

**BRAZILIAN SECURITY POLICY IN THE AMAZON BORDER AND
SECURITIZATION OF THE COLOMBIAN CONFLICT (2001-2011)**

***POLÍTICA DE SEGURIDAD DE BRASIL EN LA FRONTERA AMAZÓNICA Y
SECURITIZACIÓN DEL CONFLICTO COLOMBIANO (2001-2011)***

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Abstract:

The cross-border effects of the Colombian conflict occurred unevenly in each neighboring country. The merging of the Colombian conflict with the global war on terrorism in 2002 was a turning point for the responses of neighboring countries. For Brazilian border policies, the main impact of this turning point was to reinforce the trend toward militarizing the institutional presence at the Brazil-Colombia border and in the entire Amazon region. The Brazilian government's responses did not occur only in a traditional way of closing the borders, but with new modalities of border control, with a focus on the cross-border illegal flows.

The mapping produced by this research demonstrates that the current profile of Brazilian policies for border security was strongly influenced by the responses to challenges brought about by the Colombian conflict. It can be showed by the mapping. The result of this process represented a shift in the policies related to the continental border of Brazil. Considering security and development as two main drivers of Brazilian government approach at the border, we note that a focus on security issues, at the expense of cross-border regional development, has prevailed in recent years. Another possibility is to consider regional cooperation on security as a means to achieve better results in regional development and integration.

Resumen:

Los efectos transfronterizos del conflicto colombiano se produjeron de forma desigual en cada país vecino. La fusión del conflicto colombiano con la guerra global contra el terrorismo en el año 2002 fue un punto de inflexión para las respuestas de los países vecinos. Para la política

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de fronteras de Brasil, el principal impacto de este punto de inflexión fue reforzar la tendencia hacia la militarización de la presencia institucional en la frontera entre Brasil y Colombia y en toda la región amazónica. Las respuestas del gobierno de Brasil no sólo se producen en una forma tradicional de cierre de las fronteras, sino también con nuevas modalidades de control de fronteras, con un enfoque en los flujos ilegales transfronterizos.

El mapeo producido por esta investigación demuestra que el perfil actual de las políticas brasileñas para la seguridad fronteriza fue fuertemente influenciado por las respuestas a los problemas provocados por el conflicto colombiano. Esto puede ser mostrado por el mapeo. El resultado de este proceso representó un cambio en las políticas relacionadas con la frontera continental de Brasil. Teniendo en cuenta la seguridad y el desarrollo como dos conductores principales de enfoque de gobierno de Brasil en la frontera, se observa que un enfoque en temas de seguridad, a expensas del desarrollo regional transfronterizo, se ha impuesto en los últimos años. Otra posibilidad es considerar la cooperación regional en materia de seguridad como un medio para lograr mejores resultados en el desarrollo y la integración regional.

Keyword: security; border; Amazon region; Colombian conflict; securitization.

Palabras claves: seguridad, frontera, region amazónica, conflicto colombiano, securitización.

Introduction

This article aims to track the recent evolution of Brazilian security policies at the borders during the last decade, mainly in the Amazon region. According to research, most of the Brazilian security policies have been applied at the Colombian border segment. The main argument of this article is that the securitization of Colombian conflict has enabled a means for reshaping the Brazilian security policies in the borderlands.

First, we present a general characterization of the Brazil-Colombia borderland, highlighting the cross-border effects of the Colombian conflict and how they affect the Brazil-Colombia borders. Secondly, we look at the linkages between the regional effects of the Colombian conflict and the global war on terrorism and how those linkages caused a turning point in the regional responses to the Colombian conflict. Finally, we present the results of the changes in security policies in the Brazilian borders, especially in the Amazon region, showing how the border policies have been reshaped by traditional ways of closing borders, as well as by contemporary trends of border security.

The theory of securitization offers an analytical framework for considering how some problematic issues could be considered threats to a referent object. For this theory, security is not an objective condition but the "outcome of a specific social process: the social construction of security issues (who or what is being secured, and from what) is analyzed by examining the "securitizing speech-acts" through which threats become represented and recognized".²

²Michael Williams, "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics," *International Studies Quarterly*, no. 47 (2003): 513.

Another theoretical source is provided by the constructivism, "that posits the mutual constitution between agents and structures and adds rhetoric as an intervening or mediating variable that serves to magnify or attenuate the effects of mutual constitution".³ In order to explain the recent changes in Brazilian security border policies, we need understand how the perception of threats mediates the construction of security. Analyzing contemporary conflicts, Didier Bigo asks the question of the social construction of threats, how the security agents perceive the evolution of conflicts, separating what is important and what is in the natural order of things.⁴ This constructionist view suggests that threats, as social constructs, could be more or less taken into account according to particular contexts, what McDonald highlights as contextual factors.⁵

Beyond the recognition of the threat made by a particular political community, the securitization process implies demands for exceptional responses, which are taken as "emergency measures". In our approach, we do not focus on the structures that constrain the designation of threats, but mainly we examine the structures conditioned by threat conceptions developed by Brazilian security agents in their interactions, in a "dialectical relation" between the objectivist and subjectivist moments, as proposed by Didier Bigo.⁶ The designation of threat is a constituent part of control, and we need to examine the practical effects resulting from this designation.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks caused several fears and reactions around the world, and each one of them tells us something about the large processes of globalization of terrorist threats but also something about the small-scale situations that were enabled by the new discourses of fear. The insecurity became a continuum that connects several fears in a multi-scalar mode.⁷ We seek not to consider the Brazilian security policies as a bare assimilation of U.S. foreign policies, but recognize the active role played by Brazilian policymakers and security agents within these constructs. According to Paulo Vizontini, in the 2000s, Brazil sought "to avoid the imposition of foreign agendas that do not necessarily represent the region's gravest dangers, such as overwhelming pressures of the war on terrorism".⁸

