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FEATURED Q&A

Will the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Be Effective?

Q U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told Caribbean leaders June 10 in Barbados that the United States is committed to the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, which was launched in May in an effort to fight growing drug and weapons trafficking and other transnational crime. Will the initiative be effective in fighting crime in the Caribbean? How significant a threat does organized crime pose to the region and to the United States? Is Washington pledging enough resources for the effort?

A **Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith, political scientist, provost and senior vice president of academic affairs at York College of the City University of New York:** "Secretary Clinton's Caribbean visit earlier this month—following Secretary Gates' April visit—is further evidence of United States' re-engagement with the region. The visit's raison d'être was mostly geonarcotics, notably crime and violence, and drug and arms trafficking, which are organized and transnational. Indeed, the current Jamaica-United States saga over crime leader Christopher Coke highlights some security concerns and mutual interests involved. The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) topped the meeting agenda in Barbados. CBSI has three key objectives: substantively reducing drug trafficking, increasing public safety and security, and promoting social justice. These are laudable and necessary goals. But let's temper

expectations about how much CBSI can reduce trafficking and ameliorate criminality. As I indicated in my congressional testimony on CBSI last December, the \$37 million initial appropriation is insufficient. Yes, the administration envisages increasing the second-year request to \$79 million. But given the scope of existing challenges, the overall funding design sets the stage for low investment and low-results outcomes. And I would caution against redirecting funds to CBSI from valuable existing programs, such as Operation Bahamas and

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Candidate for Governor of Tamaulipas, Mexico Slain

Mexican gubernatorial candidate Rodolfo Torre Cantú, pictured last week at a rally with supporters, was assassinated Monday. President Felipe Calderón blamed the killing on drug traffickers. See story on page 2.

File Photo: Torre campaign.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Report: Colombia's Spy Agency Eavesdropped on Correa

Colombia's spy agency listened in on phone conversations of top Ecuadoreans including President Rafael Correa after the Colombian military's March 2008 bombing of a rebel camp in Ecuador, Guayaquil newspaper *El Universo* reported Monday, citing an unnamed source. The newspaper said the DAS agency spied on government and military officials, politicians, businessmen and journalists from a mobile base in Quito in an operation dubbed "Solomon." The director of DAS neither confirmed nor denied the report, while Ecuador's attorney general said Monday he would open an investigation.

Syrian President Meets With Raúl Castro in Havana

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad met Monday with Cuban President Raúl Castro in Havana, as part of Assad's Latin American trip that also includes visits to Venezuela, Argentina and Brazil, the Associated Press reported. Castro and Assad were slated to discuss cooperation between their two countries, which earlier signed a deal to work together to battle drug trafficking and smuggling.

Trial of Former Panamanian Dictator Noriega Begins in Paris

The trial of former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, who stands charged with money laundering, began Monday in Paris with Noriega's lawyers arguing he should be freed and allowed to return home, Reuters reported. The attorneys argued that the United States betrayed Noriega after placing him on the Central Intelligence Agency's payroll.

Political News

Gunmen Assassinate Front-Runner in Mexico Gubernatorial Election

Gunmen on Monday assassinated Rodolfo Torre Cantú, 46, the front-running candidate for governor in the drug-torn Mexican state of Tamaulipas. The assailants ambushed Torre's vehicle in Ciudad Victoria, the state capital, the Associated Press reported. At least four others in addition to Torre, a member of the Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI, were killed in the attack. Torre, a doctor who had served as Tamaulipas' health secretary, was the highest-ranking candidate to be assassinated in Mexico since the 1994 killing of presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio. In a televised speech Monday, President Felipe Calderón blamed drug cartels for Torre's death. "Today has proven that organized crime is a permanent threat and that we should close ranks to confront it and avoid more actions like the cowardly assassination that today has shaken the

“Nothing is going to intimidate us.”

— *Beatriz Paredes*

country," said Calderón. "We cannot and should not permit crime to impose its will or its perverse rules." The assassination was the most significant setback to date in advance of Sunday's elections in 12 Mexican states. For months, fears have grown that drug traffickers are paying off candidates they support and threatening ones they oppose. Tamaulipas has been hit hard by a conflict between the Gulf drug cartel and its former ally, the Zetas. Drug gangs have attacked security forces, attacking military patrols and putting up

blockades near army facilities. Last month, assailants shot and killed José Guajardo Varela, who was running for mayor of the Tamaulipas municipality of Valle Hermoso. Guajardo, of the Calderón's National Action Party, had been threatened and told to end his campaign. Eugenio Hernández, the governor of Tamaulipas, said he was unaware of any threats against Torre. "We couldn't see this attack coming at all," Hernández told Milenio television in an interview. "We are in a situation of a lot of pain." The PRI's national leader, Beatriz Paredes, said the election should occur as planned. "Nothing is going to intimidate us," she said. The PAN and the Party of the Democratic Revolution, or PRD, said their candidates for governor of Tamaulipas would suspend their campaigns.

