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Law Enforcement and the Mexican Armed Forces: New Internal Security Missions Challenge the Military

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Introduction

Mexican internal security concerns began to intensify more than three years ago with the January 1994 appearance of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (*Ejército Zapatista Liberación Nacional*--EZLN) in the southern state of Chiapas. They have accelerated since that time as a consequence of severe economic problems, political turbulence and assassinations, and the recent appearance in several states of new guerrilla groups--particularly the Peoples Revolutionary Army (*Ejército Popular Revolucionario*--EPR) which in the late summer of 1997 continues to inflict casualties on Army and police units in Guerrero, Oaxaca, and several other states. These developments--clearly identified by the Mexican government as threats to the nation's security--have been accompanied also by rising levels of street crime and criminal violence, revelations of endemic institutional corruption, and the increasingly effective operations of drug traffickers and other organized crime groups.⁽¹⁾

In this environment, the efforts of Mexican authorities to use the law enforcement and defense resources of the state to control or eliminate national and public security threats ranging from insurgency, to drug trafficking, to violent street crime, have evoked charges from some Mexicans that the 'militarization' of the state is well underway.⁽²⁾ For the federal and state police forces of the nation, this refers to the adoption of a more military character in terms of manning, equipment, and operational approaches.⁽³⁾ In troubled states like Guerrero, truck-loads of State or Federal Judicial Police equipped with automatic weapons present a frequently encountered paramilitary presence. In large measure, however, the 'militarization' charge refers to the evolving role of the Mexican Defense Secretariat (*Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional*--comprising the Army and Air Force) and the Marine Secretariat (*Secretaría de la Marina*--constituting the Navy and amphibious elements) in internal security and law enforcement. More specifically, 'militarization' is categorized as:

- the more visible deployment of troops along roads and highways, cities and villages, and remote mountainous or other rural areas;
- the transfer of law enforcement functions to the army or the placement of military officers in police organizations;
- an increase in the equipment procurement and training budgets of the military; and

- the increased training of Mexican soldiers in foreign schools or by foreign military personnel located in Mexico.⁽⁴⁾

This is the environment in which Mexico has purged, reorganized, and reinforced elements of the federal and state police establishments, and increasingly turned to the Mexican Armed Forces--growing in size and modernizing in terms of equipment and training--to bolster the nation's struggle to restore and sustain adequate levels of internal security and public safety. These actions are judged necessary by hard-pressed Mexican authorities dealing with multiple problems. They also have intensified debate about the proper role of the military in countering vigorous, growing threats to Mexican stability.

Reshaping Federal and State Police Organizations

Police corruption has been widely alleged at every level of administration and in every Mexican state. There is scarcely a criminal enterprise--major or minor, commonplace or bizarre--in which police complicity has not been charged.⁽⁵⁾

In the Federal District--specifically in Mexico City--some observers have asserted that six out of every ten crimes involve policemen.⁽⁶⁾ While such assertions cannot be verified with precision, voluminous reporting from Mexican citizens, foreign travelers, and active and former police officials compellingly indicate that police criminality is commonplace from minor traffic stop extortions to participation in more serious crimes.⁽⁷⁾ Alleged police collusion with drug and other criminal organizations, extortion, bribery, and the commission of robberies, assaults, and kidnappings are all among the charges made, and in numerous cases proved. In addition to sustaining an utter lack of public confidence in a key institution, corruption and criminality have more recently raised profound questions about the ability of Mexico City police to meet increasing threats to the Mexican capital (and other major cities) from terrorists, insurgents, and well-armed criminal groups.

As a consequence of these collective concerns, Mexican authorities began a dramatic restructuring of the Federal capital's Public Security Secretariat (*Secretaría de Seguridad Pública*--SSP) in the late spring of 1996. The SSP is responsible for the safety of Mexico City residents 'via a sufficient police deployment, operational actions, and joint actions with other organizations.'⁽⁸⁾ The SSP controls a number of police directorates organized along functional and regional lines. To reorganize this important institution, virtually every major SSP official was removed and replaced by a military officer. At the top, as the new Public Security Secretary, Division General Enrique Tomas Salgado Cordero was appointed. Salgado moved to his new post from the command of Military Region IX, encompassing three military zones (MZs) in northern and southern Guerrero state (27th and 35th MZs respectively) and in Puebla state (25th MZ). This troubled area has historically been among the poorest and most violent in Mexico, with Guerrero especially noted for its brutal and corrupt State Judicial Police, its history of 1960s and 1970s insurgency, and as the June 1996 site of the EPR's first public appearance and much subsequent activity.

