



Cross Currents

Washington and the Americas

WOLA Welcomes New Leader

The Board of Directors of the Washington Office on Latin America has chosen Bill Spencer as the organization's new Executive Director. Spencer has served as WOLA's Deputy Director since 1995. Prior to that he served for two years as Legislative Assistant for Defense and Foreign Policy issues for Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II (D-MA), and for five years as Director of the Central America Working Group. He began his new job at WOLA in April.

The Impact of U.S. International Drug Control Policy on Democracy and Human Rights in Latin America

In October 2001, WOLA launched a three-year project to study the impact of U.S. international drug control policy on democracy and human rights in Latin America. The project will examine what the war on drugs means for institutions and policy arenas central to the future of democracy and human rights, including the military and intelligence services, the police, and judicial systems. This study will form the first systematic, region-wide monitoring, documentation and analysis of what the U.S. war on drugs in the region means for democracy and human rights, with the goal of making this a significant and continuing part of the public conversation and policy debate in both the United States and Latin America.

The study is important because the United States has spent more than \$25 billion over the past 15 years on international drug control programs. The effect on the supply of cocaine and heroin entering the United States has been negligible. The escalation of the drug war, however, has wrought varied but widespread, often profoundly damaging, consequences in the region. It has strained fragile democratic political systems and turned a blind eye to

abusive tendencies in the region's security forces. Moreover, as presently designed, current U.S. counternarcotics strategy threatens to undermine other U.S.-funded programs that are designed to strengthen democracy and good governance.

This research has become even more significant since the collapse of peace talks in Colombia and the ensuing efforts of the Bush administration to increase military aid while removing all restrictions on its use. Under administration proposals, U.S. resources would no longer be limited to counternarcotics activities in Colombia, but could now be used for counterinsurgency efforts. Even basic human rights protections on the use of U.S. aid are under threat. At the same time, the U.S. government has linked drug trafficking with terrorism in its discourse, thereby helping to convince both policymakers and the public that Washington must get further involved in Colombia's counterinsurgency efforts. Both the paramilitary and guerrilla forces are on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations, and also engage in drug trafficking to finance their ac-

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tivities, so this new discourse could lead to a costly and long-term U.S. commitment to an unwinnable war.

The Project

Through our research, WOLA will: (1) construct a comprehensive picture of U.S. counter-drug policy and programs for Latin America; (2) develop an overview of the impact of those programs on democracy and human rights, and (3) conduct detailed case studies of these impacts in eight countries across the region. We will look for links and correlations

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between U.S. counternarcotics policy, funding and program implementation on the one hand, and the difficulties faced by Latin American governments in exercising civilian control and oversight of military activities, reigning in human rights abuses or strengthening democratic institutions on the other.

During the course of the project, WOLA will publish select interim results of the research and on-the-ground monitoring. These briefs, to be released several times a year, will

address specific salient issues from within the framework of the overall project. They will be broadly distributed to the media, civil society organizations, scholars and policy-makers in the U.S. and Latin America in support of advocacy efforts and policy debate throughout the hemisphere. Final results of the research, documentation and analysis on both U.S. policy and its impacts in the region will be published in a lengthy book in both English and Spanish.

The project will include extensive, up-to-date reporting on:

- U.S. security assistance programs related to international drug control in Latin America, including work in the areas of policy, doctrine, training, and provision of lethal and non-lethal equipment to Latin American militaries by the United States government, in collaboration with the "Just the Facts" project of the Latin American Working Group and the Center for International Policy.
- In-country policing and police assistance programs. In a first-of-its-kind effort, WOLA will attempt to map these programs, focusing on the work of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Latin America. We will make the effort to obtain hard-to-access information on the level and type of assistance channeled to doctrinal and training work for Latin American police forces, their collaborative enforcement efforts, and how they have shaped or influenced Latin American legal codes.

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The U.S. and Colombia: *Four Things Policymakers Should Consider*

Now that the Colombian government has ended three years of discussions with the FARC guerrillas, and the Colombian people have elected a new president committed to dealing with the insurgents with a “firm hand,” the U.S. government is considering new ways of engaging with that beleaguered nation. For years, Colombia has wanted U.S. help in battling the FARC, but Washington has limited its support to battling the drug trade, through which the FARC reaps considerable profits. Now, however, key figures within the Administration and Congress want Colombia included in the U.S. campaign against terrorism and are calling to erase the “artificial line” between drug traffickers and guerrillas, largely by characterizing the FARC as terrorists of global reach.