However, the Brazilian security policies have not gone unscathed by the influence of the war on terrorism. We could ask to what extent the Colombian conflict provides a linkage between the global level war on terrorism and regional level security issues. Despite the actual cross-border effects of the Colombian conflict in the Brazilian Amazon region, a fuzzy "Colombian threat" seems as a fire warning in the media, in the Brazilian Congress and in the public opinion. It also became the legitimate basis that enabled new demands to security border policies. The dual perception of non-state threats and U.S. interventionism in South America paved the way for the Brazilian reactions. In this survey, we seek tracking the linkage between the socially constructed "Colombian threat" and the security measures taken by the Brazilian state to face it.

³Tony Payan, "Post-Political Borders: The Security Paradigm and the Resurgence of Borders," 2012, 7.

⁴Didier Bigo, "Guerres, Conflits, Transnational et Territoire," *Cultures et Conflits*, no. 21 (1996): 397.

⁵Matt McDonald, "Securitization and the Construction of Security," *European Journal of International Relations*, no. 14 (2008): 571.

⁶Didier Bigo, "The Möbius Ribbon of Internal and External Security(ies)," in *Identities, Borders and Orders* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2001), 97.

⁷Ibid., 113.

⁸Paulo Fagundes Vizontini, "Brazil: The Dialectical Nature of Security and Integration in South America," *Policy: Issue & Actors* 20, no. 9 (2007): 11.

Transnational concepts of security, in this case, do not work "to deconstruct national sovereignties that constitute republican states" but work instead to take advantage of the moment to make changes in the national security agencies that were awaiting opportunities to emerge.⁹ This interpretation calls attention to the local and regional decision-making processes that make security issues more complex than the usual hierarchical logics.

Colombian conflict and effects in Brazil-Colombia borderlands

The configuration of the current security and defense policies in the Brazilian Amazon borders was shaped by internal and external pressures. Internally, we highlight the institutional redefinition of the Armed Forces since the 1980s and the strategic role played by the Amazon in security and defense policies. Externally, the main element was the evolution of the Colombian conflict during the decades of 1990 and 2000 and their cross border effects.

Domestically, several policies were already underway in the Amazon because of the efforts to redefine the role of the Brazilian armed forces in a democratic and post-Cold War context.¹⁰ The Brazilian Amazon region began to assume a new strategic role in the 1980s, with an increasing orientation to strengthen the military presence in this area. This change is expressed by the transfer of military units and funds to the Amazon region, on the grounds of maintaining Brazilian sovereignty in that region and as answer to the emergence of new challenges in the international security agenda. The Amazon region was involved in a direct way - global environmentalists' demands, indigenous peoples' rights, fight against drug trafficking and so on.

The Brazilian Amazon region is located in the Northern portion of the country. It comprises approximately one third of the national territory and is characterized by very low population density and deficient infrastructure. An extensive segment of the border covering seven countries (Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guyana) is located in this part of the national territory. Although internal affairs explain the weight of the Amazon region in security policies since the 1980s, the Brazil-Colombia border within this region has taken a prominent position because of external issues only since the late 1990s.

The intensification of the internal conflict in Colombia since the 1990s and its cross-border effects have placed the focus of security policies in the Brazilian Amazon on the Brazil-Colombia segment border. This intensification is expressed by three intertwined processes.

First, drug trafficking and its connections have been one of the main themes to mobilize foreign policies in South America, especially regarding the relationship between the Andean-Amazonian countries and the United States. Colombia, which has been highlighted as the main producer of cocaine since the 1980s, has expanded its role, becoming a major producer of coca

⁹Edgardo Manero, "Strategic Representations, Territory and Border Areas: Latin America and Global Disorder," *Geopolitics*, n.d., 48.

¹⁰David Pion-Berlin, "Will Soldiers Follow? Economic Integration and Regional Security in the Southern Cone," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 42, no. 1 (2000); João Roberto Martins Filho, "The Brazilian Armed Forces in the Post-Cold War Era: What Has Changed in Military Thinking?" (working paper, Centre for Brazilian Studies, University of Oxford, 2007).

leaves in their territory during the 1990s.¹¹ The era of the great Colombian cartels (the Medellín and Cali were the most famous) declined and changed the regional division of labor. The production of coca and coca paste was concentrated in Peru and Bolivia, and cocaine processing and export were located in Colombia. This division was broken by the interruption of the flow of coca paste controlled by large cartels. The illicit crops have been internalized in Colombian territory, connecting the fragmented small cartels.¹²

Secondly, the current crisis in Colombia is characterized by a high degree of external intervention, whose intensity became greater with Plan Colombia - Plan of Peace, Prosperity and the Strengthening of State - started in 1999 as a bilateral program between Colombia and the United States.¹³ Colombia went through a state of crisis, marked by the political connections of the drug trade - in state representatives and also paramilitary groups and guerrilla organizations. Furthermore, the failure of successive policies to control illicit crops and drug trafficking, and the growth of guerrilla forces and paramilitaries in the second half of the 1990s, led to the difficult challenges that would be faced at the turn of the century. In this context, Plan Colombia emerged as a permanent solution to the Colombian internal conflict.