General Salgado, a highly respected officer well-versed in the complex security problems of the southern Sierra Madre, was joined within days by 11 additional generals, 5 colonels and 5

lieutenant colonels. Three of the generals were named to head newly created SSP posts-- Executive Director of Public Security Programs, Deputy Director of Operational Communications, and Director of Operational Logistics. Other Army officers replaced police leaders in key SSP components as General Director of Operational Control; General Director of Groups; Director of Preventive Actions; chiefs of the Grenadiers (Eastern and Western); Task Force 'Zorro' (a counter-terrorist unit); Banking and Industrial Police (the 'Jaguares'); Women's Group (policewomen, to be headed by an Army nurse); Mounted Patrols; Motorcycle Patrolmen (headed by an Army cavalry officer); the Special Unit; and other posts to include Director of the Auxiliary Police.⁽⁹⁾

General Salgado framed the early SSP changes by invoking the positive aspects of military values and seeking to allay worries about the militarization of law enforcement in the capital. He went on to note:

We intend to work so Mexico City residents will trust their police once again. We intend to do this by transforming the police into a more professional body, strengthening its ethical values, which does not mean it is going to be militarized. We intend to buttress the force based on the same principles that have shaped us as military men.⁽¹⁰⁾

He subsequently set out an ambitious 21-point program of Federal District police reform that among other things called for a full review of SSP structure and personnel selection policies; undertaking intensified training and professionalism programs; seeking and facilitating citizen support in the battle against crime; acquiring increased economic resources; demanding integrity and uprightness on the part of police personnel; and adhering to legal and human rights norms.⁽¹¹⁾ Salgado has continued to push these kinds of programs vigorously. While the effectiveness of SSP programs will take some time to discern, by November 1996 General Salgado's cleanup campaign was resulting in the punishment of some 15 capital police officers a week. He also stressed the SSP was working closely with the Federal District's Human Rights Commission regarding police attention to human rights while going after the '100 criminal bands that currently exist in the Federal District' and pursuing other law enforcement activities.⁽¹²⁾ Nevertheless, crime in 1996 was at historic highs, with an average of 686 crimes in Mexico City reported daily.⁽¹³⁾

Serious and continuing allegations of police corruption, misconduct, and criminality within the Federal Judicial Police (*Policía Judicial Federal*--PJF) and analogous State Judicial Police (*Policía Judicial Estatal*--PJE) establishments throughout Mexico have fostered military-associated restructuring as well. Long before the recent assignment of military personnel to the SSP, military officers had been moved periodically into police leadership positions around the country.⁽¹⁴⁾ This was the case with former Navy Captain Americo Javier Flores Nava, who was named national head of the Federal Judicial Police. In the state of Tabasco a former Army general runs the State Judicial Police.⁽¹⁵⁾ The Defense Secretariat has come to exercise concentrated control of judicial commands and agents in Chihuahua through military prosecutors targeted against the Juárez cartel, with soldiers substituted for law enforcement in Baja California as well.⁽¹⁶⁾ Police have been increasingly 'militarized' also in Tamaulipas state with the appointment of Army officers as Federal Judicial Police commanders and soldiers 'on leave' as police agents.⁽¹⁷⁾ Indeed, preference has been given for some time to former Mexican soldiers

who seek to enter police service, a practice common in many countries.⁽¹⁸⁾ Overall, some form of military involvement in law enforcement is present in most of Mexico's 31 states in addition to the Federal District.⁽¹⁹⁾ In Chihuahua--Mexico's largest state and a major border staging area for drugs entering the U.S.--a pilot program to replace PJF officers with ex-military personnel or soldiers placed 'on leave' was begun in late 1995. The program was conducted under the joint auspices of the Mexican Attorney General's Office (PGR) and the Defense Secretariat. A former lieutenant colonel and head of the Military Judicial Police took over as Deputy Commissioner of the Chihuahua-based PJF, while some 100-120 former soldiers moved into PJF ranks. It was hoped that the 'integrity and discipline' of the former soldiers could reshape the PJF, break the alleged linkages established between police and drug traffickers, and generally clean up PJF operations. The pilot program was also accompanied by a number of announced Mexican Army redeployments in the state aimed at interdicting drug and arms traffickers. Although the Army has conducted counterdrug operations for many years, their role in Chihuahua became a much more prominent one. The program was terminated temporarily in September 1996 when military members were withdrawn and reassigned to deal with the EPR. At that time, participating personnel pointed to successes in drug and weapons seizures, substantial numbers of arrests, 10 months of strong pressure applied to the Juárez drug cartel, and momentum for continued military-police cooperation. Nevertheless, it is unclear as to whether the military presence resulted in permanent, positive change in Chihuahua police operations, and the Juárez cartel remain intact and effective.⁽²⁰⁾

While there have been a number of instances in which military officers moved to police leadership positions, the magnitude of recent shifts worry some Mexican and foreign observers concerned with the potential abuse of state power. Whether these actions mark a permanent trend that will continue to accelerate is unclear, though corruption and inefficiency continue to plague PJF and PJE police bodies and may encourage increased military support for Mexican law enforcement.

