

Intelligence and Security in the Global South: The Case of Latin America

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ABSTRACT: Security and intelligence literature has paid little attention to intelligence links within the Global South. This paper calls for the re-examination of intelligence co-operation in the Global South. It uses the example of Latin American narco-wars and trafficking to illustrate the way in which Latin American states have co-operated with one another and the implications this has for security in the region. In recent years various pacts and intelligence sharing agreements have been signed by Latin American states, such as Colombia, Brazil, Mexico and Bolivia. In the face of growing levels of criminality and violence at home, Latin American leaders have sought to reverse of effect of the US War on Drugs by increasing cooperation on a regional basis. The deep seated resentment of US involvement in drug policy can be observed across the region. The Summit of the Americas, held in Cartagena, Colombia in 2012 marked the first open declaration of the failure of the drug war by a number of Latin American leaders. These recent developments in the discussions of the Latin American narco-wars reveal the changing dynamics in region and indeed the relationship between the US and its southern counterparts.

Intelligence Beyond the Anglosphere

Spying is not limited to the countries of the 'Anglosphere'. Yet in common with international security, the study of intelligence has been notably anglocentric in terms of the scope of research.¹ This is an enduring problem and, although the issue is now widely recognised, it is far from being adequately addressed or corrected. Scholars of intelligence have expended much ink on the activities of intelligence agencies of the United States and its English-speaking allies, most obviously the UK. In an increasingly globalised and multi-polar world it is more important than ever before for to overcome the anglocentric view of intelligence and explore the national security apparatuses of countries in the Global South. September 11 not only resulted in a broad doubling of intelligence expenditure, it also directed its emphasis

¹ P Bilgin, 'The Western-Centrism' of Security Studies: 'Blind Spot' or Constitutive Practice?' *Security Dialogue*, 41(6), 2010, pp 615-622; O Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations', *International Organization*, 52(4), 1998, pp. 687-727.

southward. Over the last decade, America and its partners in the developed world have sought new intelligence alliances as part of the Global War on Terror. Established liaison relationships were complemented by vigorous new partnerships involving African, Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries that often involved a focus on domestic security agencies and internal secret policing.² As the emphasis of security shifted from a historic focus on states and their armed forces to transnational groups and individuals, efforts were made by Western democracies to benefit from the level of human intelligence, knowledge and experience of intelligence agencies in the Global South who have a greater immersion in the business of 'intelligence among the people'.

Scholars of intelligence studies are slowly adjusting to the importance of the Global South. For historians, this phenomenon comes as no surprise since it is closely intertwined with the end of empire.³ But within the realm political science we have only just begun to see a new literature about the intelligence services outside the Anglosphere. Philip H. J. Davies and Kristian C. Gustafson's recent work highlights the different intelligence practices in far flung regions of the world.⁴ Driven by a conception of 'intelligence culture', the divergent national approaches to intelligence in the Global South are beginning to be recognised as rather different to the US or European models of intelligence. However, despite these advances in the literature, it is still relatively small and retains an old-fashioned nation state focus.⁵

International criminal networks and transnational terrorist groups have benefitted greatly from globalisation. Many of these organisations boast their own intelligence capabilities. The world's longest, and arguably most successful insurgent group, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), according to the country's Attorney General's office has an annual budget of around \$1.1 billion.⁶ By 9/11, the CIA estimated Al-Qaeda's annual operating budget to be around \$30 million.⁷ In East Africa we have seen the emergence of

² R J Aldrich, 'Dangerous liaison: post-September 11 Intelligence Alliances,' *Harvard International Review*, XXIV, (3), 2002, p 51.

³ R Cormac, *Confronting the Colonies: British Intelligence and Counterinsurgency*, London: Hurst, 2013; C Walton, *Empire of Secrets: British Intelligence, the Cold War and the Twilight of Empire*, London: HarperCollins, 2013.

⁴ P H J Davis and K C Gustafson (eds) *Intelligence Elsewhere: Spies and Espionage outside the Anglosphere*, London: Georgetown University Press, 2013

⁵ For this literature see: Stuart Farson et al. (eds) *PSI Handbook of Global Security and Intelligence: National Approaches*, London: Praeger Security International, 2008; R J Aldrich and J. Kasuku, 'Escaping from American intelligence: Culture, Ethnocentrism and the Anglosphere', *International Affairs*, 88 (5), 2012, pp. 1009-1028; Davis & Gustafson, *Intelligence Elsewhere*.

⁶ '70% of FARC assets held outside Colombia', Insight Crime News, October 2012 at <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/70-of-farc-assets-held-outside-colombia>.