Two bills currently before Congress, an emergency supplemental appropriations request and the annual foreign aid bill, together would potentially lift the human rights conditions attached to prior aid, allow past and forthcoming aid to be used directly in counterinsurgency operations, reduce congressional oversight of foreign military training, and help protect a Colombian oil pipeline used by California’s Occidental Petroleum. As we face this critical juncture of deepening U.S. involvement, legislators must ask with more urgency whether either government has correctly identified the underlying causes of Colombia’s conflict, and how international actors can best help.

To begin, policymakers would be wise to acknowledge that Colombia’s problems are old, widespread, and stubborn. And resolving them requires a long-term holistic approach, rather than the incremental militarism currently in place. This conflict will not be won militarily, and if the U.S. fails to reflect on Colombia’s plight honestly and thoroughly, it just may be contributing to a protracted stalemate with brutal consequences for ordinary Colombians.

Why Stepping Back is a Step Forward

1. **Policymakers should not be misled by language that oversimplifies history.** Flashy terms, like “narcoguerrillas,” “narcoterrorists,” and “narco-terrorist guerrillas,” have been coined to describe the illegal armed groups in Colombia. These terms, intended to make a complex situation understandable, ironically show the difficulty of disaggregating Colombia’s violence, because they point to a lethal brew of insurgency, terrorism, and drug trafficking that affects millions of innocent civilians. The war rhetoric glosses over troubling details, such as the guerrillas’ 38-year history (some historians find their origins in 1900), the fact that paramilitaries first appeared in the 1940s, and that violence itself is endemic to the country (the mid-century period of

La Violencia was even bloodier than contemporary Colombia). Colombia’s problems did not begin on September 11 or even with the drug trade, and simple anti-terrorist or drug war slogans will not resolve these historical grievances.

Nonetheless, the Colombian government and hardliners in the U.S. have tried to sell a limited message: that the FARC is the sole cause of Colombia’s problems and that the FARC can be defeated militarily if the U.S. were to contribute more, and in different ways, than it currently does. It must be understood, however, that the FARC is not an isolated actor, but part of a larger picture. The FARC and ELN guerrillas, despite their military objectives and appalling

violations of international humanitarian law, still bear political ideologies. Likewise, behind the paramilitary AUC’s gruesome strategy lies a distinctly class-based political project in defense of the status quo and that, in its more extreme manifestations, is bent on eliminating dissidents of all stripes. Colombia’s conflict is, at its heart, a turf war driven by material motives with ideological and class-based undercurrents, in large part fueled by the drug trade that services a voracious U.S. market. Though myriad hostilities and Plan Colombia itself have encouraged spillover into neighboring countries, the conflict remains a domestic one and should not be mistaken for international terrorism.

2. **Policymakers should remember that no single group is wearing black hats.** There are many parties to the conflict and they are all cruel. The ELN and the FARC have been rightly condemned for their barbaric attacks on civilians and public infrastructure. The AUC also poses a grave threat to Colombian democracy and an even graver one to Colombian civilians: particularly, the very leaders who defend democracy, human rights, peace negotiations, and social reforms. The AUC is responsible for the majority of politically motivated killings in Colombia and has tripled in size since 1998. It also maintains clearly documented links to

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the Colombian Armed Forces who, for their part, have refused to cooperate with Washington on human rights conditions. Yet, Bogotá and Washington have made fighting the AUC a much lower priority than battling the FARC.

The Colombian military must fight the FARC and AUC with equal vigor. Anything less than an even-handed approach will fail to address the country's problems with drugs, terrorism, and its vulnerable democracy. According to the United Nations, the AUC is more involved in the drug trade than the FARC (AUC leader Carlos Castaño claims that 70 percent of its income comes from it), but Washington unduly emphasizes the FARC's role in the business. Similarly, the Colombian government has for years referred to the guerrillas as "subversives" and "terrorists" while it limits its description of paramilitary organizations to naturally occurring "illegal self-defense groups."

