

BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

The Ambiguity of American Power: Drugs, Crime, and Violence in Latin America

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This essay reviews the following works:

Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime, and Violence in the Americas Today. Edited by Bruce M. Bagley and Jonathan D. Rosen. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015. Pp. ix + 431. \$84.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780813060682.

The Politics of Crime in Mexico: Democratic Governance in a Security Trap. By John Bailey. Boulder, CO: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 2014. Pp. ix + 225. \$65.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781935049890.

Women Drug Traffickers: Mules, Bosses, and Organized Crime. By Elaine Carey. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014. Pp. vii + 281. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9780826351982.

Linking Political Violence and Crime in Latin America: Myths, Realities, and Complexities. Edited by Kirsten Howarth and Jenny H. Peterson. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016. Pp. vii + 143. \$80.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781498507196.

Drugs, Thugs, and Diplomats: U.S. Policymaking in Colombia. By Winifred Tate. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015. Pp. xi + 275. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9780804795661.

The five books reviewed here contribute to our knowledge of the trade in illegal drugs and illustrate some of the challenges in researching and writing on these topics, which by definition are illegal and opaque. After reviewing the themes and the books I will attempt to update the topics since the books were published.

Although the titles of these five books do not include the words “U.S. war on drugs,” they all deal with drugs, and three specifically deal with the so-called war on drugs. The treatment is overwhelmingly critical. The negative perspective is no surprise, for several reasons. First is the historic meddling of the United States in the region, most often in opposition to forces for change. The second reason is captured in the by-now-common statement that “without demand there will be no production of drugs”; that is, as long as drugs produced in or transited through Latin America are consumed in the United States, the war on drugs cannot be successful. And the “war” itself inflicts serious harm on people and institutions in Latin America. In general terms, the metaphor of war is apt since to some degree the policy of the United States has been a militarized approach. Third, small arms, which range from pistols to assault rifles, are illegally exported from the United States to Latin America and particularly to Mexico, which facilitates high homicide rates in Mexico and even higher rates in the Northern Triangle of Central America—El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.¹ Fourth, the main street gangs, or *maras*, in the Northern Triangle—the Mara Salvatrucha or MS-13, and the Calle-18—were founded in Los Angeles, California, and through deportations established in the region in the mid-1990s; they are continually regenerated by the deportations of “illegals” from the United States to Mexico and Central America. While the percentage of homicides attributable to the gangs is debatable, during the truce in El Salvador in 2012 and 2013, the homicide rate dramatically declined.

¹ For objective data and analysis on this topic see Small Arms Survey, www.smallarmssurvey.org/.

With the first factor noted above as background in all five books, the remaining three factors loom large in three of the five books. Elaine Carey's and John Bailey's monographs are different. Before turning to the individual books, I must first explain why I used the word "ambiguity" in the title of this essay. US power in the region is not only problematic, in the sense that it does not flow in only one direction, but the whole popular, moral, and legal basis of that power, that which concerns the war on drugs, is currently being transformed. Whereas the clear emphasis in Winifred Tate's monograph, and several chapters in the book edited by Bruce Bagley and Jonathan Rosen, is that the United States seeks to impose its policies, including the war on drugs, on the region, there is another way to analyze the situation.

The first element of ambiguity of power is the following: in the open US political system power is used by all who can master the rules of the game. Tate very accurately notes that the Colombian ambassador, Luis Alberto Moreno, quickly learned to use the levers of power in Washington, DC, to get funding for his country under Plan Colombia (153–154). She states, "Without exception, the U.S. officials I interviewed described Moreno as an extraordinarily skilled Washington power player" (154). Tate also notes, on the same page, that the US embassy was paying approximately \$100,000 a month to public relations firms to lobby in support of aid to Colombia. From my periodic experience with Ambassador Moreno, who is now president of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Rendon Group (which still works for the government of Colombia in strategic communications), Ambassador Moreno, as well as presidents Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002) and Álvaro Uribe (2002–2010), was extremely adept at making it clear to US decision makers in both the executive and Congress that problems of crime and violence in Colombia could be directly traced to the insatiable demand for drugs in the United States. Most recently the United States continues to provide funding to the government of Colombia under President Juan Manuel Santos (2010–present).