Thirdly, Plan Colombia was consolidated by strengthening the fight against guerrillas and forced eradication of illicit crops, using aerial spraying as a privileged strategy to combat drug trafficking. Although complementary, these two fronts – the war on drugs and counterinsurgency - were still viewed as distinct from each other until their gradual blending in the early 2000s.¹⁴

Although drug trafficking and the Colombian internal conflict reached border areas in the 1980s, it was only in the 2000s that the Colombian internal conflict assumed a privileged position in bi-national relationships and cross-border interactions between Colombia and its neighbors. The involvement of other South American countries in the Colombian conflict is caused by various factors: 1) strategic and tactical uses of border areas by illegal armed actors, 2) unilateral or combined actions of the Colombian state in the borderlands, 3) forced displacement of Colombians in the borderlands and toward the neighboring countries, 4) displacement of coca crops to border regions and 5) social and environmental damages caused by aerial spraying.

The use of border areas by illegal armed actors fulfills functions of maneuver tactics in combat situations and skirmishes and strategic functions related to refuge of combatants, food supply and control of smuggling routes, especially in arms and drugs. Paramilitary control practice and activities of illegal armed groups are common, especially in the borderlands between Venezuela and Ecuador. Forced displacement caused by armed conflict reaches border towns and

¹¹UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), “World Drug Report 2000” (Oxford University Press, 2000), 29, http://www.unodc.org/pdf/world_drug_report_2000/report_2001-01-22_1.pdf.

¹²Ricardo Vargas Meza, *Narcotráfico, Guerra Y Política Antidrogas: Una Perspectiva Sobre Las Drogas Y El Conflicto Armado Colombiano* (Bogotá: N(O)VIB/Acción Andina Colombia, 2005); Juan Carlos Garzón, *Mafia & Co.* (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta Colombiana, 2008), 47–54.

¹³Socorro Ramírez, *Intervención En Conflictos Internos: El Caso Colombiano (1996-2003)* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2004).

¹⁴Jorge Rojas and Marcela Cebella, “Conflicto Y Fronteras: Vecinos En El Borde de La Crisis,” in *Colombia: Migraciones, Transnacionalismo Y Desplazamiento* (Bogotá: CES/Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2006), 37.

neighboring countries and creates the problem of refugees as another vector of internationalization of the conflict.¹⁵

The presence of the Colombian state beyond its borders because of unilateral military actions is another source of trouble, causing diplomatic crises with neighboring countries. The most prominent cases were the arrest of Rodrigo Granda in Venezuela in 2004 and the death of Raul Reyes in Ecuador in 2008. Other less prominent cases may occur when territory - on land or airspace - of neighboring countries is used for military maneuvers by Colombian official forces.

Regarding the production of coca bush, important growing areas are located in borderlands, especially at the Colombian border with Ecuador (departments of Putumayo and Nariño) and Venezuela (mainly the departments of Norte de Santander and Arauca).¹⁶ Finally, the environmental impact of aerial spraying in Colombia affects mainly the Ecuadorian border population. Aerial spraying in municipalities of Colombian border was the subject of disagreement between Ecuador and Colombia because of damage to Ecuadorian agricultural production and the population's health in the border region.¹⁷

Cross-border effects of the Colombian conflict are uneven along the frontier. The Brazil-Colombia frontier zone experiences a low incidence of these effects compared to inner Colombia and other areas bordering the country. The presence of irregular armed forces is intermittent, serving primarily to provide medical care and food supplies for guerrillas and also serving along routes for drugs and arms. News stories usually treat guerrillas and drug traffickers without distinguishing between them. The use of the territory for combat maneuvers was not recorded until 1999 when the Querari airport was used by Colombian Armed Forces. Skirmishes between guerrillas, identified or presumed, and Brazilian forces officers have been recorded since 1991, but have occurred with greater intensity since 2002. These cases had been registered as mere police reports, but in recent years official guidance has been modified to give greater attention to the recording of these events.

The incidence of forced displacement was low in both Colombian border towns and Brazilian municipalities until 2006, according to 1999-2005 data from CODHES and fieldwork conducted by the Retis Research Group / UFRJ. Since 2006, the arrival of refugees in Brazil-Colombia municipalities was highlighted by the Pastoral Care of Migrants, who estimated the presence of 4,000 Colombians in Brazil. Although the number of refugees is high when considering the local impact, the weight of the entire contingent of Colombian refugees is very small when compared to neighboring countries. In Venezuela, for example, the International Organization for Migrants documented the confirmed presence of at least 130,000 Colombians displaced by 2008.¹⁸

Effects related to illicit crops are not important in this region. Successive surveys made by Illicit Crop Monitoring Program (ICMP), conducted by UN and Colombian government, indicate

¹⁵Rojas and Cebella, "Conflicto Y Fronteras: Vecinos En El Borde de La Crisis."

¹⁶UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), "Coca Cultivation in the Andean Region. A Survey of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru" (UNODC, 2008), <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crop-monitoring/index.html>.

¹⁷Comisión Científica Ecuatoriana (CCE), "El Sistema de Aspersiones Aéreas Del Plan Colombia Y Sus Impactos Sobre El Ecosistema Y La Salud En La Frontera Ecuatoriana," 2007, <http://www.mamacoca.org>.

¹⁸Andre Novaes and Licio Monteiro, *Relatório de Campo Não Publicado Sobre a Zona de Fronteira Colômbia-Venezuela* (Rio de Janeiro: Grupo RETIS/UFRJ, 2008).

the existence of sparse and insignificant illicit crops in the Colombian departments bordering Brazil. Hence, environmental effects related to chemicals sprayed by aircraft over illicit crops are nonexistent, unlike other regions.¹⁹

Finally, although potentially conflictive, the Brazil-Colombia borderland is far from the main centers of tension of the internal conflict in Colombia and its consequences, such as those found in Ecuador, Venezuela and other Amazonian countries. The geographical position of the Brazil-Colombia borderlands is relatively eccentric to the main axis of international flow from Colombia. Furthermore, it is located in an area with very low population density and very little transportation infrastructure on both sides of the borderland. A very low level of Brazilian engagement with the Colombian conflict would be expected in such a situation. However, that has not been the reality.

