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THE GUARDIA NACIONAL (NATIONAL GUARD): WHY A NEW MILITARIZED POLICE IN MEXICO

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The *Guardia Nacional* (National Guard): Why a New Militarized Police in Mexico

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After months of political debate, the *Guardia Nacional* (National Guard) proposed by Mexico's new President Andrés Manuel López Obrador was formalized on 27 May 2019.[1] However, it remains a source of heated controversy. Some critics claim that it was unnecessary since Mexico already had a *Policía Federal* (Federal Police - PF).[2] Human rights advocates and some security specialists argue that its military traits exacerbate the risk of abusive use of force and the militarization that prevailed during the Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) and Enrique Peña (2012-2018) Administrations.[3]

The purpose of this essay is to examine why a new law enforcement institution was created and designed as a civilian-military institution. The main argument is that a new law enforcement (LE) corps with civilian-military features was a strategic necessity. Mexico lacked trustworthy and effective national police capable of controlling the kind of threat posed by Mexican armed criminal organizations (COs) or organized crime (OC) groups. I will begin by diagnosing the insecurity situation at the time of the creation of the GN and then define the characteristics of the GN. Afterwards, I will examine the two main questions and conclude with some final commentaries.



Guardia Nacional Guardsmen. Source Guardia Nacional

By the time President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) was inaugurated, on 1 December 2018, violence had reached levels unseen since the Mexican Revolution in the early 1900s. According to security expert Mónica Serrano, Mexico was "on the verge of the precipice." [4] Spiraling violence and organized criminality plagued Mexico since President Calderón launched a war against drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) in December 2006 and coordinated it with the United States.[5] Since then, COs proliferated, acquired army-type arsenals, and became empowered to the point of controlling communities and eroding State authority and legitimacy at the local level.[6] Moreover, crimes committed by DTOs and other COs multiplied and diversified, costing Mexico at least 300,000 lives and 70,000 victims of forced disappearance between 2006-2018.[7] Therefore, by 2019 Mexico faced serious security challenges, which required professional, disciplined, robust, trustworthy, and effective forces unlike the *Policía Federal* (PF).

Defining the *Guardia Nacional* (GN)

The GN is an unprecedented police institution in Mexico, because it is conceived as a peacekeeping force.[8] Its mission is to help build peace and establish governability under State authority in regions threatened by organized criminality and violence. The central GN objective is to support public security tasks in coordination with state and municipal authorities, and upon request of the governors and the mayor of Mexico City.[9] As an auxiliary to state and municipal forces, the GN task is to help reduce violent crimes of high impact on citizens—e.g., homicides, organized crime, extortion, and robberies.[10] Besides traditional policing functions, the GN has proximity policing responsibilities. It seeks to establish a close relationship with the community; collaborate with its members; identify their safety problems; and improve their perception of public safety.[11] The expectation is that proximity policing will help "reconstitute the community after a long period of violence," as per security expert Javier Oliva; [12] and establish State legitimacy and authority. The GN has replaced other federal uniformed police—i.e., the *Policía Federal* (PF) and its *Gendarmería Nacional* (National Gendarmerie - GEN) division were officially dismantled in December 2019 and their forces transferred to the GN.[13] Hence, the GN contrasts with gendarmeries that function alongside national police organizations.

Manning the *Guardia Nacional* (GN)

The GN is a gendarmerie-style force. Basically defined, gendarmeries or formed police, are forces with police-military features, tactics and components, which I discuss in detail below.[14] The GN became operational on 30 June 2019, so it is still in the process of construction, deployment, and training. Yet it already has around 100,000 forces with the goal of reaching a robust force of about 200,000 by 2024. So far, the GN is nearly three times (less than 38,000) the size of the PF and GEN together. The GN is a hybrid of civilian-military troops and leadership constituted by police from the extinct PF-GEN; the *Policía Militar* (Military Police-PM) transferred from the *Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional* (Secretariat of the National Defense - SEDENA); *Policía Naval* (Naval Police - PN) from the *Secretaría de la Marina* (Secretariat of the Navy - SEMAR), and other military and civilian personnel.[15] The following is a breakdown based on 91,161 GN forces as of 31 July 2020:[16]

- 25,292 Police veterans from PF-GEN,
- 55,917 PM and active duty personnel temporarily commissioned from SEDENA,
- 9,952 PN and active duty elements temporarily assigned from SEMAR.

Clearly, there are fewer civilian than military national guards. However, former Secretary of SSPC Alfonso Durazo said in May 2020 that the number of military personnel on loan supporting the GN is decreasing, as new civilian recruits gradually replace them. The SEDENA personnel went down from 12,052 troops in March to 1,920 in May 2020; and SEMAR's from 5,000 in March to 225 in May 2020.[17] As of 21 October 2020 only 400 SEDENA and 211 SEMAR personnel remained on loan to the GN.[18] At that time, 37,428 new civilians had been recruited since 2019. The goal is to complete a total of 50,000 by 2021.

Training and Arming the *Guardia Nacional* (GN)

The training curriculum of veteran and new national guards incorporates instruction and practice of police procedures and skills; humanitarian and GN doctrine; and military discipline and operational/tactical capabilities. Training courses include the penal justice system, adversarial trials, and their role in them; first responders; gender equality; feminicides, police ethics; culture of legality; human rights; proximity policing; crowd control; police mediation; conflict management; and others.[19] Besides their training at the GN, veterans had been previously trained at their former institutions. The PMs and PNs were trained on military and police skills in SEDENA and SEMAR. Iñigo Guevara, defense specialist, says that SEDENA's "regular units were re-trained as MPs [military police] undertaking fast-track law enforcement courses in the proportional use of force, use of non-lethal equipment, human rights, evidence chain of custody procedures, crime scene preservation, and the adversarial criminal justice system." [20] Once they transferred to the GN, they "received multiple specialization courses, . . . [including] First Responder, . . . force Multiplier Effect, . . . and Human Rights training." Conversely, besides police skills, most veteran PF-GEN officers had some military training, while others had trained as special forces integrated by elite troops from SEDENA and SEMAR.[21]

Moreover, the training of national guards emphasizes the proportional use of force, as per Mexico's 2019 Ley Nacional del Uso de la Fuerza (Law on the Use of Force) and international conventions.[22] They are trained on the use of arms and other control equipment, such as less-than-lethal disabling equipment—e.g., batons, tasers, sprays, and handcuffs—as well as short, long, and semiautomatic arms.[23] Primary arms include Sig Sauer P-320 handguns, the Barret .50, and the H&K submachine gun. It appears that GN special forces also have access to the Mexican-made Xiuhcoatl FX-05 caliber 5.56.[24]

Fulfilling Responsibilities

The GN has a wide range of responsibilities,[25] such as:

1. Traditional proximity/preventive policing with investigative and penal procedural functions.[26]
2. Supporting federal social programs by guarding, transporting, delivering, and distributing assistance in kind and cash.
3. Providing civil protection (GN Plan) during disasters and crises.
4. Supporting local forces and the Mexican Armed Forces (SEDENA and SEMAR - FFAA) in special operations. The GN does not lead them.[27]
5. Supporting the search and rescue of kidnapped persons and desaparecidos (victims of enforced disappearance).[28]
6. Conducting criminal intelligence, surveillance activities, and complex investigations about crimes of federal and state jurisdiction.[29] By contrast, the GEN did not perform functions, but the PF did. To enhance its intelligence capabilities against money laundering, the GN plans to have a *Guardia Financiera* (Financial Guard) operational by 2024.[30]
7. Patrolling strategic infrastructure—e.g., airports, highways, federal penal courts, prisons, public plazas, and others. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the GN has protected hundreds of hospitals and health care personnel.
8. Protecting industrial productive cycles—e.g., mining, lemon, and avocado—from protection rackets and robberies.[31]
9. Combating organized *huachicoleo*—the theft of fuel and its sale in the black market by COs.[32] The GN prevents illegal fuel extractions from pipeline clandestine taps and the sale of stolen fuel, seizes it; dismantles illicit taps; and reinforces peripheral and air surveillance of petrochemical installations, control rooms, tank towers, and priority oil duct networks.
10. Patrolling border and migration installations; checking documentation; detaining undocumented immigrants; and providing humanitarian assistance. [33]

11. Disrupting illicit supply chains. National guards intercept contraband of illegal firearms, bulk cash, drugs, and other contraband by monitoring package-delivery services, airports, highways, and border areas. Also, they dismantle synthetic drug labs and eradicate illicit fields of marijuana and poppy plants.

