombia measures eventually would. Also, leaving aside Colombia's late-1990s drug issues and security crisis, the DOD was made lead agency for counter-narcotics in 1988, and the prominence of Southcom in the Latin American region dovetailed with the end of the Cold War. Southcom's need to justify its existence and the financing and resources it consumed, matched with the DOD's status as the principal agency for prosecuting America's foreign counter-narcotics policy, altogether boosted U.S. counter-narcotics militarisation.

However, this was not American support foisted upon another country solely in service to its own national security interest (even if that was the primary motivator). It was also in Colombia's interest to accept the counter-narcotics support on offer, given how drug money helped to feed its civil conflict. Pre-Plan Colombia policy, such as breaking the cartels and squeezing production in Bolivia and Peru, actually intensified coca cultivation in Colombia. The resultant revenues played a significant role in sustaining the civil conflict, even if the U.S. initially preferred to maintain an artificial distinction between the two security problems. Congress approved emergency funding for Plan Colombia, but for year-on-year expenditure only, subject to annual oversight to ensure that counter-narcotics remained the focus and not counterinsurgency. This was always a difficult line to walk, and

after 9/11 and the commencement of the War on Terror, there was no longer a need to maintain this illogical distinction. The Bush and Uribe Administrations were in sync on the need to embark on a muscular, militarised strategy of counter-narcoterrorism.

As a result, the Colombian military and national police experienced significant growth in numbers of personnel. This was especially the case for the ground forces of the army and CNP, in order to retake territory formally occupied by guerrillas, to clear coca crops, and to facilitate economic and social regeneration in those areas to create secure spaces. While this Consolidation phase emphasises economic and social development, military initiatives, such as *Sword of Honour*, still show that hard military power is utilised in the counter-narco insurgency cause, as well as soft socio-economic power.

In truth, militarisation was always on an upwards trend. American military aid was well underway before Plan Colombia, with support allocated for a 1000-man counter-narcotics brigade (U.S. Department of Defence 1998), which itself overtly boosted U.S. military involvement and support for the then-lead agency, the Colombian National Police. With Plan Colombia itself, 75 percent of the total budget allocation went to military aid (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.108), intended to help form an entire counter-narcotics battalion, not just a brigade, plus support from helicopters, improved training, ammunition, intelligence, and communications equipment. All of these represented a direct injection of American military assets into Colombian counter-narcotics. The 9/11 attacks and their fallout only increased support, with military aid going towards the formation of a counterinsurgency battalion (Crandall 2008, p.139; Isacson 2005, p.25). This amounted to an additional counter-narcotics force in all but name, due to the intertwining of counterinsurgency and counter-narcotics in the Colombian civil conflict. Counterinsurgency support also saw the direct involvement of U.S. Special Forces on the ground in a training capacity, continuing the role they had undertaken for years, going back to the days of the Military Training Teams and the hunt for Pablo Escobar.

Of the $9 billion spent by the United States between 2000-2013, $4.2 billion was dedicated to counter-narcotics funding for both the Colombian military and national police, with $670 million for direct weaponry and equipment transfers, $400 million for air wing operations, and $2 billion to fund DOD involvement in Plan Colombia (Beittel 2012, p.38). Essentially, the majority of Plan Colombia funding went into security and principally military assets, illustrating direct 'making military', as well as institutionalisation because it was carried out for such a prolonged period of time, and could not be regarded as a temporary emergency measure.

Concerning institutionalisation, this had begun pre-Plan Colombia, with the military allowed significant say over national security policy. Military authority was backed up by presidential decrees, which explicitly allowed the armed forces and the police to take the fight to drug traffickers, and even introduced effective marshal law for drug offences, until overturned by the Supreme Court. Institutionalisation is demonstrated by the confidence displayed by the United States in gradually leaving the Colombian military to guarantee their own state security. Fiscal issues in domestic U.S. politics have played a role in reducing military expenditure, and the Obama Administration's desire to disengage from protracted conflicts around the world has seen increased American draw-down in various theatres (Feickert 2014).

Yet it is likely that, even absent these factors, the growing strength and proficiency of Colombia's security forces has become entrenched, with Colombian counter-narcotics forces even exporting their expertise to train regional neighbours' forces, especially Mexico (Acierno and Kinosian 2015). Under the Democratic Security and Consolidation phases, the Colombian security budget and manpower availability grew substantially to solidify the security gains made in both counterinsurgency and counter-narcotics efforts. All said, the increase in budget, manpower and the continuous involvement of security forces in counter-narcotics, all points to a long-term trend, not a temporary state of affairs, and is thus institutionalised.

As alluded to, counterinsurgency and counter-narcotics are essentially one and the same in Colombia, and so violence associated with the civil conflict could, for most of Plan Colombia, be regarded as violised, at least in regards to *domestic* Colombian policy actions. However, U.S. counter-narcotics policy, the main objective of study, has sought to limit the scale of violence. This is not to say that the U.S. has discouraged it completely, nor abstained from indirect involvement, as targeted assassinations of FARC commanders demonstrates (Priest 2013; Guardian 2013). However, consider the aims of the Leahy Amendment in general, the human rights terms and conditions for Plan Colombia approval specifically (presidential waivers notwithstanding), and State Department efforts to fund governmental and non-governmental civil and human rights awareness and institutions (U.S. GAO 2003). These demonstrate an effort to keep violence minimal and targeted, and is thus in-keeping with levels of violence associated with militarisation, not violisation. Ultimately, the United States exerts a great deal of influence in Colombia, but cannot dictate all strategic aspects, as highlighted by the more complicated issues surrounding violence and human rights, compared to the more straightforward making military and institutionalisation elements. As

we shall see when compared to Mexico, the fact is that Colombia was actively fighting a civil conflict with a counter-narcotics dimension, but warfare was still a defining factor. Therefore, it is little surprise that militarisation was the outcome and was the pursued policy by both Colombia and its American supporters.

While the U.S. military has not had a sizable presence on the ground, it has deployed hundreds of personnel in small training and advisor units for decades. Additional input of weaponry, equipment and intelligence assets has contributed to 'making military' in Colombia, largely by empowering the native security forces with such militarised resources. This process has been underway for over fifteen years, since the start of Plan Colombia, and even before, during the operations against the cartels in the 1980s. A stronger, larger Colombian military establishment is here to stay, is not a temporary measure, and has thus become institutionalised. Finally, while violence has clearly been perpetrated on a large scale, it is the responsibility of Colombian parties, whether government forces, guerrillas or paramilitaries, and is not the direct responsibility of U.S. counter narcotics policy. Taking all factors into consideration, U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia meets all three elements required to be deemed 'militarised'. The U.S. counter-narcotics relationship with Mexico is very different, however, as explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

U.S. Counter-narcotics Militarisation:
Mexico and the U.S. Southern Border

6.1 Introduction

While an examination of the extent of militarisation in U.S. drug policy in Mexico can be structurally similar to its Colombian counterpart, it is nevertheless qualitatively different. The United States and Mexico are direct neighbours, share a 2000-mile land border across which over $500 billion in annual trade occurs (Seelke and Finklea 2014), and have experienced almost two centuries of historical interaction, comprising politics, culture, society, commerce and conflict. This has shaped the two countries' attitudes towards each other, and indeed shaped the countries themselves. Not for nothing did writer Gloria Anzaldúa – born in the Rio Grande Valley border area in Texas – refer to the U.S.-Mexico border as:

> "*Una herida abierta* – an open wound – where the Third World grates against the First and bleeds. And before the scab forms, it haemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two countries merging to form a third." (Vulliamy 2010)

While the two countries generally enjoy warm bilateral relations, there are long enduring memories and residual bitterness concerning how Mexico lost over half its historical territory to American expansionism in the 19th Century (Hamnett 2006, p.7-8). As a result, Mexican governments and their security forces have traditionally been reluctant to accept any U.S. assistance that may impinge on their sovereignty. This is in contrast to Colombia, with its hosting of American military personnel and facilities, and willingness to take direction from – or at least be influenced by – the U.S. This is not to say that cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico on security related issues is dismissed or discouraged, simply that the latter views itself as an equal rather than junior partner in such endeavours, and thus will not be 'ordered around'.

Such diplomatic sensitivity, coupled with long-standing drug trafficking issues, criminality, immigration and border politics (all exacerbated by a geographical proximity that Colombia, for all its own problems, does not possess) mean that the U.S. encounters a different set of problems and concerns when dealing with drug trafficking in Mexico and related security issues posed by these Drug Trafficking Organisations (DTOs). Primarily,

Mexico's drug war is fundamentally different to Colombia's. There is no political insurgency as such, as with the FARC or ELN, nor any counter-revolutionaries like the AUC, with all such groups contributing to a complex civil conflict. Instead, Mexico has experienced what can best be described as a criminal, or narco, insurgency[59] (Bunker 2010, p.10), where large and powerful cartels not only battle the civilian authorities, but also each other, for territory, influence and all important lucrative smuggling routes into the U.S. Unlike FARC, which is vulnerable to airstrikes, leadership decapitation and large advances by the Colombian security forces to retake and consolidate territory, Mexican DTOs have no interest in political control or setting up shadow states. They blend into their communities and thus cannot be completely 'conquered' by military means.

However, this is not to say that militarisation of some description has not taken place in response to Mexico's narcotics conflict. Indeed, the drug war rages both in the conventional sense of states and their security forces taking on drug traffickers, and also in the sense of a war being undertaken between the DTOs themselves. A potent example of the former was the deployment of the Mexican Army and Marines into regions of Northern Mexico torn apart by drug violence, as well as the militarisation of domestic U.S. border forces which play a leading role in attempting to stem the northward flow of illicit narcotics. Both examples are explored in greater detail later. As for the latter aspect, that of DTO capability, while Mexico and the U.S. have armed forces to deploy or civil forces to militarise, the DTOs have equal access to armed force, albeit of a nature that is purchased outright, or recruited and trained with the latest battlefield weaponry. Both the money and the weaponry to raise and equip these Mexican DTO militias ironically flows south from the U.S. Money represents the spoils of the sale of narcotics throughout North America, and the weaponry a by-product of the American right to buy and sell arms, whatever the ultimate destination and intent for their use.

These multiple issues involving the Mexican state, U.S. counter-narcotics, and the border between both countries, has been an issue for decades, as the Nixon Administration's Operation Intercept in 1969 (detailed in Chapter 4) demonstrates. Yet with the huge upturn in violence between rival cartels and the Mexican state from 2006 onwards, these already troublesome issues gained increased prominence in U.S. counter-narcotics and national security concerns. While the Mexican state may not have risked collapse at the hands of

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[59] Though the use of the term 'insurgent' itself carries some difficulty in Mexico, since 'insurgents' are regarded as the glorious founding fathers of the country who rebelled against Spanish rule, and are not to be conflated with violent organised criminals in the Mexican mind-set (Grillo 2010, p.11)

narco-insurgents, as once looked possible in Colombia, the shocking levels of brutality and violence underway on a daily basis, especially in Northern Mexico, risked spilling over across the border into the U.S., with corruption of some border and customs officials by the DTOs the least of American worries. In recent years the Mexican cartels have become responsible for some 80 percent of the total illegal drugs that enter the U.S. – including more than 90 percent of cocaine – leading to U.S. counter-narcotics assistance to the country growing at a faster rate than even Afghanistan and Colombia (Lee 2014; Thompson 2011).

Therefore it was with a similar sense of urgency to that displayed prior to Plan Colombia's formulation and passing, that the Merida Initiative was launched in 2008 (Seeke and Finklea 2014, p.14). Initially a counter-narcotic and anti-crime assistance package for Mexico and Central America, it too followed the path of Plan Colombia. It had an early emphasis on promoting security via the training and equipping of Mexican counter-narcotics forces, but eventually moved in a more institution-building and social development direction. However, one of the main differences between the Merida Initiative and Plan Colombia is a marked decrease in the level of overt U.S. military involvement, at least on the Mexican side of the border for political reasons. Any direct participation in Mexican-related counter-narcotics efforts by the DOD, or militarised domestic civilian forces, therefore largely takes place on the U.S. side of the border. Therefore, while this chapter places a strong focus on Mexico, the border issue between the two countries is part and parcel of the Mexican drug conflict, and so is worthy of equal exploration and consideration.

This chapter will firstly detail the type and extent of counter-narcotics support the U.S. lent to Mexico before the Merida Initiative, and will then explore the origins and development of the Initiative itself. Then, given its importance within the overall case study, the militarisation of the U.S.-Mexico border will be thoroughly detailed. Following this, the three elements of the militarisation framework – making military, institutionalisation and criteria of violence – will be analysed in the context of Mexico. Special attention is given to the third element, due to its significant role in the nature of the conflict, as well as influencing the militarisation of the U.S. border region. A broad conclusion then ends the analysis.

6.2 U.S.-Mexico counter-narcotics support & cooperation pre-Merida Initiative

One of the central issues to recognise in this case study is that, during the 20th Century, the Mexican government, under the 70-year control of the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) was either involved with, or at least tolerant of, drug trafficking and traffickers in

Mexico. As a consequence, U.S. counter-narcotics efforts conducted in cooperation with the Mexican authorities were received with one hand, while simultaneously the other hand was actively engaged, or at the least complicit, in the cross-border drug trade. For instance, in the 1970s, it was reported that the government and security establishment, from the Mexican Army to the Federal Security Directorate to the Federal Judicial Police, exercised almost complete control over drug cultivation and transport. Permission was granted to traffickers by regional military authorities to cultivate a certain number of hectares in exchange for a portion of revenues (Hernández 2013, p.65). This was at the same time that the U.S. War on Drugs was commencing and gaining momentum, with the Americans seeking to cooperate with the Mexican authorities and lend them financial and logistical support. This was despite claims that the Mexican secretary of defence, attorney general and even president had knowledge of state complicity in drug trafficking, alongside the Federal Security Directorate – the former Mexican version of the CIA that its American namesake had assisted in creating – which the U.S. enjoyed a close relationship with (Hernández 2013, p.65).

Likewise, the period 1990-2000 saw active cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico on a radar network designed to improve the tracking of drug planes coming in from Colombia. However, at the very same time, lucrative cocaine flights across the border into the U.S., belonging to drug lord Amado Carrillo Fuentes, were provided with federal protection as they left and returned to the drug-transit city of Hermosillo (Beith 2010, p.54). While complicity in drug trafficking by elements of the Mexican state continued, the 2000 presidential election marked the first time in decades that an opposition candidate secured victory and placed Mexico on the path away from soft-authoritarianism towards genuine democracy. However this was to have critical side-effects for the development of the Mexican drug trade, and subsequent violence, as will be discussed later.

Despite these embarrassing reputational blemishes on the record of the U.S.-Mexico counter-narcotics relationship, genuine and effective intelligence cooperation between Central and South American nations, Mexico and the U.S. was still substantial in the early-1990s. The U.S. aimed to squeeze the Colombian cartels and their regional connections and allies, a process given an additional intelligence element following President George H.W. Bush's authorisation for the American national intelligence agencies to become involved. Such cross border cooperation allowed not only for the capture or death of leading Colombian cartel figures, but also of significant Mexican drug traffickers, such as Joaquim 'El Chapo' Guzman of the Sinaloa Cartel, who in turn revealed intelligence on his partner Cali cartel, other Mexican traffickers, and corrupt Mexican officials (Beith 2010, p.76-77).

The growing influence of Mexican traffickers was felt not just abroad, but within the U.S. as well. In December 2000, a major law enforcement operation conducted in ten American cities resulted in the arrest of 155 people connected to Mexican drug cartels, while also seizing almost 5,500 kilos of cocaine, 9,500 pounds of marijuana and $11 million (Beith 2010, p.176). Later in the decade a series of special multi-agency law enforcement operations were launched, explicitly targeting Mexican cartels. From 2007-2008, the DEA-led Project Reckoning focused on the Gulf Cartel, leading to the arrest of over 500 individuals in the U.S., Mexico and Italy, as well as the seizure of $60.1 million, 16,711 kilograms of cocaine, 1,039 pounds of methamphetamine, 19 pounds of heroin and 51,258 pounds of marijuana (U.S. Department of Justice 2008). Likewise, from 2007-2009 Operation Xcellerator targeted the Sinaloa Cartel, one of the most powerful Mexican DTOs. The DEA once again led a cross-border effort involving the U.S., Mexico and Canada, aiming to disrupt and eliminate Sinaloa branch operations in the U.S. in order to deny the main cartel revenues and manpower. The operation arrested over 750 operatives in twenty-six cities across the U.S. and denied the Sinaloa Cartel a $1 billion in revenue (U.S. Department of Justice 2009b).

U.S.-Mexico counter-narcotics efforts were not restricted to such domestic operations. Towards the end of the 2000s, as the scale of violence perpetrated in the Mexican drug war increased, the DEA and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs at the State Department provided support and training to Mexican officials. This came in a variety of investigative, enforcement and regulatory methods for countering trafficking, especially in the growing methamphetamine trade from Mexico. Such training included procedures in clandestine laboratory and precursor chemical investigations, especially relevant given the importance of specific laboratory conditions and precursor ingredient drugs and chemicals involved in the meth production process. During 2008, prior to the effective launch of the Merida Initiative, 1,269 Mexican federal, state and local officials received such training, as well as the donation from the DEA of eight refurbished trucks used in such laboratory enforcement operations in Mexico (U.S. State Department 2009b).

Despite the efforts of such joint operations, support and training, in 2007 marijuana became the biggest source of revenue for the cartels for the first time, bringing in $8.5 billion, while cocaine, long assumed to be the primary revenue generator for the traffickers, brought in $3.9 billion, and methamphetamine, the minority component of the drug trade, still earned $1 billion in illicit revenues (O'Neill 2009). Before its closure in 2012, the National Drug Intelligence Centre, in one of its final National Drug Threat Assessments, stated that "Mexican DTOs continue to represent the single greatest drug

trafficking threat to the United States" (2010, p.2). Such an assessment was based on statistics that found Mexico to be a major producer and supplier to the U.S. market of heroin, methamphetamine and marijuana[60], and the key transit country for cocaine into the U.S., some 90 percent (U.S. State Department 2013a). In addition to the transit of illicit narcotics, of additional concern were the alliances forged between Mexican DTOs and native criminal elements in the U.S. in order to sell such illegal substances, especially street and prison gangs. In 2009, intelligence estimates found that midlevel and retail drug distribution in the domestic U.S. market was dominated by more than 900,000 criminally active gang members representing approximately 20,000 street gangs in more than 2,500 cities (National Drug Intelligence Centre 2010, p.2).

It was clear that, despite the efforts of the Mexican government and security forces (especially since 2006, as detailed below) the flow of illicit drugs into the United States was unabated. It generated enormous profits for the cartels, furthered criminal, social and public health issues in the U.S., and contributed to the public safety and national security threat to the Mexican state, as well as to U.S. Border States and regions, as explored later. In 2008 the Merida Initiative was approved by the U.S. Congress in an attempt to tackle these problems.

6.3 The origins of Mexico's drug war and increased U.S. support

Several factors account for the rise in prominence of the drug trafficking issue in Mexico, the increased violence, and the decision by the U.S. to adopt a smaller scale version of the Plan Colombia formula for Mexico, known as the Merida Initiative.

As discussed previously, U.S. and Colombian efforts to crack down and eliminate the South American cartels led to the dismantlement of these organisations and the closure or restriction of many previous air and maritime trafficking routes. As a result, the Colombian DTOs sub-contracted the trafficking of cocaine to the Mexican DTOs, making payment in cocaine. This gradually allowed the latter to evolve from mere traffickers into the wholesalers they are today, responsible for generating their own billions of dollars in revenue rather than being subservient to the Colombians as they were in the past. As profits soared, so too did the incentive for the Mexican DTOs to compete with each other for market share and lucrative routes into the U.S. (Beittel 2013, p.8; Lee 2014).

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[60] Opium poppy cultivation in Mexico 2009 rose 31% over 2008 to 19,500 hectares yielding a potential production of 50 metric tons of pure heroin, or 125 metric tons of "black tar" heroin, making Mexico the second largest opium poppy cultivator in the world. Additionally, marijuana cultivation increased 45% to 17,500 hectares in 2009 (Central Intelligence Agency 2014). These figures coincided with the effective launch of the Merida Initiative.

As covered above, the PRI effectively ruled Mexico in a soft-authoritarian manner for the best part of seven decades, and was often complicit with drug producers and traffickers, keeping them largely under control. This changed with the victory of the opposition National Action Party in the 2000 elections which made Vicente Fox president, sweeping the old order out of power along with its policy of accommodation with organised crime (Beittel 2013, p.8). While the issues of cartels had barely been mentioned by Fox in his campaign, American pressure saw a crackdown begin on traffickers and kingpins. This disrupted the old command and control structures of the established cartels, leading to power grabs, new leaderships and the splintering of organisations. As with Colombia, what had been a select few large cartels under the control of established leaderships either broke up, or remained intact but evolved. The most prominent included the Zetas Cartel, Juárez Cartel, Tijuana Cartel, Beltran Leyva Cartel, and DTOs from the long established Sinaloa Cartel, to new upstarts such as the cultish Knights Templar. All began fighting each other for the spoils of drug trafficking routes into the U.S. (Lee 2014; CNN 2012).

It was against this background of Mexican DTOs being enriched and empowered by Colombian DTO decline, the change in Mexican government and the end of accommodation, and the splintering and competition within their ranks, which prompted the gradual escalation in trafficking-related violence during Vicente Fox's 2000-2006 presidential term.

Fox's successor from the same party, Felipe Calderón, had made responding to the growing cartel issue one of his signature pledges after winning the election by the slimmest of margins. In essence assuming the mantle of a 'war president', he donned a military jacket and cap and announced the commencement of Operation Michoacán Together, the deployment of 4,000 troops in his home state in an effort to reduce crime and combat drug trafficking (Flannery 2013, p.182). As will be explored in greater detail below, from that point on drug-related violence in Mexico exploded. The DTOs were further splintered by the crackdown, adding even more violent players to the equation as they fought one another in competition for drug spoils, and attacked government security forces in an effort to intimidate and reclaim the impunity enjoyed during the accommodation with the PRI (Lee 2014).

The U.S. was fully mindful of the national security implications posed by its neighbour descending into anarchy in the border regions, and the capacity for 'spillover' violence and criminality into America itself. Its policy response sought to support the Mexican security establishment within the parameters of Mexico's constitutional prohibition on the use of foreign military forces in its jurisdiction. It was recognised that, as a predominantly criminal issue, Mexican law enforcement should ideally be the primary

solution to the drug problem. Yet it was also recognised that local and state law enforcement were simply not up to the task of containing the cartels or their violence, hence the decision to deploy Mexican military forces as an alternative. Addressing these deficiencies has become the long-term strategy of U.S. policy and is reflected in the four pillars that comprise the Merida Initiative, passed by Congress in 2008 (Seeke and Finklea 2014, p.14):

- Disrupting the operational capacity of organised crime
- Institutionalising reforms to sustain the rule of law and respect for human rights in Mexico
- Creating a 21st Century border
- Building strong and resilient communities

To these ends, U.S. policy has involved training provision for Mexican security personnel (including the military, but mainly federal law enforcement), provision of intelligence gathered by U.S. surveillance assets, stipulations in Merida legislation regarding the observance of human rights, and the dedication of resources to aide justice reform and improve the integrity and reputation of Mexican authorities (Shirk 2011a, p.240). It has also involved cooperation on border interdiction (albeit increasingly militarised on the U.S. side), and U.S. support for Mexican community initiatives, as well as drug demand-reduction and treatment programmes (Seeke and Finklea 2014, pp.13-24). A more detailed exploration of Mexican and U.S. involvement in these measures is reserved for the relevant sections below.