Two levels of preoccupation can be found in the Brazilian political debate. On one hand, non-state or transnational threats such as drug trafficking, smuggling and the activities of irregular armed groups provide a troubling situation for the Brazilian government at the border between Brazil and Colombia. On the other hand, extra-regional intervention in the Colombian crisis, mainly originated in the United States, adds another concern. This dual perception of the security challenges materialized in security policies implemented in the Amazon region in the 1990s and 2000s, but with increased intensity since 2002 because of pressures associated with security demands of the war on terrorism.

Impact of 9/11 on Brazilian security policies: the TBA and the Colombian border

The impact of 9/11 on Brazilian security policies is mainly manifested in two cases, both in the border zone: the Tri-Border Area (TBA) among Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina and the Brazil-Colombia borderland

The impact of the global war on terrorism on the Brazil-Colombia border occurred in an indirect way because the policies of the Brazilian state followed changes in the internal configuration of the Colombian conflict. The year 2002 marked a turning point in the anti-drug strategies and counter-insurgency of the Colombian state. Negotiations between the government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) were suspended at the end of the demilitarized zone located in the Colombian Amazon. The FARC, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) were included in the U.S. government list of terrorist organizations. The U.S. Congress approved the license so that resources used to combat drugs under Plan Colombia could be used for counter-insurgency.²⁰ In addition to erasing the thin line between fighting drugs and guerrillas, the Colombian conflict began to assimilate concepts of the global war on terrorism for internal use.

In South America, the Colombian case can be proven to be unique by comparison with the case of the Tri-Border Area. Before 9/11, Ciudad del Este, in Paraguay, had been assumed be

¹⁹UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), “Coca Cultivation in the Andean Region. A Survey of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru.”

²⁰Diana Marcela Rojas, “La Internacionalización de La Guerra: Estados Unidos Y La Guerra En Colombia,” in *Nuestra Guerra Sin Nombre: Transformaciones Del Conflicto En Colombia* (Bogotá: Norma, 2006), 53–54.

associated with international terrorism since the terrorist attacks in 1992 and 1994 against the Israeli Embassy and the Asociación de Mutuales Israelitas Argentinas (AMIA). These twin cities hold the second largest Arab community in South America and, thus, had been identified as a possible focus of operation and financing of international terrorist groups. In the aftermath of 9/11, control measures were intensified in the TBA because of the presumption of the existence of Al-Qaeda operation bases in these border cities. The main response to this situation was the creation of the Commission 3 +1 for Security in the Tri-Border Area, which comprised Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and United States and focused on intelligence activities. This initiative led to the creation of Regional Intelligence Center, based in Brazilian city, Foz do Iguaçu. Over the years, the lack of evidence of Al-Qaeda activity in the region shifted the focus of U.S. concerns to investigation of possible Hizballah connections in the TBA.²¹

The Colombian case differs in several aspects. First, the category of "terrorist" was not used to designate Colombian armed groups before the first U.S. responses to the 9/11 attacks. The link between the Colombian domestic level and global level of the war on terrorism was made by international and U.S. agencies, which characterized drug trafficking as a source of funding for terrorist actions.²² However, the Colombian government also adopted this presumption in order to avoid a decrease in U.S. financial and logistical support for the Colombian conflict after the start of the war in Afghanistan. According to Emma Björnehed, "the traditional separation of narcotics and terrorism counter measures and agencies has gradually faded since 9/11."²³ The concept of narcoterrorism was revived with a new focus on the terrorist side, as exemplified by a DEA statement that "some terrorist organizations use narcotics trafficking for the purpose of gaining revenues."²⁴ As an important effect of the dynamics of security after 9/11, counterterrorism initiatives brought a new lexicon and repertoire of practices that quickly changed to the former security policies in each country. In the Colombian conflict, this assimilation occurred with the merger of war on drugs, counterinsurgency and anti-terrorism.

Second, Colombian armed groups were confined to the domestic political context, in contrast to the global projection that was achieved in the case of Islamic networks linked to the TBA. After 9/11, preoccupation with homeland security reached high levels over broadened challenges that had previously been dealt with as local and national. Barry Buzan and Ole Waever have referred to this phenomenon as "macrosecuritization", i.e., a kind of securitization that occurs "on a larger scale than the mainstream collectivities from that level (states, nations) and seek to package together securitizations from that level into a 'higher' and larger scale."²⁵ Thus, the Colombian armed groups now designated as terrorists seemed a little more alarming to the global

²¹Arthur Bernardes do Amaral, *A Tríplice Fronteira E a Guerra Ao Terror* (Rio de Janeiro: Apicuri, 2010), 243–44.

²²DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), "Drugs and Terrorism: A New Perspective," 2002, <http://usregsec.sdsu.edu/docs/DEASeptember2002.pdf>.

²³Emma Björnehed, "Narco-Terrorism: The Merger of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror," *Global Crime* 6, no. 3 (November 2004): 313.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 306.

²⁵Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, "Macro-Securitization and Security Constellations: Reconsidering Scale in Securitization Theory," *Review of International Studies* 35 (2009): 257.

and regional agenda, causing a shift in the focus of the security policies of countries neighboring to Colombia.