Deploying the *Guardia Nacional* (GN)

For strategy purposes, the AMLO Administration divided Mexico into 266 regions across the 2,457 municipalities of the 31 states and Mexico City. Unlike other gendarmeries, the GN areas of responsibility include urban, suburban, and rural areas. The goal is to have GN presence in all regions by 2021. On 18 September 2020, GN reported forces deployed in 176 of the 266 regional coordination units nationwide.[34] Each state has one State Coordination and various Regional Coordination bodies. State Coordinators meet daily with governors, state public security secretaries, prosecutor generals, and other state officials along with military leaders, representatives of the *Centro Nacional de Inteligencia* (National Intelligence Center - CNI, formerly the CISEN), and other federal authorities. At these meetings, they “analyze local security problems, articulate specific strategies, and coordinate operations.”[35] Similarly, Regional Coordinators and other federal authorities meet daily with mayors and municipal security and prosecutorial authorities. Moreover, for regional deployment purposes, the GN is establishing permanent regional quarters. As of 18 September 2020, a total of 79 quarters were built; 81 under construction; and 106 to be built.[36] By contrast, the PF forces had to be lodged in hotels because they had no permanent regional deployments and quarters. Thus, PF troops and communities were more vulnerable to COs.

Chain of Command

The GN is under civilian jurisdiction. At the top of its chain of command is the *Secretaría de Seguridad Pública y Protección Ciudadana* (Secretariat of Public Security and Citizen Protection - SSPC), a civilian ministry created in November 2018 under the new Congress. The SSPC is led by a civilian secretary.[37] The second in command is the GN Commander, who may be a civilian or retired military leader.[38] At the third level is the Territorial Command consisting of 12 commands, 32 State and 266 Regional Coordinations.[39] Most coordinators, commissaries, and directors are military personnel assigned to GN until it develops its own leadership.[40]

Although the GN is under civilian command, the Mexican Armed Forces (FFAA) play a supporting role for the SSPC and the GN. During the previous 13 years, the FFAA participated in public security tasks without legal backing. Today, they are legally authorized to complement public security tasks for a period of five years. The accord dated 11 May 2020 formalizes their legal functions and confirms presidential authority to deploy them to support the GN while it “develops its structure, capacities and territorial deployment.”[41] Accordingly, the FFAA are tasked with helping the GN “establish its hierarchical structures and disciplinary and services regimes; comply with responsibilities and tasks; and instrument admission norms, education, training, professionalization, promotions and benefits ...”[42] The Secretary of the SSPC coordinates with the FFAA how to accomplish these responsibilities.

Accordingly, although the GN is not formally under a mixed (civilian and military) command like some gendarmeries, the FFAA play a key role at the operational and tactical level of the GN. There is an advisory group called the Inter-institutional Operative Coordination (COI) composed of a representative from each of the GN’s three services—a police official, a retired general from SEDENA, and a retired admiral from SEMAR.[43] COI functions as a joint chiefs of staff to advise GN Commander and SSPC Secretary. While the SSPC is the political authority deciding policy and strategy, COI advises them on strategy formulation; operational and tactical planning and coordination; use of force; training; structure; and organization.

Moreover, COI seamlessly unifies the three services into a single identity. In sum, the GN resembles more an intermediate force or gendarmerie than a preventive police institution. The question is why was a new law enforcement created in the first place and why was it created with military features?

Why a New Police?

Every Mexican administration between 1999-2018 created new national LE and other security institutions. Just since the 1990s, they established the *Policía Federal Preventiva* (PFP, 1999-2009); *Policía Federal* (PF, 2009-2019); and the *Gendarmería Nacional* (GEN, 2014-2019). Thus, it is not unprecedented that the AMLO Administration created the GN. Nonetheless, critics argue that it was unnecessary. However, there are two main reasons why it was essential. First, the criminal threat that Mexico faced required a trustworthy, robust, and effective gendarmerie-style force. Second, the existing PF not only was not up to the task but was part of the problem. I will begin by examining the latter.

Besides lacking robustness, professionalization, and effectiveness, federal, state, and local police have been generally considered as corrupt and abusive. Human Rights Watch reported in 2019 that AMLO had “inherited a human rights catastrophe originating in the extreme violence of organized delinquency and generalized abuses committed by military, police, and prosecutors.”[44] The enforced disappearance of 43 students in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero in 2014 is a paradigmatic case.[45] Their disappearance involved a drug gang, federal and municipal police, soldiers, other authorities, and high-ranking officials from the Procuraduría General de la República (PGR, dismantled in 2018, equivalent to the US Attorney General/Department of Justice). Allegedly, Peña Administration officials tortured detainees, manipulated and fabricated evidence, and left the case unpunished.[46]

Moreover, there was evidence that the PF was corrupt and captured by organized crime. Certainly, not all PF officers were dishonest and human rights abusers. But “corruption is endemic in Mexican police forces,” as police expert Daniel M. Sabet asserts.[47] Sabet says that many federal, state, and local officers regularly “use public office for private gain.” They embezzle funds, extort and physically abuse citizens; and abet criminals.[48] Moreover, serious allegations of collusion involving Genaro García Luna, Secretary of the Secretariat of Public Security (SSP, 2006-2012), surfaced early in the Calderón Administration. For instance, PFP Regional Commander Javier Herrera Valles alerted Calderón in 2008 that narco-collusion prevailed in Mexican security institutions since 2001, when García Luna created and headed the *Agencia Federal de Investigaciones* (Federal Investigations Agency - AFI, integrated later into the PF).[49] However, Herrera and other whistleblowers were ignored and jailed (though exonerated years later). It was not until 2019 that the collusion scheme was unmasked.

In December 2019, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) arrested García Luna in Dallas, TX.[50] Six months later, DOJ indicted and issued an order to capture Luis Cárdenas and Ramón Pequeño, his two accomplices in the PF that García Luna built and controlled. Since 2006, they had been high-level PF officials—Cárdenas as head of the Regional Division (troop deployments) and Pequeño of the Counternarcotics Division. Pequeño remained in the PF under the new Peña Administration as Director of Intelligence. But in 2015 he was relieved after Joaquín El Chapo Guzmán, a top boss of the Cartel

de Sinaloa (CDS), escaped from a high security prison monitored by Pequeño. Like DOJ, Mexico's Fiscalía General de la República (FGR, similar to the US Attorney General - DOJ but independent from the Executive) accused García Luna and his accomplices of drug trafficking-related charges.[51] It is the first time that a Mexican government charges a (former or current) cabinet member with a crime.

Still, critics argue that, instead of dismantling the PF, corrupt police could have been weeded out. They do not acknowledge that it was not just a few rotten apples, but systematic corruption from the top down and a structure captured by organized crime. García Luna and his accomplices played key roles in the strategy, operations, and US-MEX cooperation programs to counter DTOs, while at the same time presumably protecting a drug cartel; abetting its illicit activities; and moonlighting as drug traffickers. Allegedly, García Luna and his accomplices placed their people in the PF and established a system of corruption that permeated security structures to impede LE and facilitate narco-collusion. Moreover, security and human rights specialist Maureen Meyer highlighted in 2014 that, despite police reforms begun in 2008-2009 to reduce corruption and increase accountability, "corruption and abuses persist." [52] Hence, it is conceivable that the reforms led by García Luna were just window dressing. As Sabet asserts, "clearly one cannot expect meaningful police reform under the direction of a police chief or mayor involved with drug trafficking." [53] Therefore, the AMLO administration decided that a new LE corps was essential. But did it have to be a civilian-military force?