In this regard, the Mexican Attorney General's Office (PGR) purged some 737 agents from PJF organizations in August 1996.⁽²¹⁾ The mass firings--which had been preceded by the dismissal of hundreds of other PJF personnel--had been planned for over a year and undertaken because of the failure of many officers to meet the requisite 'ethical profile.' In particular, it was undertaken because of the heavy penetration of PJF ranks by drug traffickers and other criminals.⁽²²⁾ The firings hit PJF street agents as well as police commanders and administrators. They included also the new head of the PJF, former Navy Captain Americo Javier Flores Nava, suggesting early on that an armed forces' background was no assurance of success. One PGR official indicated that about 70% of the PJF groups working in collusion with drug traffickers had been dismantled as a result of the dismissals.⁽²³⁾ Attorney General Antonio Lozano Garcia indicated that the force would be completely restructured and that more dismissals would be forthcoming--an announcement that presaged his own dismissal in early December 1996.⁽²⁴⁾ Critics, however, cite the seemingly little impact that numerous reorganizations and purges of Mexican police organizations have had over the years--at least in terms of reducing the level of corruption.

Attorney General Lozano's replacement was Jorge Madrazo Cuellar, the well-regarded chairman of Mexico's National Human Rights Commission. The new Attorney General renewed the vows of his predecessors to clean out corruption. And in a move that signaled his near-term intention

to continuing the use of strong military leadership in counter-drug and perhaps other law enforcement roles, he immediately named Army General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo to head the National Institute to Combat Drugs (*Instituto Nacional para el Combate a las Drogas*--INCD).⁽²⁵⁾ When appointed, Gutiérrez Rebollo was Commander of Military Region V, covering several states in west-central Mexico to include Jalisco's Military Zone 15 headquartered at the drug trafficking center of Guadalajara. The general--initially reputed to be a tough officer with strong personal integrity--had had extensive experience in running Army operations against drug traffickers in the Guadalajara area. Retired General Barry McCaffrey, former commander-in-chief of US Southern Command and now the director of the President's Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), described General Gutiérrez Rebollo in the most positive terms as 'an extremely forceful and focused commander.'⁽²⁶⁾ Gutiérrez had also come head-to-head with corrupt Federal counterdrug agents in the performance of his duties in the Guadalajara area, and appeared to have well-developed views on the problems of police corruption.⁽²⁷⁾ Regrettably, within weeks after his appointment, Gutiérrez Rebollo's reputation as a tough, honest commander with more than 42 years of distinguished military service was shattered when Mexican authorities in early February 1997 announced his arrest as a direct collaborator of the notorious head of the Juárez cartel, Amado Carrillo Fuentes.⁽²⁸⁾

Two aides were also arrested with Gutiérrez, a number that grew in the weeks ahead along with new allegations against the former INCD chief. Additional military detentions included the mid-March 1997 arrests of two other generals: Brigadier General Alfredo Navarro Lara, who was charged with drug corruption, bribery, and criminal association; and Brigadier General Arturo Cardona Perez, charged with being the principal contact between Gutiérrez and narco-trafficker Carrillo Fuentes.⁽²⁹⁾ Retrospective looks at General Gutiérrez Rebollo's record--which certainly included actions against narco-traffickers--suggested that his anti-drug efforts were directed primarily against drug traffickers who were rivals of Carrillo Fuentes such as the Arellano Felix brothers. At the same time, concerns rose that sensitive drug intelligence--including information on US drug agents--had been compromised by the general, while other reports linked him and two aides with a wave of kidnappings and disappearances of suspected drug traffickers in the months preceding their arrests.⁽³⁰⁾ The Gutiérrez Rebollo affair--together with other developments that reflected badly on Mexico's drug fighting efforts--threatened for a time to scuttle the US Administration's 'certification' of Mexico as a reliable drug-fighting partner. While certification was granted, the impact of the affair continued to grow in both countries and especially the critically important Mexican military establishment. A little more than a month after his arrest, Gutiérrez was replaced as INCD chief by Mariano Federico Herran Salvatti, a former prosecutor and law professor who reportedly underwent a most rigorous background investigation.⁽³¹⁾ Endemic corruption and inefficiencies in the INCD, however, resulted in its dissolution in late April 1997 by the Mexican Attorney General. It was replaced by the so-designated 'Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes Against Health' and staffed by personnel who are to be better paid, trained, and vetted.⁽³²⁾

In the meantime, emphasis continued to be placed on training new generations of PJF agents, a task in which the Army is playing an active role. Each PJF agent receives some 449 hours of training at facilities of the 86th Infantry Battalion in the Army's 10th Military Zone in the state of Durango.⁽³³⁾ Training includes physical fitness, weapons skills, rappelling, land navigation, and counter-drug and counter-terrorism techniques. And as the Army stresses in its training literature,

the regimen seeks to instill the basic virtues of 'Honor, Loyalty, and Justice,' so that a new generation of PJF recruits will constitute 'a step forward in the process of the professionalization of that institution.'⁽³⁴⁾ Other police training takes place in Spain, Israel, Great Britain, Canada, France and other countries. Reports of Israeli soldiers training police from Jalisco state at least suggest that foreign militaries are providing police instruction.⁽³⁵⁾ While a common practice in many countries, critics have pointed to this as a further example of police militarization.