With regard to Mexico and Central America, the sums provided to Mexico under the Mérida Initiative totaled \$2.3 billion, and under the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) \$1.3 billion between 2008 and 2013. Most recently, under the United States Strategy for Engagement in Central America, the United States is to provide up to \$750,000,000 in support of the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle. In convincing the US Congress to appropriate these funds the executive used various arguments, including the three above (without demand there would be no production, gangs were founded in the United States and constantly renewed through deportations, and arms go south). In short, any analysis of the involvement of the United States must include the strategies and actions of the government and business elites in the region.

The term "ambiguity" is currently even more relevant in attempting to understand the conundrum the United States faces with regard to the consumption of illegal drugs. The bedrock of the war on drugs, which is the explicit background to the books by Tate, Kirsten Howarth and Jenny Peterson, and Bagley and Rosen, is ambiguous and becoming more so as attitudes and laws change in the United States. According to public opinion polls, the domestic war on drugs is widely recognized as a failure. As stated in a 2014 Pew public opinion report, "The public appears ready for a truce in the long-running war on drugs. A national survey by the Pew Research Center finds that 67% of Americans say that the government should focus more on providing treatment for those who use illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Just 26% think the government's focus should be on prosecuting users of such hard drugs."² Twenty-four states plus the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for medical purposes, and four states (Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington) and the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for recreational purposes. It is true that the United States has so far not decriminalized drugs, as have Portugal (marijuana and more) and Uruguay (marijuana). However, in the April 2016 United Nations General Assembly special session on drugs (UNGASS), the United States found itself uncomfortably on the side of more authoritarian governments in leaving in place prohibitionist policies banning the use of drugs, and in opposition to its closest allies in Latin America: Colombia and Mexico. In short, while unlikely to change as quickly as gender issues, the decriminalization of drugs is on the horizon in the United States and will make it more difficult for anything approaching a war on drugs in the region.

The Books

Together, these five books cover a huge amount of territory—regionally, topically, and methodologically. Three of the books are monographs (Tate; Carey; Bailey) and two are edited collections (Howarth and Peterson; Bagley and Rosen). All make contributions to the literature on the topics of drugs, crime, and violence in Latin America. I will deal first with the monographs.

² Pew Research Center, "America's New Drug Policy Landscape," April 2, 2014, <http://www.people-press.org/2014/04/02/americas-new-drug-policy-landscape/>.

Tate's *Drugs, Thugs, and Diplomats: U.S. Policymaking in Colombia* takes an "anthropology of policy" approach to the formulation and implementation of US policy toward Colombia. Like all who work within the discipline of anthropology, Tate is explicit in defining her methodology. Her discussion is insightful on the role of the human rights lobby in Senator Patrick Leahy's amendment to the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act of 1997, commonly known as the Leahy Law, which requires vetting of individuals and units for human rights violations in order to receive any kind of US aid, including education and training. Also insightful is her analysis of how Colombian ambassador Luis Alberto Moreno became extremely adept in Washington, DC, in order to receive financial and other support from the US government under Plan Colombia. A great value of Tate's book is that it moves between Washington, with the policy and the money, to Colombia, and specifically to the Putumayo. In the latter location Tate specifically analyzes the impact of the war on drugs. Her main argument in dealing with the war on drugs within Colombia, and specifically the Putumayo, is that the Colombian government, although adhering to the human rights policies of the United States in line with the Leahy Law, used the paramilitaries as proxies in the fight against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC. Tate deals with the militarization of Plan Colombia with US support. In her case study in the Putumayo, Tate demonstrates that in their struggle to control the coca traffic neither the FARC nor the paramilitaries, let alone the Colombian state, were able to establish hegemony; consequently, the title of chapter 4, "Living under Many Laws," is apt. Tate draws on her background in NGO advocacy in Central America during the 1980s to analyze the impact of NGOs and of sympathetic members of the US Congress and their staffs, in the congressional delegations, CODELS, visiting Colombia in US policy making and implementation. Tate's analysis is objective and balanced.