The paramilitaries, as justified by many military strategists, are filling a "security vacuum" left by the underfunded Armed Forces. This "security," unfortunately, is being provided to the highest private bidder and not the AUC's thousands of victims: the forcibly displaced, tortured, disappeared, and publicly executed. Colombia's wealthy, lacking confidence in the state's security forces and the legal system to protect their interests, have taken matters into their own hands by bankrolling the AUC. As a result, the AUC itself is fast getting out of hand, and not nearly enough has been done to control it.

3. **Policymakers should define the "endgame" with clarity and with guarantees against future mission creep.** Plan Colombia's lofty goals look naive in retrospect, given the utter lack of progress in any major area. Before the U.S. decides to get in deeper, it must lay bare what Colombia's fundamental problems are, what U.S. interests are, and how they converge. Policymakers should also de-

clare how success will be measured and how much the U.S. is expected to contribute. The Colombian government has publicly acknowledged that it must triple or quadruple its combat troops to effectively take on the FARC. Some Colombian military officials privately claim that the U.S. will need to increase its assistance ten-fold for many years to have any impact. Washington cannot, even under the wildest of circumstances, make up this enormous gap.

Many in Washington, from the right and the left, point out that Colombia has not made a real commitment to fighting its own war. Colombians pay little in taxes and only a small amount of their GDP goes to defense. Perhaps most disturbing, the middle and upper classes are excused from serving in combat units through outright bribery or by legal entitlement, by virtue of having a high school education. For too long, the poorest have paid the costs of war in Colombia.

4. **Policymakers should recognize that there are no quick and simple fixes to Colombia's long-standing problems.** Yet, Colombia desperately needs U.S. help, beginning with economic and social assistance. Such assistance should go towards judicial reforms in order to combat the scourge of impunity that permits criminal enterprises to operate unhindered. It should also bolster human rights investigations to break the cycle of private retribution so common in Colombia. Only through transparent civilian institutions can Colombians truly feel secure in their own country.

U.S. assistance should also focus on the internally displaced population, which now numbers some two million. Many of these people, uprooted and unemployed, are prone to joining the warring factions for a paycheck. Unless they are given more attractive opportunities, they will continue to provide the bodies for a debased war that shows no signs of taking a breather. And unless the U.S. curtails its own thirst for drugs, they will continue to work for the 400-500 drug trafficking organizations that operate in Colombia. ■

Seminar on Police Reform and International Cooperation

On April 12, the Georgetown University Center for Latin American Studies (GU), the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (LCHR), and WOLA co-sponsored a day-long seminar titled "Police Reform and International Cooperation: Assessing the Need for a U.S.-Mexico Dialog."

John Bailey of GU welcomed the following panels:

Institutional reform in Mexico at the federal level: Professionalization and reorganization; quality control and accountability

Moderator: Eric Olson, Amnesty International

Participants: German Gallegos, Eduardo Gómez and Alejandro Ramos of the Procuraduría General de la República (PGR), and Juan Sánchez Contreras, Secretaría de Seguridad Pública

Mexican perspectives on U.S.-Mexico cooperation

Moderator: Jeff Clark, LCHR

Participants: Eduardo Ibarrola, Eunice Meyer and Carlos Javier Vega, PGR

The U.S.: action, coordination and policy framework; U.S. perspectives on cooperation and assistance

Moderator: William McDonald, GU

Participants: Elizabeth Carroll and John Dawson, State Department, Joseph Jones, Department of Justice, and Rachel Neild, WOLA

A framework for U.S.-Mexico cooperation: meeting all the needs?

Moderator: Robert Varenik, LCHR

Participants: Sigrid Arzt, University of Miami, Ernesto López Portillo, Advisor, Mexican Chamber of Deputies, and Arturo Valenzuela, GU

Police Reform and the International Community: From Peace Processes to Democratic Governance

WOLA has monitored police abuse and U.S. and international police assistance since our founding in 1974. This program area grew in the mid-1990s following the peace processes in Central America and U.S.-led intervention in Haiti, when police reforms emerged as a key component of processes of democratization and demilitarization. The region became a testing ground for international assistance for post-conflict security reforms. As WOLA monitored the evolution of police reform in the region, we became convinced that the long-term consolidation of democratic policing depends on developing greater citizen involvement in and support for public security reforms. Since the late-1990s, WOLA has supported the development of local civil society organizations working on public security issues. In 2000 and 2001, we provided support to five Central American organizations to research the status of police reform in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. In November 2001, we organized a major international conference to present the results of that project in a comparative perspective with other experiences from South America and South Africa, and to examine the development of donors' engagement with democratic reforms of public security.