⁷ J Rollins and L S Wyler, 'Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Foreign Policy Issues for Congress', Congressional Research Service Advice Report for Congress, October 19, 2012 at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41004.pdf>.

organisations that are part intelligence service, part criminal organisation. Despite their significant size and the substantial intelligence links built by these organisations, there is little literature on non-state entities as intelligence actors.⁸

The literature on intelligence in the Global South is not only small but problematic. A neglected but nevertheless substantial literature exists on the intelligence agencies of the Middle East and South Asia. However, much of this literature is infected with conspiracy theory or heavily imbued with the polemic of regional conflict. For example, while a vast range of writing has emerged about the Indian intelligence service: the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) and its Pakistani equivalent: the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), much of this writing is rather shrill and constitutes what we might call the 'Histrionic School' of intelligence studies.⁹ R&AW, noted one senior former Taliban official, prompts nothing less than 'paranoia' in the mind of Pakistani intelligence.¹⁰ These bizarre and antagonistic regional literatures – replete with words like 'devils' and 'jackals' - have been generated by conflicts as far afield as the Balkans and the Taiwan Straits. However, they reveal the extent to which intelligence services in the context of long-standing regional conflict in the Global South are often covert action services. By contrast, there is only a limited literature on intelligence in Africa and Latin America and as such these regions currently constitute the 'missing dimension' of this attempt to roll forward the regional boundaries of intelligence studies.¹¹

The intelligence services in the Global South represent an exciting new research field. Firstly, their expansion and acceleration of co-operation has evoked Western policy interest in the intelligence activities of the Global South since relatively unknown partners can result in liaisons that are 'difficult, uneven and haphazard'.¹² Unlike agreements like UKUSA, sharing arrangements with these services are often little more than verbal, reflecting custom and practice rather than developed protocols. Secondly, oversight bodies in Western

⁸ But see J A Gentry and D E Spencer, 'Colombia's FARC: A Portrait of Insurgent Intelligence', *Intelligence and National Security*, 25(4), 2010, pp 453-478.

⁹ For example on ISI see: B Lal, *The Monstrous Face of ISI: Real Story Behind the Inter-Services Intelligence Agency of Pakistan*, New Delhi: Siddharth Publications, 2000; R Sharma, *Pak Proxy War: A Story of ISI, bin Laden and Kargil*, New Delhi: Kaveri Books, 2002; M K Dhar, *Fulcrum Of Evil: ISI-CIA Qaeda Nexus*, New Delhi: Mainak Dhar, 2012; S K Ghosh, *Pakistan's ISI Network of Terror in India*, New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 2000; M K Dhar, *ISI: Intelligence to Terrorism - Pakistan's Fulcrum of Evil*, New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2006.

¹⁰ R Chaudhuri, 'India', in R Dover, M Goodman and C Hillebrand (eds), *Routledge Companion To Intelligence Studies*, London: Routledge, 2013, p 185.

¹¹ D Dehéz, 'Security Sector Reform and Intelligence Services in Sub-Saharan Africa: Capturing the Whole Picture', *African Security Review*, 19(2), 2010, pp 38-46.

¹² S Lefebvre, 'The Difficulties and Dilemmas of International Intelligence Cooperation', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 16 (4), 2003, p. 527.

parliaments have come to view these partner services in the Global South as alarming avenue for the evasion of regulation, or even the outsourcing of dirty activities in the Global War on Terror.¹³ Thirdly, the democratisation of some countries in the Global South, together with the demassification of the media, has led to a somewhat porous information regime. Research material is now abundant and the media reporting in Latin America frequently covers inappropriate intelligence activity related to political scandals involving embezzlement of public funds, cases of alleged collusion between government officials and illegal armed groups or drug traffickers.¹⁴

Intelligence services often serve as a covert paramilitary arm of political parties. Although cases vary from country to country, there are numerous reports of illegal activities of state security, such as spying on politicians, dissidents, human rights activists and judges. In 2009, Colombia's '*Las Chuzadas*' scandal revealed the extent of widespread surveillance and wiretapping of key politicians, dissidents and human rights activists leading to an investigation by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.¹⁵ Perhaps the most severe case of illegal government surveillance that has come to public light is that of the ex-president of Peru, Alberto Fujimori. Investigations by Peruvian prosecutors revealed that the former president implemented '*Plan Emilio*', a nationwide surveillance programme in which almost 53,000 emails from political opponents and journalists were illegally intercepted between 1999 and 2000.¹⁶ The growing call for accountability of the military and intelligence services from civil society and the prosecution of political figures who abuse their powers has drawn public attention to intelligence failures or scandals and has not only made information of the intelligence activities more readily available but has located intelligence matters on the mainstream research agenda of political scientists interested in good governance and transparency.¹⁷

Despite the growing importance of the intelligence services in Global South they are often viewed in Orientalist terms, or else merely as distant and exotic partners of the West. Conceptualized as adjuncts of their Western partners, they are rarely seen as important services in their own right or indeed as partners of each other. In recent times, increased

¹³ H Born and A Wills, 'International Responses to the Accountability Gap: European Inquiries into illegal transfers and secret detentions', in H Born, I Leigh and A Wills, eds., *International Intelligence Co-operation and Accountability*, London: Routledge, 2011, pp.199-228.

¹⁴ See C Matos, *Media and Politics and Latin America: Globalization, Democracy and Identity*, London: I.B Tauris, 2011.

¹⁵ 'El DAS sigue grabando', *Semana*, 21 February 2009, at <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-das-sigue-grabando/100370-3>.