Initial U.S. support in the first phase of the Merida Initiative very much lay with equipment provision, such as supplying funds for the purchase of $590.5 million worth of aircraft and helicopters for counter-DTO forces, as well as forensic equipment for Federal Police and Attorney General crime laboratories (Seeke and Finklea 2014, pp.13). Yet, the shift in focus towards a more institution-building approach is apparent in the funding allocations for the lifetime of the Initiative so far, as detailed in Figure 11.

Figure 11 - Merida Initiative Funding for Mexico FY2008-2015 ($ in millions)

Account	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014 (est.)	Account Totals	FY2015 Request
ESF	20.0	15.0	15.0a	18.0	33.3	32.1	46.1	179.5	35.0
INCLE	263.5	406.0	365.0	117.0	248.5	195.1	148.1	1,743.2	80.0
FMF	116.5	299.0	5.3	8.0	N/Ab	N/A	N/A	428.8	N/A
Total	**400.0**	**720.0**	**385.3**	**143.0**	**281.8**	**227.2**	**194.2**	**2,351.5**	**115.0**

(Seelke and Finklea 2014, p.7)

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As can be seen from the figures, despite an initial burst, Foreign Military Finance (FMF) was cut to nothing, while the more counter-narcotics and law enforcement specific INCLE (International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement) funding and Economic Support Fund (ESF) spending on social and community development have either gradually increased, or fluctuated but still remained relatively steady. This illustrates financial support for the more law enforcement, institutional and community development goals represented by the four pillars of the Merida Initiative, and U.S. policy has broadly been in keeping with supporting this more securitised stance than an outright militarised one. This is not to say, however, that military cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico on counter-narcotics is completely absent and domestic militarisation is a large factor for both.

6.4 Domestic Militarisation on the U.S.-Mexico Border

While U.S. counter-narcotics efforts in Mexico have adhered to the long-standing policy of tackling drug manufacture and trafficking in source and transit states[61] (as demonstrated above by the provision of funding, training, equipment and intelligence support to Mexican authorities), an equal focus has been placed on the U.S.-Mexico border. Additionally, due to the ability of the U.S. to pursue certain policies and practises within its own jurisdiction without Mexican approval, the border area and associated issues has been subject to far a greater degree of militarisation than in broader U.S.-Mexican counter-narcotics cooperation.

As highlighted in Section 6.2, the reach of the Mexican cartels into the American homeland and cities was one of the growing concerns that influenced the continuing U.S. support for Mexican operations and the subsequent launch of the Merida Initiative. It was in an effort to curtail incoming drug shipments northwards, and the outgoing revenue and weaponry making its way southwards, that the border was one of the most obvious locations to pursue a concentrated interdiction effort. However, negative impacts of the Mexican drug trade along the border itself and further into the U.S. interior, further prompted such action.

The issue of 'spillover' violence into the Southern U.S. from Mexico has been of growing concern. In order to define the problem, the U.S. law enforcement agency community agreed that the definition of 'spillover' violence from Mexico:

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[61] While Mexico is classed as a transit state for cocaine, the amount and cannabis, heroin and methamphetamine it produces within its borders also make it a source state in the context of those particular drugs.

"Entails deliberate, planned attacks by the cartels on U.S. assets, including civilian, military, or law enforcement officials, innocent U.S. citizens, or physical institutions such as government buildings, consulates, or businesses."

(Drug Enforcement Administration 2009)

Based on this definition, it would be difficult to suggest that any substantial spillover violence has actually occurred on U.S. soil. While underground cartel operations, links and alliances may have spread rapidly since the mid-2000s, traffickers on the U.S. side of the border have traditionally been loath to directly take on powerful American law enforcement agencies. This may explain the absence of major cases of obvious cartel-inspired violence within the U.S. itself, compared to the brutality on the Mexican side of the border (Archibold 2009). That said, there have been increased concerns that, as the cartel command and control structures have been eroded by Mexican and U.S. efforts, violent but cautious former traffickers have been replaced by less-rationale and more profit-minded juniors, potentially increasing the risk of the kind of spillover violence, as defined, taking place (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2010a).

As an illustrator of this risk, in March 2010 three individuals with links to the U.S. consulate in Ciudad Juarez were killed. The likely suspects were the Barrio Azteca, a prominent street gang in Mexico and one with hundreds of members in Texas and the Southwest of the United States, who were employed as enforcers by *La Linea* (The Line). The latter were a group of former Mexican police officers highly trained in urban warfare, who acted as gatekeepers for the Juarez Cartel (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2010a). The leader of Barrio Azteca, Eduardo Ravelo, was placed on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted Fugitives list in 2009, while José Antonio Acosta Hernández, the leader of *La Linea*, was captured and sentenced to consecutive life terms by a U.S. court in 2012 for the killings of the U.S. consulate victims, as well as 1,500 Mexicans (Borunda 2012).

While this example highlights the pursuit and punishment of those responsible for direct attacks on U.S. interests, at the same time the agreed definition for spillover violence does not include acts of trafficker-on-trafficker violence. While bloody, this does not represent a dramatic departure from violence long associated with the drug trade or organised crime in most parts of the world (Drug Enforcement Administration 2009). Indeed, it can be difficult to directly attribute certain crimes to specific Mexican cartels due to the complicated operations that most of them employ in the distribution of illicit goods, typically involving

clandestine regional and local cells of Mexican immigrants and U.S. nationals, many of which have no knowledge of the existence of others, even in the same city (Archibold 2009).

Nevertheless, there remains strong evidence to point the finger of blame at Mexican cartel involvement in violence, kidnapping, extortion and corruption on the U.S. border and in Border States. According to the agreed definition, some of these crimes – such as traffickers killing each other – would generally fall under the category of 'to be expected', and would not be classed as 'spillover violence'. Yet, the actual or perceived threats to the safety and security of U.S. citizens brought about as a consequence of Mexican drug trafficking, has still prompted the advancement of militarisation as one part of the policy mix aimed at addressing these issues.

In Texas, Mexican cartels have increasingly adopted the practice of trafficking along the state's oil pipeline infrastructure, where small pipes crisscross thousands of acres of private property. This makes it all but impossible to patrol due to the limited manpower and resources of law enforcement authorities, who will often stick to recognised highways and transit routes (Carroll 2014). The isolation of these routes has made them ideal not only for traffickers to smuggle in their contraband, but also to execute and dispose of cartel rivals, informants and even unfortunate migrants, with the result that since 1999 the death toll has reached 5,570, with the Border Patrol discovering on average one corpse a day (Carroll 2014). That is in addition to the threats and acts of physical violence perpetrated against local ranchers, who arm themselves to meet the security threat. With the recent opening up of Mexico's previously closed energy industry, the problem of cartel traffickers utilising pipeline routes into the U.S. in Southwest border areas and significant sections of Texas is set to worsen. The number of such routes – and thus smuggling options presented – will multiply, along with the need to clear difficult terrain and undergrowth to accommodate pipeline maintenance, making transit for drug smugglers all the easier (Carroll 2014).

In Arizona, in 2009 roughly half of all marijuana seized coming into the U.S. was along the state's 270-mile border with Mexico, while in 2008 its state capital, Phoenix, saw 366 kidnap-for-ransom crimes (Quinones 2009). This itself was an increase from 359 reported kidnappings in 2007, with an estimate that double those numbers went unreported (Quinones 2009), though controversy was later to arise concerning the accuracy of these statistics[62]. Cases of torture and abuse of victims, not dissimilar to terror-tactics employed in

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[62] An investigation in 2011 by Phoenix's native television news station found that many of the 366 kidnapping cases that contributed to the city becoming known as America's 'kidnap capital' – as well as allowing the city to successfully apply for millions of dollars in federal funding related to border security – were in fact inflated. Up

Mexico, were also reported (McLaughlin 2009). It was claimed that nearly all such cases were associated with the Sinaloa drug cartel, often due to the high concentration of immigrants from Sinaloa state in Mexico. The traditional cartel practice of kidnapping to extract payment of debts had also been imported, and like the original Mexican version had gradually changed from only targeting traffickers and dealers, to just as keenly kidnapping legitimate businessmen and civilians as an additional source of revenue (Quinones 2009). Such was the concern, that in 2008 the city established a Home Invasion and Kidnapping Enforcement – or H.I.K.E – unit, which utilised heavily-armed police officers in its investigations and dismantling of kidnapping cells (McLaughlin 2009).

A significant amount of the surplus military weaponry and equipment acquired for the Phoenix Police Department came from federal programs 1033 and 1122, which allow law enforcement agencies to acquire equipment at no charge, or to purchase at a reduced price respectively. Through these programmes, law enforcement in the state of Arizona has acquired almost $39 million worth of surplus military hardware, from weaponry to storage pouches (Arizona Daily Star 2014). Further examples of how these programmes have contributed surplus military equipment to law enforcement agencies throughout the U.S. – but especially in vulnerable border regions – are illustrated in data maps further below.

While not overtly violent, the corruption of U.S. officials also has security implications, not least in impacting on the confidence of the American government and public in the ability of the agencies responsible for tackling Mexican drug trafficking to effectively do so. Between 2004 and 2011, 127 U.S. border or customs employees were arrested or indicted for acts of corruption, in the form of cash or sexual favours, the majority of cases linked to Mexican cartels and especially the Zetas Cartel (CNN 2011; BBC 2011b). By 2011, the U.S. Border Patrol was staffed by 20,700 agents, a doubling of its size since 2004, driven by the need for greater border securitisation, and part of the blame for the increased corruption rate was placed on this rapid increase (CNN 2011). In 2010, the inspector general opened 870 investigations into customs and border protection personnel, a

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to 40 percent of crimes that could only loosely be considered as kidnapping were still being counted as such, including kidnappings that did not even take place in the city (Biscobing 2011a). A city panel later attributed the discrepancy to error rather than deliberate fraud, and that the inflation of such figures could also be attributed to Arizona's loosely broad legal statutes (which deem restriction of freedom of movement of any kind – such as armed robbery or home invasion – as constituting kidnapping). Indeed, based on the flexibility that such broad statutes allow, the same investigation panel determined that the original statistics, while flawed, had in fact *understated* the number of kidnappings, with the corrected figure for 2008 coming in at 668 (Biscobing 2011b). Like the politicisation of the drug issue under Nixon and Rockefeller, the utilisation of such statistics concerning drug-related kidnappings and torture helped contribute to the perception of a city under siege, allowing for successful requests for federal funding.

48 percent increase on 595 cases in 2009 (Van de Vaart 2011). Illustrative cases include a border patrol officer sentenced to 20 years in prison for involvement with the Juarez's Cartel's *La Linea* enforcers (Van der Vaart 2011), and the 2013 arrest of two sheriff's deputies and two police officers in Hidalgo County, Texas (a huge marijuana trafficking area) for serving as escorts and scouts for drugs shipments from Mexico (Fernandez 2013). These four men were just a few out of over 40 law enforcement personnel arrested since 2007 for facilitating cross-border drug trafficking in the region between El Paso and the Rio Grande Valley (Fernandez 2013).

Such was the increasing concern around the issue that the 2010 Anti-Border Corruption Act was introduced to attempt to tackle it through mandatory polygraph screenings for applicants and regular background checks, though worryingly 60 percent of those polygraphed demonstrated deception when asked about previous criminal records (CNN 2011; Van de Vaart 2011). As a consequence of these cases and more, in 2009, as the Merida Initiative was getting under way, the FBI established six Border Corruption task forces. These focused on drug and general border corruption related to the Southwest region – dedicating 120 out of a total of 700 public corruption agents to the Southwest alone – and actively encouraged the expanded use of such task forces, so that by 2013 they had reached 24 in number (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2010b; U.S. Department of Justice 2009c; CBS News 2013). In general, the corruption issue may present far less of a reason for the militarisation of the border than others, but it has arguably helped contribute to the *overall* sense of an insecure border space, an insecurity that it is felt – by some citizens – could perhaps be addressed by greater militarisation (Olivo 2014).

In response to this collection of security issues generated by the Mexican drug trade on both sides of the border, by 2009 the DEA had allocated additional agents to its Southwest border field divisions, increasing the number to 1,180, representing 29 percent of its total domestic manpower (U.S. Department of Justice 2009c). In addition to this conventional law enforcement approach, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency continued along the path of overt militarisation. In 2007 it formed the U.S. Border Patrol's Special Operations Group (SOG) – headquartered in El Paso, Texas – to direct the operations of the Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC) and the Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue Unit (BORSTAR) (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2014a). While BORSTAR is, as the name suggests, a tactical medical and search and rescue unit, BORTAC is, for all intents and purposes, the Border Patrol's in-house Special Forces unit, modelled on its military counterparts with characteristics of police SWAT teams.

Formed in 1984 to serve a civil disturbance function following rioting at several Immigration and Naturalisation Service detention facilities, the unit quickly evolved to undertake specialised roles in "high-risk warrant service; intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance; foreign law enforcement/Border Patrol capacity building; airmobile operations; maritime operations; and precision marks-man/observer" (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2014b). With selection procedures and weaponry and equipment that mirror U.S. military Special Forces, BORTAC trains sector-specific smaller versions of itself along the border. It is unique in partaking in operations both in the United States and abroad, training and operating alongside foreign and domestic law enforcement and military entities, including in Iraq and Afghanistan (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2014b). The unit regularly targets drug traffickers from Mexico, on occasions resorting to lethal force or even falling victim to it, as was the case when a BORTAC officer was killed in a firefight with a drug gang on the Arizona-Mexico border (Gonzalez and Nowicki 2010).

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has also increased its use of military aviation technology, in the form of Predator Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs), albeit the B-Class which is unarmed and used for surveillance and reconnaissance. The programme began in 2005 and by 2011 there were six Predators covering the majority of the U.S.-Mexico border, with plans to increase the total number of border agency UAVs to 24 by 2016, allowing the agency the ability to deploy a drone anywhere over the continental United States within three hours (Booth 2011).

While this is indicative of the militarisation of civilian agencies in the context of prosecuting the drug war, the U.S. military itself has become actively involved in border protection against drug trafficking, to the extent that the Posse Comitatus act allows. The constitutional loophole allowing deployment of troops on American soil for the purpose of counter-narcotics/law enforcement is that such activities are carried out by the National Guard. It falls under the jurisdiction of the DOD, but is nevertheless a state and federal force, under the control of a state governor unless called to active service by the U.S. President (U.S. National Guard 2013). However, restrictions remain in that, like U.S. military counter-narcotics support abroad, National Guard personnel are unable to take part in drug enforcement directly, unless a threat is posed to their own wellbeing. The National Guard Counterdrug Programme is careful to emphasise that its ground and air assets are for training and support purposes. It provides law enforcement agencies with aerial observation, photographic imagery and communication support, along with mobile radar, Airborne Reconnaissance Signals Intelligence, language, transcription, linguistics, criminal analysis,

and air surveillance support for interagency task forces operating along the border (U.S. National Guard 2014).

Given the kind of drug trafficking-related concerns it faces, as explored above, Texas has been a proactive state in utilising direct and indirect military resources for the purposes of counter-narcotics and border security. In 2009, then-Governor Rick Perry announced the formation of Ranger Reconnaissance Teams, joint task force units made up of Texas Rangers and National Guard Counterdrug personnel to increase the efficiency of border patrolling and interdiction (Governor of Texas 2009). In the summer of 2014, as part of Operation Strong Safety, Perry ordered the deployment of 1000 National Guardsmen to assist Texas' law enforcement agencies with impeding cross-border drug trafficking, using enhanced observational equipment and additional 'boots on the ground' as a force multiplier in vulnerable areas such as the Rio Grande Valley (Governor of Texas 2014; Olivo 2014).

The DOD itself has, indirectly, also precipitated the militarisation of the U.S.-Mexico border, materially at least. During the Obama Administration, police forces across the United States have received tens of thousands of assault rifles, nearly 200,000 magazines of ammunition, thousands of pieces of camouflage and night-vision equipment, and hundreds of silencers, armoured cars and aircraft – a continuing legacy of the military surplus transfer programme begun during the Clinton Administration (Apuzzo 2014). With Mexican border security concerns so prevalent, it is unsurprising to find that substantial military equipment transfers to law enforcement agencies in Border States have taken place. The maps below (based on data supplied by the Department of Defence) illustrate the counties – highlighted – where local and state police forces and law enforcement agencies have received certain kinds of military equipment from the Pentagon's surplus programme. It should be noted that the portion of the total equipment utilised by these law enforcement agencies that came from the Pentagon programme is relatively small. However, the data does illustrate how ubiquitous such equipment has become in the name of law enforcement and, for the Southern Border States, border security with Mexico being an additional consideration.
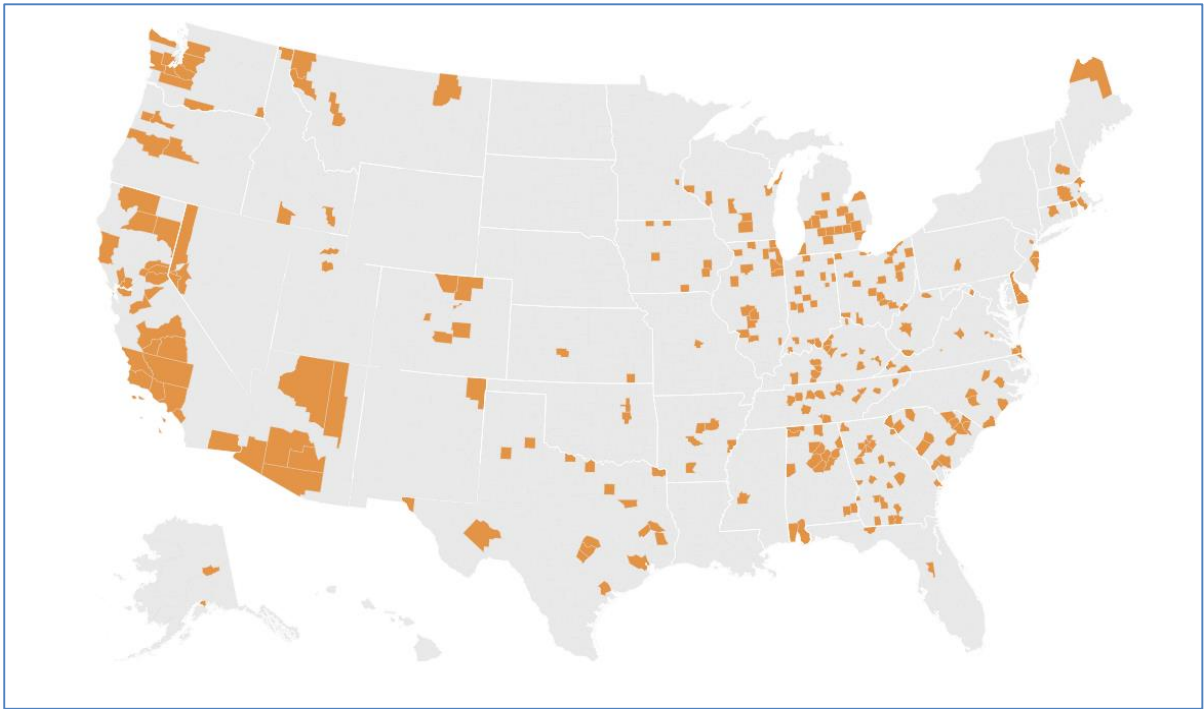
Map 2: Aircraft (Planes and Helicopters)
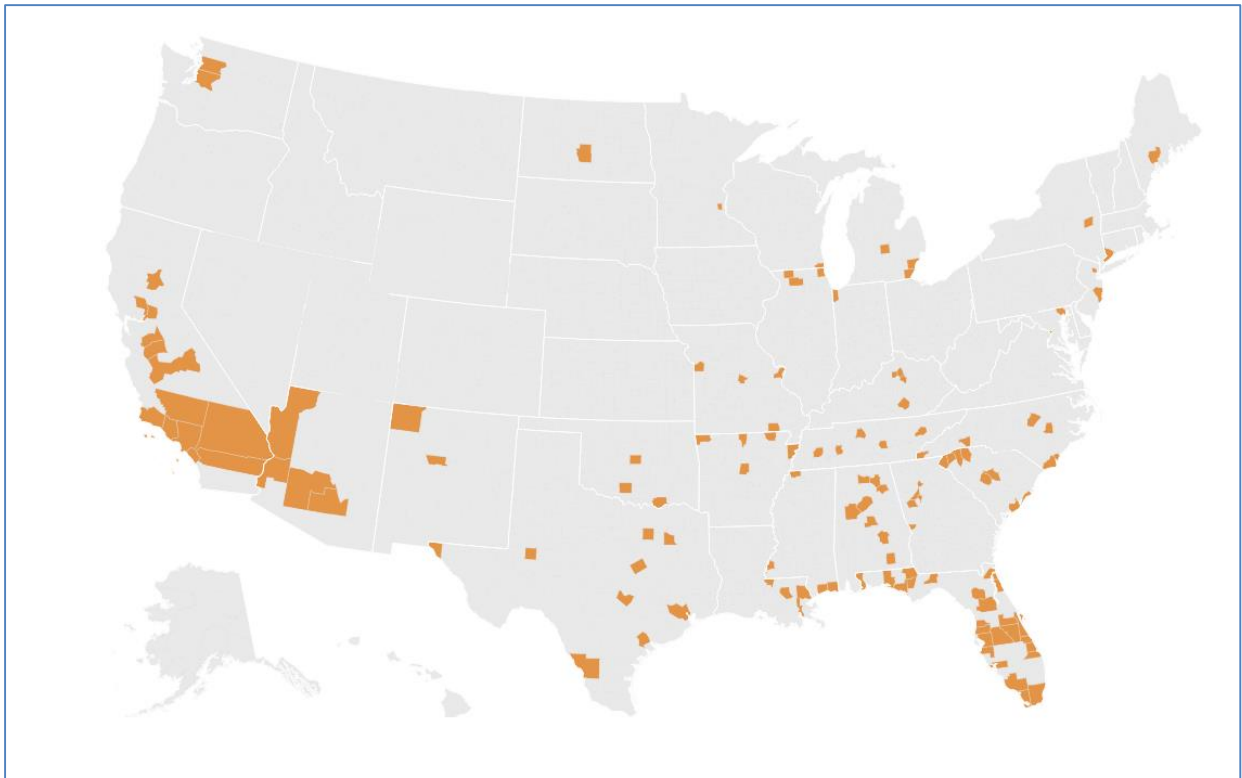
(Giratikanon, Parlapiano and White 2014)