I have three points to make regarding what I generally believe is an excellent book. Tate is explicit in her criticism of the militarization of US drug policy in Colombia. This issue also concerned me, and when I brought it up in Washington, DC, and in Bogotá at the beginning of Plan Colombia, I was told that the United States would support Colombia in terms of military aid, and the Europeans were supposed to provide other support. Her analysis of the use of paramilitaries as proxies may be true. She did field work in the Putumayo, and I did not. Tate missed an opportunity to deal with contracting out security more generally in US support to Colombia through public relations, as in contracting with the Rendon Group, with DynCorp for fumigation of coca fields, or with a myriad of other contractors. While the issue of contracting out security received a huge amount of attention with US involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, it was already well under way during Plan Colombia. Tate is clear about her methodology in line with the anthropology of policy approach. She has made a major effort in including all imaginable secondary sources as well as interviews. She is also honest in stating, "Not everyone agreed to meet with me" (16), and in pointing out that "differential access plays a central role in the kinds of ethnographic texts that anthropologists produce" (17). The challenge that anybody who does policy analysis must confront is precisely this: Does selective or limited access somehow influence the resulting analysis? Tate's background in the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) would not be lost on anybody in Washington or in Bogotá. While she states, on page 239, that she conducted more than one hundred interviews in the United States, the reader has no idea who these interviewees were. We do know that she is aware that many former officials are now contractors (16, 17). She should have picked up on this and dealt more thoroughly with contracting out security.

Similar to Tate in beginning with a personal story motivating the research, but very different in terms of methodology, is Elaine Carey's *Women Drug Traffickers: Mules, Bosses, and Organized Crime*. Carey is a historian and has reviewed all imaginable secondary and primary sources, including a great many archives, in the United States and Mexico. Carey's book is a thorough description and analysis of the multiple roles of women associated in some way with the traffic in drugs, particularly in Mexico and the United States. The topic of women and drugs has been popularized by the TV series *La Reina del Sur*, and Carey's book is solid and analytical.

As the subtitle suggests, Carey describes different roles of women in drug trafficking, highlighting how certain elements of their status as women, including dress and possible pregnancy, facilitate their success in different phases of the drug trade. Not surprisingly, since Carey is an historian she goes back to at least 1910 and the Mexican Revolution to describe the roles of women. A very positive aspect of the book is that Carey looks at women and drugs in Mexico, and not only their role in moving drugs between Mexico and the United States. It is obvious that Carey has helped to round out our understanding of drugs and trafficking in drugs by including women in multiple roles such as mules, bosses, and in organized crime, and she has done so in a thorough and objective manner.

I appreciated in particular another two aspects of Carey's book. It does a superb job in using movies to illustrate the theme of women in the drug trade. Further, Carey used vignettes, which are richly illustrated, to bring home the points of the differing roles of women.

If Carey focuses on the United States and Mexico, John Bailey in *The Politics of Crime in Mexico: Democratic Governance in a Security Trap* focuses overwhelmingly on Mexico. And, unlike the previous two books, Bailey is interested less in the drug trade and more in crime and its many manifestations in Mexico, including trafficking in drugs. Bailey is a political scientist who has researched and written extensively on crime and corruption in Mexico. The book is a virtual compendium of the many forms of crime in Mexico. Beginning with “tax avoidance and informality” and surveying in a progression of seriousness “common crime,” “organized crime,” and “drug trafficking organizations,” Bailey concludes that Mexico has reached what he terms a “security trap.” He focuses overwhelmingly on Mexico as a case study, but his argument is broader: “The majority of the Latin American countries are trapped in a low-level equilibrium in which problems of insecurity interact with weak, inefficient—even predatory—judicial and regulatory institutions and constitute major causes of poor quality democracy” (9). On the same page he outlines ten symptoms of a security trap. The relevance is obvious to anyone who studies Mexico, and Bailey argues that the dynamics of crime is a principal driver in contemporary Mexican politics. Throughout the text Bailey links crime to corruption and provides an incredible amount of data on all imaginable forms of both. Bailey frequently illustrates the text with tables (thirteen) and figures (nine) that both provide more data and organize it so that it can be easily understood.

Bailey analyzes the responses of the Mexican central government to the many modalities of crime, going into detail through the two most recent administrations (Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto) and their strategies involving different police forces, the armed forces, intelligence agencies, the judicial system, and the United States. Not satisfied in having described crime in its many manifestations and the strategies of two administrations to deal with them, in his conclusion Bailey proposes, drawing on the recent experience of Colombia, how Mexico could use political instruments to more effectively combat crime. With this book, Bailey makes a major contribution to how political leaders may deal with the security trap, but of course there are always the issues of political will and corruption. And Bailey has no illusions.