Guardia Nacional Conducting Joint Patrol with Local Police, San José del Cabo, Baja California Sur. Source: Guardia Nacional, https://twitter.com/GN_MEXICO_/status/1323031774214017024?s=20.

Why Paramilitary/Militarized?

Most critics oppose the GN because of its militarization. What do they mean? Abigail L. Hall and Christopher R. Coyne, George Mason University professors, use the term "indirect militarization" to refer to the process through which law enforcement acquire military-like features, such as training, equipment, tactics, and strategies, as well as engage in complex investigations and intelligence work.[54] Actually, the GN is not an exception; all previous Mexican law enforcement had various degrees of militarization. At the least, they were trained by the FFAA and often commanded by retired military, as well as had military troops and even special forces.[55] For instance, the *Policía Federal* (PF launched in 2009) inherited military troops from its predecessor, the *Policía Federal Preventiva* (Federal Preventive Police-PFP created in 1999).[56] Also, the PF had special forces.[57] John P. Sullivan, public security expert and practitioner, indicates that "military-style assaults and street battles waged by the gangsters ... led [the PF] to become more of a formed police unit or *gendarmérie* than a community oriented law enforcement organ." [58] Iñigo Guevara remarks that "the SSP and PF grew in capabilities beyond that of a traditional police force to include military-grade armament such as .50 cal general purpose machine guns and [other] equipment." [59]

The latest militarized LE institution before the GN was the *Gendamería Nacional* (GEN).[60] The original idea in 2012 was to build it as an intermediate force dedicated to counter DTOs; under military command; and as part of the Army/SEDENA. But political factors impeded it. Ultimately, it was launched in 2014 with limited functions; as a minor division of the PF; under the civilian jurisdiction of the *Secretaría de Gobernación* (Secretariat of Governance-SEGOB); but trained by SEDENA and commanded by a retired navy Captain for its last three years.[61] Before the launching of the GEN, drug policy expert Gary Hale had expressed, with some reservations, that "Properly trained, equipped and commanded, [the *Gendarmérie*] could serve to augment the offensive military forces that are needed to complement federal and state police forces." [62] That is, the GEN could be an asset against COs. But it was not, among other reasons, because key officials at the top of the chain of command of the PF-GEN sabotaged them. Nevertheless, opposition to a GN with military characteristics persists.

Understandably, given Mexico's catastrophic drug war, critics fear more human rights abuses by militarized forces.[63] But they were not all due to the militarization of public security. The ineffectiveness and abusive use of force of security forces, as well as other forms of violence are due to multiple factors; especially, tolerant and narco-colluded top federal and other authorities; poorly professionalized and colluded municipal, state, and federal police; a deficient and corrupt administration of justice; and a track record of impunity. Moreover, the strategy implemented by previous Mexican and US governments (2006-2018) relied heavily on the use of force. By contrast, the 2019 *Estrategia Nacional de Seguridad Pública* (National Public Security Strategy - NPSS)—a whole-of-government strategy of which the GN is a central component— reflects a paradigmatic shift that prioritizes human rights and the regulated use of force to reduce abuses and lethality.[64] Eduardo Guerrero, security expert, explained on 22 July 2020 that under the new Mexican government, "the levels of lethality in confrontations between the armed forces and criminal groups" have declined significantly.[65] Guerrero added that, "For the first time, the lethality levels have decreased and the relationship between civilians murdered and civilians injured has been inverted. Now we [sic] have more civilians injured and less civilians killed, while during the Peña and Calderón Administrations we always had almost all civilians killed in these operations. That has changed a lot." Moreover, of the 163 recommendations issued since the 1990s by Mexico's National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) to prosecute SEDENA for physical and lethal abuses, only four involved military police, who are the majority of the national guards.[66] However, until crucial transformations materialize in Mexico that help reduce the unrelenting violence and armed criminality, there is no alternative but to create a gendarmérie-style force.

Gendarmerie-style Guardia Nacional. Various factors explain why the AMLO Administration built the GN as a civilian-militarized force. They include recruitment challenges and budget constraints that impeded building a robust police force from the ground up.[67] Another factor is that, paradoxically, Mexicans prefer the military to the police in the streets. Decades of ineptness, corruption, and abuses made Mexicans distrust and fear police officers. Certainly, also the FFAA have abused human rights and lethal force, as well as been involved in corruption/collusion cases.[68] However, although it enrages them, Mexicans still trust soldiers more than police. A 2017 *Parametría* poll shows that 66% of the respondents favored the military, but only 18% preferred the police.[69] In a 2019 Mitofsky poll the military ranked second as the most trusted institution, while the police ranked 14th out of 16 institutions.[70] By contrast, the ENSU-INEGI poll dated March 2020 showed that 76% of the respondents trusted the GN highly or somewhat.[71] The same poll indicated that respondents ranked the effectiveness against delinquency of the Navy (86.2%), military (83.4%), and the GN (69.1%) way higher than of state (48.5%) and local preventive police (39.9%).[72] Hence, the AMLO security cabinet was convinced that a GN with civil-military officers and military discipline would be more trusted by citizens.

Foremost, however, the magnitude of the threat posed by COs makes it essential that Mexico has a trustworthy LE corps with the kind of dual capabilities that only a civilian-militarized institution can provide. Contemporary COs are not a bunch of pickpockets, but powerful organizations with military-type armament, like AR15s assault weapons, M2 machine guns or Browning .50 caliber, and RPG-7 anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade launchers. The *Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación* (CJNG) used RPG-7s to shoot down a military helicopter in Jalisco in 2015 and attack the vehicle of Mexico City Police Chief Omar García Harfuch in June 2020. The *Cártel de Sinaloa* (CDS) and others have similar arsenals.[73] Their firepower makes them a significant threat; not big enough to defeat the FFAA, but capable of outmaneuvering and outgunning preventive police; and cause troop losses and bloodbaths of innocent civilians.

To control non-state armed groups like Mexican COs, scholars and practitioners recommend gendarmerie-style forces or Stability Police Units (SPUs). [74] Michael Dzedzic and Colonel Christine Stark from the US Institute of Peace describe SPUs as “robust, armed police units that are capable of performing specialized law enforcement and public order functions that require disciplined group action. They are trained in and have the flexibility to use either less-than-lethal or lethal force, as circumstances dictate. They are rapidly deployable, logistically self-sustainable, and able to collaborate effectively with both the military and the police components of a peace mission.”[75] John P. Sullivan, former L.A. police Lieutenant and expert in Mexican narco-wars, explains that neither the police nor the military alone have the required set of capabilities to control powerful Mexican COs.[76] He remarks that “police are ill suited for addressing armed insurrection and military-type operations,” because they lack essential military tactical skills. By contrast, Sullivan says, gendarmeries or SPUs “are effective social control and security organs for operating in contested zones ... where there is a need to bridge policing and military operations.” Professor and security specialist Nathan Jones elaborated on the needed capabilities during a webinar in July 2012. “You need a force with firepower and organizational capability to take on these groups, but at the same time, you need a law enforcement understanding and capability and rubric for them to operate under, so that they don’t infringe upon the citizenry’s civil rights.”[77] Thus, the configuration and skills of gendarmeries and SPUs contribute to their effectiveness. Accordingly, Mexico’s GN is developing these kind of features and capabilities. They include:

- Becoming “rapidly deployable” and “self-sustainable” throughout Mexico.
- Operating in close coordination with military forces and other federal, state and municipal authorities.
- Becoming a robust federal force of around 100,000 troops with plans to double its size.
- Conducting intelligence operations and complex investigations.
- Training in policing, military tactical skills and discipline, human rights, and the proportional use of force.