¹⁶ 'Tenía 53 mil emails hackeados', *La Republica*, 26 April 2010, at <http://www.larepublica.pe/26-04-2010/tenia-53-mil-emails-hackeados>.

¹⁷ T C Bruneau and S Boraz (eds) *Reforming Intelligence: Obstacles to Democratic Control and Effectiveness*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2007, p 11.

cooperation between the West and countries in the Global South has been regularly remarked on and security sector reform has become a major industry. Countries such as Colombia and Pakistan contribute as well as receive information to counter their internal security threats which range from criminal gangs, drug cartels to insurgents. A marked increase in intelligence operations can also be seen in countries such as Yemen, Jordan and Nigeria. Perhaps the most pernicious impact of the Orientalist prism is the lack of attention given to South-South intelligence cooperation. Intelligence partnerships only seem to be worthy of comment when they are part of an Anglospheric network. In fact, states in the Global South with extensive internal security apparatuses have long enjoyed their own cooperative networks and these are now accelerating as a matter of necessity. They address important regional security issues such as cross-border violence, insurgencies and the drugs trade. Nor are these intelligence relationships limited to small states. Key intelligence actors in the Global South now boast significant capacity, with India and Brazil for example boasting their own space programmes and therefore formidable technical capabilities in the realm of intelligence collection.¹⁸

South-South Cooperation

We know little about South-South intelligence co-operation. While we have seen a surge of writing about cooperation between secret services, reflecting its growing importance, almost all of it is about liaisons with or within the Anglosphere. Intelligence liaison relationships with the US dominate the academic literature. It must be conceded that intelligence co-operation is widely regarded as the most sensitive aspect of secret service activity and perhaps one of the reasons for the predominance of the US in the literature is the American tradition of greater openness with regard to intelligence matters.¹⁹ This derives in part from the First Amendment and an intrinsic acceptance of public discussion, reflected in the fact that the CIA has enjoyed a press office in one form or another since 1947. Indeed, over the last two decades the CIA has actively encouraged engagement with academia, even sending its personnel to universities as 'officers in residence' and promoting its own academic journals. American military personnel periodically contribute to academic literature on aspects of security and intelligence through the large scale strategic studies institutes and U.S. military colleges that have a substantial research capacity. The last decade has seen the creation of a National Intelligence University in Washington and even a Joint Special Operations University in Florida. Scholars studying almost every aspect of intelligence head for

¹⁸ D Ball, 'Signals intelligence in India', *Intelligence and National Security*, 10(3), 1995, pp 377-407.

¹⁹ S Lefebvre, 'The Difficulties and Dilemmas of International Intelligence Cooperation'

Washington because of the climate of openness. While US openness is commendable, nevertheless it has exercised a distorting effect upon our understanding of the subject.²⁰

This interface between American academia and the secret world is of particular significance for our interpretative framework of intelligence. While this kind of openness is to be welcomed, an unintended outcome is that we have an impoverished idea of what intelligence might be. Not only do we have a model of single state intelligence focused on the Western idea of strategic intelligence for high policy, but we also have a model of intelligence co-operation based on either the 'Five Eyes' pattern of exchange amongst technocratic powers, or else the semi-colonial model of patronising assistance to 'little brothers' based on examples such as American assistance to the Philippines or British assistance to the Gulf states.²¹ Almost nothing has been written about South-South cooperation on intelligence, either in terms of real world case studies or indeed in terms of trying to develop an alternative generic model of how these patterns of exchange might have developed differently elsewhere.

Our thinking about intelligence liaison is still dominated by the functional model developed by Bradford Westerfield. In a seminal essay in *Intelligence and National Security* that adopts a functionalist approach he outlines the Western forms of collaboration as:

1. Often focused on foreign intelligence for strategic purposes
2. Characterised by formal relationships and treaties (fully-fledged liaison)
3. High volumes of intelligence information sharing reflecting technical capabilities
4. Joint field operations sharing including joint HUMINT operations
5. Training support to colonial partners and protégées in the Global South
6. Crypto-diplomacy to advance negotiations with non-state groups
7. Inclined to discourage 'friendly spying' on allies and neutrals

The overwhelming emphasis is upon sharing intelligence to generate support for foreign policy and military operations overseas through formal relationships.²²

²⁰ J J Wirtz, 'The American approach to intelligence studies', in LK Johnson (eds), *Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 28-37.

²¹ L Nicksch, 'Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine- U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation', RL31265 - CRS Report for Congress, 24 January 2007.

²² H Bradford Westerfield, 'America and the world of intelligence liaison', *Intelligence and National Security*, 11(3), 1996, pp 523-560.