Public security has emerged as a central element of transitions from dictatorship or civil war to democracy throughout the world. Efforts to create professional, accountable, and effective police forces have been or are being undertaken in countries ranging from Eastern Europe and Russia to South Africa. Seventeen of the twenty-three peacekeeping operations initiated in the 1990s have included efforts to build local police institutions. Donors also are supporting efforts to professionalize police through bilateral programs in countries around the globe. In many of these cases, national policy-makers and, in particular, international donors have looked to the large-scale, institution-wide police reforms under way in Central America and Haiti for lessons and models for reform. The first major peacekeeping initiative to focus on public security reform was in El Salvador following the 1992 Peace Accords.

Given the central role played by internal security forces in repressing civil unrest in those countries, a principal topic of negotiations aimed at ending the conflicts was how to restructure and “demilitarize” responsibility for internal security. In the context of negotiations, the focus was on separating responsibility for internal security and external security, redefining the role and mission of the military as focused on the latter and establishing civilian control over the armed forces. At the same time, the need to provide security guarantees to demobilizing ex-combatants and political opponents in the post-conflict period was recognized. These negotiated reforms were designed to correct the perceived flaws of existing military-controlled public security forces in order to prevent a recurrence of the massive abuses of civilians that had characterized the civil wars in those countries.

Police reform became the axis of an effort to dismantle authoritarian structures and move from “regime policing” to

“democratic policing.” The establishment of democratic policing was seen as a vital foundation for the security and stability necessary to permit the consolidation of democracy and to provide a propitious environment for economic development. Massive international assistance was provided for this purpose in countries like El Salvador and Haiti, and international donors have played a key role by providing expertise, training and resources to countries that lack them.

The reforms in El Salvador, Haiti and Guatemala did not—and to some extent could not—address the security conditions that often prevailed in the post-conflict period. Typical features of the post-conflict security situation include: an economic crisis with high unemployment at the end of the conflict; large military and internal security forces remain in place and are a significant political force; and members of insurgent forces awaiting demobilization fear for their personal safety and their economic prospects. In Central America and Haiti, bad economic conditions and a plentiful supply of guns and people who know how to use them have contributed to massive increases in crime and social violence. Rampant crime threatens to overwhelm the capacity of nascent civilian police forces, generates public support for hard-

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WOLA Activities



WOLA's Activities in 2002 to date.

Washington Policy Work

- WOLA, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International published a 32-page critique of the Colombian government's failure to meet human rights conditions on aid to **Colombia's** military (see www.hrw.org/press/2002/02/colombia0205.htm). The February 5th press conference was covered by the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Associated Press*, *National Public Radio (NPR)* and Bogotá's main newspaper *El Tiempo*, among others.
- WOLA staff continued congressional, press, and administration advocacy efforts pushing for an inter-agency declassification review of U.S. documents relevant to the work of the **Peruvian** Truth Commission.
- WOLA published the first issue of the "Colombia Monitor", a new series that will combine timely analysis of policy dynamics in Washington with on-the-ground monitoring of the impact of U.S. drug control policy in the Andean region.
- WOLA staff and representatives from the Bank Information Center, Interaction, the Solidarity AFL-CIO Center and the International Public Service Employees, had a series of meetings with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on policies surrounding **Plan Puebla Panamá**.
- Lilah Rosenblum, Special Assistant for Cuba, and Senior Associate Geoff Thale, took a congressional staff delegation to **Cuba** in early April.
- WOLA arranged meetings with the U.S. State Department and Congressional offices for the family members and friends of four U.S. citizens murdered in **Guatemala**.
- Lilah Rosenblum, Special Assistant for Cuba, and Rachel Farley, Program Assistant, met with congressional staffers to discuss **Cuba** legislation pending in the Agriculture Appropriations bill.
- Geoff Thale, Senior Associate, and Rachel Farley, Program Assistant, and representatives of U.S. non-governmental organizations met with officials from the U.S. Agency for International Development to discuss USAID's **Central America** programs.