Essentially, the GN is developing its potential to become an effective gendarmerie-style force to help reduce the violence that plagues Mexico.

Final Considerations and Conclusion

The GN is in its initial stages of construction as a gendarmerie. However, it will take years for national guards to consolidate and develop their full potential as trustworthy, human rights-abiding, and effective law enforcement. When they do, national guards are likely to become part of the solution and contribute to make it possible for the FFAA to return to the barracks. Even then, however, national guards cannot do it alone. Mexico’s historical conditions of poverty as well as ineffective, poorly professionalized, abusive, and corrupt law enforcement and justice institutions at all levels make the GN tasks difficult. The GN’s ability to achieve its objectives depends on Mexico successfully surmounting at least three challenges:[78]

1. The GN is an auxiliary to state and municipal police, not a replacement. Its role is to augment their capacity, but most of them are far from being capable of providing greater public safety to their communities. They need to be effectively overhauled, strengthened, and cleansed.
2. Mexico needs an effective and solid penal justice system to reduce impunity and discourage criminality. It must be professionalized, cleansed, and its capabilities strengthened.
3. The potential for corruption and human rights abuses in the GN exists. The challenge is to make them an exception rather than the rule. The development of strong and effective assessment and investigation mechanisms; accountability systems; internal and independent controls; and committed command is essential to reduce impunity and these offenses.

On the bright side, Mexico and national guards face an unprecedented window of opportunity to overcome some of the challenges and for the GN to become a trustworthy, effective, and human rights-abiding institution. Unlike previous administrations that presumably tolerated or abetted corruption and physical and lethal abuses, President López Obrador has the political will to make it happen. Obviously, political will and leadership by themselves are not sufficient, but they are indispensable.

Endnotes

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[6] México Unidos Contra la Delincuencia (MUCD), "Mexico pasó de seis bandas de narcotráfico a 400 grupos criminales: MUCD," 11 October 2017, <https://www.mucd.org.mx/2017/10/mex> (<https://www.mucd.org.mx/2017/10/mex>).

[7] "INEGI data: 35,964 homicides in 2018...nearly 300,000 victims since 2007," *Frontera List*, 31 July 2019, <https://fronteralist.org/2019/07/31/inegi-data-35964-homicides-in-2018-nearly-300000-victims-since-2007/> (<https://fronteralist.org/2019/07/31/inegi-data-35964-homicides-in-2018-nearly-300000-victims-since-2007/>); Most victims were killed by DTOs and other COS with illicit firearms smuggled from the US, Fabián Medina, "México y Estados Unidos: Radiografía del tráfico ilícito de armas en México," *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior*, número especial 2020, <https://revistadigital.sre.gob.mx/images/stories/numeros/ne2020/medinaradiografiarmpene2020.pdf> (<https://revistadigital.sre.gob.mx/images/stories/numeros/ne2020/medinaradiografiarmpene2020.pdf>).

[8] "Conferencia de prensa matutina del presidente López Obrador en Nuevo León del 20 de febrero de 2019, Versión estenográfica del diálogo con medios de comunicación," Presidencia de la República, 20 February 2020, <https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/prensa/conferencia-de-prensa-matutina-del-presidente-lopez-obrador-en-nuevo-leon-del-20-de-febrero-de-2019> (<https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/prensa/conferencia-de-prensa-matutina-del-presidente-lopez-obrador-en-nuevo-leon-del-20-de-febrero-de-2019>). Historically, Mexican federal police have not functioned as an organization to protect citizens, but as an (often repressive) apparatus to maintain socio-political control to keep the political regime established in the 1920s in power.

[9] Ley de la Guardia Nacional," Cámara de Diputados, 27 May 2019 in endnote 1. Also, see Presidencia de la República, "Presidente celebra avances de la Guardia Nacional en el primer año de funciones," *AMLO*, 30 June 2020, <https://lopezobrador.org.mx/2020/06/30/presidente-celebra-avances-de-la-guardia-nacional-en-primer-ano-de-funciones/> (<https://lopezobrador.org.mx/2020/06/30/presidente-celebra-avances-de-la-guardia-nacional-en-primer-ano-de-funciones/>).

[10] "DECRETO por el que se aprueba la Estrategia Nacional de Seguridad Pública del Gobierno de la República," DOF/SEGOB (Diario Federal de la Federación [DOF]/Secretaría de Gobernación-SEGOB), 16 May 2019, https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5560463&fecha=16/05/2019 (https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5560463&fecha=16/05/2019). (https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5560463&fecha=16/05/2019).

[11] "Modelo de Policía de Proximidad," Gobierno de Mexico/SSPC, 4 June 2020, https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/556177/Modelo_de_Polici_a_de_Proximidad_04_06_2020.pdf (https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/556177/Modelo_de_Polici_a_de_Proximidad_04_06_2020.pdf); and "DECRETO por el que se aprueba la Estrategia Nacional," DOF/SEGOB, 16 May 2019, in endnote 10.

[12] Javier Oliva Posada, "Perspectiva Social de la Guardia Nacional," *Vértigo Político*, 23 October 2019, <https://www.vertigopolitico.com/columnas/javier-oliva-posada/perspectiva-social-de-la-guardia-nacional> (<https://www.vertigopolitico.com/columnas/javier-oliva-posada/perspectiva-social-de-la-guardia-nacional>).

[13] The *Policía Federal Ministerial* (Ministerial Federal Police) and the *Agencia de Investigación Criminal* (Criminal Investigation Agency), under the *Procuraduría General de la República* (PGR) disappeared in March 2019. They were replaced by a federal investigative agency called the *Coordinación de Métodos de Investigación* (Coordination of Investigation Methods) under the new *Fiscalía General de la República* (FGR, similar to the US Attorney General/Dept. of Justice).

[14] Michael Dziedzic and Colonel Christine Stark, "Bridging the Public Security Gap: The Role of the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU) in Contemporary Peace Operations," US Institute of Peace. 16 June 2006, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2006/06/bridging-public-security-gap-role-center-excellence-stability-police-units> (<https://www.usip.org/publications/2006/06/bridging-public-security-gap-role-center-excellence-stability-police-units>).

[15] Mexico has two separate military Secretariats —SEDENA and SEMAR. Both are led by military Secretaries. SEDENA is composed of the Army and the Air Force. DOF/SEGOB, "Decreto por el que se reforman," 26 March 2019, in endnote 11.

[16] "2 Informe de Labores," SSPC (Secretaría de Seguridad Pública y Protección Ciudadana), 1 September 2020, https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/574793/2019-2020_Segundo_Informe_de_Labores_SSPC__1_.pdf.
(https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/574793/2019-2020_Segundo_Informe_de_Labores_SSPC__1_.pdf).

[17] "Durazo reporta reducción de militares en Guardia Nacional." Forbes, 22 May 2020, <https://www.forbes.com.mx/politica-durazo-reduccion-militares-guardia-nacional/> (<https://www.forbes.com.mx/politica-durazo-reduccion-militares-guardia-nacional/>). Commissioned military personnel may return to the FFAA after five years or transfer permanently to the GN as civilians, as per SSPC (Secretaría de Seguridad Pública y Protección Ciudadana), "Conoce más de la Guardia Nacional," SSPC, 24 July 2019, <https://www.gob.mx/guardianacional/articulos/guardia-nacional-5?idiom=es> (<https://www.gob.mx/guardianacional/articulos/guardia-nacional-5?idiom=es>).