Third, the responses to the TBA case were given mostly in the intelligence and diplomacy fields, while in the case of Colombia there was a greater engagement of the armed forces. In the TBA, Brazil adopted a low profile reaction in order to reduce the stigma attributed to the border region and neutralize possible unilateral U.S. actions in the TBA. In the Colombian border, active U.S. policy intervention became a *fait accompli* after Plan Colombia, and no attempt to circumvent it through multilateral negotiation has achieved success. The Brazilian position was to strengthen its border militarily and refute any accusation of negligence in border control, such as that directed to other countries, including Venezuela and Ecuador.

Mapping border security in Amazon region

The recent efforts of Brazilian foreign policy to build an integrated regional space in South America contrasts with the demands to close borders and strengthen territorial control in the face of cross-border threats. What seems contradictory at first glance is nevertheless the contemporary tendency of the changing world order, in which things in motion across boundaries challenge territorial covenants and fixed boundaries.²⁶ The imagined threats in our time are neither a neighboring country nor the "internal enemy", as in the geopolitical imagination of South American military doctrines of the past.²⁷ Furthermore, physical and institutional barriers, built from the top-down, are not working as they have in the past.

The transnational conception of security and demands for cooperation on security at the borders have enhanced initiatives that bring together two or more countries against a new common enemy, one who operates across borders. Seemingly contradictory, both approaches can be shown in the case of the Brazil-Colombia border segment. Changes in border security policies in the Amazon region are following both a traditional way of closing borders with military reinforcement and renewed initiatives of security cooperation.

We can track these changes in three main periods: first, military engagements from 1985 to 1998, when the military displacement to the Amazon region answered to the new functions of the military in the democratic context; second, escalation of the internal war in Colombia and US intervention with Plan Colombia, from 1998 to 2002; and third, since 2002, the merger of the fight against drugs, guerrillas and terrorism in Colombia and its consequences on regional security. The recent negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the FARC could be heralding a new era in the Colombian conflict, but it is too early to know what will result from them. We are focused on the second and third periods.

The traditional approach is expressed primarily in three dimensions: 1) military infrastructure and presence, 2) regulatory changes, and 3) programs and operations. We refer to a

²⁶Simon Dalby, "Changing Borders/ Bordering Change" (Draft Paper, Security's Impact on Border Policies Conference, University of Victoria, Victoria: unpublished, 2012).

²⁷A. Kacowicz, "Geopolitics and Territorial Issues: Relevance for South America," *Geopolitics* 5, no. 1 (2000): 81–100.

"traditional approach" as one that is grounded in a territorial way of border control, with emphasis on the military side and unilateral measures made from the top-down.

I. Military infrastructure and presence

The first dimension - military infrastructure and presence - includes the increased number of soldiers in preexistent military organizations, the increase in military units in the Amazon, the creation and expanded number of Special Border Platoons at the borderlines, the implementation of the Amazon Surveillance System (SIVAM) linked to the Amazon Protection System (SIPAM), and the acquisition, renovation and expansion of military equipment. The Federal Police also expanded its operations in the Brazil-Colombia border with Operation COBRA, which started in 2000 (discussed below).

Since the 1990s, the Brazilian Armed Forces have conducted the transfer of military units to the Amazon and expanded the number of soldiers and officers in this region. In 1992 and 1993, Jungle Infantry Brigades were installed in Boa Vista-RR, Cruzeiro do Sul-AC and Tefé-AM with the transfer of brigades from the southern and southeastern regions. In 2004, another brigade was established in São Gabriel da Cachoeira-AM, a municipality adjacent to Colombia that also received an Air Force detachment in 2005. The new units and the increased number of soldiers in the former bases multiplied military contingent activity in the Amazon. The army in the Amazon region increased from 6,000 men in 1986 to 22,000 men in 2004 and 25,000 in 2008.²⁸ Of the 23 Special Border Platoons existing today, only 12 existed prior to 1990. More than 28 of these Platoons are expected by 2018, according to the Plan Protected Amazon (Plano Amazônia Protegida), which was launched in 2008.

In the Brazilian Navy, the Riverine Operations Battalion was deployed from the Marine Group of Manaus in 2001. The 9th Naval District arose in 2005, based in Manaus-AM, covering the Western Amazon. These changes are expanding the number of Companies of Marines (from one to three), resulting in an increase of mariners and reducing dependence on the Fleet Marine Force, located in Rio de Janeiro.²⁹

The participation of the Brazilian Air Force in the Amazon borders defense has increased in recent years through such measures as the creation of new bases in São Gabriel da Cachoeira-AM, Vilhena-RO, and Eirunepé-AM and the start of operations of the 3rd Aviation Group squadrons in Porto Velho-RO and Boa Vista-RR, which are equipped with the Super Tucano aircraft and supported by the Base in Anapolis-GO.

Furthermore, the SIVAM, developed during the 1990s, started operation in 2002. This system, deployed as a new apparatus of control over the Amazon region, prioritizes the production and processing of information and remote sensing instruments. Between the launch of the project (1990) and the start of the operation of SIVAM (2002), the geopolitical changes in the South American Amazon region, such as the escalation of conflicts related to drug trafficking and

²⁸Nelson Jobim, "Apresentação Do Ministério Da Defesa À Comissão de Relações Exteriores E Defesa Nacional Do Congresso Nacional," 3, accessed February 13, 2009, http://www.senado.gov.br/web/comissoes/cre/ap/AP20081118_CrepaAudPub96a.pdf.

²⁹J. Henrique Elkfury, "Batalhão de Operações Ribeirinhas," *O Anfibio*, 2001, 63.

guerrillas in the Andean countries, served to reinforce the legitimacy and revaluation of SIVAM in the 2000s.

