



Prepared Statement of:

Ambassador Luis E. Arreaga

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Hearing before the:

House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere

“Examining FY 2017 Funding Priorities in the Western Hemisphere”

April 27, 2016

Chairman Duncan, Ranking Member Sires, Members of the Subcommittee: thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to discuss the fiscal year 2017 budget request for the Western Hemisphere.

Many places in the Western Hemisphere today face significant security challenges, and these are compounded by falling commodity prices on which many economies in the hemisphere rely, pervasive corruption, and limited employment opportunities, particularly for young people. This far too often results in difficult and dangerous choices being made by those in the region: to either join organized crime or migrate in search of better prospects. Poppy and coca cultivation is now sharply increasing in Mexico and Colombia respectively, and drug trafficking organizations and associated criminal gangs are fighting each other, perpetuating a cycle of violence, corruption, and instability that is rising in many places throughout the region.

In spite of these negative indicators, there are signs of hope and opportunity in the region. For example: the prospect of a peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC holds the promise of extending the rule of law throughout the country, and marginalizing the drug trade. At the same time in Guatemala and Honduras, local populations fed up with corruption are successfully mobilizing to demand greater accountability.

To counter the threats and capitalize on opportunities, the Administration has advanced an integrated approach to U.S. assistance programs in the Western Hemisphere. This includes traditional crime and violence prevention, law enforcement, and counternarcotics programs; however, it also involves the development and implementation of innovative anti-corruption, judicial reforms, anti-gang campaigns, community policing, and corrections efforts as well.

Working with interagency partners across the U.S. government, with countries in the region, and through engagement with international donors, INL programs are a vital part of a comprehensive approach to effective U.S. assistance to the region. This includes economic development and institution building initiatives at all levels of government, as well as drug interdiction and eradication programs and programs to assist host governments in improving their own programs to treat substance use disorders.

For example: In Central America, the State Department and USAID's Place-Based Strategy have combined violence prevention and law enforcement interventions in communities most at risk of violent crime. These programs expand

upon USAID community-level crime prevention programming that has already reduced violence in some of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the region.

Another example is how Colombia, with INL support, has gone from a consumer to a supplier of security assistance to the region over the past decade. Today, Colombian trainers and law enforcement institutions are training and advising police and canine handlers throughout the hemisphere through the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan and INL's International Cooperation Division.

In FY 2017, we are requesting \$489 million in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funds to support INL programs throughout the Western Hemisphere including through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), and in Colombia, Mexico, Haiti, and Peru.

Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI)

In FY 2017, the INCLE CARSI request of \$205 million will continue support for the governance and security objectives of the U.S. Strategy for Central America. This request expands these ongoing programs, including the Model Police Precincts (MPPs) program; task forces and interagency vetted unit initiatives; and both police reform and border security efforts. INL will also continue building on successful, emerging INL efforts such as more expansive corrections, justice sector, and anti-corruption programs; and increased support for vulnerable populations in the region through grants and civil society outreach.

The Northern Triangle region of Central America will remain a priority focus for INL. In FY 2017 we will continue to expand our footprint there by building upon successful efforts to introduce Place-Based Strategy programs in coordination with USAID. In addition, we will continue to support and expand rule of law and justice sector programming which will be guided by a three-part approach: bottom-up community security efforts; top-down institutional reforms; and operational coordination with host country law enforcement through support of vetted units and task forces.

INL will continue a major expansion of the successful MPP program, with a target of expanding the program to cover 137 locations, mostly in the Northern Triangle area, by the end of 2017 (as of March 2016 there were 37 MPPs –12 in El Salvador, 10 in Honduras, 15 in Guatemala). Already, MPPs in Guatemala and El Salvador have contributed to reductions in reported homicides from 30 to 70

percent in their precincts during 2014-2015. One of these in Honduras, which averaged eight homicides per month before the MPP, has experienced 100 consecutive days without a homicide, a testament to the effectiveness of this program.

Guided by the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, which prioritizes support to the Northern Triangle during the first three years, and then increases support to other countries in Central America in subsequent years, INL will dedicate additional resources to Panama and Costa Rica in FY 2017. In both Panama and Costa Rica, INL will focus on professionalizing and developing more accountable criminal justice institutions, and we will seek to position Panama and Costa Rica to be regional leaders in the areas of border security and rule of law/justice sector reform.

For example, where INL has trained justice actors transitioning to the newly adopted accusatory justice system in Panama, the system's efficiency has been greatly improved, with average case processing times reduced by two-thirds. In Costa Rica, the INL-supported canine program of the Penitentiary Police has significantly improved prisoner and guard security, while leading to seizures of prohibited and illegal items within the facilities. The program has become a model for all of the country's security programs, and could be a model throughout the region and beyond.

The FY2017 INCLE request also emphasizes Central America capacity building programs which include the Central America Police Reform Initiative (CAPRI), the Colombian Assistance Program (CAP), and the Criminal Investigation School in Honduras. Each of these programs improves the capabilities of law enforcement actors and institutions, and they represent long-term investments in Central America's success.

Lastly, INL also supports efforts to regionalize land and maritime border security training and coordination, the professionalization of land border capacities across Central America, and the development of maritime capabilities to patrol national waters. Under the guidance of a senior regional advisor, INL will advance regional information-sharing and operations with host government law enforcement units to more effectively combat the fluid nature of transnational crime and trafficking.

Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)

The FY 2017 INCLE request of \$20 million for CBSI will support INL programs that will develop law enforcement and rule of law institutions within our partner nations in the Caribbean, while also promoting cooperation among governments in the region to address shared crime and trafficking challenges.