I cannot adequately cover all twenty-eight unique contributions in the two edited collections (five chapters plus introduction and conclusion in Howarth and Peterson, and twenty chapters plus introduction in Bagley and Rosen) but will instead attempt to highlight some of the key elements that are most relevant to the three monographs reviewed above and to my discussion in this review essay.

Linking Political Violence and Crime in Latin America: Myths, Realities, and Complexities, edited by Kirsten Howarth and Jenny H. Peterson, includes chapters dealing with crime and violence with reference to Mexico, Central America, and Colombia. The editors state: “This book aims to critically unpack the dynamics of contemporary forms of violence and crime in the Latin American region in order to identify and understand not only its impact on society, but also the processes through which it is able to manifest” (xiii). In the conclusion they focus on five “causes of contemporary violence and crime in Latin America,” which include the following: ongoing legacy of civil wars and physical political violence, limited state capacity, oligopolies of violence, social exclusion, and the role of external actors. Three “characteristics of crime” include the spiral of structural violence, location of violence, and critiques of the characterization of crime.

There are some problems with this edited book. There is much use of buzzwords such as “structural,” “myths,” “critical,” and “innovative,” which do not add anything to the analysis. Further, there are serious typos such as “literautre” (xiii), and errors, such as “United States Department for International Aid” for “US Agency for International Development”; these are probably as much the fault of the publisher as the authors.

While much is promised that cannot be delivered in such short chapters, I did find the discussion on the police in El Salvador by Kirsten Howarth, and on prisons in Honduras by Lirio Gutiérrez Rivera very useful. The first analyzes the causes and implications of the weakness of the Policía Nacional Civil, and the latter the role of the prisons in increasing violence. Both are manifestations of the lack of state capacity.

Bagley and Rosen, in *Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime, and Violence in the Americas Today*, bring together authors who have had some connection to the International Studies Department at the University of Miami. The editors state: “The goal of this work is to examine where we have been and where we are in the twenty-first century in the war on drugs. In other words, what have been the major trends of the twenty-first century? What is the future of the ‘war on drugs’ in the United States, Central America, and South America?” (xiii). If there is a common theme in the book it is the war on drugs. Bagley lays out trends or patterns that, as he puts it, “typify the ongoing transformation of the drug trade and the organized criminal groups it has spawned as of mid-2011” (1). Most of these are negative, and according to Bagley, can ultimately be attributed to the misguided war on drugs that the United States has fostered.

The chapters are short and generally factual. Topics include US policy; case studies of Mexico, Central America, and five countries in South America; regional issues; and the European Union. The editors conclude with several general findings that include the following: the globalization of consumption, militarization, the “cockroach” effect (dispersion of criminal groups), asymmetrical relationships, strengthening institutions, education and prevention, prison reform, and, not surprisingly, rejection of the US war on drugs.

The War on Drugs

A theme in the books by Tate and Bagley and Rosen is the “war on drugs,” in which the term “war” signifies a militarized approach. The US approach in Plan Colombia was clearly in support of the Colombian government and used, among other agencies, the Department of Defense (DoD) and all four of the US Armed Service Branches. The US approach in the Northern Triangle of Central America today is overwhelmingly guided and implemented without the DoD and the US Armed Services. It is primarily carried out by the US Department of State through USAID and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). It can be debated which strategy has been most effective, but it must be acknowledged that the war on drugs today, at least in Central America, is waged by the United States with a minimal role of the DoD and the Armed Services.

Methodology and an Updating of the Issues

These five books are a welcome addition to the very limited number of scholarly books on the topics of drugs, crime, and violence in Latin America. They contribute to our knowledge about illegal drugs and violence, but there are two inherent methodological problems in attempting to analyze these issues. First, they concern illegal phenomena, and to the best of my knowledge El Chapo and the Sinaloa Cartel do not publish annual reports. Consequently serious researchers must use all imaginable sources of information to deal adequately with these topics. Further, the topic is incredibly dynamic, with cartels and now unaccompanied alien children responding to opportunities, and governments attempting to catch up, all within a context of relatively open politics with a huge number of competing interests involved.