Public announcements to the contrary, the Army has long expressed private--and sometimes public--contempt for the professionalism of PJF and PJE components and especially their endemic corruption. In particular, Army spokesmen continue to allege that the PJF in particular protects and facilitates the operations of narcotraffickers.⁽³⁶⁾ There have been a number of encounters between Army and police units in the field during counterdrug operations to include, on occasion, firefights.⁽³⁷⁾ Charges and countercharges usually obscure what actually transpired, but serve to underscore high levels of animosity. Nevertheless, efforts are clearly being made to enhance Army-police interaction, even as the Defense Secretariat, and to a lesser extent the Navy, assumes a greater role in supporting law enforcement.⁽³⁸⁾ This role not only includes the kinds of support addressed earlier, but also the employment of active Army elements in more direct ways in the fight against drug criminals and arms traffickers.

The Armed Forces Against Drugs and Crime

The employment of Mexican military units in counterdrug operations--to include interdiction, and eradication--is far from a new phenomenon. Army and police counterdrug interaction gained some momentum during the administration of President Jose Lopez Portillo (1976-1982). It developed into a more 'systematic campaign' during the tenure of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) and his successor Carlos Salinas Gotari (1988-1994), and has intensified all the more under current President Ernesto Zedillo.⁽³⁹⁾ Some Mexican commentators assert that greater involvement of Mexican military units in counterdrug operations are a consequence of U.S. pressure and American calls to 'confront drug trafficking as if it were a foreign invasion.'⁽⁴⁰⁾ Clearly though, Mexican law enforcement's hapless efforts to counter increasingly powerful and violent Mexican drug trafficking organizations has also generated internal Mexican demands for strong support from other quarters. President Zedillo's October 1996 judgement that the drug trade had become the biggest threat to Mexican national security underscores this official concern.⁽⁴¹⁾

Whatever the arguments about primary motivation, Mexican military forces have become more directly active and visible in counterdrug and other anti-crime activities than was earlier the case. Despite legislative and other challenges to the employment of military forces in these roles, the Mexican Supreme Court determined in March 1996 that 'the Army, Air Force, and Navy may intervene in public security matters 'as long as civilian authorities, even the government itself, request it.'⁽⁴²⁾ The National Defense Secretariat--in its 1995 'Mexican Army and Air Force Development Plan' setting out important future changes--also identified 'the fight against drug trafficking' as a task in which the military would participate more directly.⁽⁴³⁾ The distinction among drug traffickers, arms traffickers, other heavy armed criminal groups and bandits, or insurgents is often not a clear one. As a consequence, military support to law enforcement will certainly be directed against a variety of targets.

With this background, then, there are numerous illustrations over the last 18 months of the military's struggle against drugs and crime. A few examples suggest the range and types of involvement:

- The Mexican Army supported PGR raids in a number of Tijuana residential areas. The raids were aimed at arresting members of the Arellano Felix brothers drug-trafficking organization. In one phase, some 500 armor-mounted Army troops wearing ski masks established roadblocks and check points, searched vehicles, and assisted PGR agents in surrounding residences.⁽⁴⁴⁾
- A Mexican Navy helicopter, after being fired upon from two drug trafficking vessels off Carmen Island, Baja California Sur in March 1996, sank one boat with return fire and captured four drug traffickers.⁽⁴⁵⁾
- Troops of the 63rd Infantry Battalion, based in the 26th Military Zone, Veracruz, deployed to Sinaloa state in fall 1995 to participate in one of the 'Task Force Mars' counterdrug operations. The operation was aimed at eradicating marijuana and poppy crops in areas of the western Sierra Madre.
- Increased levels of Mexican military activity (and an increasing problem) is reflected in the number of clandestine airfields destroyed. Mexican military forces neutralized some 55 clandestine drug trafficking airstrips in 1986, 338 strips in 1995, and 510 in the first six months of 1996--a six-fold increase in ten years.⁽⁴⁶⁾
- Soldiers of Military Region V (reportedly including a military intelligence unit) and Guadalajara's Public Security Directorate conduct joint counter-drug operations in Guadalajara. In a February 1996 operation, these joint forces arrested Guadalajara Cartel drug trafficker Ramiro Mireles Felix, who in addition to his other crimes is believed to have been associated with the kidnaping and murder of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique Camarena Salazar. (This Military Region was under the command of the now-disgraced General Gutiérrez Rebollo.)⁽⁴⁷⁾
- In November 1996, the Army supported Federal Judicial Police in seizing a Gruman aircraft carrying 1½ tons of cocaine. The plane had been forced down near the Pacific coast town of La Trinidad. The load was the largest seized in Mexico in 1996 up to that time.⁽⁴⁸⁾
- In late January 1997, two army brigadier generals were assigned to take over the administration of airports in Toluca (Mexico DF) and Cuernavaca (Morelos state). The previous airport directors were dismissed after it was determined that the two airports under their control had been used by aircraft belonging to Juárez drug cartel chief, Amado Carrillo Fuentes.⁽⁴⁹⁾
- The wake of General Gutierrez Rebollo's arrest--far from curtailing military participation in law enforcement--saw increased substitution of PJF and INCD agents with soldiers in Chihuahua and Baja California. In late February 1997, at least 95 military personnel were assigned to pursue law enforcement missions in these two states. In Chihuahua, additionally, personnel from the Army's 20th Motorized Cavalry Regiment used light armor in mobile patrols, surveillance, and blocking actions as they sought to seize drugs in the action code-named Operation Canador.⁽⁵⁰⁾
- Beginning on 2 March 1997, the first of what will total some 2,538 Mexican soldiers were deployed temporarily to patrol streets in Mexico's Federal District. The deployment began in the 1.4 million resident Iztapalapa section of the greater Mexico City area.