Since its inception in 2010, INL's CBSI programming has demonstrated proven results. For example: INL assistance to counternarcotics forces in the region has resulted in a 152 percent increase in cocaine seizures between 2014 and 2015; in the Dominican Republic, INL's investment in a 911 system in Santo Domingo, co-financed with the Government of the Dominican Republic and other donors, has enabled law enforcement to respond to over 500,000 system calls in its first year of operation, the system enjoys a 93 percent public approval rating; and, INL has developed a regional digital training platform called CBSI Connect that has reduced travel costs in the Caribbean for training by almost \$600,000, while strengthening regional relationships.

Colombia

For nearly two decades, Colombia and the United States have worked together to confront transnational crime, and minimize the harmful effects of criminal activity, including narcotics trafficking both in Colombia and throughout the hemisphere. As Colombia works to finalize its peace process with the FARC, and continues its peace talks with the National Liberation Army (ELN), INL has positioned itself to support the Government of Colombia's civilian security, rule of law, and counternarcotics objectives.

With the \$143 million INCLE requested in FY 2017 for Colombia, INL programming will help the Colombian government extend its presence and control to remote, former conflict areas. In order to achieve this, INL will support enhanced manual eradication, interdiction, and improved methods to investigate, dismantle, and prosecute criminal organizations. We will expand efforts to promote the rule of law through justice sector reforms and correctional services capacity building. When possible and appropriate, assistance programs in former conflict zones will be designed to deliver whole-of-government solutions to Colombia's security issues and to extend the benefits of peace to these areas.

While Colombia experienced back-to-back increases in coca cultivation over the last two years, the resolution of the FARC's 52-year insurgency will over the

long term help the Colombian government address the narcotics challenge in areas not controlled by the Colombian government. This is because a successful peace process will allow Colombian authorities to establish a state security presence in areas previously controlled by FARC insurgents and drug-traffickers. It also will result in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of thousands of FARC insurgents previously involved in drug-trafficking. Still, Colombia will continue to face considerable narcotics challenges, and through our FY 2017 request, INL will position itself to help Colombia implement its counternarcotics strategy, which is heavily weighted toward enhancing interdiction, dismantling complex criminal organizations, and investigating money-laundering operations.

Mexico

The FY 2017 INCLE request of \$80 million for Mexico builds on the deep relationship we have with the Government of Mexico, and allocates resources towards areas of shared priority, particularly the broad range of Merida Initiative programs already approved and underway.

These include: expanding assistance to Mexico's transition to an accusatory justice system; broadening support to Mexican state governments to develop more professional, accountable police forces; strengthening border security with a focus on the southern border (which helps support Mexico's efforts to mitigate the smuggling of unaccompanied migrant children); INL-supported community anti-drug coalitions which are bringing together residents, businesses, and NGOs in Mexico to clean up neighborhoods and provide wholesome activities for youth; and, we are deepening our bilateral cooperation on combatting both heroin and sources of corruption.

Effective assistance to Mexico through INL programs has resulted in: the seizure by the Government of Mexico of more than \$4 billion in narcotics and illegal currency since the beginning of Merida, much of it supported by Merida-funded equipment and training; the commander of the INL-supported Morelos anti-kidnapping unit crediting INL-sponsored FBI and Colombian training in the successful rescue of a kidnapped Mexican state legislator and the arrest of 10 suspects within 24 hours of the kidnapping; and, the reduction of deaths and fights in Mexican prisons due to INL-funded American Correctional Association (ACA) accreditation program. In 2010, before accreditation the Chihuahua State prison system reported more than 200 deaths and 189 prison fights. In 2013, after all Chihuahua prisons achieved ACA accreditation, this dropped to one prison death

and three fights. Their experience is an example of how accreditation has helped reduce crime while maintaining safer, more secure, and humane prisons.

Haiti

INL's FY 2017 INCLE request of \$7.5 million for Haiti continues our successful programs designed to increase the capability of the Haitian National Police (HNP). INL support has: improved the professionalism and capacity of the HNP through the implementation of a community policing program in violence-prone neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince; developed a strategic planning unit within the HNP; and resulted in the professional training of more than 3,000 police officers since the 2010 earthquake. Nearly 1,500 more Haitian law enforcement officers will graduate from Haiti's INL-supported police cadet training program next month, and another 1,600 are now being recruited for the next class in the program which is scheduled to begin later this year.

Peru

The Administration of Peruvian President Humala has been an outstanding partner of INL. They have taken ownership of our joint counternarcotics efforts and are now at a point where they are matching or exceeding U.S. government assistance for both eradication programs and alternative development efforts in Peru. With INL support, the Government of Peru exceeded its eradication goal and eradicated a historic 35,868 hectares of coca –more than in any previous year, and 300 percent more than 2011. In addition, with our support, they interdicted nearly 30 MT of illicit drugs last year

The FY 2017 INCLE request of \$33.5 million will continue this positive momentum with President Humala's successor through programming support for coca eradication; aviation support for eradication and interdiction; police training and support; administration of justice, customs, and port security programs; and demand reduction, anti-money laundering, and asset forfeiture initiatives.

Conclusion

Our partners throughout the Western Hemisphere face complex challenges that threaten public security and the rule of law. Building institutions necessary for lasting change is not easy, but we know these programs, over time, and with concerted effort work. Our nation's investments over time have produced the intended results, increased our own security, and spread justice and stability to our neighbors and partners. INCLE investments are having an impact, and the

resources we are requesting in FY 2017 will enable us to sustain these investments, address challenges, capitalize on emerging opportunities, and continue to advance our goal of a more secure, democratic, and prosperous region.