Map 3: Armoured Vehicles (including cars and trucks)
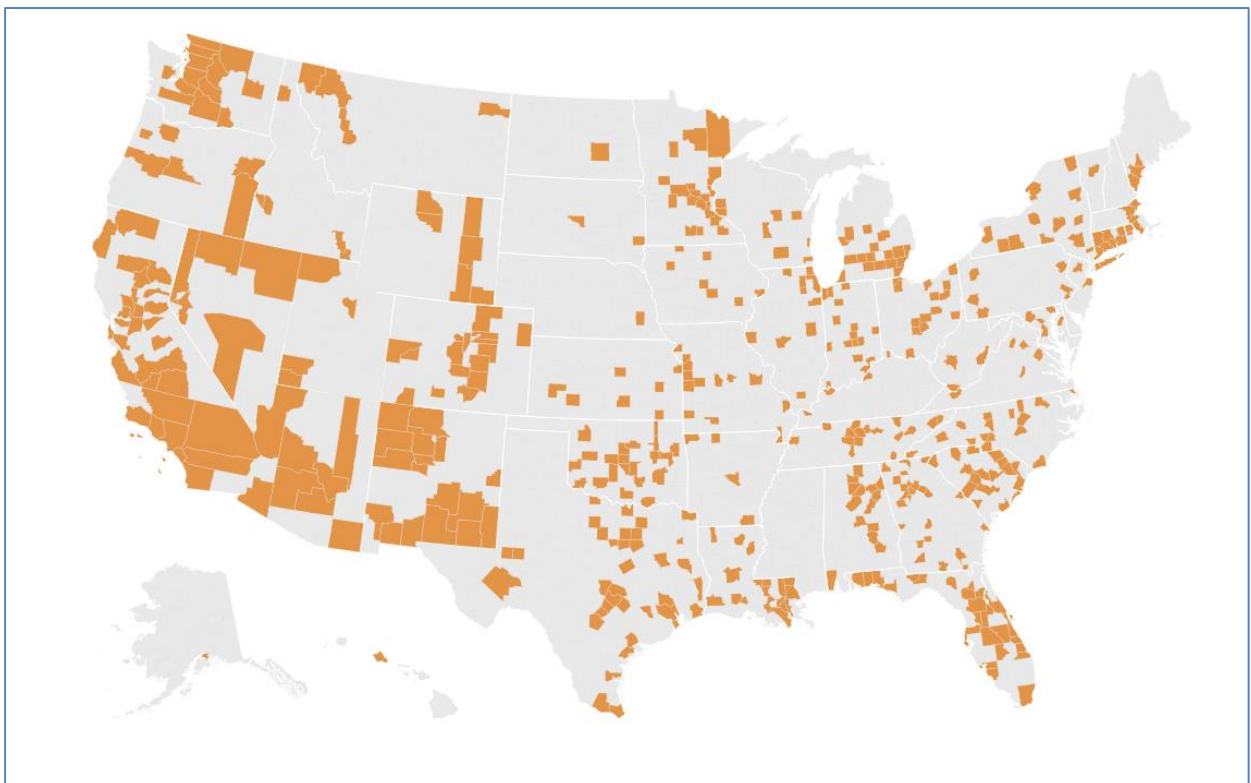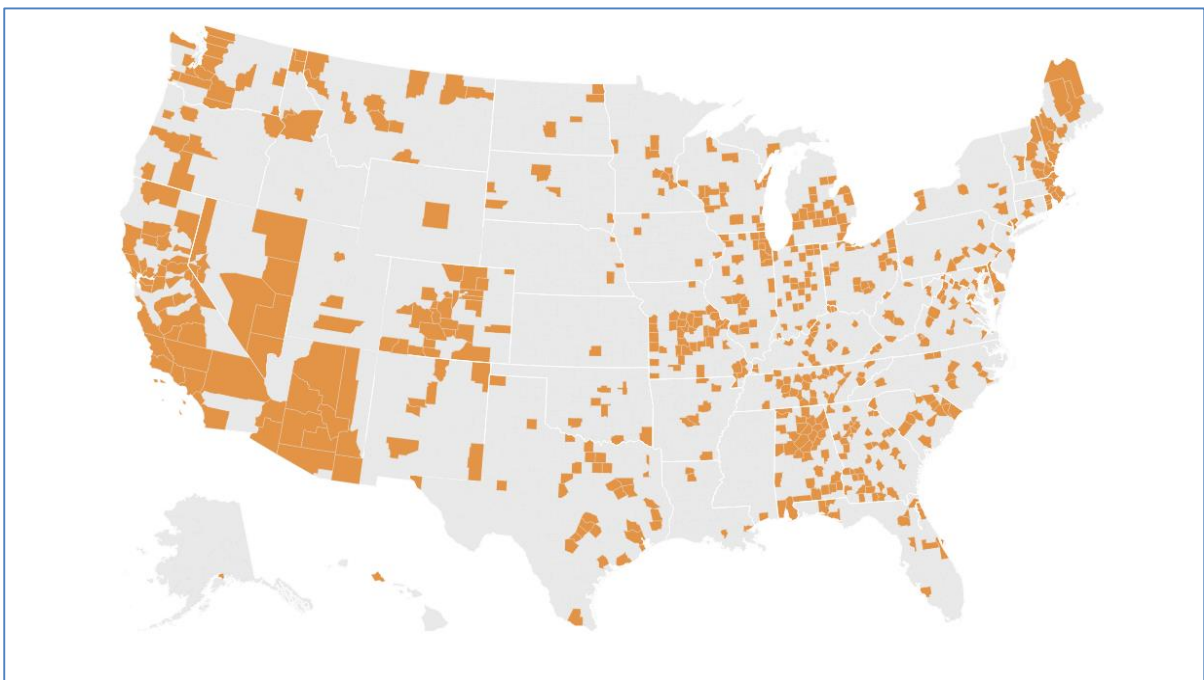

(Giratikanon, Parlapiano and White 2014)

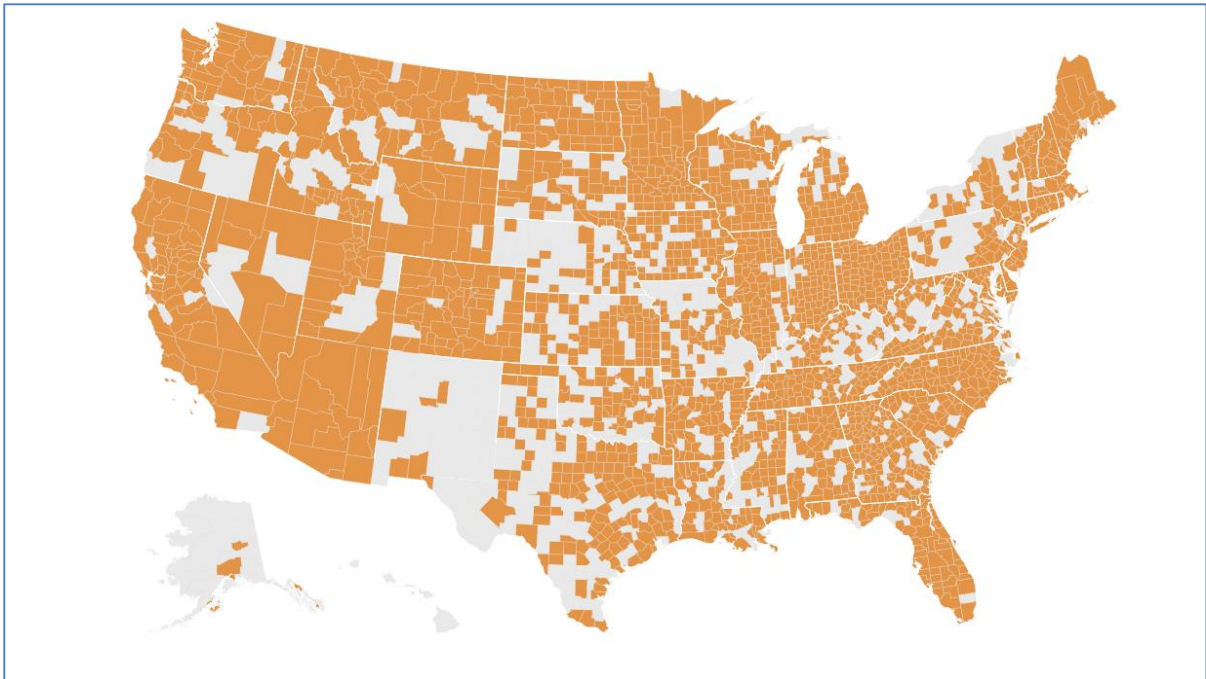**Map 4: Body Armour (including vests and helmet)**

(Giratikanon, Parlapiano and White 2014)

Map 5: Night Vision (including sights, binoculars and attachments)

(Giratikanon, Parlapiano and White 2014)

Map 6: Assault Rifles (5.56-mm and 7.62-mm rifles)

(Giratikanon, Parlapiano and White 2014)

As can be seen on each map, a large concentration of counties that have received surplus military equipment are geographically located near the U.S.-Mexico border (with the exception of assault rifles acquisitions, where the majority of the country has partaken). California and Arizona are particular examples, two states that experience drug-trafficking related crime and violence due to their proximity to major smuggling routes. While of course there are counties throughout the United States that have purchased all manner of surplus military equipment, it is interesting to note that much of the resources and equipment that would have merit in surveillance, interdiction and patrolling – especially aircraft (Map 1) and night vision items (Map 4) – find healthy purchase in the Southwest. Indeed, Florida also shows healthy aircraft purchase, reflecting the recent revival of older drug trafficking routes through the Caribbean and up through South Florida, in order to avoid the violent Mexican border regions, and increasingly securitised American side of the border (Gibson 2014).

It is interesting to note that fewer border counties in Texas have purchased surplus military equipment than their equivalents in Arizona and California. However, this is related to an important caveat that counties in the Southwestern states are invariably larger due to sparser population concentrations, and so 'colour in' more of the maps, potentially generating the illusion of significantly militarised regions. One only needs to see the difference in county size in the Southwest region by comparing their geographical scale to the hundreds of smaller

ones in the Eastern half of the U.S. Additionally, there are vast differences in asset purchases in each county depending on individual need. For example, Arizona's Pima County – large and with a long stretch of territory along the border – received 455 night visions pieces, 282 items of body armour, 141 assault rifles and 40 pistols; by contrast tiny Santa Cruz County merely received 8 assault rifles (Giratikanon, Parlapiano and White 2014).

Nevertheless, there is a relation between the border security issues experienced by some states as a whole, e.g. Arizona, or certain counties within large states, e.g. Texas. For instance, every border county in Arizona has received military equipment of some description due to that state being classified as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (U.S. Department of Justice 2010). Meanwhile, in Texas, not every border county received military equipment, with some purchasing nothing from the programmes. However, El Paso County, which mirrors the violent Mexican drug city of Ciudad Juarez, purchased 294 body armour pieces, 108 assault rifles and 8 helicopters, while Hidalgo Country purchased 326 assault rifles, 22 pistols, 85 night vision pieces and one mine-resistant vehicle (Giratikanon, Parlapiano and White 2014). Hidalgo County is part of the Rio Grande Valley, a major trafficking corridor, where 797,000 pounds of marijuana alone was seized by border protection forces in 2013, the second largest haul in the U.S. after the Tucson Sector in Arizona (Ortega and O'Dell 2014).

The county leaders in surplus military purchases however are in California, with Los Angeles County's vast acquisitions including 3,408 assault rifles, 1,696 items of body armour, 827 night vision pieces, fifteen helicopters and four armoured vehicles, with neighbouring Ventura County alone purchasing 3,275 pieces of night vision equipment (Giratikanon, Parlapiano and White 2014). The most likely explanation for purchases of such scale are the huge drug trafficking and drug-related gang activity and violence law enforcement authorities in this region must contend with. According to the Los Angeles Police Department's own admittance, the city and county are the 'gang capital' of the nation. L.A. hosts up to 450 active gangs with a combined membership of 45,000, with the primary factor for such an increase in numbers and violence – including hundreds of homicides – being the Mexican-linked narcotics trade (Los Angeles Police Department 2014). Like their allies in the Mexican cartels, affiliated gangs have gradually come to possess more powerful weaponry that was once the main preserve of U.S. law enforcement, and even military forces. When asked whether it was a fair statement to say that in some cases his police officers may in fact be outgunned by some of the drug gangs in the area, City of Bell (part of Los Angeles county) former police chief Randy Adams replied that "I think that's a very safe statement and that's why we have to exercise the utmost caution" (CNN 2009).

In June 2013, a U.S. Senate amendment to the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernisation Act appropriated $43.6 billion for expenses related to security on the southern U.S. border and initial administrative costs, a figure $38 billion greater than the amount proposed in the original draft of the act (Congressional Budget Office 2013). The amendment stipulated that $30 billion of the additional amount be used to hire at least 19,200 additional U.S. Border Patrol agents, to equip them with the necessary resources, and to further secure and fence the border with Mexico (Congressional Budget Office 2013). In addition to the other security responses detailed above, this extra funding and directives for its use indicate that U.S. policy is seemingly set to continue along the path of fortifying and effectively militarising the border with Mexico. This is not only to address significant immigration concerns, but is aimed at improving the interdiction of illicit narcotics during transit in order to deprive the Mexican cartels of revenues, and to attempt to address crime and security concerns on the U.S. border, in Border States and indeed much further afield in the American interior.

While such a policy and increased emphasis on militarisation is the prerogative of the U.S. within its own jurisdiction, as stated above, direct cooperation with Mexican authorities in such matters is far more sensitive concerning counter-narcotics operations on Mexican territory. The U.S. has been able to cooperate and assist with intelligence support, equipment and training. However, the overall counter-narcotics efforts, whether undertaken by the military or police, are primarily Mexican directed, and there is every sign that the Mexican government has increasingly turned to its military to combat its drug issue domestically.

6.5 Mexico: Making Military

The Mexican military has long been put to use for the purpose of counter-narcotics operations prior to the key deployments at the beginning of the Calderón Administration in 2006. Several years before the large-scale deployment of military forces in Northern Mexico, the Army was used in manhunts for drug lords due to fears that local and state police in certain areas were corrupt and in the pockets of said cartel figures or bosses, such as during the aftermath of the prison escape by El Chapo Guzman in January 2001[63] (Beith 2010, p.20).

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[63] Even then it was alleged that elements of the military were potentially corruptible, such as when a Mexican Air Force plane flew over an area El Chapo was hiding in, allowing him the forewarning to flee before Army units hunting him closed in (Beith 2010, p.24). Likewise, in 1996 General Jose Gutierrez Rebollo took over as Mexico's 'drug czar', with the support of his American equivalent, General Barry McCaffrey. Less than six months later, Rebollo was arrested and sentenced to over 70 years in prison for links with the Juarez Cartel (Beith 2010, p.92-93).

Reliance on the military as a reliable and more effective alternative to the civilian law enforcement agencies – in perception if not always in practice – has been one of the main developments responsible for militarising the Mexican drug conflict. However, whether the utilisation of the military has militarised the conflict, or whether it was *already* so violent and militarised that the deployment of the Army and Marines was one of the only viable courses of action, remains a point of contention.

For instance, Mexican drug cartels are, by their own standards at least, increasingly militarised entities, often due to the presence of former military operatives and counter-narcotics police in their ranks. The former police officers of *La Linea* have already been mentioned, but the most notable other example is *Los Zetas*. Though most of the original members have been captured or killed, in their original incarnation the Zetas were recruited by the Gulf Cartel as a military and enforcement wing for operations. They had training and expertise as a Special Forces military unit, with some members even rumoured to have undergone U.S. training at Fort Benning, Georgia (Vulliamy 2010, p.15). The initial leaders were even able to entice members of Mexico's special airborne counter-narcotic military unit – the GAFE – into the Zeta ranks, as part of an ongoing recruitment process that has in the past openly directed recruitment advertisements at military personnel. It was a process that eventually created what the DEA estimated to be a paramilitary army numbering 4000 by 2010, a powerful tool that helped the Zetas turn on their former masters in the Gulf Cartel and assume drug trafficking operations themselves (Vulliamy 2010, p.15-16).

Not only has such a development increased the militarised skill-sets available to the Zetas Cartel, but has also increased the number and sophistication of the military equipment introduced into Mexico's drug conflict. For example, in November 2008, the arrest of a top Zeta lieutenant, Jaime Gonzalez Duran, resulted in the largest weapons seizure in Mexican history up to that point – 540 rifles, 287 grenades, two rocket launchers and 500,000 rounds of ammunition (O'Neill 2009). In both the figurative and literal arms races between the cartels, such militarisation in techniques and equipment will be adopted by rivals, not only to combat and intimidate each other, but also the mutual enemy of state authority and border control. As one anonymous Mexican journalist stated (anonymous because the Zetas would have killed him without question):

"The Mexican government can put all the money it wants into the customs and inspection posts, it's all useless. A customs officer is as afraid of organised crime as anyone else. What are they to do [when confronted with men] wearing paramilitary

uniforms and ski masks, carrying AK-47s? [...] They just look the other way. Who wouldn't? This is a military unit [they face]; they wear hand grenades in their vests […] You can militarise customs instead of having civilian law enforcement, and have regular shoot-outs on the border […but] you'd be having battles all day."

<div align="right">(Vulliamy 2010, p.231-232)</div>

This is a concise analysis of the security issue Mexican authorities have faced since 2006 and the subsequent military deployments. On the one hand the incapability – or culpability – of civilian law enforcement to deal with cartel trafficking and violence in the worst affected areas of the country prompted the government to deploy troops as a capable counter-force to oppose aggressive and well-resourced cartels with no respect for authority. On the other hand, such a course of action prompted a huge upswing in violence, deaths, weapons imports and cartel militarisation in response.

Though unable to take a more overt role in the militarisation of the Mexican drug conflict, U.S. counter-narcotics policy has supported Mexican military endeavours where possible. This has been through Merida Initiative funding, direct training, support and equipment provision, as well as developing closer ties between the military and security establishments of both countries. In 2010 a high-level U.S. delegation comprised of Hilary Clinton (Secretary of State), Robert Gates (Secretary of Defence), Admiral Mike Mullen (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs), Janet Napolitano (Secretary of Homeland Security) and Dennis Blair (Director of National Intelligence) met with Mexico's Defence Secretary Guillermo Galván and the Navy Secretary Mariano Francisco Saynez Mendoza to discuss coordination between their respective militaries and to develop a comprehensive approach to counter-narcotics operations and planning (U.S. Department of Defence 2010).

By 2013 the Mexican military was becoming increasingly comfortable cooperating with U.S. Northern Command in developing capacity, via upgrading airborne platforms for counter-organised crime operations and disaster relief, and institutional professionalism, such as allowing the U.S. Marine Corps to train Mexican junior non-commissioned officers as a step towards establishing a domestic Mexican NCO academy (U.S. Department of Defence 2013a). By 2013, the Pentagon was spending $15 million on training up to 3,000 personnel from across the Mexican military, which was tiny in both budget and numbers in comparison

to similar efforts in Colombia, but a marked improvement over the $3 million spent in 2009 (Michaels 2014)[64].

Equipment transfers and foreign military sales have also played a role in U.S. support, alongside institutional cooperation. As part of the Merida Initiative, four CASA maritime surveillance aircraft, valued at $50 million each, were delivered to the Mexican Navy to help increase naval vigilance and control over Mexican territorial waters with the aim of impeding and disrupting coastal and Caribbean drug trafficking (U.S. Embassy – Mexico 2013). Additionally nine UH-60M Blackhawk helicopters were delivered to Mexican security forces, with three going to the Mexican Navy and six to the Federal Police. (U.S. Embassy – Mexico 2013). Aid to law enforcement is the principal purpose of the Merida Initiative, thus the delivery of equipment and support to the Federal Police, but greater military cooperation between the U.S. and the Mexican Navy and Marines, rather than with the Mexican Army, is not coincidental. The former has become enthusiastic in working with the U.S. than what is regarded as the far more insular Mexican Army, with the Navy willing to adopt American techniques and modern intelligence gathering, such as the use of surveillance drones. Mexican maritime forces are by nature more mobile and insulated from bribery and intimidation, as experienced by the Army in its static bases and direct drug eradication efforts. Mexican marines are also often trained to a high level and used more for targeted raids so that, despite their far smaller numbers, the more trusted marines were used in as many raids on high-profile traffickers as were the Army and Federal Police (Michaels 2014).

The extensive use of the Mexican military in drug eradication, interdiction and enforcement alone complies with the 'making military' element, at least in terms of Mexican domestic policy. However, can the same be said of U.S. policy? As stated previously, there are multiple reasons why *direct* U.S. military involvement in the Mexican drug war is prohibited. U.S. policy of offering better vehicles, equipment and training to enable the Mexican military to provide a more effective counter-narcotics solution, does however indicate that the U.S. is generally supportive of Mexico's militarisation efforts. As noted later, though, U.S. policy in totality is more securitised than militarised in emphasis, with focus principally on law enforcement support.

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[64] By 2015 that figure had increased again, with the U.S. providing 7,678 elite training courses to nearly 9,000 members of the Mexican military since 2010, at a modest cost of $60 million, but still a 60 percent growth in training provision to Mexican forces since 2012 (Acierno and Kinosian 2015).

6.6 Mexico: Institutionalisation

Though there is a greater degree of trust between the U.S. military and its equivalents in the Mexican Navy and Marines than there is with the Army, the latter is still looked upon more favourably in comparison to civilian law enforcement in Mexico, even by the Mexican government itself. This is in large part due to the greater resources and arguable efficiency of the military as compared to the under resourced and often corrupt, or intimidated, local police forces. As a consequence of such reliance on the military, militarisation of the drug conflict in Mexico has become *de facto* institutionalised, even if the longer term desire is to improve the effectiveness of civilian law enforcement, as demonstrated with the Merida Initiative's emphasis on developing exactly that.

Echoing the complicity between the state and narco-criminality during the rule of the PRI, a former police spokesman in one of the worst affected areas, Ciudad Juarez, stated that:

> "There is a culture of corruption which we face in this country, which hurts our country, but is part of its soul [...I believe] 80 to 90 percent of people in Ciudad Juarez, if not a 100 percent of us, are involved in some sort of corruption." (Beith 2010, p.134).

Indeed, significant corruption, institutional breakdown and loss of authority or control by civilian law enforcement in certain regions of Mexico will often see the military being deployed in an effort to 'clean house' and retrieve the situation[65]. By 2009 there were more than 5,000 soldiers and federal police in Ciudad Juarez, following the deaths of over 3,000 people between 2003 and 2008, with 2009 adding 2,600 victims (Beith 2010, p.168). The city – quite literally on the U.S. border – had effectively been transformed into a militarised zone in the name of counter-narcotics enforcement. The police stations from which the army operated resembled urban fortresses not dissimilar to structures seen in Northern Ireland or Iraq at the height of their respective insurgencies, with all forms of patrolling conducted by the military in armoured vehicles rather than by civilian authorities (Beith 2010, p.169).

Since 2006, this strategy has been pursued in the name of stability and counter-narcotics, even if its effectiveness is continually questioned and human rights violations – further explored in Section 6.7 – often come to the fore due to the issue of deploying combat troops into a civilian environment. In addition to Ciudad Juarez, another illustrative example

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[65] This can create local friction between local and federal forces. Police and army personnel actually exchanged gunfire with each other when tensions boiled over in Ciudad Juarez (Beith 2009, p.135).

of the policy is Tamaulipas state on the north-eastern Gulf coast, bordering Texas, where violence between the warring Gulf and Los Zetas Cartels had become so bad, and kidnappings reaching a national high, that by 2014 the Mexican government revealed Plan Tamaulipas. The plan set three objectives that conformed to the general template that accompany military deployments, namely the dismantlement of organised crime groups, the closing of smuggling routes and the restoration of effective and reliable local security institutions (Wilson and Weigend 2014, p.1). To achieve these ends the plan involved deploying an estimated 2,200 Mexican army troops, 200 naval personnel, 1,400 federal police and 300 members of CISEN, the Mexican intelligence agency (Wilson and Weigend 2014, p.4). Not only were troops deployed, but the federal government divided the state into four security sectors and supplanted corrupt and ineffective local leaders and security chiefs, installing regional military governors to take charge of security in an organisational manner befitting a form of quasi-military occupation (Wilkinson 2014; Meyer 2014a).