Troops will rotate every 2-3 months through the 16 designated neighborhoods (delegaciones) of the metropolitan area over the next 32 months. This initiative was proposed by SSP chief General Salgado as a measure that would allow regular police to be absent during sweeping professionalization programs, without unduly compromising security for affected residents.⁽⁵¹⁾

These are other dimensions of the military's growing role in law enforcement have been accompanied by increasing evidence that corruption in the military establishment itself exists to a far greater extent than imagined earlier. By August 1997, some 34 Mexican military officers have been arrested for collusion with drug criminals. The publication of Mexican military intelligence documents in the weekly news magazine *Proceso* suggested that military corruption went even deeper.⁽⁵²⁾ Following the *Proceso* report and other revelations, the Defense Minister forbade military contacts with the press, and the two officers accused of leaking the documents were arrested.⁽⁵³⁾

While the military confronts these developments within Mexico, for the United States, the most apparent dimension of Mexican military activity against criminals has been in the border area. As noted above, Mexico announced that Army units would be redeployed in Chihuahua and tasked to perform a more assertive role in counterdrug and patrolling activities along Mexico's northern border. Indeed, over the last year Mexican Army units have begun to more visibly patrol sections of the U.S.-Mexican border not only in Chihuahua, but in other areas from the Pacific to the Gulf of Mexico. These units--dismounted or in light transport vehicles to include U.S.-supplied Humvees--perform counter-drug missions in some sectors and also search for arms being smuggled from the United States among other tasks.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Mexican military units occasionally cross into U.S. territory along the often unmarked border, raising concerns about risky, surprise encounters with the U.S. Border Patrol, other law enforcement bodies, and even U.S. military units (active components or National Guard) supporting U.S. drug law enforcement.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The tragic confrontation between a U.S. Marine patrol on drug enforcement duties and a young U.S. citizen--leaving the young man dead--highlighted the dangers of analogous encounters, and for a time at least has curtailed U.S. military counterdrug patrols along both sides of the southwest border.

South of the border, Mexican 'Alfa' and 'Beta' interagency border patrol/migrant protection groups constitute an additional law enforcement presence along the frontier.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Group members are selected for their good personnel records, are more highly paid than police officers, and are subject to strict codes of conduct. Owing to the manifest border dangers, there have been calls for their 'reinforcement' and better equipping to include the issuing of body armor.⁽⁵⁷⁾ All of this has placed increased importance on improving the limited and uneven coordination among organizations --law enforcement and military--operating on both sides of the border.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Conclusions

With rising levels of criminality, law enforcement has become a high priority issue for the Mexican government. The interagency Public Security National Council, for example, in late 1996 requested a 12% increase in budget to meet growing national instability for the next year.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Specifically, Mexico's 31 state governors together with the Attorney General and the

chiefs of the Interior and Finance Ministries are seeking some 300 million dollars for police training, equipment, prisons, and criminal data base development in 1997.⁽⁶⁰⁾ The increasing use of Mexican military units and personnel cadres to support police operations or bolster police effectiveness and integrity is reflective of this high priority.

Ordinary Mexicans are similarly concerned about the violent crime and corruption that affects their everyday lives. But the use of the armed forces to reinforce faltering police efforts preoccupies some sectors of Mexican society who focus on the dangers of 'militarization' and particularly the potential for military abuses. These dangers, in their view, outweigh potential advantages.

Some have suggested that the military--despite their obvious capabilities--would be ill-suited to law enforcement tasks in any case. During the SSP reorganizations, for example, one commentator summed up that view by judging the military to be 'tough, but equally inefficient' (*duros, pero igualmente ineficientes*) in comparison to the police.⁽⁶¹⁾ Others have suggested that the need for a force to bridge the gap between police and military forces. In September 1996, a group of PAN (Nation Action Party) senators proposed that a 'National Guard' be raised to deal with instability and violence, citing a provision in the constitution for this.⁽⁶²⁾ Little has come of this proposal to date, however.

Criticism of increasing military support to law enforcement has come also from within the military itself. Insisting that they have not actively sought such roles--and that they are, in any case, temporary expedients--a number of Army, Air Force, and Navy spokesmen have publicly and privately pointed to the dangers of direct military engagement with drug traffickers. Foremost among these concerns are the well-founded dangers of corruption if soldiers are directly involved with front line police work and exposed to the corrosive effects of drug money.⁽⁶³⁾ Evidence of continuing endemic police corruption stands as a daily reminder of this challenge to military personnel who now work more closely with police colleagues. Additionally, the Gutiérrez Rebollo affair and the continuing series of revelations about the depth of military corruption, have underscored for the Mexican military how easily drug corruption can penetrate the highest levels of an institution that had prided itself on strength and dedicated national service. Charges of human rights abuses--real or false--and the consequent damage to institutional legitimacy and national respect are also among the prominent dangers recognized by the Armed Forces as they enter further into law enforcement roles.