[18] "Conferencia de prensa matutina del presidente López Obrador," Presidencia de la República, <https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/es/articulos/version-estenografica-conferencia-de-prensa-del-presidente-andres-manuel-lopez-obrador-del-21-de-octubre-de-2020?idiom=es> (<https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/es/articulos/version-estenografica-conferencia-de-prensa-del-presidente-andres-manuel-lopez-obrador-del-21-de-octubre-de-2020?idiom=es>).

[19] Also, national guards take basic knowledge courses like math, Mexican and world history, Spanish, English, writing, and others. "Decreto por el que se reforman," 26 March 2019, in endnote 11; and Guardia Nacional/Gobierno de Mexico, "Elementos concluyen cursos de formación inicial de guardia nacional," DOF/SEGOB, 10 December 2019, <https://www.gob.mx/guardianacional/es/articulos/elementos-concluyen-cursos-de-formacion-inicial-de-guardia-nacional> (<https://www.gob.mx/guardianacional/es/articulos/elementos-concluyen-cursos-de-formacion-inicial-de-guardia-nacional>). For a more detailed list see Alejandro Hope, "Mexico's National Guard: What do We Know so Far?" Wilson Center, January 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/Presentacion%20Wilson%20Center%2015012020.pdf> (<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/Presentacion%20Wilson%20Center%2015012020.pdf>).

[20] Íñigo Guevara Moyano, "Mexico's National Guard: When Police Are Not Enough," Wilson Center, January 2020, p. 17, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/mexicos-national-guard-when-police-are-not-enough> (<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/mexicos-national-guard-when-police-are-not-enough>).

[21] "Grupo de Operaciones Especiales (GOPES) de la Policía Federal," 29 March 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/notes/sorpresavelocidad-y-violencia-en-acci%C3%B3n/grupo-de-operaciones-especiales-gopes-de-la-polic%C3%ADa-federal/758575731004557/> (<https://www.facebook.com/notes/sorpresavelocidad-y-violencia-en-acci%C3%B3n/grupo-de-operaciones-especiales-gopes-de-la-polic%C3%ADa-federal/758575731004557/>). Also, see "Decreto por el que se expide la Ley de la Policía Federal," Cámara de Diputados, DOF, 1 June 2009, http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/ref/lpf/LPF_orig_01jun09.pdf (http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/ref/lpf/LPF_orig_01jun09.pdf). Known as *Grupos Especiales de Operaciones* (Special Groups of Operations-GEOS) or *Grupos de Operaciones Especiales* (Special Operation Groups-GOPES), GOPES belonged to the PF-*División de Policías Federales*. GOPES-style forces existed earlier, under different names, in federal and state police corps. Former GEN gendarmes and PF special forces are now in the GN as a *Unidad de Apoyo a la Guardia Nacional* (specialized support unit) called *Dirección General de Servicios Especiales*. It is under the *Jefatura General de Coordinación Policial* (General Directorate of Police Coordination). "Acuerdo por el que se crea la Unidad de Apoyo a la Guardia Nacional, denominada Dirección General de Servicios Especiales," DOF/SEGOB, 29 April 2020, https://dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5592426&fecha=29/04/2020 (https://dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5592426&fecha=29/04/2020).

[22] "Ley Nacional sobre el uso de la fuerza," Cámara de Diputados, 27 May 2019, http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/LNUF_270519.pdf (http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/LNUF_270519.pdf); and "Basic Principles of the Use of Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials," United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (UNHROHC), 27 August-7 September 1990, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/useofforceandfirearms.aspx> (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/useofforceandfirearms.aspx>).

[23] "Conoce más de la Guardia Nacional," SSPC (Secretaría de Seguridad Pública y Protección Ciudadana), *Defensa (defensa.com)*, 24 July 2019, <https://www.gob.mx/guardianacional/articulos/guardia-nacional-5?idiom=es> (<https://www.gob.mx/guardianacional/articulos/guardia-nacional-5?idiom=es>).

[24] Jorge Medellín, "La Guardia Nacional recibe 50,000 pistolas Sig Sauer," 29 April 2020, <https://www.defensa.com/mexico/guardia-nacional-mexico-recibe-50-mil-pistolas-sig-sauer> (<https://www.defensa.com/mexico/guardia-nacional-mexico-recibe-50-mil-pistolas-sig-sauer>).

[25] "Ley de la Guardia Nacional," Cámara de Diputados, 27 May 2019, in endnote 1. For a detailed list of GN actions and results as of 31 July 2020, see SSPC, "2 Informe," 1 September 2020, in endnote 16.

[26] Proximity officers may be visibly distinguished from national guards in the field. They use uniforms of non-intimidating designs; wear arm bracelets with the words *Proximidad*; and visibly carry only less-than-lethal and short firearms.

[27] "¿Qué es la Guardia Nacional?" SSPC/GN (Secretaría de Seguridad Pública y Protección Ciudadana /Guardia Nacional), 24 July 2019, <https://www.gob.mx/guardianacional/articulos/blog-noticias-1> (<https://www.gob.mx/guardianacional/articulos/blog-noticias-1>).

[28] The GN investigates these cases and helps with transportation and teams of forensic experts with canine binomials, sensors, drones, and aircraft. Victims of enforced disappearances are those persons who "are arrested, detained or abducted against their will or otherwise deprived of their liberty by officials of different branches or levels of Government, or by organized groups or private individuals acting on behalf of, or with the support, direct or indirect, consent or acquiescence of the Government, followed by a refusal to disclose the fate or whereabouts of the persons concerned or a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of their liberty, which places such persons outside the protection of the law." "Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance 1993," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/observances/victims-enforced-disappearance> (<https://www.un.org/en/observances/victims-enforced-disappearance>).

[29] Mexico classifies crimes as of *fuero común* and *fuero federal*. Those of *fuero común* are of state responsibility and include crimes like homicides, extortion, kidnapping, burglary, theft, robbery, and others. Federal crimes include organized crime, money laundering, and cybercrime (e.g., illicit firearms sales, child pornography, human trafficking, and enforced disappearances), and others.

[30] “2 Informe,” in endnote 16, SSPC. The GN must obtain warrants from federal and state *fiscalías* (prosecutors) and judges to conduct searches, detentions, install listening devices, and other actions. The GN financial intelligence functions support the *Unidad de Inteligencia Financiera* (UIF). The UIF is the leading agency against illicit financial operations under the *Secretaría de Hacienda* (like the Treasury Department-SHCP). The UIF coordinates with the *Fiscalía General de la República* (FGR).

[31] The main function of the extinct *Gendarmería Nacional* (GEN) was monitoring territory to protect productive cycles.

[32] “2 Informe Gobierno de Mexico 2019-2020, Presidencia de la República, 1 September 2020, <https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/es/articulos/version-estenografica-2-informe-de-gobierno-2019-2020?idiom=es> (<https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/es/articulos/version-estenografica-2-informe-de-gobierno-2019-2020?idiom=es>). The GN coordinates with the national petroleum company *Petróleos Mexicanos* (PEMEX), the FFAA, and other authorities to conduct these functions. Previous administrations did not persecute organized *huachicoleo*, although for years it has depleted financial and natural resources from PEMEX. This activity increased in 2000 and skyrocketed by 2018. Just between 2016-2019, the loss for Mexico is estimated at about USD\$6 billion, as per Arturo Solis, “Los 5 estados con más huachicoleo durante 2018,” *Forbes*, 23 January 2019 <https://www.forbes.com.mx/los-5-estados-con-mas-huachicoleo-durante-2018/> (<https://www.forbes.com.mx/los-5-estados-con-mas-huachicoleo-durante-2018/>).