Use of the military delivered some immediate success regarding the first objective, with federal forces capturing eight out of 14 priority targeted members of criminal organisations (Wilson and Weigend 2014, p.5). However, it is recognised that progress in the second and third objectives is far more difficult to achieve, since history has demonstrated that interdiction makes only a limited difference if the broader issues of supply and demand are not resolved, regardless of the numbers of 'boots on the ground'. Additionally, local security institutions will always be vulnerable to bribery and intimidation once the military leaves unless sufficient training and resources are committed to developing them (hence the U.S. emphasis on this policy approach via the Merida Initiative).

Recent policy by the Mexican government has led to the institutionalised militarisation of civilians themselves, in certain cases. The phenomenon of vigilantes, or self-defence groups as they are known, is explored in greater detail in Section 6.7, but has generally involved civilian militias taking up arms in areas ravaged by drug violence and cartel intimidation, determined to take matters into their own hands rather than rely on ineffective local authorities. While initially regarded with suspicion, in 2014 the Mexican government began swearing in members of such groups into an officially sanctioned State Rural Force, the reasoning being that if such groups were determined to fight the cartels, then they may as well do so under official control (Meyer 2014a). In the western state of Michoacan, 3,000 members of a self-defence group who had been fighting the Knights Templar cartel signed up to join the Rural State Force, and were issued with registered firearms and military-style uniforms, with the intention that they support the federal and state

authorities in law enforcement and counter-narcotics efforts (BBC 2014; AFP 2014). While only 3,300 out of an estimated 20,000 vigilantes in the region signed up, and the self-defence groups have experienced various leadership and communications issues, by pursuing such a policy Mexico has, in effect, created a *de facto* civilian militia with all the trappings of a military reserve force.

In summary, the militarisation of counter-narcotics and public order policy has progressively become institutionalised, whether that militarisation takes the form of direct military intervention, or the arming and organising of civilians in a military fashion. However, this institutionalisation has come about incrementally and almost accidentally rather than by design. It is recognised by both the U.S. and Mexico that the long-term strategy requires the development of effective, professional, well-resourced and trustworthy civilian law enforcement institutions at local, state and, to some extent, federal level.

While such a long-term policy is being encouraged and pursued with U.S. support, the moving target of cartel violence and drug trafficking routes mean that it is all too easy an option to deploy the military. They can plug the gaps and attempt to restore order when violence flares up. More recently the notion has been embraced of militarising civilians and incorporating them into the state security apparatus as a compliment to the main forces. However, by repeatedly utilising these emergency measures, whatever their faults and merits, the militarised response has become institutionalised and self-perpetuating. It can impede the kind of reforms and development law enforcement requires in the long-term, since the knowledge is there that the military is an immediate and viable option, an easy 'quick fix' so to speak (Meyer 2014a). Therefore civilian forces will not be given the full support and opportunities required to stand up on their own, meaning their performances may not be deemed acceptable and thus the military is called upon once again.

Despite some successes related to military involvement, usually in the form of raids on cartel leaderships, the defining characteristic of Mexico's drug conflict remains as prominent as it has been since 2006 – that of significant levels of bloody and brutal violence.

6.7 Mexico: Criteria of Violence

One of the most significant factors concerning the Mexican drug war since 2006 is both the numbers of fatalities and the often barbaric violence associated with those deaths. While the drug violence in Colombia is certainly cause for concern, it has often been more in line with conventional methods of killing, such as firearms, airstrikes, bombings and so forth. The

equivalent in Mexico however has taken on a far higher degree of sadism in the name of establishing respect and fear between cartel rivals and those in civil society who would oppose them[66]. However, despite thousands of cases of torture, dismemberment and mass killings, the essential question remains where this level of violence is located on the security spectrum – taking into account the nature of the violence perpetrated and the weaponry used to do so – and to what extent, if any, U.S. counter-narcotics policy plays a role.

Firstly, let us consider the key barometer of violence, which is to say death tolls and associated violent acts of mass executions, assassinations and disappearances. Homicide-related data and statistics in Mexico are generally regarded as being consistent and reliable due to public health records chronicling the nature of a violent death (and thus whether it can be judged as being drug war-related), which in turn is fed into the autonomous government statistics agency, INEGI. A secondary source is the National Public Security System (SNSP), which is updated monthly and compiles and reports data on cases involving homicide that are identified by law enforcement. Taken together, both data sets can be closely correlated to form a detailed overall picture of the numbers of homicides related to Mexico's drug war (Justice in Mexico Project 2013, p.13).

Figure 12 - Homicide Rate in Mexico: 1995-2012
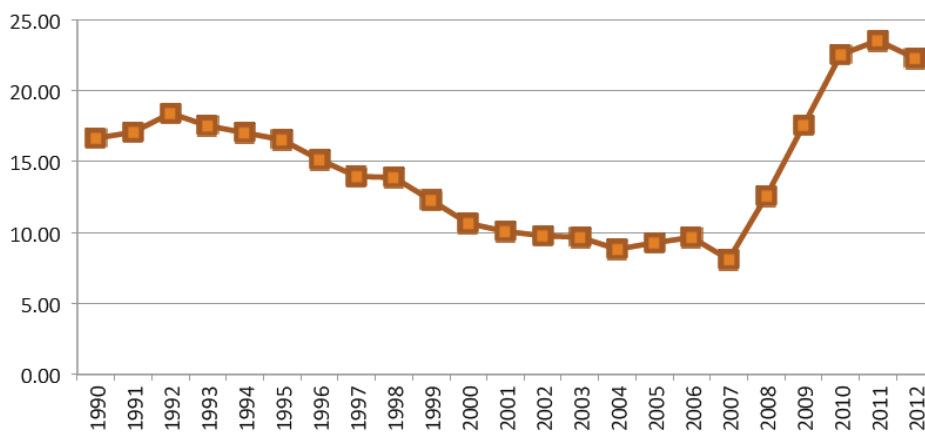
(Justice in Mexico Project 2013, p.7)

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[66] Tallies compiled independently by Mexican media organizations suggest that as many as two-thirds of all homicides in 2012 bore characteristics typical of organised crime groups, including the use of high-calibre automatic weapons, torture, dismemberment, and explicit messages involving organised crime groups (Justice in Mexico Project 2013, p.2-3).

While Figure 12 above measures the rate of all homicides in Mexico since the mid-1990s, it demonstrates that, despite a general decline from the start of the measurement to just prior to the 2006 'launch' of the drug war under the Calderón Administration, the homicide rate hugely increased in only a five year period, coinciding with the bloodiest period of the Mexican drug conflict. Since the 'commencement of conflict', the figure most cited by the international media for the number of those killed between then and 2012 is often in the

Figure 13

YEAR	Homicides INEGI	Homicides per day
2007	8,867	24
2008	14,006	38
2009	19,803	54
2010	25,757	71
2011	27,213	75
2012	26,037	71
TOTAL 2007-2012 (Calderón sexenio)	121,683	56

region of 60,000 (Miroff and Booth 2012; Grillo 2013; CNN 2014a). However, closer inspection of INEGI statistics in Figure 13 (Molloy 2013), reveals that the number of total homicides in the country during that period was closer to 121,000. The smaller figure is often cited due to the Mexican authorities referring to a specific subset of those deaths as being directly involved in organised crime in order to justify the tough, militarised approach to the conflict. To report the organised crime death toll as 60,000 or so would, despite it being a high number in itself, still generate the impression that government measures were working, at least compared to the actual figure which is nearly double the stated amount and indicates far more collateral civilian damage than reported (Molloy 2013). If the true drug war-related death toll was indeed 60,000 or so, then what would account for the rest of the 121,683 deaths for the period? As Mexican security expert Alejandro Hope opines:

"Does this mean […] that all other possible forms of violence are growing? Has there been an explosion of domestic violence, bar fights, land conflicts and assaults that end in murder? What factors could explain a phenomenon of this nature? Or, is it not more likely that the government changed the criteria for classifying a homicide as "related to organised crime"?" (2013)

The numbers of deaths relating to Mexico's drug conflict extend, at minimum, into the tens of thousands in the space of only a few years compared to the longer time scale of Colombia's internal conflicts. Mass executions have helped such macabre figures to be reached, and are illustrative of the exceptional levels of brutality that characterises the conflict. The Zetas Cartel has perpetrated some of the most infamous acts, from executing

193 people in what has become known as the 2011 San Fernando massacre and burying them in mass graves, to killing over 50 people by setting fire to the Casino Royale in Monterrey, to dumping 49 mutilated bodies on the main road from Monterrey to the U.S. border – all of them acts to strike at competitors, especially the Gulf Cartel (Rueda 2012; Grillo 2011; Associated Press 2012). Indeed, mutilations have been a favoured tactic of the cartels to sow fear since the very beginning of the drug conflict when, in 2006, severed heads were thrown onto a crowded dance floor in the city of Uruapan in Michoacán state, one of the main trafficking avenues on Mexico's Southwest Pacific coastline (BBC 2006). In 2011, a sack of heads was left outside a primary school in Acapulco following demands from local drug gangs for half of all teacher pay to be donated to local cartels (Whitwell 2011). Other examples of such mass violence and brutality are numerous, but these acts and Mexico's drug conflict are not unrelated. As Map 7 highlights, the majority of mass grave sites uncovered in recent years are mainly found in areas of significant drug trafficking-related violence. They are close to the U.S. border with its export routes, to the Southwestern Pacific coast with its import routes from South America, as well as certain areas in the Southeast connected with trafficking routes over the Central American land bridge.

Map 7 - Mass Grave sites and Number of Bodies Located, 2010-2013
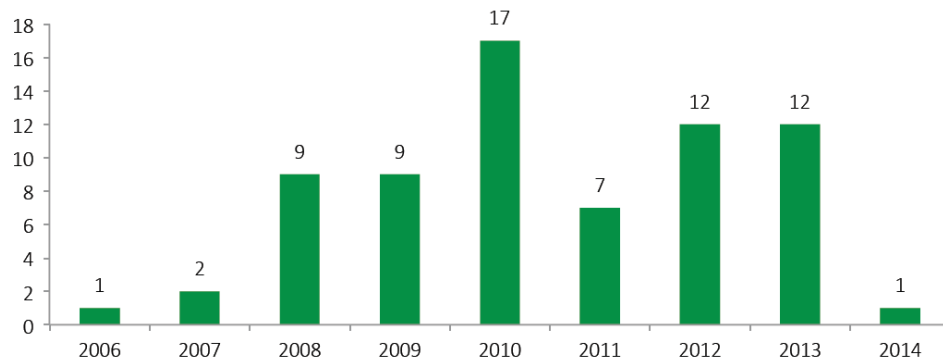

(Justice in Mexico Project 2013, p.18)

Many of the worst affected communities in Mexico have started to respond to such levels of homicides, mass killings and intimidation by forming their own self-defence units, known as

fuerzas autodefensas, or what are effectively vigilantes. In the town of Hidalgo, the Pedro Mendez Column conducts night patrols independent of any law enforcement support, chasing off criminals who once triggered a wave of kidnappings and even murdering several members of the Zetas Cartel to send a message (Grillo 2014). In March 2013, over 1,500 armed men marched into the town of Tierra Colorada, seized what they perceived to be the corrupt local police force, and fortified the town (Asfura-Heim and Espach 2013). Meanwhile members of the Self-Defence Council of Michoacán battled with members of the Knights Templar drug cartel for control of the town of Nueva Italia in early 2014 (Taylor 2014). These are just several example of movements that have sprung up across Mexico in response to violence and the seeming inability of the Mexican security forces to make a noticeable impact. As of late 2013 such groups had formed in the Pacific states of Michoacán and Jalisco, in the northern border state of Chihuahua, in the eastern states of Veracruz and Tabasco, and on the outskirts of Mexico City, operating openly in 13 different states and at least 68 municipalities (Asfura-Heim and Espach 2013). While Mexico has a tradition of the public rising up when faced with injustice, criticism of such groups includes charges that they only perpetuate the cycle of violence and that some could become criminal entities themselves, not dissimilar to the path followed by the AUC in Colombia, despite the government having begun a policy of bringing them under official control, as detailed above.

In addition to mass killings, individual assassinations can also propagate a climate of fear and intimidation, with the elimination of certain security, political and media professionals furthering insecurity and instability in Mexico with the sense that no one is safe to take a stand. This potentially furthers the cause of militarisation in the sense that, if nothing else, the Mexican military are at least able to protect themselves by virtue of weaponry, equipment and urban fortifications often unavailable to the civilian state actors targeted. Notable examples of senior police deaths are Igor Labastida, a senior commander in the Mexican Federal Police and head of the anti-trafficking and contraband division, who was casually gunned down while eating lunch in 2008 (BBC 2008), and Edgar Millian Gomez, another federal police commander, executed by four assassins in a supposed safe house (Beith 2009, p.123). More broadly, numerous politicians and journalists throughout Mexico have been killed for opposing or investigating cartel activities, as highlighted in Figures 14 and 15. While there are year-on-year fluctuations, once again the trend is one of increased violence from 2006 onwards as the Mexican drug war began to demonstrate notable societal impacts that would have drawn the attentions and/or criticism of non-compliant political and journalistic figures.

**Figure 14 - Mayors and Ex-Mayors Killed in Mexico (January 2006-March 2014)**

Figure 15 - Journalists and Media-Support Workers Killed in Mexico, 2006-2013
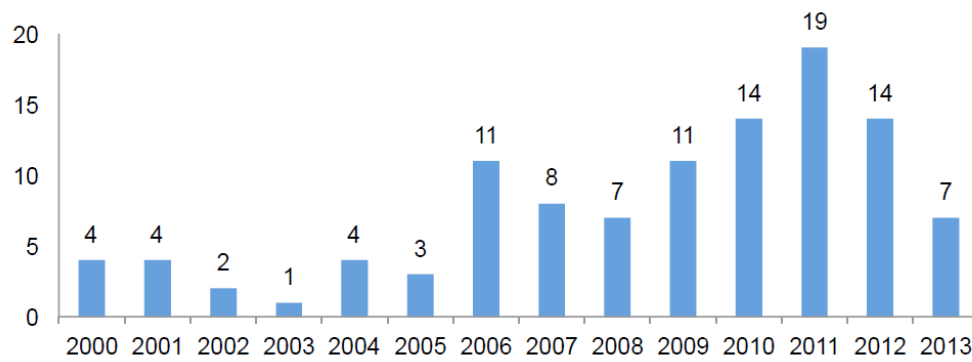
In addition to overt violence, more subtle but no less socially damaging instances of kidnapping and disappearances have risen since the commencement of the drug conflict. As Figure 16 indicates, kidnappings broadly followed a decreasing trend from the late-1990s to mid-2000s before experiencing a sharp upturn.

Figure 16

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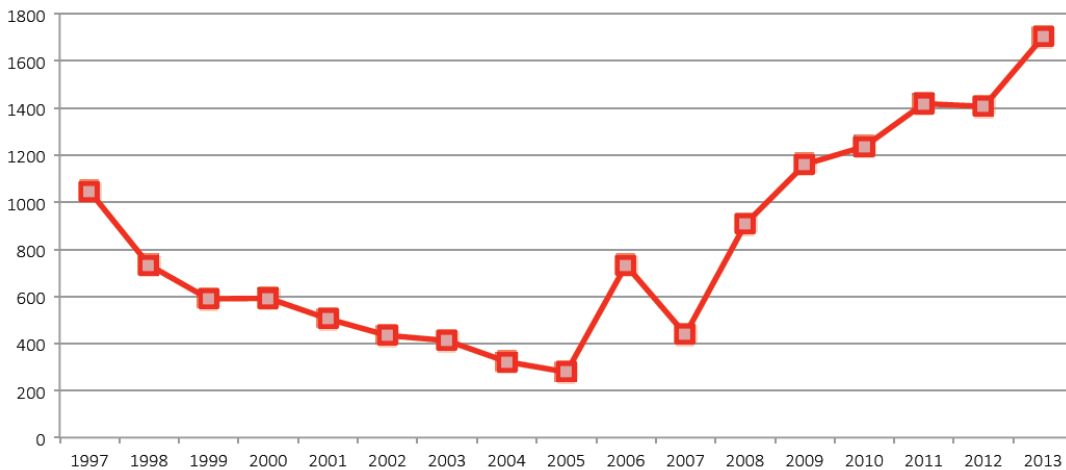
The explanation is similar to the reasons behind the increase in kidnapping incidents reported in U.S. Border States, as explored in Section 6.4. It has become an easy way for criminals to acquire revenues alongside trafficking, or as a replacement should trafficking be temporarily disrupted or broken, by snatching not only rich citizens, but increasingly anyone whose families have money (Partlow 2014). Official statistics noted that 2013 was the worst year on record for kidnappings, but authorities estimate that perhaps only one-in-ten incidents are reported due to mistrust of the police, some of whom are accused of taking part in kidnappings and disappearances themselves, as detailed below (Partlow 2014). Statistics kept by the independent organisation *Asociacion Alto al Secuestro* (Association to Stop Kidnapping) recorded 3,038 kidnappings in 2013, while another group led by former victims put the figure even higher, at 27,740 for the year, or 76 per day (Partlow 2014).

The related trend of disappearances has also increased since the beginning of Mexico's drug conflict, with 26,121 people reported missing or disappeared between December 2006 and December 2012, with many suspected of being related to drug gang and cartel activities, and up to 40 percent having never been subject to criminal investigation (Amnesty International 2014). The high percentage of un-investigated disappearances may be related to the involvement of certain sections of Mexico's security forces in such crimes. This was recently demonstrated with police complicity in the kidnap, disappearance and eventual murder of 43 student teachers from Iguala, whose protests and economic disruption aroused the ire of the mayor and local security establishment, which was intimately connected with the criminal activity of the *Guerreros Unidos* (United Warriors) drug gang (Miroff 2014; Archibold 2014). Ultimately, mass graves were uncovered (including one unrelated to the missing students) and dozens of police officers, Guerreros Unidos members and Iguala's fugitive mayor and his wife were arrested, while the Mexican federal police and army have taken over the Iguala Police Department and assumed security responsibilities (Romo 2014).

In terms of such enforced disappearances purportedly carried out by Mexican authorities, Human Rights Watch has documented 249 disappearances committed in Mexico since December 2006 (during the Calderón Administration, when the Mexican drug war truly escalated). In 149 of these cases, compelling evidence (eyewitnesses, photo and video evidence, and even admittance that they were security personnel) was found that state actors, i.e. national security forces, participated in illegal arrests and undocumented detentions, either acting on their own or collaborating with criminal groups (Human Rights Watch 2013, p.17-18). Indeed, a provisional list compiled by the Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Prosecutor's Office that was leaked in 2012, listed more than 25,000 people who disappeared

or went missing during those years and who remained unaccounted for, and though there were questions concerning methodology, such figures still speak to the severity of the situation (Human Rights Watch 2013, p.2). Indeed, if the map of regions where enforced disappearances were most apparent (Map 8) is compared with one that highlights areas of drug-related violence and cartel activity in 2013 (Map 9), a broad but clear correlation is apparent, especially in trafficking-heavy provinces on the Northern border with the U.S. and on the Southwestern coastal border on the Pacific where shipments from Colombia arrive.

Map 8 (Human Rights Watch 2013)

**Map 9** (Justice in Mexico Project 2013, p.30)
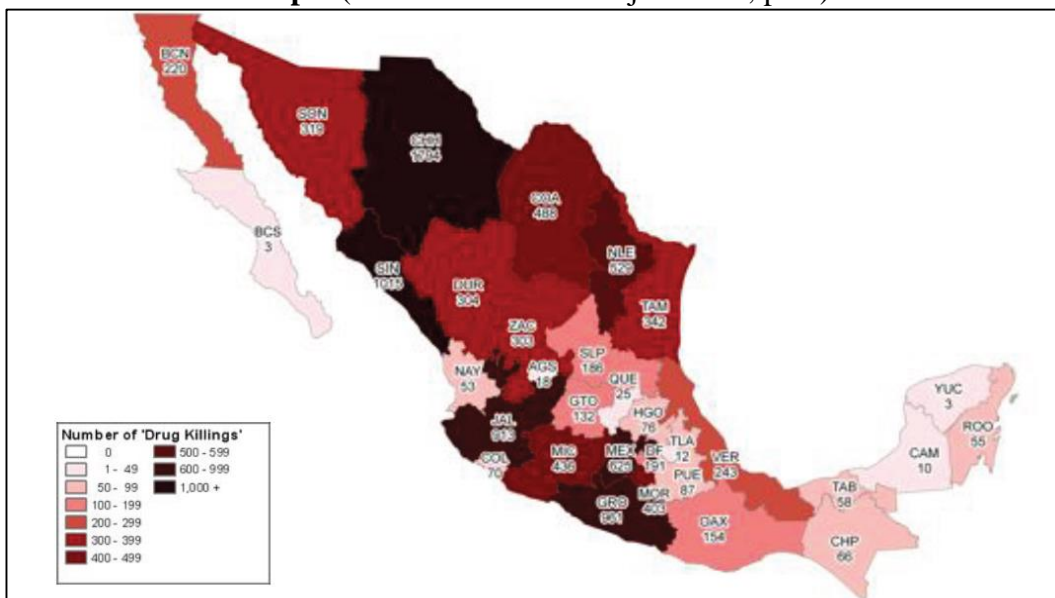
Alongside more dramatic cases of enforced disappearances, more general everyday human rights violations have been reported concerning the Mexican security forces, with complaints by members of the public having increased six fold since the deployment of the armed forces against the cartels in 2006 (Meyer 2014b, p.4). Figures 17 and 18 highlight this trend in rising complaints during the period of the drug conflict, with substantially more complaints directed at the Army in comparison to the Navy (see Figure 18) seemingly validating the U.S. approach of having more faith in the professionalism of the maritime service.