The military, nevertheless, has pushed forward to carry out the greater internal tasks they have been assigned, even as they are cognizant of the dangers they face. Given the alternative of continued growth in drug trafficking, arms trafficking and other criminality, the Mexican military leadership appears to share the views expressed by Navy Secretary Admiral José Ramon Lorenzo Franco--'we must take this risk, but I have the responsibility also to seek ways to prevent the corruption of our staff to the maximum extent possible....'⁽⁶⁴⁾ These remarks were made before the most recent revelations of military corruption and it is unclear how substantially military confidence in the sustainable integrity of their institution has been eroded. Mexican military efforts to balance and execute the complex missions and dangers ahead constitute the most important challenges to be faced in the months ahead--and the success of these efforts will directly shape Mexico's future stability and development.

ENDNOTES

1. Levels of organization, planning, weaponry, and transportation employed in criminal acts has often blurred the distinction among criminal, insurgent and terrorist perpetrators. A number of the 74 bank robberies that had taken place in Mexico City from January 1996 to the end of November 1996 involved well-armed groups who were able to commit their crimes and make their escapes. See the Associated Press report of 28 November 1996 for an account of two of the most recent Mexico City bank robberies.
2. Among those many articles, assessments, and essays addressing the issue of 'militarización' are Ignacio Ramírez, 'La militarización de las fuerzas policiacas, 'grave riesgo social,' *Proceso*, no. 1002, 15 January 1996, pp. 34-35; Antonio Jáquez, 'En Tamaulipas crece el narco, y el Ejército, en roces con la policía,' *Proceso*, no. 1019, 13 May 1996, pp. 32-35; and the US features Dudley Althaus, 'Mexicans Worried Greater Military Presence Crosses Political Lines,' *Houston Chronicle*, 27 July 1996; 'A Risky New Role for Mexico's Army,' *New York Times*, 20 October 1996; and a rebuttal to the aforementioned *New York Times* piece by *The Mexico Report* editor Christopher Walen, 21 October 1996, received via Internet.
3. Ramírez, 'La militarización de las fuerzas policiacas.'
4. See Miguel Concha, 'Militarización,' *La Jornada*, 2 November 1996, for his discussion of these issues.
5. Among recent, unusual charges are allegations that federal and/or state police personnel in Oaxaca protect poachers who have stolen hundreds of thousands of endangered Olive Ridley sea turtle eggs from the state's ecologically sensitive Pacific beaches. The eggs are sold on the black market for their presumed aphrodisiac qualities. See 'Mexico Police Charged With Turtle Poaching,' United Press International report, 18 October 1996, received via Internet.
6. 'Human Rights Atrocities in Mexico,' *MEXPAZ Bulletin: Human Rights*, no. 96, October 22 to 29, 1996 received via Internet.
7. See Sam Dillon, 'In Mexico, Line Between Police and Criminals Continues to Blur,' *New York Times News Service*, 3 September 1996, received via Internet.
8. Alfredo Joyner, 'Military Officials to Head Security Secretariat,' *Reforma*, 14 June 1996, as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-117, p. 15; and Raúl Monge, 'Duros, Pero igualmente ineficientes, los militares jefes de policía capitalina,' *Proceso*, no. 1024, 17 June 1996, p. 27.
9. Joyner, 'Military Officials to Head Security Secretariat;' and Raúl Monge, 'En 12 Años la Policía Capitalina ha creado Casi una Desena de Grupos Elites,' *Proceso*, no. 1000, 1 January 1996, pp. 10-11.
10. Miriam Posada Garcia, 'Niega la SSP que haya una militarización del cuerpo policiaco,' *La Jornada*, 10 June 1996.