[33] Since 1 August 2019, GN forces were deployed as part of the *Operativos Blindaje Frontera Sur* and *Frontera Norte* (Border Armor South and North) led by SEDENA to regulate massive inflows of undocumented immigrants and deter and dissuade US-bound transit. The GEN performed similar functions from 2014-2018. Maureen Meyer and Adam Isaacson, “The ‘Wall’ Before the Wall: Mexico’s Crackdown on Migration at its Southern Border,” Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), 17 December 2019, <https://www.wola.org/analysis/mexico-southern-border-report/> (<https://www.wola.org/analysis/mexico-southern-border-report/>).

[34] “Conferencia matutina del Presidente Andrés Manuel López Obrador,” Versión Estenográfica, Presidencia de la República, 18 September 2020, <https://Lópezobrador.org.mx/2020/09/18/version-estenografica-de-la-conferencia-de-prensa-matutina-del-presidente-andres-manuel-López-obrador-378/> (<https://Lópezobrador.org.mx/2020/09/18/version-estenografica-de-la-conferencia-de-prensa-matutina-del-presidente-andres-manuel-López-obrador-378/>).

[35] “2 Informe,” SSPC, 1 September 2020, p 25-26 in endnote 16. Some opposition governors, like the one from Guanajuato state, have refused to attend these daily meetings with the federal government. Meetings are known as *Mesas para la Reconstrucción de la Paz* (Roundtables for Peace Reconstruction).

[36] “Conferencia matutina,” Presidencia, 18 September 2020 in endnote 34.

[37] “Reglamento de la Ley de la Guardia Nacional,” DOF/SEGOB, 29 June 2019, https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5564530&fecha=29/06/2019 (https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5564530&fecha=29/06/2019). The law establishes that the top of the GN chain of command must be civilian. The first SSPC Secretary was Alfonso Durazo (2019-2020), a civilian. He resigned as of 1 November 2020 to run for a governorship. Rosa Icela Rodríguez was appointed to replace him. She is a civilian who, since the early 2000s, has occupied various public security positions in the Mexico City government and was its Secretary of Governance (2018-2020).

[38] The GN Commander is Luis Rodríguez Bucio, a PhD in national security affairs and retired 3-star General of the Mexican Air Force/SEDENA. His PhD dissertation is titled “The effectiveness/efficiency of public security policies to address the threat of drug trafficking in Mexico.” Among other positions before the GN, Bucio was President of the Council of Delegates of the Interamerican Defense Board-Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, D.C.

[39] “Reglamento,” DOF/SEGOB, 29 June 2019, in endnote 37. At the third level, adjacent to the Territorial Command, are the Specialized Normative Bodies (SNBs), and Specialized Competency Bodies (SCBs). The SNBs include Internal Affairs, Human Rights, Discipline and Professional Development, and others. The SCBs include intelligence, investigations, counternarcotics, and others. Also, under the GN commander but above the third level is the *Jefatura General de Coordinación Policial* (General Directorate of Police Coordination). “Acuerdo por el que se crea la Unidad de Apoyo,” DOF/SEGOB, 29 April 2020, in endnote 21.

[40] Alejandro Hope, “El problema es la Secretaría, no la Secretaria,” *El Universal*, 2 November 2020, <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/opinion/alejandro-hope/el-problema-es-la-secretaria-no-la-secretaria> (<https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/opinion/alejandro-hope/el-problema-es-la-secretaria-no-la-secretaria>).

[41] “Acuerdo por el que se dispone de la Fuerza Armada permanente para llevar a cabo tareas de seguridad pública de manera extraordinaria, regulada, fiscalizada, subordinada y complementaria,” DOF/Segob, 11 May 2020, https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5593105&fecha=11/05/2020 (https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5593105&fecha=11/05/2020). This authority was established first in the 26 March 2019 constitutional reform, published in “Decreto por el que se reforman,” DOF/SEGOB, 26 March 2019, in endnote 15.

[42] “Decreto por el que se reforman,” DOF/SEGOB, 26 March 2019, in endnote 25.

[43] “Reglamento,” DOF/SEGOB, 29 June 2019, in endnote 37; “Presentan a comandante de la Guardia Nacional e integrantes de órgano asesor,” Conferencia de prensa matutina del presidente López Obrador, Presidencia de la República, 11 April 2019, <https://presidente.gob.mx/presentan-a-comandante-de-la-guardia-nacional-e-integrantes-de-organo-asesor/> (<https://presidente.gob.mx/presentan-a-comandante-de-la-guardia-nacional-e-integrantes-de-organo-asesor/>).

[44] “World Report 2019: Mexico Events of 2018,” Human Rights Watch (HRW), <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/mexico> (<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/mexico>); David M. Sabet, *Police Reform in México: Informal Politics and the Challenge of Institutional Change*, p. 5, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012. See Sabet’s Chapter 4 for Mexican police citizen abuse and human rights

violations.

[45] "World Report 2019," Human Rights Watch, in endnote 44. See endnote 28 for definition of enforced disappearance.

[46] "AMLO: "Zero Impunity" for Military Involved in Ayotzinapa Case," *TeleSUR*, 27 September 2020, <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/amlo-zero-impunity-for-military-involved-in-ayotzinapa-case-20200927-0010.html> (<https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/amlo-zero-impunity-for-military-involved-in-ayotzinapa-case-20200927-0010.html>). The investigation was reopened in 2019. In September 2020, AMLO made an unprecedented statement for a Mexican president. He said that, for the sake of justice and the integrity of the FFAA as a whole, there would be "zero military impunity." Moreover, the FGR head stated that 70 arrest orders were being issued against federal and local police, high-ranking federal prosecutorial officials, and military officers accused of participating in the Ayotzinapa case. "Mexico issues arrest warrants on sixth anniversary of disappearance of 43 college students," Reuters, 26 September 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-human-rights-ayotzinapa/mexico-issues-arrest-warrants-on-sixth-anniversary-of-disappearance-of-43-college-students-idUSKBN26H0RP> (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-human-rights-ayotzinapa/mexico-issues-arrest-warrants-on-sixth-anniversary-of-disappearance-of-43-college-students-idUSKBN26H0RP>).

[47] David M. Sabet, 2012, in endnote 44. See Sabet's Chapter 4 on how Mexican police turned into one of the most corrupt in the world.

[48] Maureen Meyer, "Mexico's Police: Many Reforms, Little Progress: Report," Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), 8 May 2014. https://www.wola.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/La-Policia-C3%ADa-en-Mexico_Muchas-Reformas-Pocos-Avances.pdf (https://www.wola.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/La-Policia-C3%ADa-en-Mexico_Muchas-Reformas-Pocos-Avances.pdf); Juan Camilo Jaramillo, "Entire Police Forces Continue to be Arrested in Mexico," *InSight Crime*, 21 August 2019, <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/entire-police-forces-continue-arrested-mexico/> (<https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/entire-police-forces-continue-arrested-mexico/>); and Arturo Angel, "Seis años de desvíos quebraron a Policía Federal; fraude supera los 2 mil 650 millones de pesos," *Animal Político*, 25 August 2020, <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2020/08/desvios-policia-federal-2-mil-650-mdp/> (<https://www.animalpolitico.com/2020/08/desvios-policia-federal-2-mil-650-mdp/>). Cartel and official narco-collusion expert Anabel Hernández, author of *The Traitor: El diario secreto del hijo del Mayo Zambada*, 2019, argues that the PF has been an illicit money-making enterprise for mid- and top-level officials responsible for supervising personnel, recruitment and promotions, equipment acquisitions, and other functions. They use their power to demand kickbacks and bribes and embezzle public funds.