Figure 17 - Complaints of Human Rights Violations by Federal Police, 2007–2013
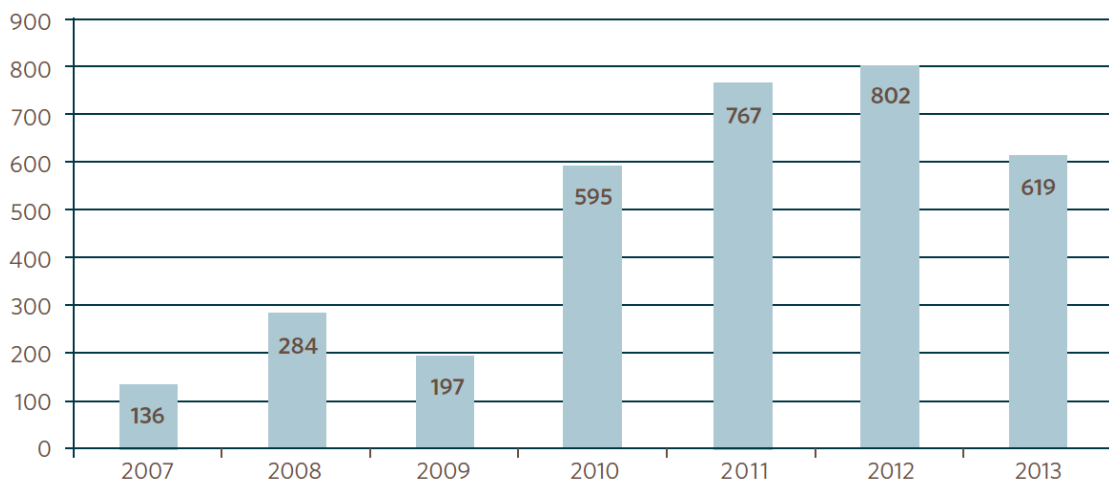
(Meyer 2014b, p.3)

Figure 18 - Complaints of Human Rights Violations by Mexico's Armed Forces, 2007–2012
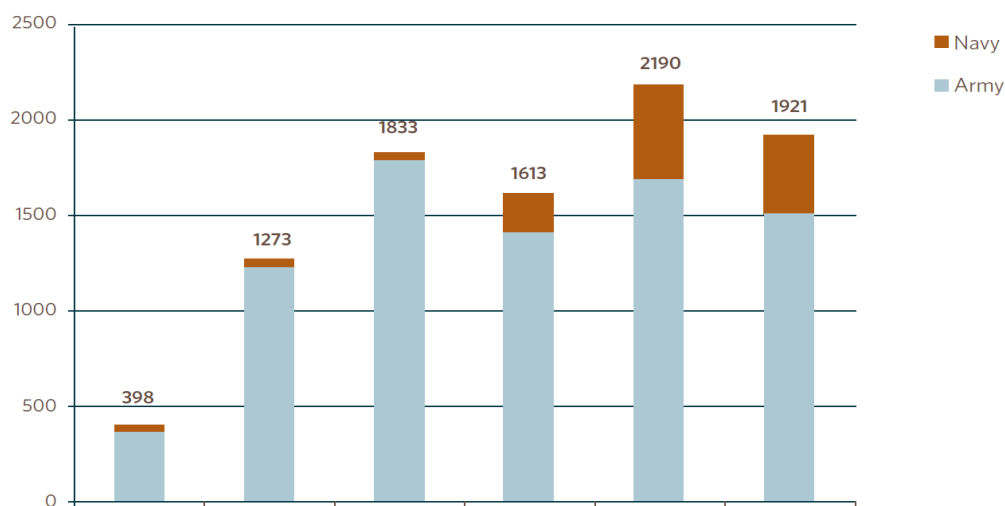
(Meyer 2014b, p.4)

Such trends are also symptomatic of the long-standing issues concerning inadequate training and professionalism that have dogged Mexican police forces for decades, as was alluded to in

Section 6.2. They also highlight the issue with employing a militarised mind-set for the policing of civilian spaces, as has been the case with the deployment of the Mexican military for law enforcement purposes.

As with the similar issues of Colombian security forces breaching human rights in the prosecution of their native drug conflict, the U.S. has been involved in attempting to address such actions. The provisions of the Leahy Amendment are as applicable to Mexico as to Colombia, prohibiting the funding of security units or forces with legitimately questionable records or proven human rights violations (U.S. Code 1997). From the outset of the Merida Initiative, the U.S. Congress placed such human rights requirements on 15 percent of select funding, including the improvement of transparency and accountability in Mexico's police forces, investigating and prosecuting human rights violations committed by the Federal Police and military, and enforcing the prohibition on the use of testimony obtained through torture (Meyer 2014b, p.19). In accordance with such efforts, by December 2013 the U.S. had provided $8 million of training and equipment support to the national vetting program at state and federal police levels in an effort to stamp out corruption and improve trust in security institutions (U.S. Embassy – Mexico 2013). Furthermore, U.S. funding supported additional efforts:

- In 2010 the State Department reported that it would utilise INCLE funds to improve Mexico's polygraphing capacity, as well as provide 300 polygraph units directly (Meyer 2014b, p.19).

- $8.8 million of INCLE funding via the Merida Initiative has gone towards supporting Mexico's Police Registry, expanding and enhancing it and its availability nationwide[67] (U.S. Embassy – Mexico 2013).

- By 2013, the U.S. had trained over 4,500 Federal Police officers in investigative techniques, evidence collection, crime scene preservation and ethics. From February to June 2013, 1,498 state and municipal police officers had received appropriate training, the largest block of direct training provided to date during the Merida Initiative (Meyer 2014b, p.19; U.S. Embassy – Mexico 2013).

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[67] According to the State Department., the National Police Registry will contain photos, biographical data, fingerprints, DNA, voice samples, and personnel data (all employment-related information, to include date of hire, education, training, discipline and terminations) of all active Mexican police officers (federal, state, and local), auxiliary officers, and private security companies in Mexico (Bricker 2009)

Irrespective of Mexican constitutional sensitivities, like in Colombia the U.S. is constrained in its ability to directly intervene with its own forces in counter-narcotics in Mexico. Therefore it must enact any influence through the training of native security forces to perform to a standard conductive to the efficient interdiction, disruption and hopeful elimination of drug trafficking interests. Again, like Colombia, while there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Mexican security forces have violated human rights in the pursuit of counter-narcotics, it is U.S. policy to mitigate and eventually stamp out such abuses and associated corruption, and so blame for human rights abuses cannot be placed directly with the U.S. Likewise, the predominant violence in Mexico is carried out by organised crime, be it cartels or gangs, and so takes place outside the influence of both the U.S. and Mexican authorities, and so neither can be held responsible for the wanton brutality that characterises the conflict.

Where the U.S. does harbour a degree of responsibility is in the ready availability of weaponry in Mexico that is utilised in the violence. Mexico itself has such strict criteria for the issue of firearms ownership permits that there is, quite literally, only one gun store in the entire country. Known officially as the Directorate of Arms and Munitions Sales, it is located at a secure military base in Mexico City, where visitors are subject to strict checks to be permitted only one small-calibre weapon for sports or home protection (Booth 2010). Despite having some of the strictest gun-control laws in the world, Mexico is nevertheless awash with weapons. Tens of thousands have been seized from cartels and gangs, often of a sophistication and calibre to match anything law enforcement or the military possess.
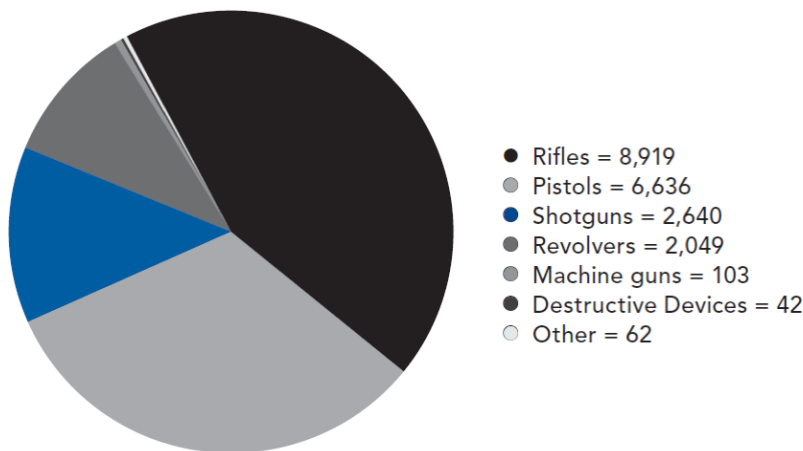
The charts below clearly demonstrate this, and along with almost every other measurable factor explored above, the onset of the drug war in 2006 was the harbinger of a significant increase in negative trends. Indeed, in 2011, five years into the Mexican drug conflict, of the 94,000 weapons seized, it was determined that 64,000 were of U.S. origin after tracing them back to their source (McGreal 2011; ATF 2012). Texas was the source state at the top of the list in a 2010 investigation by *The Washington Post*, accounting for eight of the top 12 U.S. gun dealers whose firearms ended up in Mexico, with the remaining three in Arizona and one in California, though with 3,800 gun retailers in Texas alone, this cannot be surprising (Grimaldi and Horwitz 2010).

Figure 19 - Firearms seizures by U.S. and Mexican authorities, 2006-2009
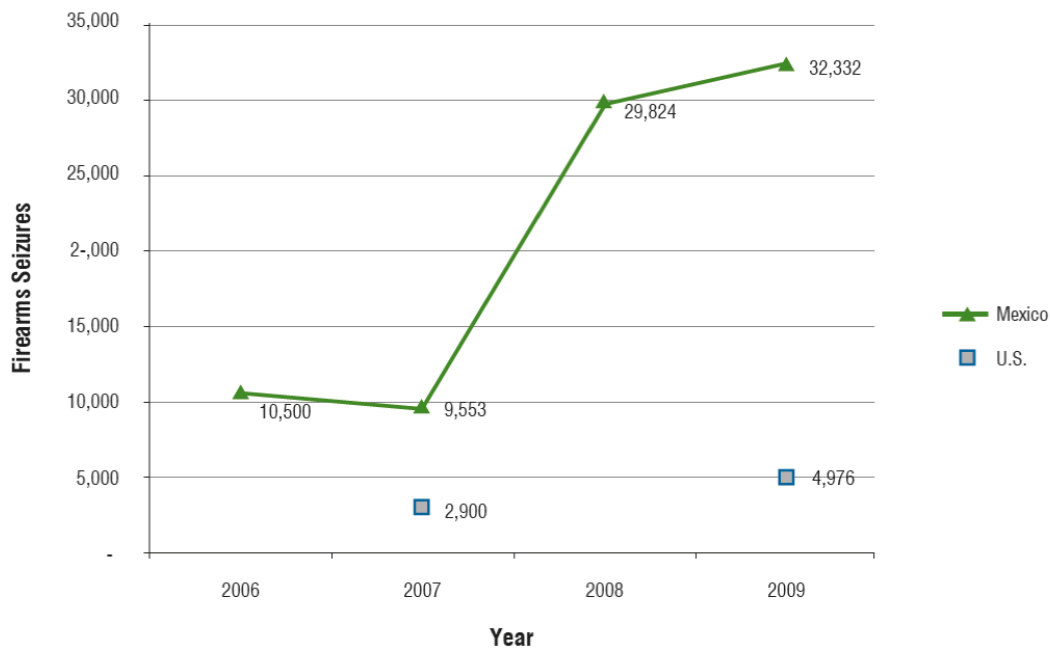
(McDougal et al. 2013, p.10)

Figure 20 - ATF Data on Firearms Recovered in Mexico in 2009 by Type

- Rifles = 8,919
- Pistols = 6,636
- Shotguns = 2,640
- Revolvers = 2,049
- Machine guns = 103
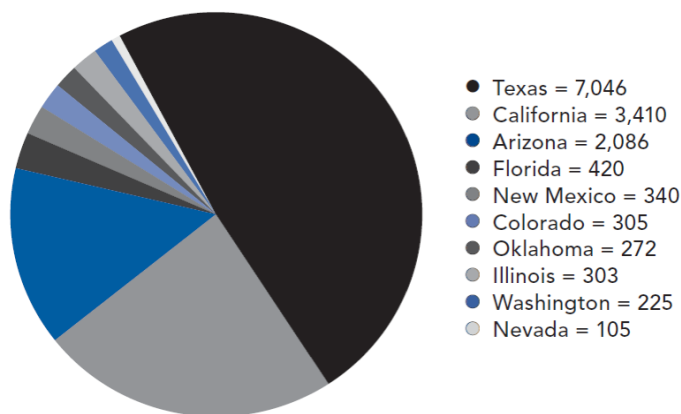- Destructive Devices = 42
- Other = 62

(Goodman and Marizco 2010, p.188)

Figure 19 highlights the huge disparity between the numbers of firearms seized in the U.S. versus the numbers seized in Mexico. Such a difference suggests that only a small portion of the firearms destined for Mexico are being intercepted at the border, meaning that the majority get through and are liable to be used before they are subsequently seized in Mexico. Figure 20 demonstrates the types of firearms seized, with the majority unavailable even for legitimate purchase in Mexico. This suggests that such huge numbers – as well as their high-calibre and destructive lethality – originate in the significant cross-border smuggling of firearms purchased in the U.S. and transported into Mexico along with money generated from drug sales.

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The U.S. broadly has a constitutionally and historically relaxed attitude to gun control, and a combination of factors has fuelled the smuggling firearms into Mexico. In 1994 President Clinton signed into law a federal ban on 19 types of military-style assault weapons, which expired in 2004 after non-renewal by Congress, allowing such weapons as AK-47s, Uzis and TEC-9s to be legally purchased prior to, and during, the Mexican drug conflict (Associated Press 2004). Until recently, potential loopholes at gun shows in the U.S. allowed individuals to sell firearms, sometimes of military-grade, to other individuals without requiring the standard background checks (CNN 2013). With almost 5,000 gun shows across the U.S. each year, the opportunity for criminal elements to take advantage was significant (CNN 2011; Szoldra 2013). One of, if not the biggest factor, however, is the huge number of gun stores within easy reach of the border. There are an estimated 6,700 gun dealers located in the border region, which represent more than 12.5 percent of all registered firearms sellers in the U.S. (McDougal et al. 2013, p.10). Their impact is clear in Figure 21, where the top five source states for seized weaponry in Mexico for a two-year period were either Border States, or Florida with its drug trafficking connections.

Figure 21 - Top 10 U.S. Source States for Seized Firearms 2007–2009

- Texas = 7,046
- California = 3,410
- Arizona = 2,086
- Florida = 420
- New Mexico = 340
- Colorado = 305
- Oklahoma = 272
- Illinois = 303
- Washington = 225
- Nevada = 105

(Goodman and Marizco 2010, p.192)

The U.S. has clear concerns about the impact of the northern flow of narcotics on its national security and public health. However, Mexican complaints about the opposite southerly flow of smuggled weapons and money from drug sales has equal validity. Unlike U.S. policy to improve the training, equipment and performance of Mexican security forces – and therefore reduce violence and improve counter-narcotics initiatives – efforts to address this particular issue are held hostage to the domestic political difficulties of sufficient U.S. gun control reform, exacerbating Mexican frustrations (Shirk 2011b, p.13-14). The Obama Administration has called for the reinstatement of the assault weapons ban, but lobbyist pressure and Congressional opposition makes this unlikely. The 23 Executive Orders it was in Obama's power to sign, in January 2013, were modest initiatives designed to strengthen enforcement of existing laws and to encourage more information sharing between federal agencies and state governments, though

such minor adjustments were unlikely to address the issue (Corcoran 2013; Baker and Shear 2013). Further Executive Actions were introduced in 2016, involving stricter background checks on firearms purchasers, improved mental health services, and increased resources to recruit extra ATF agents and track illegal online firearms trafficking (White House 2016). However, these actions were primarily in response to the regular gun atrocities carried out across the U.S., rather than seeing to address cross-border weapons trafficking into Mexico (Lichtblau and Shear 2016).

One direct measure that U.S. authorities did undertake in an effort to undermine weapons smuggling into Mexico was Operation Fast and Furious, where ATF agents in Arizona allowed the sale of more than 2,000 weapons to suspected criminals with links to drug gangs. The intention was to trace the guns over the border as part of a wider investigation of Mexican cartels and their weapons procurement (Barrett 2013). However, the ATF failed to track the contraband firearms, with two of the weapons being involved in the killing of a U.S. border agent. In addition to institutional incompetence, the failed operation solicited further scandal when a Congressional investigation damned then-Attorney General Eric Holder, and by implication the Obama Administration, for mishandling the operation and for attempts to dampen criticism and deflect blame (CNN 2014b; Horwitz 2013).

With significant domestic gun control reform beyond Executive Actions unlikely, and what efforts there have been to directly crack down on weapons smuggling being limited to traditional border interception or incompetent operations, it is questionable whether the situation will improve. The Obama Administration has sought to strengthen some gun enforcement laws, and additional border manpower and surveillance may improve interdiction. However, such is the scope and scape of cross-border smuggling – both ways – that it seems U.S. policy efforts to dampen drug violence and improve drug enforcement will remain focused on improving the capacity of Mexican law enforcement to make progress in these areas themselves, while regaining the trust of the civilian population through improved efficiency and respect for human rights.

6.8 Results and Chapter Summary

Mexico presents a more complicated case study than Colombia, both in analysis and assessment. Its traditional reluctance to accept U.S. security involvement beyond levels of training and support that comply with its highly guarded sovereignty, mean that U.S. military influence, and U.S. policy of a militarised nature, is far more minimal than in Colombia. This

accounts for the smaller size of Sections 6.5 and 6.6, as making military and institutionalisation of such efforts in the prosecution of the drug conflict are very much Mexican endeavours. While they enjoy U.S. support, they do not feature any significant U.S. involvement beyond what could be regarded as basic efforts to improve counter-narcotics efficiency through personnel training, institutional development and equipment provision.

Sections 6.4 and 6.7 – concerning U.S. border militarisation and violence in Mexico respectively – warrant the larger portions of analysis in this case study, as they are strongly connected to each other. Mexican violence, instability and penetration of criminal elements into the U.S. has prompted the increased militarisation and fortification of the border in an effort to try and keep the chaos confined to the Mexican side. Conversely, it is the huge demand for narcotics in the U.S. that encourages high levels of drug trafficking and cartel competition, which in turn fuels such extreme violence against rivals, state authorities and innocents caught in the cross fire. More often than not, these people are killed by weapons sourced in the United States and are ill-served by the inefficient local and state police that the U.S. attempts to train and equip to hold the line.

It can be suggested that the death toll, mass executions, disappearances, assassinations, vigilantism, human rights violations and a flood of weapons all contribute to classifying Mexico as being in a violised rather than militarised state of affairs. However, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, Mexico is experiencing what can be best described as a criminal rather than political or guerrilla insurgency. While significant issues and concerns are present regarding Mexico's public safety, as well as the efficiency and integrity of large elements of its security forces, the state itself is not at risk of collapse or violent takeover, as was possible in Colombia at certain times. Mexico's transition to a fully legitimate democratic system is seemingly entrenched, while structural reforms of labour, education, competition policy, finance, telecommunications and energy have been passed to promote growth and productivity. The country has experienced positive economic growth figures for a number of years, with the lowest rate being 1.1 percent in 2013 and 3.5 percent anticipated for 2015 (World Bank 2014).

Therefore, while the death rates and violence are undeniable, they do not mean that the security situation in Mexico should be judged as being violised *overall*. It is a country experiencing an acute security crisis in certain regions, not one engaged in a state of war. The key factor is the Mexican policy response – i.e. the deployment of the military as a primary tool in the drug conflict, its institutionalisation in prosecuting it, and the para-militarisation of

civilians in certain circumstances. These cause the situation to be classified as being a militarised one.

Crucially though, it is *Mexican* policy in Mexican *jurisdiction* that is militarised. Due to the sovereign caveats of cooperating with the Mexicans, and the policing and economic focus of the Merida Initiative, only a minor portion of U.S. counter-narcotics policy is militarised. By emphasising training, intelligence and support for Mexican law enforcement above the military, U.S. policy towards Mexico can be considered as primarily securitised. However, U.S. policy in American jurisdiction, i.e. the border area and Border States, *is* decidedly militarised as Section 6.4 has revealed. Such are the complexities when dealing with a case study featuring two countries with different legal, political and security jurisdictions, but which are so intertwined in dealing with the drug trafficking issue that it is difficult to completely separate them. Figure 22 helps to visualise the arrangement:

Figure 22
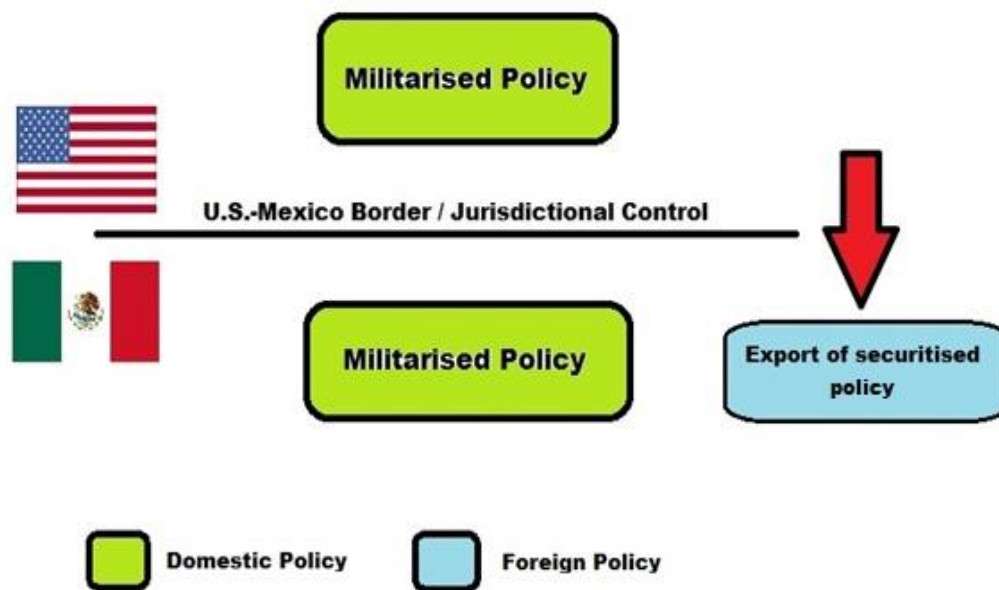
A strategy of domestic militarisation, such as sending in the army and marines, has been a viable tool for the Mexican government, but not necessarily the most effective. A recent statistical analysis suggested that in 18 areas of drug-related violence where the Mexican military were deployed, the homicide rate actually increased, or experienced no improvement (Espinosa and Rubin 2015). In the notoriously violent drug city of Ciudad Juárez, after the military intervened in 2008 the homicide rate actually rose to more than 200 people per 100,000 in 2010, the highest in the world at the time (Malkin 2015). This corresponds with charts featured in this chapter that demonstrate a correlation between the launch of Mexico's

drug conflict and rocketing violence. By contrast, a 2015 report by the International Crisis Group detailed Ciudad Juárez's path to relative recovery in the last few years, as greater government accountability, well-funded social programs, judicial and police reform, and greater engagement by the latter with citizens, has seen encouraging developments and improved security and stability, despite continuing challenges (International Crisis Group 2015). If sufficiently replicated on a national level, then significant inroads could be made against the cartels and resultant violence.

Such initiatives, while early in implementation and subject to unforeseen developments, could validate the U.S. strategy of shifting away from a principally militarised strategy during the early days, and towards a socio-economic and broadly *securitised* effort. In all three elements of the militarisation framework, U.S. involvement and policy intent has not met the requirements for its counter-narcotics policy towards Mexico to be regarded as being militarised on the security spectrum.

In the following chapter, a comparison will be made between this case study and the previous one concerning Colombia. This way, a broad conclusion can be reached regarding the extent of the militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy in these two hugely important theatres of conflict in the broader Latin American drug war.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This thesis has developed a militarisation analytical framework and successfully applied it to American counter-narcotics policies in Colombia, Mexico and on the U.S. Southern Border. In doing so, the research has proven the occurrence of counter-narcotics militarisation in Colombia and on the U.S. border, and of counter-narcotics securitisation in Mexico. The findings from those case studies also allowed the militarisation framework to be further developed and refined, thus making a valuable contribution to the securitisation debate.

In this conclusion I firstly conduct an overview of the preceding chapters, reviewing their content and the reasoning behind the research decisions in each. The research question is then addressed, exploring the militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia/U.S. border and securitisation in Mexico. The academic contribution of the militarisation framework, including post-case study reflexivity, is then explored, and a final summary closes the thesis.

7.1 From securitisation to Mexican drug violence – a chapter summary

This thesis has charted the process behind the securitisation and militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy, both at home and abroad, and has developed a useful and nuanced militarisation framework with which to conduct this research and reveal these findings.