11. '24 Hours' newscast, XEW Television Network, 0300 GMT, 12 July 1996, as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-135, p. 10.
12. Miriam Posada Garcia, 'La SSP no puede violentar su quehacer,' *La Jornada*, 25 September 1996, received via Internet.
13. *El Financiero*, 5 August 1997, as reported in *Mexico Update*, No. 134, 6 August 1997.
14. Alejandro Gutiérrez, 'Ex-Military Replace PGR Antidrug Forces,' *Proceso*, No. 1001, 8 January 1996, pp. 18-19, as translated in FBIS-TDD-96-009-L. [PGR is the Spanish acronym for *Procuraduría General de la República* or the Republic's Attorney General's Office.]
15. 'New Police Officials Taken from the Army,' *The Mexico Report*, vol. v, no. 12, 24 June 1996, received via Internet; and Dudley Althaus, 'Greater Military Presence Crosses Political Lines,' *Houston Chronicle*, 29 July 1996, received via Internet.
16. Concha, 'Militarización;' and, for subsequent developments, Jorge Alberto Cornejo, Alejandro Romero, and Martín Sánchez, 'Mas relevos militares a la PJF y al INCD en BC y Chihuahua,' *La Jornada*, 21 February 1997.
17. Concha, 'Militarización;' and Meliton Garcia and Miguel Dominguez, 'Soldiers Replace Police In Tamaulipas,' *Reforma*, 5 March 1997, as translated in FBIS-LAT-97-048.
18. In regard to Mexico, see William V. Wilkenson and Enrique Malagón, 'Mexico: Structure, Training, and Education in Policing,' *CJ (Criminal Justice): The Americas Online*, 1994, pp. 5-6, received via Internet.
19. Gregory Gross, 'Mexican Army Takes Command of War on Crime,' *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 5 December 1996, received via Internet. One estimate asserted that 29 of 31 states had military involvement in law enforcement of some type.
20. Alejandro Gutierrez, 'La militarización en Chihuahua no dio resultados: El grupo conjunto de la Defensa y la PGR se disolvió poder desintegrar al Cártel de Juárez,' *Proceso*, No. 1038, 22 September 1996, pp. 26-27.
21. The PGR itself has long been accused of corruption. The most notorious recent example is that of former Mexican Deputy Attorney General Mario Ruiz Massieu, who allegedly smuggled millions of drug dollars to US banks before fleeing Mexico himself. United States officials have frozen his U.S. deposits and are seeking permanent possession of them. Mexico is seeking Massieu's extradition. See Sam Dillon, 'Concerning Mexican Aide's Millions, U.S. Charges Drug Link,' *New York Times News Service*, 12 November 1996.
22. Norma Jimenez and Xochitl Maldonado, 'Mexico: Attorney General Lozano Views Complete Revamping of PJF,' *Reforma*, 20 August 1996, as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-165; 'Mexico Attorney General Fires More than 700 Police,' *Reuter*, 16 August 1996, received via Internet;

and 'Mexico: Attorney General Reports Federal Judicial Agents Dismissals,' NOTIMEX, 2353 GMT, 16 August 1996, as translated in FBIS-TDD-96-026-L, received via Internet.

23. Jimenez and Maldonado, 'Mexico: Attorney General Lozano.'

24. Lozano was removed from his post by President Zedillo on 2 December 1996, presumably because of his office's failure to solve the murders of two leading political figures (then-presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio and Secretary-General Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu). He was replaced by Jorge Madroazo Cuellar.

25. 'Mexico's New Top Lawman Promises to Clean House,' Associated Press Report, 4 December received via Internet.

26. Carolyn Skorneck, Associated Press Report, 6 December 1996, received via Internet.

27. When Gutiérrez Rebollo's troops participated in the 1994 arrest of the notorious drug trafficker Luis Hector Palma Salazar, the drug traffickers reportedly had 7 federal drug agents serving as his bodyguards. See Ibid.

28. Among the many articles that followed in the wake of the general's arrest, a good review of the events is provided in Agustin Ambriz, 'Informe militar sobre el general Gutiérrez Rebollo: otros oficiales del Ejército, agentes y comandantes del INCD y de la PGR, cómplices de Amado Carrillo,' *Proceso*, No. 1060, 23 February 1997, pp. 7, 11-12, and several of associated pieces appearing in the same issue.

29. Mark Fineman, '2nd Mexican General Arrested on Drug Charges,' *Washington Post*, 19 March 1997; and Gerardo Rico and Antonio Gonzalez Vazquez, 'House Arrest Ordered for General Cardona,' *La Jornada*, 22 March 1997, as translated in FBIS-LAT-97-057.

30. Steve Fainaru, 'Drug War in Mexico Put at Risk: Trafficker May Have Seen Files,' *Boston Globe*, 23 February 1997, received via Internet; and Julia Preston, 'Drug Connection Links Mexican Military to Spate of Abduction,' *New York Times*, 9 March 1997.

31. Mark Stevenson, 'Mexico Names New Head of Drug Control Institute,' Associated Press report, 10 March 1997. Received via Internet.

32. Tracey Eaton, 'Mexico's Attorney General Replaces Old Drug Agency,' *Dallas Morning News*, 31 April 1997.

33. Jimenez and Maldonado, 'Mexico: Attorney General Lozano;' and Associated Press Report, 26 May 1996. Received via Internet.