In the Global South, intelligence sharing reflects the rather different understanding of the nature of secret service. Above all intelligence is often inward-facing, focused on protecting precarious regimes and reflecting the fact that intelligence support for the dominant ruling party often takes precedence over intelligence support for government machinery or policy. Indeed intelligence services are, not uncommonly, an expression of the ruling party rather than the state. The fissiparous nature of many states in the Global South often means complexity with several competing rival agencies, often reflecting key personalities, that might each have strong external partners but which might not work well with each other. Intelligence in Global South has its own distinct characteristics but is closer to the Eastern Bloc model of a 'counter-intelligence state' than anything we might find in North American or Europe. This is not to suggest that all states boast colossal apparatus of surveillance and espionage of the former East Germany. Nevertheless, in a state with a security-led architecture, even the activities of the external service are largely focused on countering the activities of exiled opposition groups and constitute the external arm of a domestic security machine.²³

This in turn helps to shape the texture of South-South intelligence relations. This article posits a distinctive character to co-operation in this environment and suggests that there six characteristics:

- First, intelligence is overwhelmingly about people and domestic security, often reflecting powerful internal security agencies and weak external agencies;
- Second, intelligence is closer to political parties and presidential power, therefore liaison often reflects presidential linkages overseas;
- Third, there is stronger interest in covert action, disruption and fixing especially against dissident groups;
- Fourth, limited technical ability allows much more individualistic and free form sharing, often devoid of complex frameworks and more focused on verbal agreements;
- Fifth, working relationships are often extensions of particular individuals, and are often broken off because of personal differences;
- Sixth, there is an unspoken animus against developed states in the North and a collective desire to 'do intelligence for ourselves'.

²³ The term was coined by John Dziak; see P Gill and M Phythian, *Intelligence in an Insecure World*, Cambridge, Polity, 2005, pp 57-58.

Dirty Wars: Intelligence in Latin America

To what extent is this alternative model of intelligence co-operation born out in practice? Intelligence in Latin America is a fascinating subject for scholars of intelligence and security. The regional dynamics of state security systems in the region give an insight into the way intelligence agencies in the Global South emerge, operate and cooperate. The recent history of Latin America is a chilling example of counterintelligence states writ large. Between 1930 and 1990 almost the entirety of the continent had been ruled by authoritarian regimes dominated by the armed forces.²⁴ From Central America to the Southern Cone, military dictatorships declared war on their civilian populations in the name of freedom and Christian values, leading to the systematic killing, torture and incarceration of hundreds of thousands of civilians. The practice of state sponsored terrorism across the region created 'societies of fear'.²⁵ Extensive state security apparatuses emerged to counter wide ranging threats from leftist dissents and insurgents. Importantly, these state security practises were also developed on a cross-border basis.

During this period of repression in Latin America complex collaboration networks between Latin American states emerged. Police and intelligence services during the brutal dictatorships across the Southern Cone in the 1960s and 1970s engaged in cross border intelligence sharing to counter dissent from the left. We are only now probing the detail of these relationships since there was a concerted effort to cover this up. Recently declassified materials reveal the extent of the liaisons between Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay and Chile in 'Operation Condor' – a Southern Cone collaboration during the 1970s that included transnational covert action, such as kidnapping, torture, disappearance and assassination. Refugees who fled from repression in their own countries and sought safety in neighbouring countries 'disappeared'. The historic trials against twenty-five high-ranking military officials that have recently taken place also reveal that the 'find and kill' missions stretched to Europe.²⁶ This rather dark military network represents a striking level of coordinated repression between the various regimes in which Latin American states not only shared intelligence but also conducted complex combined operations.²⁷

²⁴ See J E Corradi et al. (eds), *Fear at the Edge, State Terror and Resistance in Latin America*, Oxford: University of California Press, 1992.

²⁵ See K Koonings and D Kruijt (eds), *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*, London: Zed Books, 1999.

²⁶ J P McSherry, 'Operation Condor: Clandestine Inter-American System', *Social Justice*, 26(4), pp. 144-174; J P McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005.

²⁷ A wide variety of data has been collected on the 'Dirty Wars' by members of civil society in Latin America (NGOs, Human Rights Organisations) and scholars in the region. These include the 'Archives of Terror' in Paraguay, national truth reports, Comision Nacional sobre la Desaparicion de

'Operation Condor' has often been portrayed as the regional projection of Cold War dynamics originating in the North. However, it also reflected regional political culture. Claudio Veliz's classic work on the political traditions in Latin America draws attention to centralist system in the region.²⁸ He demonstrates how a highly centralised control over statecraft information and autocratic decision making is deeply embedded in the region, to the extent that Veliz declared 'that political elites in this region, even during the latest Cold War, relied on their own political intelligence sources' and therefore remained unaffected by US and Soviet intelligence based attempts to exercise political influence.²⁹ Whilst it is undeniable that the US and Soviet links to Latin America during the Cold War did have an impact in the region, few scholars have explored the emergence of intelligence links from within the Global South. In the case of Latin America, political survival of those in leadership has meant that intelligence services are under the tight control of political factions rather than the executive branch, with little judicial and legislative oversight. Although Latin America was part of the 'third wave' of democratisation, there is little evidence to suggest that the democratisation of the intelligence services has taken place, as it has in the US following the Second World War.³⁰

In recent years we have learned more about Latin America. The shift in narrative from counter-communism to counter-narcotics has allowed intelligence co-operation to emerge from the shadows. We have seen more open collaborations between the secret services of Latin American states. In April 2012, Colombia and Mexico signed an intelligence-sharing pact marking a new phase in security cooperation in the region. Intelligence cooperation focused on information sharing, training and support is being used to combat drug trafficking. This includes information on drug smuggling routes, information on targets, as well as transnational police operations between the two countries, which - given the current security problems in Central America - are set to expand. However, the extant literature tends to ignore this bilateral linkage, instead seeing intelligence co-operation as something which occurs via a hub provided by the hegemonic United States intelligence community - or else

Personas (CONADEP, Argentina), Comision Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliacion (Rettig Commission of Chile).