II. Regulatory changes

The second dimension - regulatory changes - is expressed by the changing of several laws to broaden the spectrum of functional and territorial actions of the Armed Forces along the border, on indigenous lands in protected areas, airspace and waterways.

The Decrees 4411, 4412 (2002) and 6513 (2008) were intended to facilitate military access into the protected areas and indigenous lands in the border region, which are viewed as vulnerable "to the occurrence of transnational crimes and threats to national sovereignty."³⁰ In the case of indigenous lands, the decree regulates both the military presence in these areas and the relationship between soldiers and indigenous people. It opens the possibility of military actions on "measures to protect lives and properties of the indigenous and their community" without previous authorization from National Foundation of the Indigenous (FUNAI).³¹

The implementation of protected areas and recognition of indigenous lands were the most successful model of interdiction along the border strip. These areas are characterized as "buffer zone" and represent "strategic areas where the central government restricts or prohibits access to the border strip and border zone."³² On one hand, state officials are concerned about the vulnerability of indigenous peoples against illegal agents with specific interests in its population for labor or work, or in its territory for the extraction of wealth, illegal trafficking or refuge. On the other hand, there is fear of complicity between indigenous and non-state actors, legal or illegal, that can take advantage of indigenous areas to promote their practices. Decree No. 6513 (2008) has established that the "Army Command must install permanent military units, in addition to the existing, in indigenous lands located in border areas".³³

The Air Interdiction Act was legislated in 2004 with the aim of establishing permission to shoot at "hostile aircrafts or suspected of trafficking in narcotics and other drugs, taking into account that these may present a threat to public safety". The operation of law requires the combination of information services of the Brazilian Air Force, the Federal Police Department, and the Brazilian Information Agency (ABIN) and the availability of infrastructure for the Air Force to respond promptly when illegal aircraft are identified. The information services enable the identification of routes and areas used by traffickers and the prevention of methods used to avoid detection, such as the pitch thrown by small cargo planes and flights at low altitudes to evade radar.

³⁰Sebastião Silvestre, "O Exército E O Meio Ambiente," *Revista Do Exército Brasileiro* 140-3 (2003): 79.

³¹Brazil. Civil Office of Presidency of Republic of Brazil, *Decree 4412, On Presence of Brazilian Armed Forces and Federal Police in Indigenous Lands of the Seventh of October of 2002*, accessed May 5, 2015, http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/decreto/2002/D4412.htm.

³²Retis / Min., "Proposta de Reestruturação Do Programa de Desenvolvimento Da Faixa de Fronteira: Bases de Uma Política Integrada de Desenvolvimento Regional Para a Faixa de Fronteira. Brasília" (IICA-OEA / Ministério da Integração Regional, 2005), 145.

³³Brazil. Civil Office of Presidency of Republic of Brazil, *Decree 6513, On Presence of Brazilian Armed Forces and Federal Police in Indigenous Lands of the Twenty-Second of July of 2008*, accessed May 5, 2015, http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2007-2010/2008/Decreto/D6513.htm.

The use of fire to destroy suspected aircraft must be preceded by investigation, intervention and persuasion. When preventive measures do not succeed, the aircraft becomes susceptible to being shot down. Although law enforcement is valid for the entire national territory, the priority given to the Amazon region is driving the need to harmonize the laws of Brazil, Colombia and Peru.

III. Territorial action programs.

Among regional action programs, we focus on the return of the Calha Norte Program (*Programa Calha Norte*) and expansion of its operations area, the development of joint operations between the three Armed Forces in the Amazon borderland, joint operations with the air forces of neighboring countries and the support of Federal Police operations.

The Calha Norte Program (CNP), which focuses on the Brazilian Amazon frontier, is not a new program, having started in 1985. Its initial goal was to address emerging problems in the northern border area, including the protection of indigenous communities, mining of precious metals and drug trafficking, mixed in with old anti-communist concerns, such as the Cuban influence in Guyana and Suriname.³⁴ The program took three main objectives since its inception: colonization and development, territorial control and national defense, and bilateral relations with neighboring countries.

The worsening of the problems that gave rise to the CNP justified expansion, in 2004, of its coverage area beyond the zone of the original program. The CNP now encompasses the states of Acre, Rondônia, the entire state of Amazonas and part of the state of Pará. Although the "demographic empty" remains a concern following a traditional conception of security and defense, the "intensification of illegal practices" assumes a growing importance as an element of insecurity. This expansion was accompanied by an increase of funds and the restructuring of the program. Currently, the CNP covers 32% of Brazilian territory.

Between 1990 and 2004, the CNP was sustained with less funding than it currently receives, and it was limited to internal actions of the Armed Forces, to support the improvement and deployment of military infrastructure in the Amazon region, which was gaining increasing importance in security and defense policies. The current structure of the CNP, with enhanced funding, is very different from its initial structure. The resources used by the CNP have increased sharply in value since 2005.

Another important program was the realization of so-called Combined Operations, undertaken by the Brazilian services under a single command. The first combined operation under command of the Ministry of Defense was the Operation Tapuru in 2002, on the Brazil-Colombia border. Between 2002 and 2008, there were eight similar Combined Operations in the Amazon, all of them in border areas, mostly in the western Amazon and particularly in the Brazil-Colombia-Peru borders zone.