Zelaya Accuses U.S. of 'Being Behind' Coup That Ousted Him

Former Honduran President Manuel Zelaya on Monday, the one-year anniversary of the coup that drove him from power, accused the United States of involvement in his ouster, the Associated Press reported. "What we suspected at the beginning has now been confirmed. The United States was behind the coup," Zelaya said in a letter. Zelaya has lived in exile in the Dominican Republic since the January inauguration of current Honduran President Porfirio Lobo, who was elected in November. Since soldiers dragged him from bed at gunpoint on June 28, 2009 and flew him to Costa Rica, Zelaya has given conflicting statements about the United States' alleged role in the coup. In September, after Washington cut off Zelaya



aid to the de facto government that replaced him, Zelaya said "it is gratifying that the United States has taken a strong position against the coup." However, in a letter released June 11, Zelaya alleged members of his Liberal Party "conspired with the oligarchy and the Pentagon to remove me from the

File Photo: Latin America Advisor.

political scene." The U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa did not immediately respond to the AP's request for comment. After the coup, the United States refused to recognize the interim government of Roberto Micheletti and also pressured the Central American country to allow Zelaya to return to office. In his letter Monday, Zelaya did not specify what he alleges U.S. officials did. The former president did suggest that his ties to Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and his plans to turn the Soto Cano military air base, which the U.S. military uses, into a civilian airport created hostility between his administration and the United States.

Company News

Brazil's Vale Names Cavalcanti New Chief Financial Officer

Brazil's **Vale**, the world's largest producer of iron-ore, said Monday that it had named Guilherme Cavalcanti as its new chief financial officer, Bloomberg News reported. In a regulatory filing, Vale said current CFO Fabio Barbosa is leaving the company to "pursue new professional challenges." Vale, based in Rio de Janeiro, said the change would be submitted to the company's board at its next meeting. It did not say when that would occur. Cavalcanti has been Vale's global head of corporate finance since 2005. He previously worked for **Globo Comunicação e Participações** as treasury director and was a board member at **Net Serviços de Comunicação**.

Gran Tierra Energy Confirms Colombia Oil Discovery

Canada-based **Gran Tierra Energy** on Monday confirmed the discovery of oil in a block in Colombia's Putumayo Basin, Reuters reported. Gran Tierra said it had completed initial testing on an exploration well in the Chaza block and will drill a second well and also begin a three-dimensional seismic survey to determine the find's size and capacity. The company, headquartered in Calgary, also has operations in Peru and Argentina.

Featured Q&A

Continued from page 1

Turks and Caicos, and Tradewinds. Murders are a major concern. For

“The overall funding design sets the stage for low investment and low-results outcomes.”

— *Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith*

instance, Jamaica—important to the U.S. because of bauxite, among other things—with 2.6 million people, had 4,881 murders from 2007 through 2009. Trinidad and Tobago, which provides 78 percent of United States' liquefied natural gas needs, with 1.3 million people, had 1,446 murders during the same time. Most of the murders are gun related, with the weapons coming mainly from the United States. Thus, Clinton must have felt somewhat awkward, considering that the United States has yet to ratify the hemispheric arms trafficking treaty that was signed in November 1997. Overall, CBSI is necessary, but it's not sufficient."

A **G. Philip Hughes, senior director of the White House Writers Group and former U.S. ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean:** "Organized crime—whether home-grown, as in Jamaica, or transnational—is certainly a serious threat in the Caribbean region, as numerous U.S. government, multilateral agency and independent reports over the last decade attest. Drug trafficking and related money laundering represent the most traditional and direct organized criminal threats to the United States from the region. But, more recently, the risk that criminal networks might be hired or exploited by terrorists to smuggle more lethal cargoes into the United

States—taking advantage of regional law enforcement weaknesses and the toxic mixture of criminals, narcotics and money flowing through the region—poses an additional dimension of danger. Obama's Caribbean Basin Security Initiative is, consequently, an appropriate response to this rising problem. However, the way in which it has been presented makes me wonder about the administration's seriousness of purpose. The Clinton administration built on Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative with its Bridgetown Declaration, and the George W. Bush administration built on

“The way in which [the initiative] has been presented makes me wonder about the administration's seriousness of purpose.”

— *G. Philip Hughes*

its predecessors' Caribbean efforts with its Third Border Initiative—an effort strikingly parallel in both its focus and scope to Secretary Clinton's June 10 Barbados announcement. When Hillary Clinton claims that, with the CBSI, 'we're back' in the Caribbean, it simply deprecates the efforts of its predecessors. Trying to make yourself look big by making others look small is a remarkably juvenile pastime—one that suggests that the Obama administration is much more interested in using the CBSI to score rhetorical and reputational political points than to accomplish much of substance for the region."

A **Ronald Sanders, business consultant and former Caribbean ambassador:** "Organized crime in the Caribbean is a far greater threat to democracy, the integrity of political

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Featured Q&A*Continued from page 3*

institutions and the outcome of general elections in Caribbean countries than it is to the United States. The links between drug traffickers and political figures in some Caribbean countries are a matter of concern for governance in the region. Unfortunately, the CBSI is focused on U.S. concern about the flow of drugs through the Caribbean, and while this is a legitimate U.S. worry, the initiative does not sufficiently address the Caribbean's problems, which are increasing unemployment and poverty. These two conditions render the Caribbean vulnerable to the monies available from drug trafficking. The focus of the CBSI is on strengthening security forces mostly for drug interdiction. This will help to stem the flow of drug trafficking, but it will not address the fundamental problems of economic underdevelopment nor will it end drug trafficking. Forty-five million dollars has been identified this year for the Caribbean. It is a small sum for 15 countries spread over the wide Caribbean sea, and it does not deal with the issues of the deportation of criminals or of illegal weapons from the United States. At the root of all this are two factors: the demand for illegal narcotics within the

United States, which is still not receiving adequate U.S. government attention, and the failure of the U.S. government to

“The initiative does not sufficiently address the Caribbean's problems, which are increasing unemployment and poverty.”

— Ronald Sanders

agree with the Caribbean on a program of assistance that tackles poverty and unemployment, reverses the policy of deporting criminals and helps to build institutions of democracy and accountability in the political life of the region.”

The Advisor welcomes reactions to the Q&A above. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta at gkuleta@thedialogue.org with comments.

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