²⁸ C Veliz, *The centralist tradition of Latin America*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.

²⁹ R G Swenson, 'Intelligence education in the Americas, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 16 (1), 2003, p. 109.

³⁰ The literature is immense but see for example D Nugent, 'States, secrecy, subversives: APRA and political fantasy in mid-20th-century Peru', *American Ethnologist* 37(4), 2010, pp. 681-702.

seeing Colombia as a source of intelligence and security lessons from the 1990s to be copied and pasted onto Mexico in the current counter-narcotic context.³¹

The United States has certainly poured vast resource into the narco-wars in both Colombia and Mexico. For Washington, these are foreign intelligence wars not dissimilar from Afghanistan, indeed with drones now flying over Mexico, the parallels are striking. However, for Colombia and Mexico intelligence is primarily about managing dangerous internal threats, such as the criminal networks and insurgencies that have begun to penetrate the state and political parties. In this context of 'internal war', intelligence agencies are not well-regulated by their governments and heavily dependent on those personalities leading the organisation or presidential priorities. Intelligence is there closely linked to power, leading to a collusion between the state and the 'enemy'. Moreover, intelligence agencies in both Colombia and Mexico increasingly share the view that an accommodation with the cartels that will manage the levels of violence down is preferable to any utopian effort to defeat the enemy.³²

Drugs, Intelligence and Shared Interests

For both Colombia and Mexico, the United States is often perceived to be the key intelligence partner. In terms of both financial support and also technical assistance, especially signals intelligence, this is certainly the case.³³ Signals intelligence is a highly technical area in which relatively few states have proficiency and tends to generate hierarchical and patrimonial relationships.³⁴ Yet the very scale of American assistance has masked growing bilateral relationships between Latin American countries. These other relationships reflect the fact that US intelligence sharing with Colombia and Mexico has fluctuated.³⁵ Moreover, Colombia and Mexico do not share the same priorities as the United States. Both have sought to lower levels of violence and achieve a *modus vivendi* rather than defeat the drugs trade. At times both Colombian and Mexican intelligence have been penetrated by criminal elements or have pursued political rather than security objectives.

Few countries in the world have faced more dangerous internal security threats than Colombia. The director of Colombia's national police force stated that 'one does not know if the drug trafficker is a guerrilla or if the guerrilla is a drugs trafficker. The line is now blurred,

³¹ R C Bonner, 'New Cocaine Cowboys - How to Defeat Mexico's Drug Cartels', *Foreign Affairs*, 89, 2010, pp 35-45.

³² V Felbab-Brown, 'The Violent Drug Market in Mexico and Lessons from Colombia', *Brookings Policy Paper*, 12, March 2009.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Walsh, *Intelligence Co-operation*, 79, 84-87.

it is a brotherhood community.³⁶ However the reality of the situation is unfortunately even more complex, one does not actually know if the drug trafficker is working for a cartel, criminal gang, or a paramilitary group. The country has been in state of war for many decades with insurgents, paramilitaries and drug cartels fighting between themselves as well as against the state in a bid to control significantly portions of the country. Over the last six decades of violence the actors involved have grown and evolved. Groups such as the FARC, Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) as well as various drug cartels have presented serious security challenges for the Colombian state. Accordingly, the intelligence services have focussed on dealing with internal threats: illegal armed groups and the drugs trade.

The Colombian intelligence services were formed under the military government of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla during the period of civil violence known as *La Violencia* in 1953. In the face of an intense civil conflict that had engulfed almost the entirety of the country, the Administrative Department of Intelligence Services (SIC) was formally charged to deal with internal and external intelligence to counter increasing internal security conditions. In 1960, the SIC was substituted by the Administrative Department of Security (DAS). Over the decades the role of DAS significantly changed to include wider activities. This included intelligence gathering, counter-intelligence and providing security for officials. However, repeated allegations of secret dealings with guerrillas, paramilitaries and drug trafficking groups led to the creation of yet another agency in 2011. The National Directorate of Intelligence (DNI) is now solely responsible for the collection of intelligence.

The Colombian intelligence agency is the archetypal agency of the Global South. Whilst the diverse security services of Colombia have made significant improvements in recent years in countering insurgents and paramilitaries the county's premier intelligence agency has faced considerable problems. Scandals, the revolving door of leadership, inter-agency rivalry, a poor ability to share intelligence and a significant lack of oversight mechanisms have significantly hindered the Colombian intelligence services.³⁷ Security policies and priorities have changed with each successive Colombian president. Accordingly, the relationship between the president and the intelligence community has also varied. For example, President Ernesto Samper (1994-1998) reorganised Colombia's intelligence services in 1995, creating the National Intelligence System (SINAI). The primary purpose of SINAI was

³⁶ D J Davids, *Narco-Terrorism: A Unified Strategy to Fight a Growing Terrorist Menace*, New York: Transnational Publisher, 2002, xiii.