Chapter 2 explored securitisation and its components, such as security actors, the speech act, and so on, as detailed by Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde (1998). It was posited that context, which is to say the impact of specific historical and cultural considerations on a society and its identity, can help influence whether certain issues solicit enough concern to gradually become regarded as threats and thus eventually become securitised. Additionally, attention was given to the security spectrum, whereby a security issue progresses along a path from Non-Politicised, to Politicised, to Securitised, with the possibility of becoming a Violised, war-like situation at the furthest extreme, as suggested by Iver Neuman (1998).

It was important to detail the conceptual foundations of securitisation, the security spectrum and highlight some of the surrounding debates, before proceeding to outline and explain the militarisation framework that builds upon securitisation, along with its three principal elements; making military, institutionalisation and criteria of violence. With regards to aiding the thesis's empirical research – involving U.S. counter-narcotics policy in

Colombia and Mexico/U.S. border – it was important to first explore the broader securitisation and militarisation frameworks. Both proved to be useful tools to analyse the development and direction of U.S. counter-narcotics policy over the past century, both abroad and domestically, as it gradually securitised in general, and then militarised in more select initiatives and areas of operation.

Chapter 3 covered the methodology involved in conducting the research, the most important element being the research question that determined the direction of the thesis as a whole, i.e. to what extent has United States counter-narcotics policy in Colombia, Mexico and on the U.S. Southern Border become militarised? This involved a primarily qualitative approach, as it became clear during the initial research stages that government documents, policy proposals, and archival sources from various presidential administrations and congressional sessions, would provide the best sources for achieving the research goals. As the research progressed, primary and secondary sources were utilised, usually in the form of official documents and reports, but it was found that quantitative sources – either embedded in qualitative sources or separate – also provided useful statistical information. These often related to budget allocations, the size and type of security forces, duration of operations, and so on. They not only proved useful in determining the extent of militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy in the case studies, but also helped to further develop the broader militarisation framework by suggesting new elements that could be added to the existing ones, as explored later.

Chapter 3 also justified the case study selection, as well as the justification for regarding the U.S. as the main actor, due to its lead role in global counter-narcotics. From early preliminary research, it was concluded that Colombia and Mexico were, respectively, the biggest cocaine producing and transit states in the broader Latin American drug conflict (UNODC 2014; Lee 2014; Thompson 2011). Along with their relations with the United States concerning the drug issue, this made them both worthy of a case study. Though analysis of the security situation on the southern U.S. border with Mexico was substantial in its own right, it was logical to include it within the overall Mexico case study given how closely interrelated both security issues are (DEA 2009; FBI 2010a), rather than grant the border situation its own separate study.

Chapter 4 chronicled the history and development of U.S. counter-narcotics policy during the 20th Century. This was in order to establish a historical narrative of how the narcotics issue increasingly became securitised in American politics and society, which gave credence to the importance of context in how and why societies securitise, as suggested in

Chapter 2. It was also useful to explore how popular culture in America can have an impact in facilitating an acceptance of increased militarisation in certain areas of public policy. The chapter demonstrated how narcotics progressed along the security spectrum from a non-politicised issue, to politicised, to securitised, and thus how further progression into militarisation was the next stage. To this end, I highlighted how what began as a non-politicised issue at the dawn of the 20th Century, became increasingly politicised as various actors sought to raise awareness and concern over the effects of narcotics on American public and moral health and civil society. Drugs became securitised from the Nixon Administration onwards, but it would later become militarised as later presidents, and increasingly an American security establishment in search of reasons to sustain itself, sought to tackle the drug issue and associated violence at home and abroad (Isacson 2005, p.28). The securitisation framework demonstrated its usefulness in analysing the development of narcotics into a security issue for the U.S. during this period.

Having established this trend, the militarisation framework could then be employed as an analytical tool for the case studies, in order to determine the extent of the militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy. Before embarking on the case studies, it was useful from a historical perspective to chart the gradual militarisation of counter-narcotics policy within the U.S. itself, most notably via the cooperation rendered to civilian law enforcement by the DOD. It was also useful to chart the early American military and security support for Latin American governments, which would pave the way for the major initiative of Plan Colombia from 2000 and (to a far lesser extent militarily as was eventually discovered) the later Merida Initiative in Mexico.

Chapter 5 constituted the first case study, that of U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia, mainly through the prism of the Plan Colombia initiative. It detailed the long history of U.S military and security involvement in that country, initially motivated by anti-communism and a desire to bolster a relatively stable and prosperous regional ally (McLean 2002, p.124). Later support still aimed at maintaining Colombian stability, but the emphasis shifted to counter-narcotics. I illustrated that drugs had not only become a source of conflict with the cartels that undermined Colombian state security, but had also become a source of U.S. national security concern as narcotics encouraged violence and addiction in American society (the 'existential threat' that demanded 'emergency measures' to combat it, in accordance with the securitisation framework). While early American scepticism concerning the effectiveness and professionalism of the Colombian military meant that support predominantly went to the civilian-yet-paramilitary Colombian National Police (Herring

1956, p.704; Colombian National Police 2014), as the threat to the state itself by narcotics-funded guerrillas increased, so too did the militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy.

This led to the dedicated Plan Colombia initiative, which predominantly favoured military and security related aid, especially following 9/11 when all pretence to separate counter-narcotics from counterinsurgency was dropped (Vauters and Smith 2006, pp.171-172). The quantitative sources used in the research showed that the later stages of Plan Colombia saw increased U.S. social and economic support (while simultaneously reducing military commitments). Yet the same statistics for the period which concerned expenditure, asset support and growth in military personnel numbers underlined that American counter-narcotics policy as a whole in Colombia has nevertheless favoured an overtly militarised strategy (Crandall 2008, p.31; Veillette 2006, p.6; Beittel 2012, p.38; Isacson 2012, p.3).

Chapter 6 explored U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Mexico and the complexities of the issue, which is itself defined by the historical, diplomatic and geographical relationship between the two countries. As a reflection of the impact that drug-related violence in Mexico has on U.S. security and domestic counter-narcotics policy, a section on the militarisation of the U.S. border was included within the case study. This interrelated, cross-border security issue has proved significant in the gradual militarisation of U.S. domestic drug enforcement.

Analysis then moved on to counter-narcotics policy in Mexico itself, which due to constitutional prohibition limits overt U.S. support, in comparison to Colombia. I determined that the situation concerning domestic Mexican counter-narcotics strategy could be classified as being militarised. This was due to the deployment and institutionalisation of Mexican military forces or militarised civilians into areas of drug violence in replacement of compromised or weak law enforcement (Meyer 2014a). This, alongside militarisation by the U.S. of counter-narcotics policy on its own side of the border, could potentially lead to the assumption of militarised American policy approach all round. However, the case study findings strongly indicated that U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Mexico is in fact securitised in nature and not militarised, given the far greater emphasis placed by the Americans on support for Mexican law enforcement, judicial reform and socio-economic development above purely military support (U.S. Embassy – Mexico 2013; USAID 2014).

7.2 Results

The research question asked to what extent has United States counter-narcotics policy in Colombia, Mexico and on the U.S. Southern Border become militarised? As a precursor to exploring U.S. policy on its border, the historical analysis in Chapter 4 detailed the progressive securitisation and then gradual militarisation of aspects of U.S. domestic counter-narcotics policy. This was explored further by a section in Chapter 6 that specifically focused on the extent of militarisation on the U.S. border with Mexico. These combined findings indicated that American law and counter-narcotics enforcement in general has not become some kind of domestic military force, a civilian version of the combat-oriented Department of Defence. Nevertheless, the war on drugs has facilitated an overall trend in militarising domestic counter-narcotics policy, and especially so on the border compared to the rest of the country. This is demonstrated by the increased material and training support from the DOD to regional and local southwestern law enforcement since the 1980s, to federal agencies such as the Border Patrol deploying their own Special Forces units and UAVs, to direct employment of military forces such as the National Guard for border protection.

The core of the research question, however, involves U.S. foreign counter-narcotics policy in Colombia and Mexico, the primary narcotics producing and transiting countries in Latin American, and the militarisation of such American policy in each. Below, I provide a detailed comparison between the Colombian and Mexican case studies. I compare how each of the three elements of the militarisation framework apply to both cases. The cumulative comparison will help determine a conclusion for the research question itself, while the findings will allow comment on what has been learned about militarisation as a process, as well as broader U.S. counter-narcotics and foreign policy.

7.2.1 Comparing the 'making military' element in each case study

As has been explored in Chapter 2, the making military element of the militarisation framework is intended to describe the direct involvement of a nation's military forces and/or the utilisation of assets, resources and training support involving said military in cooperation with domestic or foreign civilian and military security forces. An example of this element put into practice is the long-standing military ties between the United States and Colombia, involving both Cold War geopolitics and, more recently and with greater primacy, the War on Drugs.

The security relationship between the two countries stretches back to the 1950s onwards, with the contribution of Colombian troops to the Korean War and the signing of a Military Assistance Agreement between the U.S. and Colombia in 1952 (Crandall 2008, p.21). This signalled the beginning of small but gradual increases in U.S. military training and support of Colombian forces, as well as a CIA presence. The persistent civil conflict with Marxist guerrillas also meant that the military held great influence in Colombian internal security, including *de facto* jurisdiction over the civilian population until its ultimate repeal (Ramirez Lemus et al. 2005, p.123). The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 saw the institutionalisation of U.S. efforts to promote Western Hemisphere security. Under the Act's three programs - the Military Assistance Program, the Military Education and Training program, and the Foreign Military Finance program – the U.S. contributed some $2 billion to Western hemisphere security forces over the following three decades, of which Colombia was one of the primary recipients. Therefore, even before sustained U.S. support for Colombian counter-narcotics efforts in the 1990s, and counter-narcoinsurgency in the 2000s, there was an established policy of American promotion of Colombian military capability and effectiveness – amplifying its already strong presence in Colombian society – in pursuit of anti-communism and regional security interests.

In the case of Mexico there is a long history of security cooperation with the U.S., but due to Mexican constitutional sensitivities this has not involved the U.S. military to nearly the same extent as American security cooperation with Colombia. In accordance with the promotion of Western hemispheric security, the CIA assisted in the creation of its Mexican counterpart, the Federal Security Directorate (Hernández 2013, p.65). Likewise, there has also been a long tradition of counter-narcotics cooperation, as demonstrated by the Nixon Administration donating aircraft for drug interdiction following Operation Intercept (Epstein 1977, p.83-84), or joint work on a radar network for detecting Colombian drug flights. In general, despite concerns about pre-2000 Mexican government tolerance of the drug trade bordering on collusion (Hernández 2013, p.65), U.S.-Mexican intelligence and law enforcement cooperation regarding counter-narcotics was generally effective, as demonstrated through numerous seizures and roundups of cartel personnel in the U.S. (Beith 2010, p.176; U.S. Department of Justice 2008).

Whatever the moral qualms, Mexican government accommodation, and in certain cases even control, of the drug trade is generally regarded as having kept a lid on cartel power struggles and resultant violence. There was, in short, no pressing need for an internal militarised response to narcotics in Mexico, and thus also no reason it should have influenced

U.S. counter-narcotics strategy in Mexico in a more militarised direction, as the situation in Colombia had encouraged. Therefore, just as the swift rise of the cartels in the 1970s has caught Colombian authorities and U.S. representatives off guard, so too did the fallout of the PRI's removal from power in 2000. This, combined with the erosion of the Colombian cartels, allowed for the rapid rise of the Mexican cartels and consequent violence and instability in prominent contested trafficking zones on the U.S. border.

Even with a more militarised approach to Colombia, there was still a greater emphasis on promoting the effectiveness of native law enforcement during the initial rise of the drug cartels via the CNP, just as the ideal – if not practically realised – course of action in Mexico is to respond to criminal cartel violence via effective law enforcement. The key difference is that the security situation in Colombia deteriorated in the late-1990s due to the threat posed by guerrilla movements, significantly supported by the drug trade, gaining territorial control from the Colombian state. This more conventional war-like situation necessitated a more militarised response by the Colombian state through direct involvement of its military forces, in conjunction with military training, equipment and asset support from the U.S. – both aspects described by the making military framework element. Even then, due to domestic and congressional caution, U.S. support had to be seen to be adhering to clear dividing lines between supporting the counter-narcotic versus the counter-insurgency efforts of Colombian forces. This was a distinction which was difficult to enforce in reality, and indeed one which was essentially abandoned in favour of combining both efforts after 9/11. To date, such a civil-conflict scenario does not yet exist in Mexico. The viability and stability of the Mexican state is not under threat from the cartels as Colombia was from guerrilla movements at the time. Therefore, the onus is on supporting the development of Mexican law enforcement capability via Merida Initiative funding, even if Mexico's police forces are currently supplemented or even replaced by the Mexican military more often than is desired.

The declining security situation in Colombia at the beginning of the 2000s prompted the U.S. to dramatically increase the military component of its support to native security forces. However, as has been repeatedly stated throughout, while both countries have drug-related violence and insecurity in common, the circumstances in Colombia and Mexico are different. Colombia is principally a source country for drug production, has a long-running civil conflict with guerrilla movements, and has been receptive to outside U.S. training, equipment provision and intelligence support, largely accepting the terms and conditions that come attached, such as aerial eradication of coca crops. Mexico on the other hand is mainly a transit country for narcotics, and is dealing with an essentially criminal conflict rather than

civil-insurgent one. Due to long standing policy attitudes, Mexico has not been willing to accept significant direct American military support on its territory that may infringe on its sovereignty, which only leaves the 'support' aspect of the making military element. Equipment donation and training assistance for sections of the Mexican military by the U.S. is acceptable, as is funding support and equipment provision intended to improve law enforcement professionalism and resources. As with Colombia's drug problems in the 1990s, where it was appropriate to meet criminal cartel activities with primarily law enforcement means via a strongly supported CNP, complimented by specialised military units, it is felt that Mexico's current cartel-criminal problem is best met by a judicial approach. The problem however lies in a Mexican law enforcement establishment that is undermanned, under-resourced and easily intimidated or corrupted. This leaves the Mexican government little option but to send in the military to take control of law and order in certain areas, effectively militarising its drug conflict.

The U.S. has provided some military support in the form of high-level engagement between Mexican and American security figures, joint military cooperation with U.S. Northern Command, and the upgrading of some Mexican equipment and airborne platforms, such as naval surveillance aircraft and Blackhawk helicopters. Additional efforts at increasing Mexican military efficiency and effectiveness have involved U.S. Marine Corps provision of training to many Mexican NCOs (U.S. Department of Defence 2013a), plus \$15 million a year spent on training for 3,000 personnel from across the Mexican services (Michaels 2014). However, even taken all together, such efforts are dwarfed by U.S. military support to Colombia. U.S. counter-narcotics support in Mexico is not at the level of direct military involvement as set out in the making military element of the framework.

The U.S. counter-narcotics approach in Colombia has seen sustained and active involvement of Special Forces and intelligence officers in the country since the 1980s, albeit in supportive and not combat-oriented roles. Likewise, military-centred support for the training, resourcing, growth and operational reach and effectiveness of the Colombian armed forces and the paramilitary national police has gone hand in hand with a U.S. operational presence. While U.S. social and economic aid has increased during the Consolidation phase, such past and present direct military involvement, by both U.S. and Colombian forces, as well as long-running American military-related support, mean that the features of the making military element of the militarisation framework are present in this case study.

By comparison, concerns regarding Mexican sovereignty mean that, despite U.S. policy in Mexico supporting the improvement of Mexican military professionalism and

counter-narcotics assets, there has been no direct U.S. military involvement in drug enforcement in that country. Direct military efforts against narcotics are the preserve of the Mexican government and security forces. What U.S. military-related support that exists is far outweighed by the support for the development of Mexican law enforcement capabilities, as well as socio-economic aid. This is as a result of the recognition that, despite huge levels of violence, the Mexican drug conflict is essentially a socio-criminal problem, and not one where significant military resources need to be committed to 'turn back the tide' as was the case when Colombia was on the brink of state failure. While U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia has primarily involved a military dimension to a greater, then gradually decreasing, degree as Plan Colombia evolved, its policy in Mexico is predominantly securitised in nature. Small-scale military asset and training support is still observable, but combined with an absence of direct U.S. military involvement, the principal factors involved in the making military element of the militarisation framework are not present in the Mexican case study

7.2.2 'Institutionalisation' of militarisation in the cases

Institutionalisation, in the context of the militarisation framework, is the existence of a strategic environment whereby the elements involved in the 'making military' element, discussed above, have been present for a such sustained period of time that they can no longer be considered simply as emergency measures and have taken on the character of the 'new normal' in terms of policy practice. The main issue is the term 'sustained period', which risks being an arbitrary one, as it could represent a period of time lasting months, years or decades. Every security situation is different, some with clear objectives and finite operational lengths, such as the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999. Others have looser defined goals and generally commence with no established 'end date', as demonstrated by Plan Colombia, which broadly continues fifteen years after its launch and has been subject to constant evolution, from an initial focus on counter-narcotics, to support for counter narco-terrorism, to an increasing socio-economic development programme.

I have attempted to address the issue of what constitutes a 'sustained period' in a later section of this chapter, which refines the militarisation framework and suggests new elements that take into account the length of time and the aftermath of security situations. The U.S.'s Colombian and Mexican counter-narcotics initiatives are still ongoing, and so it was reasoned that their lengths so far – sixteen and eight years respectively – constituted a 'sustained period'. Several years is generally adequate to determine whether use of military assets in

pursuit of a strategic goal has grown and then receded (confirming it as a shorter-term emergency measure), or has been maintained long enough to become the 'new normal'.

As detailed in the section above, U.S. military and intelligence agencies have had generally warm relations and varying degrees of involvement with Colombia since the early 1950s, and such a long-established security relationship allowed anti-communist support to pivot towards counter-narcotics support. The Colombians have been willing to accept funding, asset and equipment transfer, military and police training and U.S. military and intelligence personnel in this strategic environment, in supervisory roles if not directly participating on the ground in counter-narcotics operations. Colombia's role is not necessary supplicant, but more one of a willing partner, mostly content to ally with American counter-narcotics policy. That said, Colombians are not without the capacity to propose their own strategic direction, as well as defend Colombian sovereignty and priorities if the situation demands it. For example, aerial spraying was halted in May 2015 due to Colombian concerns over the detrimental environmental and health effects of the chemicals used (Neuman 2015).

Mexico on the other hand has often been reluctant to accept U.S. support on nearly the same scale. This has been due to historical factors of old-but-tempered enmity, and because the security situation in that country did not previously warrant such aid, until the recent decade with its accompanying explosion of violence and instability. As detailed earlier in Chapter 6, Mexico was a recipient of U.S. counter-narcotics support, such as interdiction aircraft or cooperation on airspace monitoring. However, due to smaller Mexican cartel power, and the controlling influence of the Mexican PRI regime, any significant drug-related security issues were easily tempered. Until 2000, when the PRI fell from power and the pressures on the Colombian cartels ultimately created opportunities for their Mexican counterparts, Mexico generally had no urgent need for significant U.S. counter-narcotic support, or to employ its own forces to that end on a mass or prolonged scale. Such emergency measures were not required in this strategic environment.

By contrast, Colombia was being pushed to the brink by FARC and narcoterrorism, and as a long-term U.S. ally in the region, security cooperation came more naturally. The Mexican state though, while perhaps not under the same existential threat as Colombia had been, has seen its security situation progressively worsen compared to the relative peace of the past. Prideful or not, it cannot turn down the offer of U.S. counter-narcotics support, even if Mexico's constitutional caveats on the nature of that support are to a far stricter standard than Colombia's, and it is principally focused on law-enforcement rather than military development.

Each country's drug conflict is inherently different and this has effected the nature of U.S. counter-narcotics support. In Colombia, while the criminal cartels were serious players in the 1980s and 1990s, and still occupy a current if diminished role, that country's drug conflict conflated with its civil conflict. The already highly militarised nature of the Colombian state's offensive against insurgents and their drug cultivation operations meant that U.S. counter-narcotics support also took on a more military dimension. Even notionally civilian security forces in Colombia, like the CNP, are essentially paramilitary in nature. Plan Colombia has increasingly focused on socio-economic development, though this was only really after the military advantage over FARC had been entrenched after almost a decade of sustained development of the native security forces and near-continuous military campaigning. It has only been with the establishment of this relatively stable 'new normal' that the U.S. felt it was safe enough to leave security progress in Colombian hands.

Mexico's drug-related security situation is not a military-political civil conflict with a drug dimension as with Colombia, but is a criminal and public security matter where narcotics are the principal cause of conflict and insecurity. As such, there are no real guerrillas to defeat, territory to reclaim and government writ to restore in this security environment, as with Colombia, and so it is a security issue that does not – or at least should not – strictly require a military solution. The reason that the Mexican military plays such a key role in the domestic policy response to counter-narcotics is because the civilian law enforcement authorities are simply not up to the task through under-training, inefficiency, intimidation and especially corruption. It is because of this different problem in Mexico that U.S. counter-narcotics policy, while lending limited support to the Mexican military given their frontline role against cartels, is more geared towards providing support for law enforcement and civil justice capability in the longer term.

As the Colombian case study revealed, aside from long-standing military and security ties between Colombia and the U.S., the counter-narcotics-related support offered by the latter to the former totalled billions of dollars in direct or associated military aid. Colombia has increased spending on security and defence over the past decade in an effort to consolidate gains made in the civil conflict, and to disrupt the drug trade to cut off funding for guerrillas as well as satisfy U.S. concerns. As a result, the number of personnel in the Colombian military and national police has increased by tens of thousands. Indeed, Colombia has less than half the population of Mexico at around 48 million, yet has a combined military and paramilitary police force of some 405,000, while Mexico with a population of 112 million has 260,000 active duty military troops and about 40,000 federal police (Molloy

2013). If Mexico were to expand its military and federal police to a per capita level comparable to Colombia's, then it would involve a combined military and paramilitary police force of some 945,000 (Molloy 2013).

Irrespective of the prohibitively high budgetary requirements to institutionalise such an arrangement in Mexico on a permanent basis (and indeed whether it would even be needed to deal with a criminal and not civil conflict), this fact highlights how comparatively less militarily focused Mexican security is compared to Colombia. Likewise, this is also reflected in the less militarised focus of U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Mexico. For instance, budget statistics show that after the first two years the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) portion of the Merida Initiative decreased hugely before disappearing altogether. During the same period, U.S. law enforcement and socio-economic aid significantly increased or at least remained modest but consistent, indicating where American priorities lay in its counter-narcotics approach in Mexico compared with Colombia (Seelke and Finklea 2014, p.7).

Adding to the case that a more military-focused U.S. counter-narcotics policy exists in Colombia is that the Colombian armed forces, notwithstanding small fluctuations in recent years, are significantly larger and more professional in the present than at the outset of Plan Colombia. This in turn complements the trend that the CNP, out of all services, has experienced unbroken and consistent increases in personnel. This has been part of the strategic thinking of the Consolidation phase, seeking to re-establish government writ by deploying civilian (albeit essentially paramilitary) security forces in territories recaptured by an upgraded and larger military, as opposed to having the military alone permanently stationed and 'bogged down' in such areas. Sustained increases to the defence budget during the Uribe presidency cemented the permanence of larger security forces. With this, and continued (if generally reduced) U.S. support, the involvement of the Colombian military and U.S. military and intelligence advisors in counter-narcotics has long moved from being a temporary emergency measure, to become institutionalised practice as relative security and stability is consolidated.