In 2008, the Ministry of Defense created the Plan Protected Amazon, which sought to regulate the installation of permanent military units located on indigenous lands in the boundary

³⁴Carlos de Meira Mattos, *Geopolítica E Teoria Das Fronteiras: Fronteiras Do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: BIBLIEX, 1990), 106; João Roberto Martins Filho, "As Forças Armadas Brasileiras E O Plano Colômbia," in *Amazônia E Defesa Nacional* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2006), 17.

zone. The design of the Special Border Platoons was also changed to reduce the empty borders and set up surveillance outposts, with "fewer people and more equipment", ready to "monitor" and "respond immediately" to any threats. With the installation of these new Platoons, the Armed Forces are also projecting that the entire area will be covered by air surveillance radar, connected to the command and control center unit system.

Although they were the result of different decision-making processes, these policies form a coherent whole, in which the Colombian border segment assumes prominence within the range of the continental border and Amazon region. The influence of the Colombian conflict appears explicitly in references to the threats that justify each act of control, when they come to the fore issues such as transnational crime, drug trafficking and the close proximity of Colombian guerrillas. Moreover, the intensification of both the Colombian conflict since 2002 and the responses of the Brazilian Government occurred during the same period.

Despite the current border problems facing Colombia's neighboring countries, the Colombian crisis has opened opportunities for the redefinition of political priorities in security and defense. This openness has been exploited in a somewhat opportunistic way by South American countries in order to strengthen their positions at the regional level.

Emerging trends of security policies in the Brazilian borderlands

During the 2000s, beyond the traditional approach, we highlight the evolution of latent issues affecting the conversion of the Brazilian Armed Forces to new paradigms of security and defense. Institutional responses to new threats have undergone adaptive processes that incorporate contemporary models of territorial control of the borders. The challenges found in the Brazil-Colombia border area enabled the implementation of these changes because the transnational threats were perceived as new, urgent, and requiring exceptional solutions.

These new trends are manifested in three ways. The first is the tendency to integration between agencies both within the military - operations of the three forces under single command - and among these and other state agencies (the Federal Police, IRS, Brazilian Agency for Information, etc.) with exchange of information, logistical support and concerted action. The second is the tendency for international cooperation on security and defense policy at the regional level, which manifests itself both in bi-national agreements and exchanges at the level of agencies. The third trend is the recognition of "bottom-up" dynamics in negotiations between central and local level governments, in order to build the social bases for the operation of state agents.

I. Integration between agencies and new functions of the military

Military joint operations under a single command in the Brazilian Amazon began in 2002, and eight operations were performed through 2008. The link between the start of these operations and the Colombian conflict is demonstrated by the fact that the first operation - Operation Tapuru (2002) - was prompted by a clash between the Special Border Platoon of Vila Bittencourt-AM and suspected FARC guerrillas in the same year. Moreover, some operations simulated confrontation against the guerrillas and most were concentrated in the border towns of western Amazonia,

particularly along the border between Brazil and Colombia.³⁵ Integration between state agencies is exemplified by Operation COBRA, which began in 2000 with the creation of several Federal Police bases to secure control of waterways and clandestine airstrips used for illicit traffic in the Brazil-Colombia segment border. This initiative involved cooperation between Federal Police and Armed Forces for logistical support and information exchange and, at a secondary level, partnership with Colombian state agencies. When Operation COBRA started, expectations were very high for the possible impact of Plan Colombia on the increase in drug trafficking at the Colombian border. Initially, the operation was provisional (for three years), but eventually it became a permanent structure of the Federal Police. Some years later, Operation COBRA inspired the creation of similar operations along borders with other countries.

The merger of military and police functions is a common trend in several countries outside South America and in Brazil is expressed by the Complementary Act 97 (2004). This Act redefined the role of the military in security and defense activities within the national territory in order to grant powers for subsidiary military actions, such as combating crime and repression in the borderlands. In the national territory, relevant offenses are those of "national and international repercussions"; and the actions taken are cooperative and supportive. Along the border, the Armed Forces address cross-border and environmental crimes; and the actions taken are preventive and repressive, alone or coordinated. Such offenses are to be treated as a threat to the sovereignty and integrity of the Brazilian state, paving the way for a more militarized response to the challenges of transnational crime.

II. Binational cooperation on security and defense

The internationalization of the Colombian conflict has led to the strengthening of security policies at Colombian borders by Colombia and its neighboring countries. This trend contrasts with Colombia of the 1990s, when the country was accused of being unable to control its borders. It was very common for the Armed forces of Venezuela and Brazil to travel into Colombian borderlands to fight illegal groups. By providing institutional and military reinforcements at the borders, Colombia sought to assert control over the so-called "ungoverned territories" and establish new perspectives in bilateral relations with neighboring countries. This change in Colombia's border security policies has resulted in a more unilateral approach in relations with emerging left-wing governments in the region, mainly Venezuela and Ecuador.

The transnational nature of threats in Colombia would also require transnational cooperation in efforts to combat it. The relations between the Colombian government and neighboring countries has taken on two distinct behaviors: the bilateral cooperation in the cases of Peru and Brazil, and the explicit rivalry in the cases of Venezuela and Ecuador, which was especially pronounced during President Uribe's second term (2007-2010).

Colombian border policies in the 2000s emerged with implementation of Plan Colombia (1999) and the Democratic Security and Defense Policy (2003). The focus of activity of Plan Colombia was the Amazonian department of Putumayo, on the border with Ecuador and Peru, but

³⁵Jobim, "Apresentação Do Ministério Da Defesa À Comissão de Relações Exteriores E Defesa Nacional Do Congresso Nacional."

state intervention was still mainly focused on confrontation in the domestic sphere, against coca plantations and guerrillas. In 2002, the Security, Sovereignty on Borders and Social Development Plan laid the foundation for Plan Fronteras (2003).³⁶ In a departure from the previous government, the recent initiatives have the prospect of linking together goals of social and economic development and national security actions. This perspective was reinforced by the Consolidation of Democratic Security Policy, in 2007, which classified the border areas as one of four types of security zones where the model should be applied. Its main goal is social rehabilitation, with a strong emphasis on military intervention.