[49] Elyssa Pachico, "Beating of Jailed Mexican Top Cop Raises Questions of Dirty Politics," *InSight Crime*, 15 May 2012, <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/beating-of-jailed-mexican-top-cop-raises-questions-of-dirty-politics/> (<https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/beating-of-jailed-mexican-top-cop-raises-questions-of-dirty-politics/>); "Calderón supo de nexos entre García Luna y Cártel de Sinaloa: ex Comisario de PFP," *Aristegui Noticias*, 12 December 2019, <https://aristeginoticias.com/1212/mexico/felipe-calderon-supo-de-los-nexos-entre-garcia-luna-y-el-cartel-de-sinaloa-ex-comisario-de-la-policia-federal/> (<https://aristeginoticias.com/1212/mexico/felipe-calderon-supo-de-los-nexos-entre-garcia-luna-y-el-cartel-de-sinaloa-ex-comisario-de-la-policia-federal/>).

[50] "Former Mexican Secretary of Public Security Arrested for Drug-Trafficking Conspiracy and Making False Statements," US Department of Justice, 10 December 2019, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/former-mexican-secretary-public-security-arrested-drug-trafficking-conspiracy-and> (<https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/former-mexican-secretary-public-security-arrested-drug-trafficking-conspiracy-and>).

[51] Arturo Angel, "Congelan más de 45 cuentas a Cárdenas y Pequeño García por sospechas de lavado," *Animal Político*, 31 July 2020, <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2020/07/congelan-cuentas-cardenas-palomino-pequeno-garcia-lavado/> (<https://www.animalpolitico.com/2020/07/congelan-cuentas-cardenas-palomino-pequeno-garcia-lavado/>).

[52] Maureen Meyer, 2014 in endnote 48.

[53] Daniel M. Sabet, p. 36, in endnote 44.

[54] Abigail L. Hall and Christopher R. Coyne, "The Militarization of US Domestic Policing," *The Independent Review*, Spring 2013, p. 487, https://www.independent.org/pdf/tir/tir_17_04_01_hall.pdf (https://www.independent.org/pdf/tir/tir_17_04_01_hall.pdf).

[55] The Policía Federal de Caminos (Federal Highway Police-PFC, 1931-1999) had military troops. ASF (Auditoría Superior de la Federación), Grupo Funcional de Gobierno, "Informe de resultados de la fiscalización Superior de la cuenta pública 2011". Policía Federal, Carrera Policial, Auditoría de Desempeño 11-0-36C00-07-0013 GB-124, https://www.asf.gob.mx/Trans/Informes/IR2011i/Grupos/Gobierno/2011_0013_a.pdf (https://www.asf.gob.mx/Trans/Informes/IR2011i/Grupos/Gobierno/2011_0013_a.pdf). The *Policía Federal Preventiva* (PFP) started with more than half its officers from SEDENA's Military Police and SEMAR personnel, including those inherited from the Federal Highway Police. By 2007, over 16,000 military troops accounted for more than half of PFP forces, though many deserted later. In the end, the PFP had only 4,500 troops. Also, the PFP had special forces. Security and defense specialist George Grayson, remarks that the goal had been to model the PFP as a paramilitary force, like Chile's *Carabineros*, but political events frustrated the plan. See George W. Grayson, "High Drama Over Mexico's Next Defense Secretary," Foreign Policy Research Institute, E-Notes, September 2012; Gustavo Carrillo García, "La Guardia Nacional, otro intento para abatir la ola de violencia en el país," *La Jornada*, 2 January 2019, <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2019/01/02/politica/01n1pol> (<https://www.jornada.com.mx/2019/01/02/politica/01n1pol>); and Daniel M. Sabet, 2012, p. 48, in endnote 44, cites Manrique Gandarúa, "Se han integrado 16 mil soldados del Ejército a la PFP," 22 May 2007. Gandarúa's article is unavailable online.

[56] In 2006, SSP Secretary García Luna began to convert the PFP into the *Policía Federal* (PF). But it was not until 2009 that the PFP was officially dismantled and the PF formalized. "Decreto por el que se expide la Ley de la Policía Federal," Cámara, DOF, 1 June 2009, in endnote 21; Gustavo Carrillo, "La Guardia," 2 January 2019 in endnote 55. "Mexico y las tragedias regionales," *InfoDefensa.com*, 4 August 2011, <https://www.infodefensa.com/latam/2011/08/04/opinion-mexico-y-las-tragedias-regionales.php> (<https://www.infodefensa.com/latam/2011/08/04/opinion-mexico-y-las-tragedias-regionales.php>). By 2018, the PF had only 37,300, including about 4,500 troops from the Gendarmería Nacional (GEN). Arturo Angel, "Con todo y Gendarmería, la Policía Federal tiene ahora mil agentes menos que al inicio del sexenio," *Animal Político*, 3 October 2018, <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2018/10/policia-federal-menos-agentes-e-pn/> (<https://www.animalpolitico.com/2018/10/policia-federal-menos-agentes-e-pn/>).