³⁷ S Boraz, 'Colombia' in S Farson et al., *PSI Handbook of Global Security and Intelligence*, Vol. 1, London: Preager Security, 2013.

to unify intelligence policy at the national level. This included increased internal cooperation and representation from various heads of government institutions as well as the creation of new systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of intelligence. However, under President Samper's leadership SINAI and the various bodies of the Colombian military and intelligence services rarely met, resulting in an ineffective and incommunicative intelligence culture. By contrast, President Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002) restructured the Colombian military and intelligence and made significant advances in the collection, analysis, counterintelligence, military intelligence and training. The election of President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010) again altered the security landscape of Colombian intelligence. He established a Joint Intelligence Council (JIC) to unify the country's seven intelligence bodies and put forward the objectives, function and direction of the country's leading intelligence agency, DAS.³⁸

Most importantly, oversight of the intelligence services in Colombia remains minimal. The executive branch of Colombia provides little guidance to the Colombian intelligence services. Moreover, the legislative branch plays a small oversight role. Instead, scrutiny only followed scandals and intelligence failures. Over the past decade, a number of court cases and investigations have taken place to examine multiple cases of corruption and extra-judicial activity within the DAS.³⁹ Between February 2003 and June 2005, a number of parallel offices were uncovered in Bogotá, Honda and Girardot where DAS personnel hid arms and munitions and held secret meetings with criminals. In 2004, a DAS agent met with the chief assassin of one of the leading drug kingpins of Colombia and leaked information on a rival. In September 2004, a senior DAS official was found to have erased the records of the two of the leading drug traffickers in order to hinder extradition hearings.⁴⁰

In October 2005, the Colombian intelligence services suffered a humiliating blow. It was alleged that a secret organisation within the DAS had links with the country's largest paramilitary organisation, the AUC. The former deputy of DAS, José Miguel Narváes begun an investigation after receiving information about the Director of Intelligence, Enrique Ariza and his involvement in the sharing of intelligence with the AUC. However, when Narváes reported this information to the then director of DAS, José Noguera, he was allegedly told to keep the information to himself. Despite the warning and contrary to what he had been

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ L Haugaard, K Nicholls, A Poe, G Sánchez-Garzoli, 'Far Worse than Watergate: Widening Scandal regarding Colombia's Intelligence Agency', *Latin America Working Group Education Fund*, 2010 at <http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/29457/1/Far%20worse%20than%20Watergate.pdf?1>.

⁴⁰ S Boraz, 'Colombia'.

ordered, Narváes continued his investigation and eventually obtained a recording between the members of the Special Intelligence Group and Ariza which proved that plans were underway to establish a private agreement of the sharing of information with the AUC. Following the scandal, dubbed the 'Colombian Watergate', Norguera resigned as the Director of DAS, and Narváes and Ariza were fired.⁴¹ This case was one of the most important scandals in recent times that ultimately led to the demise of DAS as an institution. The public nature of the scandal and the collusion between the intelligence community and paramilitaries called into question the legitimacy of the Colombian intelligence services and tarnished the reputation of the Uribe administration that relied heavily on public support on its war against the guerrillas and drug trade. Most importantly, this case illustrates the salience of a well-regulated and accountable intelligence community, especially in the context of violent conflict.

Stephen Boraz, in his analysis of the Colombian intelligence services calls for civilian control of the services and control to ensure that the various agencies part of the country's security apparatus operate within the rule of law and do not abuse their authority.⁴² However, establishing the limits and boundaries of 'control' can prove to be a demanding task for two reasons: resistance from the intelligence and military services and the tendency of politicians to disassociate themselves from the intelligence services. Intelligence services are typically resistant to control as they often feel that politicians do not understand their work and similarly as the majority of intelligence services come under the control of the military, militaries want the focus of the intelligence services for the 'protection and advancement of operational forces in the field.'⁴³ Politicians are weary of an increasingly vocal civil society. Moreover, the legacy of brutality and violence against citizens during the 1960s and 1970s across Latin America have not been erased from the collective memory of the people, leaving politicians with a tendency to steer away from issues relating to intelligence.

The military-paramilitary link in Colombia has been heavily publicised in the international media. The Human Rights Watch report in 2001 claimed that the 'paramilitaries are so fully integrated into the army's battle strategy, coordinated with its soldiers in the field, and linked to government units via intelligence, supplies, radios, weapons, cash and common purpose

⁴¹ Colombia: "infiltración paramilitar", BBC Mundo, 26 October 2005. A useful and detailed analysis on the Colombian intelligence scandals is available at <http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/29457/1/Far%20worse%20than%20Watergate.pdf?1>

⁴² S Boraz, 'Establishing democratic control of intelligence in Colombia', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 19, 2006, p. 84.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p 89.

that they effectively constitute a sixth division of the army.⁴⁴ In 2005, *Jane's Intelligence Review* reported that 'the DAS remains heavily infiltrated by the AUC'.⁴⁵ These scandals and the lack of accountability of outside of the executive branch are troubling for a country with such deep internal security threats. In order to achieve security, the Colombian intelligence services need to improve coordination, oversight and accountability across the board.