Presenting Latin American Voices

- WOLA staff set up meetings with Washington policymakers for representatives from **Peru's** *Coordinadora*

Nacional de Derechos Humanos, an umbrella group of the country's leading human rights organizations.

- WOLA helped arrange the visit of **Mexican** human rights defenders from the Miguel Augustin Pro Juarez and the Fray Bartolome de las Casas human rights centers, among others.
- WOLA, the George Washington University, and the Latin America Working Group sponsored a seminar, "The Impact of Fumigation and Alternative Development Policies in Southern **Colombia**" featuring three speakers: Dr. Fabio Trujillo, the Secretary for Agriculture and Environment of Nariño Province, Eder Sanchez of the National Association of Small Farmers of Putumayo Province, and Dr. Dya Revelo of the Putumayo Government Health Agency.
- WOLA set up meetings with Washington policymakers for Helen Mack, Director of the Myrna Mack Foundation, regarding the current situation in **Guatemala**.
- WOLA supported civil society participation in the Consultative Group meeting on **Guatemala**, held at the Inter-American Development Bank.
- WOLA arranged meetings with Washington policymakers and the IDB for Frank La Rue, Executive Director of the Center for Legal Action on Human Rights (CALDH), **Guatemala**.
- WOLA hosted a visit from Jon Cortina and Azucena Mejía of the "Association in Search of Disappeared Children" (Pro-Búsqueda) of **El Salvador**, arranging meetings with human rights organizations and policymakers.
- WOLA and The George Washington University Seminar on Andean Culture and Politics co-sponsored the seminar "**Peru's** Economic Policy: On the Right Track?" with Professor Carol Wise, Peruvian Ambassador Dr. Allan Wagner, and Peruvian analyst Richard Dawson.
- WOLA and The George Washington University sponsored a seminar, "In Search of Truth and Justice in **Peru**," with Francisco Soberón and Pablo Rojas of Peru's Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos and Peter Kornbluh and Tamara Feinstein of the National Security Archive.
- WOLA co-sponsored a seminar on the **Andean region** with the George Washington University, "Indigenous Movements and Political parties in Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela," featuring Donna Van Cott.



WOLA Activities



- WOLA and the George Washington University sponsored the seminar “The Union Movement in **Bolivia** Today,” with Saturnino Mallcu, head of the Bolivian Miners’ Union.
- WOLA co-sponsored a seminar with Joel Suárez, Coordinator of the Martin Luther King Center in **Cuba**.
- WOLA, NISGUA, the Latin American Working Group and the Guatemala Human Rights Commission organized the Congressional briefing “Justice Postponed: New Efforts to Hold Former **Guatemalan** Dictators Accountable,” with Pedro Canil, a leader of the Association for Justice and Reconciliation; Paulina Ixpata de Osorio, member of the Xeseguan community and plaintiff in the genocide cases; Frank La Rue, Executive Director of the Center for Legal Action on Human Rights; Alex Arriaga, Director for Government Relations for Amnesty International USA; and Guatemala expert, Hugh Byrne.
- WOLA and the International Human Rights Law Group organized a seminar with Victor Abramovich, Director of the Center for Social and Legal Studies (CELS) in **Argentina** to discuss the neglected human rights, political and social dimensions of the crisis in Argentina.
- WOLA and the Nicaragua Network co-sponsored a seminar with Silvia Arguello, the Environmental Lobbying Coordinator of the Alexander Von Humboldt Center in **Nicaragua** on the likely effects of the proposed Plan Puebla Panama.

WOLA in Latin America

- Senior Associate Coletta Youngers traveled to **Ecuador** for the Drugs, Democracy, and Human Rights Project.
- Vicki Gass, Economic Issues and Hurricane Mitch Consultant, with Senior Associates Geoff Thale and Eric Olson, led workshops with civil society representatives in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua to present findings from WOLA’s study on the involvement of civil society organizations in post-Hurricane Mitch reconstruction efforts.
- Senior Associate Rachel Neild traveled to **Mexico** City to participate in a seminar presenting the findings of a diagnosis of local security issues in the Villa Coapa area of Tlapan in the south of the city. WOLA is working in coordination with Mexican partners to support the development of local prevention initiatives in this area.
- Senior Associate Susan Peacock traveled to **Guatemala** with the Ecumenical Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, an al-

liance of Guatemalan Catholic and Evangelical leaders that is attempting to build support for the peace process.