In Brazil, we can observe the development of binational agreements on security and defense, defined by high diplomacy but accompanied by the creation of institutional links between state officials on both sides of the border. They operate to control threats within the terrain that do not dwell fully on either side but are shaped across boundaries. The binational cooperation on security and defense policy is implemented through various measures: a) information exchange through Operation COBRA (2000) and the Binational Plan for Border Security (2011); b) joint military exercises between Brazilian and Colombian Air Forces, which started in 2005; c) sharing infrastructure, as in the case of SIVAM; d) compatibility of rules, as the Air Interdiction Law.

Comparing the Amazon countries, Peru and Colombia stand out with the greatest number of binational agreements with Brazil on security issues such as control of chemical precursors trafficking (Peru) and illegal flights (Colombia), as well as surveillance cooperation in the Amazon (Peru) and crime and terrorism suppression.³⁷ Colombia stands out as the partner with the largest number of such agreements in what is a new rapprochement between the two countries, together with commercial linkages.³⁸ Although most of agreements were initiated in 1997, their realization only came in later years: in 1999 (control of drug trafficking), 2001 (judicial cooperation in criminal matters) and 2006 (control of illegal flight).

In order to strengthen air interdiction, Brazil, Peru and Colombia formed a transnational mechanism to share airspace control in a combined effort involving common rules, information sharing, joint exercises, and even bi-national agreements for the sale of aircraft, as those sold by Embraer to Colombia in the 2000s.

III. 'Top-down' policies and 'bottom-up' demands

The resumption of the Calha Norte Program (CNP) in the early 2000s, with the expansion of its coverage area in 2004 and increase in funds available since 2003, was accompanied by a change in the program profile, placing a higher priority on civilian aspects relative to the military side.

³⁶César Andrés Restrepo, *Colombia: Seguridad Y Defensa En Las Fronteras* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2004).

³⁷Ministério das Relações Exteriores (MRE), “Acordos Bilaterais” (Ministério das Relações Exteriores), accessed February 12, 2009, <http://www.mre.gov.br/>.

³⁸Socorro Ramírez, “Distante Vecindad Se Fortalece Con Comércio Y Seguridad,” *Análisis Político*, no. 58 (December 2006): 18.

The application of the resources of the CNP is differentiated into three types. First, in the civil sphere, the municipalities run the funds in actions of civil infrastructure for the purpose of "supporting the government's actions in promoting regional development."³⁹ On the military side, the funds are run by the Armed Forces for the purpose of "maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity". Resources are focused mainly on military infrastructure (second type) and, secondarily, to support the civilian infrastructure (third type), focused on locations with less capacity to manage funds. The increased weight of the civilian side was a way of increasing the overall supply of funds, which positively affected the military aspect, while also increasing the legitimacy of the action of the armed forces in the cities, ensuring support of local governments for security policies applied in the Amazon border area.

Funds for the civilian side have been concentrated in municipalities in the states of Roraima and Acre. The funds for the military component, aimed at infrastructure, civil or military, are concentrated in Belém-PA and Manaus-AM (out of borderlines), which are the headquarters of the command of three armed forces and of most of the military organizations. However, the municipalities of Tabatinga-AM and São Gabriel da Cachoeira-AM, bordering Colombia, stand out as recipients of big funding in both dimensions - civil and military. The data from the CNP Status Reports indicates that these two municipalities have the capability to excel in the three modalities of application of the resources described, which demonstrates the effort to establish a redundancy of institutional links between the Armed Forces, municipalities and local communities in the operation of security policies in the border segment with Colombia.

The local-level negotiations to accomplish the Calha Norte Program are an example of the different ways that security primacy penetrates local politics. The existence of the "Colombian threat" appears in the local political discourse as a means of obtaining funds from central government that, in the absence of this threat, would be more difficult to obtain. Thus, security becomes a bargaining chip between local powers and central government. The discomfort and criticism of local powers is by-passed when other state functions are accomplished together in these peripheral places. Similar effects occur with indigenous people: their movements across boundaries could be blocked by military displacements in border zones, but at the same time they could be protected from other threats by the military presence.

Summary

The cross-border effects of the Colombian conflict occurred unevenly in each neighboring country. The merging of the Colombian conflict with the global war on terrorism in 2002 was a turning point for the responses of neighboring countries. For Brazilian border policies, the main impact of this turning point was to reinforce the trend toward militarizing the institutional presence at the Brazil-Colombia border and in the entire Amazon region. The Brazilian government's responses did not occur only in a traditional way of closing the borders, but with new modalities of border control, with a focus on the cross-border illegal flows.

³⁹Ministério Da Defesa, "Programa Calha Norte:Relatórios de Situação Final (2003-2007)" (Ministério Da Defesa), 2007, accessed February 13, 2009, http://www.defesa.gov.br/programa_calha_norte/index.php.

The mapping produced by this research demonstrates that the current profile of Brazilian policies for border security was strongly influenced by the responses to challenges brought about by the Colombian conflict. It can be showed by the mapping. The result of this process represented a shift in the policies related to the continental border of Brazil. Considering security and development as two main drivers of Brazilian government approach at the border, we note that a focus on security issues, at the expense of cross-border regional development, has prevailed in recent years. Another possibility is to consider regional cooperation on security as a means to achieve better results in regional development and integration.

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