In terms of sources of information, a book that should be read by anyone interested in these topics is *Bribes, Bullets, and Intimidation: Drug Trafficking and the Law in Central America* by Julie Marie Bunck and Michael Ross Fowler (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012). In addition to primary and secondary literature, Bunck and Fowler make good use of a unique source of information, that is, court cases concerning drugs, crime, and violence. Material relevant to these topics will be found in legal case reports, US government sources such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Congressional Research Service (CRS), various United Nations Organizations (UN Development Programme and UN Office on Drugs and Crime), think tanks such as the Wilson Center and Inter-American Dialogue in the United States and several in Europe, blogs such as InSight Crime, NGOs including WOLA and International Crisis Group, and of course interviews. The librarians at the Naval Postgraduate School have developed, and constantly update, a Homeland Security Digital Library that makes available to the public most of these types of documents.³

By way of suggestions for future research, to update and complement the topics covered in these five books, and to illustrate the necessity of using all available sources of information, I will briefly review six topics relevant to the books reviewed here. They are the peace process between the Government of Colombia and the FARC, unaccompanied alien children on the US southern border, the effort in Latin America via the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) to deal with the drug issue, CARSI (Central American Regional Security Initiative), CICIG (Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala) and international drug cartels.

The Peace Process in Colombia

A central theme in Tate’s book and one of the themes in the book edited by Bagley and Rosen is the civil conflict in Colombia. After five decades of conflict between the government of Colombia and the FARC, on June 23, 2016, they signed a bilateral cease-fire agreement paving the way for a potential peace agreement, which was signed on August 29, 2016. In both Colombia and Washington, DC, Plan Colombia, which provided \$10 billion to Colombia between fiscal year 2000 and 2016, is viewed positively. On February 4, 2016, President Obama and President Juan Manuel Santos met in Washington to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of Plan Colombia. President Obama promised to seek \$450 million for a Paz Colombia program,

³ Homeland Security Digital Library, <https://www.hsdl.org/>.

and the US Congress seems willing to support in large measure. With the continuation of progress towards peace the militarized US approach in the war on drugs in Colombia will cease.⁴

Unaccompanied Alien Children

Unaccompanied alien children are not a topic in any of these five books but must be in any future book, or article, on Central America, Mexico, and the United States. It was the arrival of 68,541 unaccompanied children at the US border with Mexico during 2014, 75 percent of them from the Northern Triangle countries of Central America, that drew attention to the terrible problems of crime and violence from which these children are fleeing and began to draw the attention of decision makers in Washington. While the numbers decreased in 2015, in 2016 they again increased and are likely to exceed those in 2014. The huge number of children fleeing crime and violence has resulted in a several US government studies but little action so far, since the whole issue of immigration is currently toxic in the US political environment. While Nevada senator Harry Reid introduced a bill on June 28, 2016, called "Secure the Northern Triangle Act," which is intended to address the violence and humanitarian crisis driving the kids north, it is unlikely to pass. The crisis of unaccompanied children did, however, play an important role in the appropriation of the \$750 million in support of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle.⁵

Innovations in Drug Policy

The issue of drug policy has been a central topic in the more recent Summits of the Americas, and in the Organization of American States, drawing on the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) report published in 2013, *The Drug Problem in the Americas*. While there has not been a transformation of drug policy in the United States government, as noted in the first part of this essay, the public now supports a change, and four states plus the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for recreational purposes. In Latin America, Uruguay has legalized marijuana and the presidents of Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico have been extremely vocal in promoting new and different drug policies.⁶

Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI)

CARSI is briefly mentioned in one chapter in the Bagley and Rosen book. CARSI began only in 2008, having grown out of the Mérida Initiative that began the year before. Initially there were huge bureaucratic problems, and even as late as September 2015, of the \$1.2 billion appropriated for CARSI, \$984 million (86 percent) had been obligated but only \$457 million (40 percent) expended. There is a conscious policy in Washington, DC, not to "militarize" a US role in the region. Rather, there are bilateral relationships between big city police departments in the United States and individual countries, although the Department of State sponsors an International Law Enforcement Academy in San Salvador to share information and insights between and among US, Central American, and Caribbean law enforcement officials.