34. Araceli De La Torre Moreno, 'Nueva Generación,' *Revista del Ejército y Fuerza Aérea Mexicanos*, pp. 4-5.

35. Concha, 'Militarización.'

36. See, for example, Jáquez, 'En Tamaulipas crece el narco,' p. 33.
37. See *Ibid.*, in regard to the Army's purported discovery of PJF elements protecting a marijuana shipment in Michoacan, and Althaus, 'Mexicans Worried Greater Military Presence Crosses Political Lines,' for a shootout between Army and PJF units during a drug operation in Veracruz.
38. Araceli De La Torre Moreno, 'Nueva Generación,' p. 4.
39. For a good recent treatment of Mexico's counterdrug efforts, see María Celia Toro, Mexico's 'War' on Drugs: Causes and Consequences, *Studies on the Impact of the Illegal Drug Trade*, vol. 3 (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995).
40. Eduardo R. Huchim, 'Narcotráfico: la corrupción militar,' *La Jornada*, 8 April 1996.
41. Molly Moore and John Ward Anderson, 'Drug Trade Called Greatest Threat to Mexico,' *Washington Post*, 23 October 1996.
42. Edgar Muñoz, 'Night Monitor' program, Mexico City *Radio Red*, 0000 GMT, 20 March 1996, as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-058, received via Internet. It was reported also that one of the articles of the Constitution would be revised to better reflect what the military was legally permitted to undertake in supporting civil authorities.
43. Ignacio Rodriguez Reyna, 'The Enemy is Also Within' (Part II of a three-part series), *El Financiero*, 26 September 1995, as translated in FBIS-LAT-95-194, p. 21.
44. Rocio Galvan, 'Army, PGR Raid Tijuana Cartel Properties,' *Excelsior*, 2 March 1996, as translated in FBIS-TDD-96-012-L, received via Internet; and Martin Espinosa, 'Night Monitor' newscast, Mexico City *Radio Red*, 6 March 1996, as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-047, received via Internet.
45. XEW Television Network, 0400 GMT, 20 March 1996.
46. Jesús Aranda, 'Aumentó 34.9% el personal de Fuerzas Armadas,' *La Jornada*, 4 September 1996.
47. Gerardo Rico, 'Capturan al presunto narco Ramiro Mireles Félix,' *La Jornada*, 20 February 1996; and Althaus, 'Mexicans Worried.'
48. 'Cocaine Cache Seized in Mexico,' Associated Press Report, 14 November 1996, received via Internet.
49. 'Mexican General Named to Head Two Airports,' Reuter Report, 25 January 1997, received via Internet.
50. Jorge Alberto Cornejo, et al, 'Mas relevos militares a la PJF y al INCD.'

51. Miriam Posada García, 'Propone la SSP remplazar con soldados a 2 mil 598 policías para vigilar las calles,' *La Jornada*, 28 February 1997; Raúl Llanos Samaniego, 'Confusión entre los militares-policías,' *La Jornada*, 2 March 1997; and Paige Bierma, 'Shape Up and Stop Taking Bribes! Mexican Police Get some Basic Training,' Associated Press report, 8 March 1997. Received via Internet.
52. Carlos Marin, 'Documentos de Inteligencia Militar involucran en el narcotráfico a altos jefes, oficiales y tropas del Ejército,' *Proceso*, No. 1082, 27 June 1997, pp. 6-15.
53. 'Military Bans Contact with Press,' Associated Press, 21 August 1997.
54. As regards the weapons smuggling issue, see 'U.S. to Help Mexico Trace Thousands of Seized Firearms,' Associated Press, 5 November 1996, received via Internet; and Pierre Thomas and John Ward Anderson, 'Mexico Asks U.S. to Track Guns Being Imported by Drug Cartels,' *Washington Post*, 5 November 1996, received via Internet.
55. Jaime Nieto, 'Army Presses Offensive Against Drug Trafficking at U.S. Border,' XEW Television Network, 0330 GMT, 1 June 1996, as translated in FBIS-TDD-96-019-L, received via Internet; and Gregory Gross, 'Mexican Soldiers Increase Presence Along U.S. Border,' *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 3 November 1996.
56. NOTIMEX, 0231 GMT, 21 May 1996, as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-102, received via Internet. A 'Grupo Beta Sur' (South Beta Group) group has also been established on Mexico's southern border in Chiapas, according to NOTIMEX, 2002 GMT, 5 May 1996, as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-088, received via Internet. See also, Nancy Nusser, 'Special Police Unit Aims to Crack Down on Illegal Migrant Abuse,' Cox News Service, 23 November 1996, received via Internet, for more on the 35-man Grupo Beta Sur and its activities.
57. Jorge Alberto Cornejo, 'Aplica México plan para proteger derechos de centroamericanos,' *La Jornada*, 23 May 1996.
58. A letter to the editor (*Washington Post*, 24 September 1996) from the Mexican Ambassador to the United States discussed the March 1996 establishment of a High Level Contact Group for Drug Control (HLCG). It consists of various working groups addressing issues like money laundering, essential chemical control, arms trafficking, and other issues as well as specialized border task forces. An HLCG meeting took place in early December 1996. See also Gross, 'Mexican Soldiers Increase Presence,' for other kinds of cross-border interaction at the tactical level.
59. 'Public Security Asks for More Funds,' *MEXPAZ Bulletin: Human Rights*, no. 97, October 30 to November 5, 1996, received via Internet. The Council membership includes representatives from Defense and the Navy, the PGR, and other Government secretariats and organizations, as well as members from each state.
60. As reported in 'Mexican Governors to Seek \$300 million in Crime-Fighting Funds,' *Bloomberg Business Wire*, 5 November 1996, received via Internet.

61. Monge, 'Duros, Pero igualmente ineficientes, los militares jefes de policía capitalina.'
62. Ismael Romero, 'Guardia Nacional, Propone el PAN,' *La Jornada*, 18 September 1996.
63. For the Navy's view, see Jesús Aranda, 'Sería desleal no usar a la Marina contra el narco: Lorenzo Franco,' *La Jornada*, 18 March 1996.
64. Ibid.