As observed in the Mexican case study, there is a recognition that civilian security forces taking the lead would be better for longer-term stability in cartel and drug conflict zones. However, the Mexican police – albeit generally the local constabularies than the more professional Federal Police – are currently significantly behind in realistically aspiring to this goal. As a consequence, the Mexican military is often called upon to fill the security gaps left by ineffective civilian authorities, merely perpetuating the cycle of militarised responses to narcotics in Mexico despite the recognition that this is not an ideal nor sustainable long-term

strategy. At present, such policy constitutes a short-term emergency measure. However, if the Mexican military were to be continuously deployed throughout the eventual lifetime of the Merida Initiative (even if the objective of improving native law enforcement had been advanced), and the U.S. military were to take a more direct role and/or increase its support, then this would constitute sustained and institutionalised militarisation.

In comparing both strategic environments, a militarised approach to tackling narcotics and associated insurgency in Colombia has become deliberately institutionalised, with American support, in order to consolidate the security gains made. By contrast, in Mexico, a native militarised response to cartel and drug violence has seemingly become institutionalised by accident rather than intention, with the authorities often having little option – often with American acceptance of the reality on the ground – but to utilise military assets in counter-narcotics efforts in the absence of any viable alternative. When civilian law enforcement simply cannot cope with the security challenges presented by the conflicts between both rival drug cartels and against state authorities, and cartels that often employ their own private armies, then the only like-for-like response is a military one. However, the fundamental U.S. policy of supporting the development of competent and effective law enforcement suggests that the longer-term aim of American counter-narcotics policy in Mexico's strategic environment is to institutionalise civilian security solutions over a sustained period and beyond, instead of native military-based solutions.

7.2.3 The Inhumanity of Man: the 'criteria of violence' element

In the context of the militarisation framework, the criteria of violence element concerns the amount of violence observed in a security situation that has a military dimension. Such observations can indicate the extent that military forces are directly involved in the perpetration of said violence, which can ultimately help to assess where on the security spectrum the situation is best placed, i.e. securitised, militarised or violised. Of the three components of the militarisation framework, this is the most difficult to ascribe to U.S. counter-narcotics policy. Any violence observed in the case studies is essentially a result of the actions of native security forces, guerrillas or cartel killers, and has little directly to do with the U.S. as it has no direct operational control of counter-narcotics efforts, merely a supporting and advisory role. In both Colombia and Mexico, any American aid, whether for counter-narcotic or counter-insurgency needs, is monitored by the U.S. Congress to ensure compliance with human rights as mandated by the Leahy Amendment (U.S. Code 1997). In both case studies, there have been multiple observations of how each country's drug conflict

has given rise to violence and associated suffering. The issue is whether such violence remains within the boundaries of the militarisation framework (i.e. not wide-scale, war-like violence) or crosses over into (wide spread, war-like) violisation, and also to what extent U.S. counter-narcotics policy plays a role.

Internal displacement of peoples (i.e. people forced to flee from their homes but who remain within the borders of their nation state, effectively refugees, if not legally recognised as such) is a far larger concern in Colombia than in Mexico. Statistics cited in the case study showed that levels have decreased in recent years as the security situation has – reasonably – stabilised. However, at the height of internal displacement, the principal causes were the civil conflict and associated war-like violence that civilians are often subjected to and were perpetrated by the guerrillas, right-wing paramilitaries and elements of the Colombian state, and also the environmental and economic consequences of aerial eradication. With the absence of similar civil conflict and aerial eradication in Mexico, such a problem does not exist on nearly the same scale, though of course in areas plagued by cartel-related violence it is natural to expect some displacement of peoples as civilians or those under threat of death relocate in fear for their safety.

Mexico's violence primarily revolves around the casual and indiscriminate brutality employed by the feuding cartels. As observed in the case study, Mexican authorities have been accused of perpetrating or facilitating disappearances. However, the bulk of these, as well as kidnappings, assassinations and general drug-related murders are attributed to the cartels and their personnel, whether they be hired killers or former police and military officers who have switched sides. In response to such violence and intimidation of the public, some citizens have taken to forming quasi-militarised vigilante groups, but these are still relatively small in number.

As stated in the Mexican case study conclusion, while the levels of violence would seem to indicate a violised situation, it is still not an open-warfare environment. Instead, it is just an atypically brutal criminal security crisis that, like the majority of U.S. counter-narcotics policy towards that country, fulfils more of a securitised criteria on the security spectrum, despite the employment of military forces as a short-term solution.

Colombia by contrast, as with making military and institutionalisation, meets the requirements of the criteria of violence component of the militarisation framework. This is due to the violence that does occur being a result of the civil conflict and the predictable consequences on the civilian population, on Colombian forces, and against guerrillas and their assassinated leadership. Violence is either targeted, or of a level to be expected when

military operations are involved, and are nowhere as indiscriminate and sickeningly violent as acts perpetrated in Mexico.

In both cases the same finding can be applied to U.S. counter-narcotics policy; that of the American attempts to minimise official state violence by conducting oversight of, and attaching conditions to, its military or law enforcement support. In both cases, U.S. policy can only pursue best intentions. It cannot be held directly responsible for violence carried out by parties outside its direct operational control, be they Mexican forces and cartels killers, or Colombian forces and narco-guerrillas.

7.3 Drug War militarisation and securitisation in the cases

Given the direct intervention of U.S. military assets in Colombia, and military-related support provided to the latter's security forces, all in the name of counter-narcotics, U.S. policy has been militarised in that country. While Mexico has taken its own militarised stance domestically, U.S. counter-narcotics support for that country is more law-enforcement focused – due to Mexican sovereignty and the fact that law and order is the key issue anyway – and so the American policy approach to Mexico is securitised rather than militarised. The U.S. border has seen gradual militarisation and is linked to the Mexican conflict, but falls within the realm of domestic American counter-narcotics policy and therefore outside its Mexican policy in the strictest sense. Such border militarisation though, along with historical trends as explored in Chapter 4, indicate substantial militarisation in domestic counter-narcotics enforcement. This is not to say that the entirety of counter-narcotics efforts across the U.S. is now subject to a militarised approach, just that significant elements of it have seen increased military involvement, cooperation and support in terms of training, tactics, equipment and intelligence.

In general Plan Colombia represented a gradual shift into different phases as the strategic situation demanded. What began as a primarily militarised effort to stabilise the country, promote security and roll back the guerrillas, morphed into a more social, economic, judicial and law enforcement-based initiative once the security gains had been consolidated (or at least consolidated as much as the socio-economic challenges of the country currently allow). This conforms to the common strategy employed in prosecuting a civil conflict or counterinsurgency campaign, that of 'clear, hold, build' (British Army 2009; U.S. State Department 2009; Defence Technical Information Centre 2013), and as explored in the Colombia case study, any pretence that the counter-narcotics campaign and

counterinsurgency campaign were mutually exclusive was progressively dropped until they essentially merged after 9/11. In such circumstances where physical territory and resources need to be captured from the enemy, it is very much a military matter, and the conflict between the Colombian state and FARC and the ELN conformed to such a model.

In Mexico however, as has been repeatedly stated, a civil conflict similar to Colombia does not exist. The Mexican government has not 'lost' vast swathes of territory to the cartels, just as U.S. authorities did not 'lose' Chicago to Prohibition-era gangsters. Government writ and civil society seemingly go on as normal, but with the key exception of the cartel vs cartel and cartel vs state violence, kidnapping and intimidation. As a result there is no military solution available to the Mexicans in the same fashion as the Colombians. There is therefore no scope for U.S. counter-narcotics policy to be militarily supportive in the same way either, notwithstanding the constitutional limitations placed on such overt American military involvement and support on Mexican soil. The principal reason the Mexican military has been deployed into violent trouble spots is because they represent the best immediate option for the state to impose some form of effective order and control in an environment where too many civilian law enforcement personnel and departments are completely ineffective due to corruption, intimidation, murder or even the participation in organised crime themselves.

U.S. foreign policy and counter-narcotics policy in Colombia effectively became synonymous, whereas the more complex relationship the U.S. has with Mexico due to geographical proximity – i.e. trade, immigration, border security, etc. – is reflected in the less straightforward nature of American counter-narcotics policy concerning its immediate neighbour. Military-related support, funding, training and resourcing in assistance of Colombian counter-narcotics efforts has dwarfed that of U.S. involvement in Mexico, but this is not surprising. The Colombian case study covers double the time period of the Mexican case study, and so by virtue of benefiting from more time and attention, U.S. military involvement in Colombia is bound to be larger in manpower, material and budget allocated.

Additionally, U.S. militarised counter-narcotics support in Colombia effectively developed into counter-narcoinsurgency assistance following 9/11. This represented tacit if not overt U.S. involvement in Colombia's civil conflict and efforts to erode FARC as a fighting force, reclaim territory for the state and decapitate the guerrilla leadership. While the Colombian government, or at least past and present figures within it, has at times expressed reservation about some of the counter-narcotics strategies espoused by the U.S., not least aerial eradication, by and large throughout Colombia's civil and drug conflicts it has been a welcoming recipient of U.S. military, law enforcement and socio-economic assistance.

Mexico by contrast, despite the appearance of chaos, is not a failing state. The case study highlighted its growing economy and reforms, the slow-paced but gradual increase in the effectiveness of its civilian security forces, and the general fact that drug violence is concentrated in certain areas of the country and not throughout, with some areas remaining untouched. There is therefore a degree of pragmatism in the U.S. policy approach – reflected in the changed Merida Initiative funding allocations – that building up an effective law enforcement establishment, judicial system and sustainable socio-economic development is the best counter-narcotics strategy to pursue; a pincer movement of punishment and incentive. Despite the involvement of the Mexican military, with American support for such moves, U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Mexico is, strictly speaking, primarily in-keeping with a securitised position.

7.4 The factors that drive the process of militarisation

Having compared both case studies through the prism of the three elements of the militarisation framework, I have identified a number of factors broadly responsible for driving the militarisation process:

- The existing strategic situation in the theatre of operations

The case studies in this thesis have demonstrated that, when considering U.S. counter-narcotics policy towards certain countries, the strategic circumstances in those operational theatres will often determine the nature of the policy approach, whether it is more militarised or securitised. This is to say that if a country with a narcotics problem is experiencing a civil conflict, then there will likely be military solutions already in play in an effort to deal with the situation. This then means that it is all the easier to apply military-related solutions to counter-narcotics efforts as well, e.g. Colombia. If a country is instead dealing with narcotics through primarily law enforcement means in a securitised environment, then counter-narcotics support will often compliment that approach, as with Mexico.

Colombia is a case in point, where the ostensibly civilian Colombian National Police was favoured for U.S. support because the threat in the 1980s and early-1990s came from criminal cartels. When the Colombian state was being pressurised by guerrilla armies with their own military-style structure in a civil conflict that had progressively worsened, a military response by the Colombian armed forces was the favoured option. Since the guerrillas were also involved in the drug trade, fighting insurgents also meant fighting drug

traffickers, and so it made sense to utilise the military to take on both challenges. Now that Plan Colombia has moved on to the Consolidation phase, in reclaimed territories we see a reversion back to supporting law enforcement and socio-economic efforts. The military still fights guerrillas and their drug operations in contested areas, but 'behind the lines' narcotics are once again more of a criminal matter requiring a proportionate law enforcement response.

This is the situation that Mexico is currently experiencing, whereby the narcotics challenge, however violent, remains an essentially criminal matter that is best suited to a law enforcement solution. Despite the risk that it could become institutionalised if employed for years to come, the wide-scale use of the Mexican military in counter-narcotics is in theory a stop-gap emergency measure until civilian forces are up to the task, aided by U.S. training and support. If the Mexican cartels started to act in such a way as FARC has, taking territory from state control and aiming to topple it, then a fully militarised response would be proportionate. It is then likely that counter-narcotics efforts would also become militarised, as demonstrated by Colombian forces targeting coca fields that provide revenues to FARC as part of the parallel counter-insurgency campaign.

The strategic situation in theatres of operation can go a long way in determining the counter-narcotics policy approach, and this similarly applies to militarisation, which is to say that if a situation already features military involvement of some description, then it is likely this will be built upon.

- The levels of power and influence of the security establishment

The power and influence of the security establishment of a country and/or its partners also has a role in determining the likelihood of a security situation becoming militarised. In Chapter 4 I detailed how the U.S. military and security establishment frequently embraced reasons for being, especially as the Cold War came to an end and narcotics usefully presented a threat (Isacson 2005, p.28). The launch of the War on Terror further enhanced the Department of Defence's growing role in broader foreign policy, a trend explored below. Added to this was the established precedent of the Reagan and Bush Administrations utilising military and intelligence assets in the pursuit of counter-narcotics efforts abroad (White House 1986; White House 1989), and of the Clinton Administration furthering earlier Reagan-era measures to enhance DOD cooperation with law enforcement agencies (White House 1993; Balko 2006, p.8). With the military already having involvement in broader foreign and security policy, it was natural for policymakers looking to make an impact

against narcotics to make use of defence assets, to utilise the 'biggest tool in the box' so to speak (U.S. Congress 1986).

In the case of Colombia, such a policy approach by the U.S. seemed all the more sensible given the heavy involvement of the Colombian military in counter-narcotics efforts. The U.S. would merely be complementing an already militarised situation. This leads into the point that the security establishments of partner countries can also influence how militarised a security situation can become. As noted in Chapter 5, the Colombian military has long held significant power and influence in the country, and so its militarised approach to native counterinsurgency and counter-narcotics issues went hand in hand with the growing American tendency to turn to military solutions in response to security challenges. Mexico, by contrast, highlights the opposite, where Chapter 6 detailed their security establishment's – or at least Army's – long-held suspicion of cooperating with U.S. forces too closely (Michaels 2014). This significantly limited American scope to involve itself in Mexico with either a direct military presence, or in a supporting role beyond constitutionally acceptable levels of training support and equipment transfer. Coupled with the strategic situation on the ground favouring a law-enforcement response to an essentially law and order drug problem, the U.S. counter-narcotics approach was consequently more securitised in character than militarised. This may not have necessarily been the case had the Mexican security establishment been more receptive to American military involvement, and had the drug issue in Mexico involved an insurgent/civil conflict (as with Colombia) rather than a criminal one.

- The cultural and historical trends of the policy initiator/s

The third and final factor in what can drive militarisation are the cultural and historical trends of the policy initiator/s, which relates to the importance of context proposed in Chapter 2. I mention above the historical precedent for the growing role of the U.S. military in counter-narcotics efforts, either directly or by supporting partner countries, as seen with various presidential administrations. With the trend of military involvement established in the 1980s, it was easier for similar and then more advanced policy approaches to be taken in the 1990s and 2000s when narcotics-related security issues gained prominence in Colombia, Mexico and the U.S. border area. Part of why such policy moves gained traction in the first place can be attributed to the 'tool box' position – i.e. with the DOD playing such a significant role in national security and with vast resources at its disposal, it made sense to utilise those assets against the drug problem (U.S. Congress 1986) – and also because of underlying cultural

trends. I have explored militarisation in American culture, of how the increased use of militaristic language and metaphors helped amplify an 'Us and Them' narrative (Thorne 2006, p.2 & 12-13), of American 'good guys' versus 'bad guys', be they communists, terrorists or drug lords. Military imagery has also permeated the American consciousness through popular culture, whether through movies or videogames (Power 2007, p.273; Singer 2010; Keegan 2011). American cultural inclinations, in conjunction with the vast resources at its disposal that can be committed to policy objectives, combined with historical and patriotic reverence for its role and accomplishments, means that the U.S. military has become idealised as a means to 'fight the good fight'. In more basic terms, it can be utilised as an emergency measure to counter existential threats, in this case the War on Drugs.

7.5 DOD vs State – the broader impact on U.S. foreign policy

Cumulatively, what does all this tell us about the current state of U.S. foreign policy, at least in the context of the provision of military and counter-narcotics support? The involvement of the Department of Defence in foreign policy matters has gradually increased since World War II. That conflict, then the Cold War and War on Terror, were all major foreign policy issues that involved the military and security establishment. As a consequence, DOD involvement in foreign affairs has progressively become institutionalised, almost to the extent of setting up a parallel foreign policy structure, as evidenced by the formation of regional commands that cover every sector of the globe, as well as the full global remit of Special Operations Command (Marks 2014, p.237). If nothing else, the sheer institutional imbalance in terms of the respective manpower at the disposal of DOD and State mean the former exercises significant influence, almost by default. For example, in 2008 for every single employee of USAID overseas, there were twenty-three State Department employees and six-hundred DOD military and civilian personnel (Adams 2014, p.23). To put the entirety of these institutions into perspective, by 2012 the DOD employed 1.5 million active duty personnel and 770,000 civilians, nearly 28 percent of the federal civil service, while by contrast the State Department employed nearly 19,000 Foreign Service officers and civil servants, complemented by roughly 2000 USAID workers (Adams 2014, p.23; Office of Personnel Management 2014). With military involvement in many aspects of foreign policy, from its traditional role in hot wars to more benign efforts such as natural disaster relief and humanitarian intervention (see Anderson and Veilette 2014), then it is no surprise that the DOD would have an involvement in counter-narcotics foreign policy.

Legally the State Department still retains influence and oversight on military involvement and support in foreign policy issues, via the Secretary of State, ambassadors and department officials (Serafino 2014, p.123). This was in evidence when the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, Myles Frechette, was regarded as having a pivotal role in overseeing American counter-narcotics policy during his tenure from 1994 to 1997, along with Assistant Secretary of State Robert Gelbard (Crandall 2001). However, this kind of State Department influence and primacy has reduced over time as DOD involvement has grown. If we examine U.S. foreign security support initiatives, such as Foreign Military Financing (FMF) or International Military Education and Training (IMET), from Financial Year 2002 to Financial Year 2010 there was a 66 percent growth in security assistance provided by the State Department, as compared to a 500 percent growth in DOD security assistance for the same period (Serafino 2014, p.130). Even accounting for the fact that many of the funded activities were during the Iraq and Afghan Wars, and that many have or are expected to return to State Department administration following U.S. military drawdowns, the percentage of overall U.S. security assistance administered through the DOD has risen from around 25 to more than 60 percent (Serafino 2014, p.130).

The State Department has responded to this new reality by trying to work with and influence DOD operations, rather than attempt to challenge or subvert them. Close cooperation is encouraged between foreign ambassadors and the military commanders of each Geographic Combatant Command, Political Advisors (or POLADs) are assigned to assist commanders, and even ambassador-ranked personnel are offered to serve as deputy civilian commanders at Combatant Commands (Serafino 2014, p.123). Nor is the State Department being starved of funding, at least with regards to non-war related areas. From Financial Year 2001 to Financial Year 2010, State Department accounts that provided for counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, de-mining and some rule-of-law training grew by 168 percent compared to 20 percent for similar DOD accounts, and some areas such as non-proliferation saw the State account grow significantly while the DOD account actually decreased (Serafino 2014, p.131).

However, while such growth figures may seem impressive, they are relative, since the State Department budget and consequent expenditure is proportionately far smaller than that of DOD. The requested budget for State and USAID for Financial Year 2014 was $47.8 billion, a six percent reduction from that requested in 2012 (U.S. State Department 2013b). By comparison, the requested budget for the DOD for the same fiscal year was $526.6 billion, over ten times the amount as State (U.S. Department of Defence 2013b). Ultimately,

while it still retains significant influence, the State Department is no longer the main gatekeeper of foreign military assistance and U.S. involvement as it once was, but nor has it ceded all responsibility to DOD.

Such developments raise legitimate issues going forward as to how future research into U.S. foreign policy, and the counter-narcotics policy subset, is to be approached, in the sense of where jurisdiction falls and who is responsible for administering and carrying out such policy efforts. If U.S. foreign policy and counter-narcotics policy effectively became synonymous in Colombia, as an example, and the DOD took a more active role in that counter-narcotics policy with Plan Colombia onwards, then was State or Defence effectively responsible for Colombia, even if it was through the prism of counter-narcotics? The support of the Department of Defence in U.S. border protection is less of an issue, as the Posse Comitatus Act still applies to prohibit military involvement in law enforcement (U.S. Code 1994), even if the strict division has been eroded over time, and operational control and authority still lies with Federal law enforcement agencies and state governors.

Remaining with foreign policy, based on the case study observations, an argument could be made that the level of U.S. military involvement can depend on the American national interest, the proximity of a theatre of operations, and relations other than those involving security. For instance, while narcotics-related security issues are significant considerations in U.S. relations with both Colombia and Mexico, they almost dominate the former, while immigration and trade – to name but two issues – are as big if not bigger factors in the U.S. relationship with Mexico. Such interests other than security tie in with proximity, with Mexico the immediate neighbour to the U.S. and main source of illegal immigrants (Preston 2013), as well as being member of North American Free Trade Association (Sergie 2014). The essential point is that U.S. foreign relations with Mexico are multi-faceted, encompassing economic, cultural, social as well as security issues. Therefore there is more scope for the State Department or the US Agency for International Development to be involved in areas other than security, such as climate change, human rights, and so on (U.S. State Department 2014; USAID 2014). With regards U.S. foreign policy towards Colombia by contrast, while it would be simplistic to say it is wholly dominated by security concerns, security and military relations have been at the forefront of the relationship since the early days of the Cold War, and were only strengthened by the War on Drugs and Plan Colombia. U.S foreign policy towards Colombia increasingly came to be viewed through the prism of counter-narcotics and, as detailed above, the greater the role the

DOD took in counter-narcotics, the more inevitable that U.S. military involvement and American foreign policy in Colombia would become conflated.

Such a perspective also complements one of the driving factors of militarisation, as described above, whereby the strategic situation in a theatre of operations can help determine the level of military involvement or support. The relatively complex foreign relations between the U.S. and Mexico, coupled with a more law enforcement-based approach to tackling counter-narcotics, meant there was only limited scope for U.S. military involvement or support. By contrast, the more straightforward, security-centric foreign relations between the U.S. and Colombia, coupled with a militarised approach to combatting the narco-insurgency/civil conflict, meant that U.S. military involvement became a policy option far more naturally.

7.6 The Militarisation Framework: The academic contribution laid out

The militarisation framework formulated in Chapter 2 is an analytical tool, which has been used to analyse the militarisation of counter-narcotics policy in the case studies. In researching the cases through the prisms of the three elements – i.e. making military, institutionalisation and criteria of violence – I was able to determine the extent of the militarisation of U.S. policy in Colombia and Mexico, and found it to be far more substantial in the former than in the latter. Reaching these empirically-based conclusions was the main objective, not using them as tests to prove how useful the militarisation framework was or was not. Nevertheless, like any useful tool, the framework is intended to be applicable to any security situation. By using it with these counter-narcotics case studies, it has allowed me to consider how the framework could be improved for future use, and in doing so contribute to the overall securitisation debate.

When considering the framework, the case studies revealed both the strengths and weaknesses of the initial elements I adopted, that of making military, institutionalisation and criteria of violence. Ultimately there was sufficient merit with the first two to justify their inclusion. In the case studies it was found that either direct U.S. military involvement or indirect asset and training support for native counter-narcotics was either present or was not – i.e. making military – and had been underway for a long enough period to become entrenched policy and practice, or had not – i.e. institutionalisation.

However, I began to encounter increased difficulty when it came to the criteria of violence element of the framework. As I made clear in the individual case study conclusions,

and again above, the U.S. has limited capacity to influence the levels and nature of violence associated with the drug conflicts in Colombia and Mexico. The Leahy Amendment and diplomatic oversight, combined with increased human rights training of native security forces, may allow the U.S. some measure of influence, but compared to the direct contribution American policy has with regards the making military and institutionalisation elements, criteria of violence is, at best, secondary. This is not to say that it does not merit overall inclusion in the militarisation framework, but that the case studies have still exposed the structural weakness of my initial framework in awarding criteria of violence equal primacy with making military and institutionalisation.