CARSI remains the main "security" program of the United States in the region. Eric L. Olson states, in a major study of CARSI at the Wilson Center: "A central conclusion of this report is that CARSI does not reflect a comprehensive strategy to address the critical public security threats that have shaken the region, and thus its impact on the problems of crime and violence driving Central American migration to the United States is quite limited."⁷ In short, CARSI is not a strategy but instead a mixed bag of programs implemented very

⁴ See June S. Beittel, "The Proposed U.S. Foreign Assistance Initiative 'Peace Colombia,'" *Insight* Congressional Research Service, March 3, 2016; and Kristian Herbolzheimer, "Innovations in the Colombian Peace Process," Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2016.

⁵ United States Government Accountability Office, *Central America: Information on Migration of Unaccompanied Children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, February 2015), 1. On the recent increase see Marc R. Rosenblum and Isabel Ball, "Trends in Unaccompanied Child and Family Migration from Central America," Fact Sheet of Migration Policy Institute, January 2016; William A. Kandel, "Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 11, 2016). For the role of violence in the migration see Manuel Orozco and Julia Yansura, "Understanding Central American Migration: The Crisis of Central American Child Migrants in Context," August 2014, *Inter-American Dialogue*, http://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/FinalDraft_ChildMigrants_81314.pdf.

⁶ Ilona Szabó de Carvalho, "Latin America Awakes: A Review of the New Drug Policy Debate," Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, October 2013; Michael Lohmuller, "Hopes for Global Drug Policy Reform Dashed at UN Assembly," *InSight Crime*, April 25, 2016; Organization of American States, *The Drug Problem in the Americas* (Washington, DC: OAS, 2013).

⁷ See Eric L. Olson, "Executive Summary," in *Crime and Violence in Central America's Northern Triangle: How U.S. Policy Responses Are Helping, Hurting, and Can Be Improved*, ed. Eric L. Olsen (Washington, DC: Wilson Center, 2016), 6–7; and Peter J. Meyer and Clare Ribando Seelke, *Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress*, CRS Report, December 17, 2015 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service).

differently from one country to another. Currently, as part of the appropriation of \$750 million for Central American in the FY 2016 budget, approximately one half will go to CARSI.

International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG)

There is no mention at all in the five books of probably the most important innovation in Central America, the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), which Eric L. Olson of the Wilson Center refers to as “a glimmer of hope in Central America.”⁸ Due to domestic pressure in Guatemala, and with support of NGOs and some countries, including the United States, the United Nations and the government of Guatemala signed an agreement to create the commission which went into effect in 2007. CICIG essentially supports the prosecutor’s office and has expanded its jurisdiction into all aspects of illegality and corruption in Guatemala. It has been successful in assisting the Guatemalan legal system to force President Otto Pérez Molina to resign in September 2015, and generally to promote the rule of law in Guatemala. Similar initiatives have been suggested in El Salvador, and one form, under the OAS, has been adopted in Honduras.

Cartels

The only book of the five that deals specifically with organized crime and the drug cartels in Bailey’s on Mexico. Today, the trade in drugs, or in people for that matter, is a global enterprise. Not constrained by national or international laws, nor hindered by boards of directors or by national borders, the international cartels, now based in Mexico, Colombia, the United States, Jamaica, Italy, and a few other countries, are transnational enterprises which can, to use the common metaphor, bring heroin from the farm (in Mexico) to the arm (in the United States, for example) quickly and at a great profit. It is these cartels that today dominate the drug trade and the trade in humans, and they are incredibly difficult to counter.⁹

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⁸ Eric L. Olson, “A Glimmer of Hope in Central America,” February 24, 2016, Wilson Center Latin American Program, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/glimmer-hope-central-america>. See also WOLA, “The International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala,” *WOLA Report*, June 2015.

⁹ See, for example, Juan Carlos Gachúz, “Globalization and Organized Crime: Challenges for International Cooperation,” *Issue Brief*, Baker Institute for Public Policy, July 6, 2016; and Rodrigo Nieto Gomez, “The Geopolitics of Clandestine Innovation in the Drug Business,” <https://medium.com/rodrigonieto/the-geopolitics-of-clandestine-innovation-in-the-drug-business-a07efe494035#.ze6pq4q05> (accessed July 12, 2016).

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