- [57] "Policía Federal: 90 años de contar con la confianza de México," *Policía Federal Blog*, 13 July 2018, <https://www.gob.mx/policiafederal/articulos/policia-federal-90-anos-de-contar-con-la-confianza-de-mexico> (<https://www.gob.mx/policiafederal/articulos/policia-federal-90-anos-de-contar-con-la-confianza-de-mexico>)_The PF special forces are known as GEOS or GOPES. See endnote 21 for more on them.
- [58] John P. Sullivan, 'The Benefits of a Paramilitary Force in Mexico,' *Chron (Houston Chronicle)/Baker Institute Blog*, 4 January 2013, <https://blog.chron.com/bakerblog/2013/01/the-benefits-of-a-paramilitary-force-in-mexico/> (<https://blog.chron.com/bakerblog/2013/01/the-benefits-of-a-paramilitary-force-in-mexico/>).
- [59] Íñigo Guevara, January 2020, in endnote 20.
- [60] "De la Gendarmería Nacional a la División de la Gendarmería de la Policía Federal," FDHS, 26 August 2014, <https://fdhs.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Germanderia.pdf> (<https://fdhs.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Germanderia.pdf>).
- [61] Arturo Angel, "Con todo," 3 October 2018 in endnote 56. The goal had been for GEN to reach a 40,000 force, but it started and ended with just about 5,000 officers, including 1,000 transferred from the PF, and responsible mainly for territorial monitoring.
- [62] Gary Hale, "Paramilitary power in Mexico: A strategy shift in Mexico's drug war," *Chron (Houston Chronicle)/Baker Institute Blog*, 25 July 2012, <https://blog.chron.com/bakerblog/2013/01/the-benefits-of-a-paramilitary-force-in-mexico/> (<https://blog.chron.com/bakerblog/2013/01/the-benefits-of-a-paramilitary-force-in-mexico/>).
- [63] Actually, during the previous years, the PF and other police corps committed more lethality and abuses than the military. The case of Salvador Camacho Aguirre, former Director of the PF Division of Federal Forces-GOPES is an example of extreme police lethality. Besides accusations in other cases, during his tenure Camacho was accused of torture and arbitrary execution of 22 victims in a confrontation that ended in a massacre with more than 40 people killed in Tanhuato, Michoacán in 2015. Patricia Dávila, "Cesan a mando de la Policía Federal acusado de excesos," *Proceso*, 16 November 2016, <https://www.proceso.com.mx/nacional/2016/11/16/cesan-mando-de-la-policia-federal-acusado-de-excesos-173950.html> (<https://www.proceso.com.mx/nacional/2016/11/16/cesan-mando-de-la-policia-federal-acusado-de-excesos-173950.html>).
- [64] "Presidente celebra avances," Presidencia, 30 Jun 2020, in endnote 9; "DECRETO por el que se aprueba la Estrategia Nacional," DOF/SEGOB, 16 May 2019, in endnote 10; and "Decreto por el que se aprueba el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo," DOF/SEGOB, 12 July 2019, https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5565598&fecha=12/07/2019 (https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5565598&fecha=12/07/2019)_The NPSS is a strategy unlike the one (2007-2018) formulated and implemented in coordination with the US under the Merida Initiative. For more on the Merida Initiative, see Clare Ribando Seelke, 2020 in endnote 5. The NPSS' central objective is to pacify Mexico, not combating transnational drug trafficking as under the previous Mexico-US strategy. In addition to human rights and the proportional use of force, the NPSS prioritizes intelligence, investigation, anti-corruption, law enforcement, and social development means over the use of lethal force. Its primary targets are no longer DTO kingpins, as before, but COs identified as violence-generators, regardless of illicit activity. The disruption of the illicit drug supply-chain is still an objective, but not the priority as before.
- [65] Eduardo Guerrero, participation in "Interpreting the Mexican Cartels' Latest Public Maneuvers," webinar, sponsored by Canadian Council for the Americas, 22 July 2020, video, <https://www.cacanada.com/interpreting-the-mexican-cartels-latest-public-maneuvers-webinar-july-30-11am-edt/#.X81qvi3MyQx> (<https://www.cacanada.com/interpreting-the-mexican-cartels-latest-public-maneuvers-webinar-july-30-11am-edt/#.X81qvi3MyQx>)_ Eduardo Guerrero is Director & Partner at Lantia Intelligence in Mexico City.
- [66] "Policía Militar de cara a su incorporación a la Guardia Nacional," *Milenio*, 25 February 2019, <https://www.milenio.com/mileniotv/policia/policia-militar-cara-incorporacion-guardia-nacional> (<https://www.milenio.com/mileniotv/policia/policia-militar-cara-incorporacion-guardia-nacional>).
- [67] Mónica del Carmen Serrano, "AMLO's Security," 2019, in endnote 4, said that due to recruitment challenges, the PF was a "squalid" force of about 38,000. About insufficient budget, see "En 6 meses debe verse un cambio en tendencias de inseguridad: Durazo," *El Financiero*, 25 February 2019, <https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/en-6-meses-debe-verse-un-cambio-en-tendencias-de-inseguridad-durazo> (<https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/en-6-meses-debe-verse-un-cambio-en-tendencias-de-inseguridad-durazo>); Marcos Muédano, "Dan 30 mil policías más a Durazo para la Guardia Nacional," *La Silla Rota*, 10 Jun 2019, <https://lasillarota.com/nacion/dan-30-mil-policias-mas-a-durazo-para-la-guardia-nacional-cdmx-mexico-policias-durazo/289923> (<https://lasillarota.com/nacion/dan-30-mil-policias-mas-a-durazo-para-la-guardia-nacional-cdmx-mexico-policias-durazo/289923>)_The PF was nearly bankrupt and unable to pay even for basics, like utilities, gas for patrol cars, and hotel bills for lodging troops in the field. Arturo Angel, "La Policía Federal está en "quiebra": debe casi 2 mil 500 millones y no tiene para pagar," *Animal Político*, 15 April 2019, <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2019/04/policia-federal-quiebra-debe-millones/> (<https://www.animalpolitico.com/2019/04/policia-federal-quiebra-debe-millones/>).
- [68] The most shocking case of alleged narco-collusion is the arrest of 4-star General and former (2012-2018) Secretary of SEDENA Salvador Cienfuegos in Los Angeles, CA on 15 October 2020. The US DOJ charged him with drug trafficking and other related crimes from 2015-2017. Yet the DOJ and FGR accorded that US charges against Cienfuegos would be dismissed and he would be returned home to pursue the investigation, and possible prosecution, in Mexico. Whether or not Cienfuegos is prosecuted depends on the ability of the Mexican FGR and justice system, and the admissibility in Mexico of the US evidence. This is the first time that Mexico investigates such a high-ranking military official. César Gutiérrez Priego, "El poder del generalato en riesgo," *La Silla Rota*, 24 November 2020, <https://lasillarota.com/opinion/columnas/el-poder-del-generalato-en-riesgo/457950> (<https://lasillarota.com/opinion/columnas/el-poder-del-generalato-en-riesgo/457950>); Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Cienfuegos and the US-Mexico Firestorm," *Brookings*, 23 November, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/11/23/cienfuegos-and-the-us-mexico-firestorm/> (<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/11/23/cienfuegos-and-the-us-mexico-firestorm/>).
- [69] "Prefieren que Ejército cuide las calles," *Parametría*, 30 June 2017, <http://www.parametria.com.mx/estudios/prefieren-que-ejercito-cuide-las-calles/> (<http://www.parametria.com.mx/estudios/prefieren-que-ejercito-cuide-las-calles/>).

[70] "Mexico: Confianza en Instituciones 2019," Mitofsky, 4 January 2020, <http://actualizar.consulta.mx/index.php/encuestas-e-investigaciones/item/1309-mexico-confianza-en-instituciones-2019> (<http://actualizar.consulta.mx/index.php/encuestas-e-investigaciones/item/1309-mexico-confianza-en-instituciones-2019>).

[71] "2 Informe," SSPC, 2020, p. 15 in endnote 16.

[72] "Encuesta Nacional de Seguridad Pública Urbana" (ENSU), Percepción del desempeño de las autoridades de seguridad pública," INEGI (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía*), Press Release No. 153/20, March 2020, https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/saladeprensa/boletines/2020/ensu/ensu2020_04.pdf (https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/saladeprensa/boletines/2020/ensu/ensu2020_04.pdf).

[73] Jorge A Medellín, *Defensa* (*defensa.com*), 23 Oct 2020, <https://www.defensa.com/mexico/fuerzas-especiales-ejercito-mexicano-enviadas-culiacan-para-1> (<https://www.defensa.com/mexico/fuerzas-especiales-ejercito-mexicano-enviadas-culiacan-para-1>). The CDS gunmen involved in the frustrated capture of the son of El Chapo in Culiacán, Sinaloa in October 2020 had similar weapons.

[74] Sonia Alda Mejías, "La Gendarmería en México: Un proyecto frustrado pese a ser un eficaz instrumento contra el crimen organizado," Real Instituto Elcano, 16 October 2013, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_es/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/comentario-alda-reforma-gendarmeria-mexico-crimen-organizado (http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_es/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/comentario-alda-reforma-gendarmeria-mexico-crimen-organizado).

[75] Michael Dzedzic and Colonel Christine Stark/US Institute of Peace, "Bridging the Public," 16 June 2006, in endnote 14.

[76] John P. Sullivan, "The Benefits of a Paramilitary Force in Mexico," 4 January 2013, in endnote 58.

[77] Nathan Jones, participation in "Mexico, Drugs and a Possible Way Forward," panel sponsored by Rice University's Baker Institute, *YouTube*, 28 July 2012, video on "Mexico, Drugs, and a Possible way Forward," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fMwWRZVY7M> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fMwWRZVY7M>).

[78] A big challenge, but outside the scope of this essay, is to conciliate Mexico-US security priorities in their bilateral agenda. To significantly decrease the violence in Mexico, it is essential to reduce US pressure to prioritize combating the drug supply/DTOs over Mexico's pacification. Also, the US must try harder to reduce arms smuggling into Mexico and restrict domestic arms sales, which is essential for both objectives. Thus, a different US strategy—not centered on the use of force—is needed to address the drug supply-demand quandary.

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Dr. Patricia Escamilla-Hamm specializes in US-Mexico security and defense cooperation and the combat of transnational organized crime. She is a scholar and independent consultant and former Associate Professor of National Security Affairs at the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (WJPC, National Defense University) in Washington, DC. As a subject matter expert at WJPC, she was responsible for briefing officials from the US Department of Defense (DOD) and other departments, as well as from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Dr. Escamilla conducts research and frequently lectures at academic and government institutions and other fora. She taught at the University of California at Irvine (UCI), and was assistant professor at Iowa State University (ISU) and El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (Colef, Tijuana, Mexico). Dr. Escamilla has produced policy research for the DOD and provided consultancy for the Organization of American States (OAS) and Mexican and bi-national government institutions.

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