Although it hesitates to admit the fact, Mexico has followed down the Colombian path. It has experienced a huge spike in violence related to the drugs trade and organised crime. It has also faced similar issues with its intelligence services. The mushrooming of local and regional fiefdoms has led to some areas being regarded as out of the control of government all together. Mexico's civilian intelligence agency, Centro de Información de Seguridad Nacional (CISEN) was created 1989. However, like the Colombian intelligence services, it also faces parallel agencies which make coordination and central command difficult.⁴⁶ Increasing demands for congressional oversight, a poor public image the lack of leader and the penetration by drug cartels and criminal organisations have hampered the capability of the Mexican intelligence services to effectively deal with internal security threats. In 1997, the well-respected General Gutiérrez Rebollo, head of Mexico's National Institute to Combat Drugs was arrested for the protecting the Juárez cartel. Similarly, other high ranking military officials have also been arrested. In August 2000, General Francisco Quiroz who had held high posts in the intelligence and military transport directorates of the army and General María Arturo Acosta Chaparro, a counter-insurgency specialist whom human rights organisations had long accused of repressing and torturing leftists in the Guerrero state were arrested. In April 2001 Brigadier General Ricardo Martínez Perea was arrested and accused of providing protection for the Gulf cartel.⁴⁷

The increase of internal security threats has led to the growth of intelligence institutions in Mexico. Accordingly, the national security agenda of the country has come to encompass a wide range of issues. The civil intelligence service, CISEN, has shifted from undertaking bureaucratic tasks such as obtaining, processing and the analysis of information to more substantive case studies, and in recent years more open collaboration with Colombia. Like Colombia, each Mexican president has imposed his own set of security priorities. As a result, the Mexican intelligence services have experienced changes every six years. These vary

⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch, 'The "Sixth Division": Military-Paramilitary ties and U.S. Policy in Colombia', September 2001.

⁴⁵ 'Colombian secret police under the microscope', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, December 1, 2005.

⁴⁶ M P Moloez, 'Public security and police reform in Mexico' in J Bailey and L Dammert (eds) *Public Security and Police Reform in the Americas*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.

⁴⁷ I Hussain, 'Mexico' in S Farson et al., *PSI Handbook of Global Security and Intelligence, Vol. 1*, London: Preager Security, 2013

from mild modification of the role of the services to the implementation of more broad swaths of reforms.⁴⁸ Whilst the priorities and interests may change along with presidential power and authority, the behaviour of intelligence agencies does not always follow suit leading to intelligence failures and a significant lack of progress in dealing with internal security threats. Given the far reaching administrative changes that have taken place with every president, the acquired intelligence may not be purposefully driven and leaks and collusions with the 'enemy' are more likely.

Since 2006, when Mexico followed Colombia in launching a vigorous war on the drug cartels, the need for regional intelligence cooperation has become increasingly clear. Colombia's notable success against both the cartels and guerrillas has driven some of this activity into Mexico. Mexico's increasingly militarised campaign has had a similar effect on Venezuela and Brazil. The Brazil - West Africa – Europe corridor is now immense. Multilateral bodies designed to foster regional security cooperation, notably System for Integration (SICA) and its Armed Forces Council (CFAC) are weak due to political rivalries between member states. Equally the UNASUR South American Anti-Drug Council is an unimpressive organisation and so hopes for multilateral intelligence exchange of the sort enjoyed by the European Union or AdEAN are distant.

Remarkably, in 2012, Mexico's new president elect, Enrique Peña Nieto, turned to Colombia for new intelligence and security leadership. He has hired the former Colombian National Police, General Óscar Naranjo, to assist him with a new anti-crime policy. Naranjo is viewed as the central figure in delivering success in Colombia through high-tech surveillance. He improved intelligence gathering so that police could move against drug cartels, insurgents and paramilitary groups, marking one of his main accomplishments in Colombia. He also improved intelligence integration across government by creating trust across the many intelligence bodies. Importantly, Naranjo made his name and earned his reputation as the intelligence chief of the special force that was formed to hunt down the Pablo Escobar in December 1993.⁴⁹

South-South cooperation between Latin American states relates to a wider regional shift. Recent developments in the discussions of the Latin American narco-wars reveal the changing dynamics in region. The Summit of the Americas, held in Cartagena, Colombia in 2012 marked the first open declaration of the failure of the drug war by a number of Latin American leaders. The event was somewhat overshadowed in the international press due to

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ D Agren, 'Mexico's new leader seeks help from Colombia crime fighter', USA Today, 18 July 2012.

the sensational after-hour activities of thirteen American officials that led to an official investigation by the Homeland Security Office into the affair. However, one of the most important issues discussed at the Summit was the legalisation of drugs. A number of serving heads of Latin American states called for an alternative to prohibition. The Guatemalan president and former head of the country's military intelligence service, Otto Pérez Molina, whilst admitting that a legalisation strategy is problematic, states that 'the prohibition paradigm that inspires mainstream global drug policy today is based on a false premise: the global drug markets can be eradicated.'⁵⁰ Whilst this is by far the most outspoken statement to be made by the head of a state, there undoubtedly a growing hostility amongst Latin Americans against US led strategies.