The case studies have caused me to re-evaluate and revise the militarisation framework for future application. I have included new elements, but by adding nuance by identifying primary and secondary types, I have also made the framework more flexible and applicable to a range of security scenarios.

7.6.1 The Revised Militarisation Framework

<u>Primary Elements</u>

➢ **Making Military**: The direct involvement of a nation's military forces and/or the utilisation of assets, resources and training support involving said military in cooperation with domestic or foreign civilian and military security forces.

As an example, the direct involvement of U.S. military aircraft or ground-based personnel in an operation, regardless of the size of the contingent, would meet the criteria of this element. So would the support of the U.S. military in the provision of training, equipment, weaponry, funding and intelligence to civilian and other military agencies, whether they were under American or foreign jurisdiction. We have seen the real-world application of this element in both case studies, especially in Colombia, as well as within U.S. jurisdiction on the southern border with Mexico.

• **Institutionalisation**: The existence of a strategic environment where the factors involved in 'making military' have been present for a such sustained period, that they are no longer considered as emergency measures and have taken on the character of the 'new normal' in terms of policy practice.

Domestically in the U.S. we see this with the sustained growth over the past few decades of the use of military equipment, tactics and training by civilian law enforcement. Examples include Police Paramilitary Units (PPUs) (Balko 2006, pp.8-9; Kraska and Kappeler 1997, p.11), the special BORTAC units of the U.S. Border Protection Agency (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2014), and the utilisation of military surveillance assets – be they drones, aircraft or maritime vessels – in drug interdiction efforts (Booth 2011). In foreign operations, especially Colombia, the paramilitarised Colombian National Police, as well as specialised army brigades, lead counter-narcotics efforts, and the greatly expanded security forces show no sign of decreasing in numbers in order to guarantee a relatively stable security situation. The 'democratic security' thrust launched by President Uribe as an emergency measure seems to have become the 'new normal' in Colombia, with U.S. support.

Secondary Elements

- **Levels of Violence**: The amount of violence observed in a security situation that has a military dimension can indicate the extent that military forces are directly involved in the perpetration of said violence. This can ultimately help to assess where on the security spectrum the situation is best placed, i.e. securitised, militarised or violised. Because of the potential contradictions this may generate – see below – any violence must be measured with reference to the policy intent of the principal security actor being studied.

As noted above, this element proved to be the most problematic in the case studies, as the question often came down to '*who's violence*?' Making military and institutionalisation, especially in the context of U.S. policy, were relatively straightforward to demonstrate based on empirical evidence, e.g. American equipment, training and weaponry provided to the Colombians, and support for the long-term growth and prominence of the Colombian military and police, respectively. But, in strategic environments, such as Colombia and Mexico, where U.S. policy has great influence but an inability to directly shape events, any violence that was either associated with partner security forces or non-state actors muddied the waters. Tens of thousands of deaths in Colombia and Mexico, by fault of security forces, guerrillas or cartel killers, would justify categorisation as war-like, violised situations, especially in Colombia where a true territorial civil conflict was raging. Yet such violence was neither the aim nor intention of U.S. counter-narcotics policy.

Therefore, situations presented themselves whereby U.S. counter-narcotics policy was either militarised (Colombia) or securitised (Mexico) in *intent*, but was being enacted in countries with violence bordering, or even crossing into, war-like violised situations. I ultimately resolved this problem by tying the measurement of violence to the *policy intentions* of the principal security actor undergoing study, i.e. because it was U.S. policy I was focused on, I measured the levels of violence based on American rather than Colombian or Mexico priorities. Minimising loss of life and increasing respect for human rights in supported countries are important aspects of U.S. policy based on Congressional conditions for counter-narcotics funding. The U.S. can influence its partners as best it can, but it cannot be held responsible for abuses perpetrated by partner security forces over which it has no direct operational control, and even less so for guerrillas and cartel killers.

On the other hand, in security situations where the principal actor *does* have the ability to shape the environment, often through direct operational control, then the levels of violence observed *can* be measured directly against the policy intent. For example, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 had the U.S. as the main security actor and so the violence perpetrated by its forces, be it lives lost or property destroyed, could be measured against the original policy intent, which was the conquest of the country in a war-like, violised security environment.

- **Budget Allocation**: The amount of money allocated year-on-year towards supporting military expenditure on an initiative, whether that expenditure supports direct military involvement by the principal security actor, or of partner-state military and security forces. A picture gradually emerges over time of the level of priority given to militarised policy.

While this element is often analysed anyway in order to verify making military and institutionalisation – assets cannot be deployed nor sustained long-term without the finance to pay for them, after all – this is an example of a more nuanced element that can alter the understanding of a situation based on how it is interpreted. For instance, to analyse only the first two years of funding allocation to the Merida Initiative would be to assume that U.S. policy was primarily militarised, given that $116.5m was involved in FMF funding in 2008, then $299m in 2009 (Seelke and Finklea 2014, p.7). However, continued analysis for subsequent years would show that FMF spending for Mexico fell dramatically until it reached zero in 2012, only a few years into the Merida Initiative. Meanwhile, INCLE (International

Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement) funding and Economic Support Fund (ESF) spending remained reasonably constant over time or increased, ultimately suggesting a far more securitised U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Mexico (Seelke and Finklea 2014, p.7).

By contrast, sustained military support through FMF, IMET and so on for Colombia, suitably demonstrates a long-running commitment to a military strategy, though admittedly the strategic decision to conflate counterinsurgency and counter-narcotics in that country made this far more likely than the primarily law enforcement problems faced by Mexico. Ultimately, this secondary element is important in helping to tell the whole story regards an initiative. For instance, deployment of U.S. Special Forces in Colombia for a year would simply but validly classify as making military, but the budget allocation and how it breaks down into different kinds of military and security support, and importantly how *long* for, provides more depth and detail than initial surface impressions might imply.

- **Size and type of security forces**: The numbers of security personnel and manner of equipment at the disposal of a state – either in its own jurisdiction or that of a security partner – broken down into the component military services (i.e. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines) and civilian law enforcement forces and agencies (e.g. police, special interdiction or enforcement units, criminal investigation agencies).

By analysing the personnel figures and type of forces, we can ascertain where, if any, growth has occurred, and therefore what policy emphasis may exist and how it may contribute to certain trends. For example, if the principal growth in numbers has occurred in a partner country's military, and especially the army and specialised units within it, then that would indicate a greater emphasis on ground-based operations prioritising military tactics and assets.

A prominent example of how this component can contribute to the bigger picture is the figures for the Colombian security forces since the launch of Plan Colombia, as detailed in Chapter 5, where we see relatively small fluctuations in the number of Air Force and Navy personnel, indicating that some, but far from all, attention has been given to them (Government of Colombia 2014, p.70-71). Compare this to the generally significant growth in the Colombian Army, despite occasional peaks and dips, and especially the sustained and steady growth of the Colombian National Police (Government of Colombia 2014, p.70-71). This allows us to ascertain that priority was given to military ground forces to combat the guerrilla and narco threat during the period of 'Democratic Security', and subsequently that

CNP numbers increased to aid the pacification and restoration of state control in previously contested areas, reflecting the policy of Consolidation. By contrast, despite mixed results, the growth in the numbers and efficiency training of the Mexican Federal Police and greater asset and training support for civilian agencies (Meyer 2014b, p.19; U.S. Embassy – Mexico 2013), indicates more of a securitised than militarised approach to U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Mexico.

Another example of the utility of this secondary element is analysing the growth of whole, or certain parts of, civilian law enforcement and security agencies, and what trends this may indicate. For example, in Chapter 4, I detailed how the Drug Enforcement Administration grew to include thousands of agents operating on a multi-billion dollar budget compared to its launch, highlighting the increased resources the War on Drugs gradually consumed. More importantly, however, was highlighting the growth of PPU personnel operating in civilian law enforcement departments, their military-standard equipment and training often being put to counter-narcotics uses, as well the growth of entities such as the BORTAC units, and UAV and National Guard deployments on the border. In accordance with this secondary component, the observably greater numbers of paramilitary-type forces helped to further establish making military and institutionalisation when considering U.S. domestic counter-narcotics policy, especially on the Southern Border.

- **Legacy**: The level of direct military involvement or military-related support in a theatre of operations once the main security initiative has ended. Such military involvement would either be under the control of what was the principal security actor in that initiative, or of the partner/formally occupied states. The greater the length of time given to observing the aftermath of a militarised initiative, the greater the amount of data available for drawing a conclusion.

At the time of writing, the U.S. initiatives involved in the case studies are either ongoing, or still in the process of winding down gradually. Therefore it is not yet possible to match an example directly from them to this secondary element (though, as indicated in Chapter 5, the fact that Colombian security forces have grown to the extent they have, and that GDP spending on defence has also permanently risen, would indicate a long-term legacy of militarisation). Instead, we can apply this component to various other security situations where an adequate amount of time has passed to determine whether a militarised policy 'legacy' endures.

If we take The Falklands Conflict of 1982, prior to the British military initiative to reclaim the islands from Argentine occupation, there was only a token contingent of Royal Marines stationed on the islands. Following the British victory, a significant UK military presence was established and has endured for over three decades, with further military deployments planned in response to potential Argentine belligerence (Daily Telegraph 2015). By conforming to making military and institutionalisation, this represents the continuation of militarised policy by the principal security actor in that theatre of operations. By contrast, when Coalition forces, with the U.S. at the lead, eventually ended combat operation in Iraq in 2011, a policy of demilitarisation was adopted by the principal security actor/s with the complete withdrawal of all-but-token Western military personnel (Logan 2011, BBC 2011c). However, there was a continuation of the provision of resources, training and assets for the Iraqi security forces to maintain a militarised stance by the partner/formally occupied country, despite difficulties stemming from a less-than-cooperative political climate (Cordesman et al. 2013, pp.21-36). In the case of Afghanistan, there could have been a legacy of demilitarisation similar to Iraq, as initial indictors suggested eagerness for full Western withdrawal. However, that thinking has since altered in light of the collapse of stability in Iraq, where a full pull out of Western forces left the country vulnerable to instability and partial takeover by organised Islamist extremists (Whitlock 2015; Hanna and Elis 2015).

Ultimately, as a result of reflexivity brought about by the case studies, the confirmed primary components and new secondary components of the framework add conceptual depth to 'militarisation'. However, they also generate new consideration as to what *categories* of militarisation can be applied to security situations.

7.6.2 Categories of Militarisation

During the initial development of the militarisation framework for this thesis, I viewed militarisation as a binary phenomenon. Either a security situation fell under the militarised section of the security spectrum, or it did not, in which case it was likely either securitised or violised. While this essentially remains the case, just as the observations of the case study results caused me to re-evaluate the number and primacy of the elements in the militarisation framework, so too did the observations cause me to consider what *categories* of militarisation may apply to certain security situations. This is to say ascertaining not only whether a situation is militarised in the first place, but what *type* of militarisation is involved if so. In pursuing this line of thinking, I have generated three categories:

- **Sovereign Militarisation**: Exclusive to a nation state, which sees it either operate militarily, or in a militarily-supported civilian capacity, within its borders, or participating as the main security actor in foreign deployments, such as military occupations or conflicts. The militarisation of internal U.S. border security would be one example, as would the deployment and subsequent permanent basing of UK military forces on the Falkland Islands.

- **Cooperative Militarisation**: Where two or more nation states assemble for an operation in a country or region. They work together alongside a host government, albeit likely a weak or diminished one, or in replacement of a conquered or collapsed authority, e.g. Afghanistan after 2001, Iraq after 2003 and Somalia in 1992-93. Depending on the size and scale of their operations, they may have the ability to directly shape the security environment rather than relying on security partners to do it for them, the effectiveness of which is entirely dependent on how professional and competent said partner forces are. Operations can also take place in more of a geographical region than a specific country, e.g. maritime waters to take on piracy.

- **Partnership Militarisation**: The principal security actor/s work with the security forces and government of a host country to help tackle a security-related issue within that country's borders, e.g. Colombia and Mexico. The main difference is that, though a principal actor like the U.S. can play a pivotal role, the host country governments are not necessarily subservient partners. Resultant diplomatic or policy restrictions, institutional suspicions, etc., may contribute to the already likely situation that the main security actor may have influence, but not the means or capacity to directly shape the strategic environment as they might ideally wish. With the previous two militarisation categories, direct involvement of military forces allows external actors to play a leading shaping role, either as occupiers or major security partners along with other allies. In this category however, external actors can only support and influence host country authorities and hope for the best in achieving the desired policy outcomes. In some areas, such as levels of violence, the external actor/s may have little direct influence at all over the host security authorities, as demonstrated with the U.S. and the conduct of Colombian/Mexican forces.

The Partnership category is the most applicable to U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Colombia and Mexico, while the Sovereign category best describes U.S. policy within its own

jurisdiction, as mentioned above. Cooperative Militarisation may not have a direct example in the case studies, but is still a logical inclusion based on broader analyses, and it complements the other two categories.

7.6.3 My contribution in summary

I have determined how the militarisation framework contributes to the securitisation debate and I have addressed this by:

- Demonstrating how the framework provided a useful tool for assessing the extent of militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics policy based on empirical findings from the case studies.
- Taking on-board the strengths and weaknesses of the initial framework as applied to the case studies, and subsequently suggesting improvements by developing a more detailed framework with more elements.
- Using the revised framework and case study observations to suggest that there are different categories, or types, of militarisation and not simply a single type that encompasses all strategic scenarios.

Taken altogether, these elements have strengthened the case for the inclusion of a 'militarised' segment on the security spectrum, placed in-between 'securitised' and 'violised', as suggested in Chapter 2, thus contributing to the securitisation debate.

As I have demonstrated, if we take into consideration the conclusions reached in a case study analysis, together with detailed empirical research of a security situation, in combination with cross checking with the new components of the militarisation framework, then these factors in combination will suggest whether a situation is securitised, militarised or violised. If a situation is militarised, observing the broader geo-political picture and interactions of the security actors involved will then determine what category of militarisation to assign to it. This is not to say that there exists a standard quantifiable 'formula' that will always provide the correct categorisations, more that the analytical process provides a useful overview, which can inform and suggest an overall conclusion.

7.6.4 Militarisation and the future research agenda

In this thesis I have concentrated on Colombia, Mexico and the U.S. border region, yet there remains further scope to expand research into the militarisation of U.S. counter-narcotics

policy. Future case studies could include other drug producing and transit states that the U.S has influence with, whether in Latin America, Central and South East Asia, and increasingly Western Africa, but to take into account what the broader security situation is in that country or region, regardless of drugs. For instance, in countries which are experiencing internal conflict, and/or ones where the military and paramilitary forces play a significant role in the security establishment, to what extent is U.S. counter-narcotics support in those countries more militarised when compared to countries that prioritise a more law enforcement approach? Possible future case studies along these lines could include Afghanistan, Central American countries experiencing an upturn in drug violence such as Nicaragua and Honduras, and the lower priority cocaine producing countries of Bolivia and Peru.

Through this enhanced militarisation framework and categorisation we can add greater nuance and flexibility in analysing security situations, which can in turn help indicate where these situations are best placed on the security spectrum. By developing this process, and in doing so further developing the security spectrum at the same time, my research has made as much of a contribution to the securitisation debate as it has to the empirical study of U.S. counter-narcotics policy.

I do not claim that the development of the militarisation framework stops here. Just as the empirical results of the case studies in this thesis informed the reflexivity that developed the initial framework, I am sure that future scholars will be able to further refine it once results and observations are incorporated from other case studies. For instance, what I have proposed so far is developed mainly from the case studies and so naturally leans towards the state as the main security actor, and other states and allies as partners. This does not address hypothetical situations where Non-State Actors potentially militarise security situations either before or absent the decision of a state/s to do so, whether they be heavily-equipped and organised outlaw militias, or Private Military Companies operating without national license.

Additionally, theatres of operations in the framework so far are geographical and territorial, where boots can be on the ground, whereas emerging security arenas that could be subject to securitisation and militarisation are more abstract, such as cyberspace (Deibert 2003, pp.517-520) or actual orbital space (Economist 2008). These have not been explored for the principal reason that they are beyond the remit of this thesis and the case studies did not suggest them for the revised framework, but they are certainly areas of research that could be further investigated by scholars in the securitisation and militarisation fields.

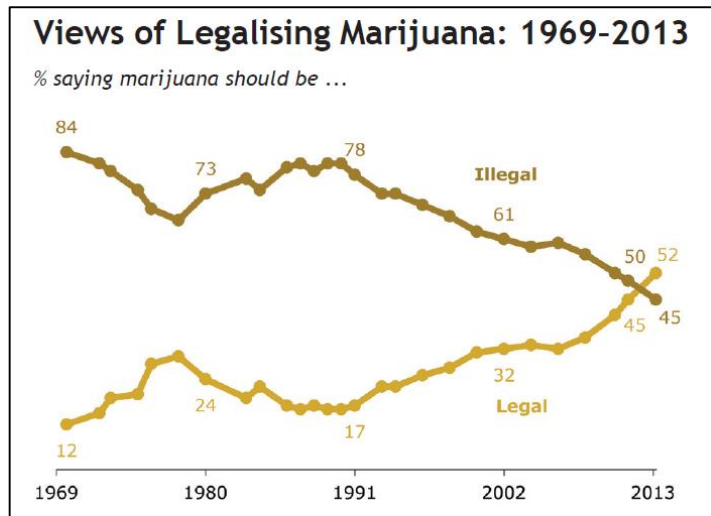**7.7 War without end? Closing thoughts on U.S. counter-narcotics policy**

In April 2016, diplomats, drug policy experts and actors from civil society will gather for a UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) to address the world drug problem. The session itself is regarded as an important marker on the path towards achieving the goals that the UN set out in the 2009 policy document entitled "Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem", goals that aim to be met by 2019 (UNODC 2015b). One of these goals is to "minimize and eventually eliminate the availability and use of illicit drugs and psychotropic substances in order to ensure the health and welfare of humankind" (UNODC 2009, P.8). Recent statistics by the UNODC's World Drug Report, however, have not been encouraging, with an estimated 246 million drug users around the world, constituting 5.2 percent of the global population, though this does actually represent stable figures for the past three years (UNODC 2015c, p.1)[68]. A report by the UN University suggests that "the likely outcome of UNGASS 2016 will not differ significantly from the status quo" of law enforcement-based orthodoxy regarding counter-narcotics, but that "cracks in the global drug policy regime are increasingly clear" (Cockayne and Walker 2015, p.34). It appears that, while member states are in broad agreement in aiming to reduce and eliminate the narcotic threat, calls for greater flexibility in *how* that outcome is achieved are growing louder.

Given that it effectively launched the War on Drugs, and has presided over an enforcement-based orthodoxy for the majority of it, it is surprising that the United States is actually one of those member states calling for greater flexibility and experimentation, albeit within the existing drug regime (Cockayne and Walker 2015, p.i). For example, during the 58th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2015, the U.S. submitted a resolution "supporting the collaboration of public health and justice authorities in pursuing alternative measures to conviction or punishment for appropriate drug-related offences of a minor nature" (UNODC 2015d). This is in contrast to the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 and its introduction of a 'get tough and lock them up' approach via mandatory minimum sentences.

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[68] These figures represent the average of the estimated range of users (range: 162 million-329 million) and subsequent calculation for estimated global percentage (range: 3.4-7.0 per cent) (UNODC 2015c, p.1). As such, the problem could, in reality, be far better or far worse.

The gradual decriminalisation of the sale of cannabis across various U.S. states in recent years has also demonstrated alternative thinking, with polls indicating that national support for regulated cannabis sale has been growing and continues to do so, as shown in Figure 23. How long will it be tenable for the U.S. to advocate a prohibitive regime – for cannabis at least – at a federal and international level when its own states are implementing decriminalisation and sale?

Figure 23

(Crick, Haase and Bewley-Taylor 2013, p. 1)

These are signs that domestic U.S. counter-narcotics policy may be changing, slowly, or at least taking a more pragmatic approach, as with its foreign counter-narcotics policy. This is evidenced by its Colombian drawdown and change in Mexican strategy, from a military to a law enforcement focus. Also, at least in regard to its policies towards Colombia and Mexico, the U.S. may have no option than to be flexible, as those countries begin to assert their own authority in how best to prosecute the drug war. It was Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia that convinced the other member states that UNGASS 2016 needed to take place, three years ahead of the 2019 policy review (Cockayne and Walker 2015, p.1).

Additional reasons may be the effectiveness of U.S. foreign counter-narcotics policy. Although this thesis did not seek to determine the levels of success or failure of American drug policy, for every seeming positive there is a negative outlook. For instance, 2013 saw the lowest level of coca bush cultivation since the mid-1980s and a continued decline in cocaine use in the global adult population (UNODC 2015c, p.xiv), yet the prevalence of cannabis use in the United States has increased (UNODC 2015c, p.x). Just as during the 1970s and 1980s, a fashionable taste for cocaine gave way to heroin and then back to cocaine again in the form of crack, the market will often determine the demand for certain kinds of drugs. If cocaine seems to be slipping back in recent years, then amphetamine-type stimulants are on the rise. According to the DEA, between 2009 and 2013 the amount of methamphetamine seized in powder and crystalline form along the southwestern border with Mexico increased by 200 percent (Drug Enforcement Administration 2014b, p.19).

Ultimately this thesis has demonstrated that U.S. foreign counter-narcotics policy in Colombia has essentially been militarised during the operational lifetime of Plan Colombia since 2000, and that it has been securitised in Mexico since the introduction of the Merida Initiative in 2008. The Mexican drug conflict has also encouraged the militarisation of domestic policy on the U.S. southern border.

It is no coincidence that in both foreign case studies it can be observed that, in recent years, U.S. support in Colombia and Mexico has gradually shifted towards emphasising a law and order approach, supplemented by economic and social development. It was recognised that the civil conflict in Colombia – with narcotics mixed in as they were – required a militarised strategy. However, in order to win the peace and erode the appeal of the narcotics trade, law enforcement and social and economic progress also needed to complement the security gains made as a result of the increased scale and entrenched status of militarised security. In Mexico, by contrast, the initial favour shown to a militarised solution, seeking to replicate the Plan Colombia formula, swiftly gave way to law enforcement and socio-economic support. Unlike Colombia, Mexico was struggling with a criminal problem and not political insurrection, not dissimilar to the gangland wars of American prohibition in the 1920s, but on a completely different order of violence. While the Mexican government may turn to its military as a short-term stop-gap in areas of insecurity, both it and the U.S. recognise that the development of effective civil security institutions and socio-economic development is the principal long-term solution to Mexico's drug conflict.

UNGASS 2016 will go some way in indicating the future direction of U.S. counter-narcotics policy, both foreign and domestic. The global policy review it precedes, due in 2019, may well usher in a completely new approach to international drug control, a compromise between advocates of flexibility and complete prohibition, or a continuation of the status quo. Whether the United States, the original 'drug warrior' chooses to keep fighting the drug war in the same fashion, or adapts its approach to new circumstances at home and abroad, remains to be seen. Whatever its decision, support for the current orthodox approach to drug policy remains strong in Russia, China, India, Japan, and many Middle Eastern and Asian states (Cockayne and Walker 2015, p.13). Whether the United States leads from the front or not, the War on Drugs in some shape or form, 45-years old and counting at the time of writing, does not look set to end anytime soon.

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