The historic Summit of the Americas led to a 'gamechanging' report on global drugs policy, 'The Drug Problem in the Americas'.⁵¹ The report was initiated by the Colombian president, Juan Manuel Santos and presented to international bodies, including US president Barak Obama in May 2013. The extensive study is the first, high-level and multi-lateral study produced by Latin American governments examining drug production, trafficking, distribution and the relationship between the drugs trade and organised crime. The report presents four different scenarios that illustrate the possible outcomes of approaches to tackle to drug problem in Latin America: together, pathways, resilience and disruption.⁵² Of particular significance is the final scenario: 'disruption'. It outlines the impact of the drugs trade in the region if powerful Western states refuse to engage in drug policy in which it is estimated by 2025 Latin American states will consolidate their status at 'narco-states'.

The deep seated resentment of US involvement in drug policy can be observed across the region. The recently elected president of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto ushered a shift from the American strategy of targeting cartel kingpins toward prevention and achieving social peace. Military action against cartels from 2006 sparked an unprecedented rise in violence which the government is keen to ease. The new government proposed plans for the creation of five regional intelligence fusion centres with an emphasis policing tactics rather than military force. In April 2013, a Mexican delegation to the US confirmed that 'Americans will no longer be allowed to work in any fusion centre,' including the DEA and retired military

⁵⁰ O P Molina, 'We have to find to find new solutions to Latin America's drugs nightmare', *The Observer*, 7 April, 2012

⁵¹ OAS, Drugs in the Americas available at http://www.oas.org/documents/eng/press/Introduction_and_Analytical_Report.pdf

⁵² OAS, Scenarios Report available at http://www.oas.org/documents/eng/press/Scenarios_Report.PDF

contractors.⁵³ Bolivia, the world third largest producer of cocaine, expelled USAID and the DEA stating that his country is better off now that it is free from US interference. Evo Morales, the country's leader has sought alternative assistance from partners such as Brazil.

The emergence of Brazil as a leader of regional security comes as no surprise. The sprawling country borders three of the largest cocaine producers in the world and is battling a growing level of drug use within the country. In June 2012, Colombia and Brazil signed the Binational Border Security Plan (PBSF) in an attempt to counter drug-trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking and terrorism. Bilateral coordination is the mode with Brazil and in recent years it has stepped up its operations by working with neighbouring countries to monitor their Amazonian borders. Bilateral intelligence activity avoids political problems and focuses on work-a day operational and technical issues. Latin American intelligence services not only have shared interest and a great deal of common business, they also recognise that their internal realities bear striking resemblance. In the face of growing levels of criminality and violence at home, Latin American leaders have sought to reverse of effect of the US War on Drugs by increasing cooperation on a regional basis.

Conclusion

South-South intelligence liaison is now big business. No intelligence agency has the resources in terms of finances, human and technical intelligence capabilities to be entirely self-sufficient in today's globalised world. Whilst these cases do not amount to fully fledged liaison of the UKUSA variety, there is still a great deal intelligence sharing and operations that ranges from covert action against anti-subversives and support and training to counter the international drugs trade and cross border violence. Across the Global South the intelligence networks are geared toward internal security and covert action. In countries governed by authoritarian states the security forces are extensive and are precisely those countries the West is dependent upon for fighting the War on Drugs and the Global War on Terror. Moreover they are 'good' at intelligence in a domestic context.

Intelligence agencies cooperate for a wide range of reasons; however the most important reason for Western democracies is to achieve a nation's foreign policy objectives or the projection of military power, whereas in the Global South, achieving domestic security or regime protection are the priorities for the intelligence services and for liaison with other

⁵³ D Priest, U.S. Role at a Crossroads in Mexico's Intelligence War on the Cartels, *The Washington Post*, 27 April 2013.

states. A poor human rights record, which is especially the case for many developing countries, can set-back such liaisons. This is particularly important for Western nations who avoid being seen to assist human rights violations; however this is also increasingly the case for developing countries as the call for accountability from civil society spreads.

Perhaps the most striking difference between liaisons in the West and South-South intelligence cooperation is that the latter has often taken the form of covert action by linked authoritarian regimes against their own citizens. These so-called 'dirty wars' have been well-documented by area studies scholars, human rights activists and NGOs. They now require more attention from political scientists and scholars of intelligence. In a world of global uncertainty, South-South co-operation poses fascinating challenges for states the North. Many of the issues that it addresses are also of profound interest to the North. Yet the texture of these relationships is likely to discomfort their services in an age of Wikileaks wherein they are increasingly wary of their own judiciary and the ever watchful eyes of global civil society.