- Senior Associates Rachel Neild and Eric Olson traveled to **Mexico** City for a seminar on municipal crime prevention in Iztacalco. WOLA supported the participation of three crime prevention experts in meetings with different sectors of the community. Paulo Mesquita Nieto of the Institute São Paulo Against Violence with the business sector; Jose Maria Rico of Costa Rica with police and prosecutors; and Joan Hoffman of the Inter-American Coalition for the Prevention of Violence with educators. The experts also spoke at a public forum that was attended by over 400 local residents.

Conferences and Events

- Senior Associate Coletta Youngers participated in an international workshop, “The Role of **Alternative Development** in Drug Control and Development Cooperation,” organized by the German government aid agency, GTZ, the German Foundation for International Development and the United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP).
- WOLA co-sponsored a full-day conference with Georgetown University entitled “Police Reform and International Cooperation: Assessing the Need for a U.S.-**Mexico** Dialogue.”
- Associate Jason Hagen spoke at a conference entitled “**Colombia** and the U.S.—Rethinking the War on Drugs,” hosted by the University of Pennsylvania, on a panel with Colombian Ambassador Luís Alberto Moreno, Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Control and Cooperation, and César Gaviria, Secretary General of the Organization of American States and ex-president of Colombia.
- WOLA sponsored a seminar entitled “**Mexico’s** Human Rights Defenders and their Struggle for Accountability.”
- Associate Jason Hagen attended a conference in Miami sponsored by the U.S. Army War College and the North-South Center of the University of Miami, titled “**Colombia’s** Ambiguous War in Global and Regional Context: Insurgency, Transnational Crime, and Terror.”

WOLA in the News

- WOLA Associate Jason Hagen was quoted on U.S. policy towards **Colombia** in numerous print, radio and

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Police Reform

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line elements resisting the reform process, and fuels broad public demands for tough measures against crime. The paradox of post-conflict police reforms is that these settings offer both unparalleled opportunities to re-conceptualize and reshape policing institutions and doctrines, and deeply hostile environments for the implementation of ambitious reform plans.

For a number of years now, polls find that crime is among the top or is the top concern of citizens in countries across Latin America. Rising crime rates have increased national and international attention to the costs of crime and social violence for development as well as the cost to individual security. The

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salience of these issues is bringing a new set of international actors into the arena of public security reform. Among others, the Inter-American Development Bank has made a number of loans for crime prevention and public security initiatives and has drawn up policy guidelines for lending in the area and reviewed them with human rights

organizations, including WOLA. The issues of public security reform are new ones for development agencies that are concerned about human rights issues and their own lack of background and expertise in these issues. They are working to define their approaches, exploring issues such as the causes of violence and crime prevention, and the role of local authorities and civil society as well as police reform itself.

WOLA's November 2001 conference—"Police Reform and the International Community: From Peace Processes to Democratic Governance"—brought together donors working in post-conflict settings with donors from development agencies. Despite the latter's primary focus on development and governance, they are increasingly facing the challenges that insecurity and the many official and unofficial responses to insecurity pose to democracy, human rights and development in the region.

Important lessons have been learned by donors supporting post-conflict reforms. A shortcoming identified by those lessons is the primary focus on the delivery of assistance itself and on the achievement of short-term goals, with less attention given to the sustainability of democratic policing in troubled post-conflict settings or the viewpoints of local beneficiaries of the reform process. Furthermore, careful consideration needs to be given to how transferable these lessons may be to other contexts where police reforms are undertaken with fewer resources and greater political constraints.

The threat posed to democratic governance and economic development by crime and social violence within countries is creating increasing demand for police assistance. Demand-driven aid programs are bringing donors to work in settings where the parameters of reform are often far more constrained, and international influence in shaping the reform process is also more limited. Indeed, the manner in which reforms emerge—through governmental or police initiatives or through political agreements spurred by civil society pressures—have primary influence in shaping and limiting the strategies and focus of the reform process. In these increasingly complex settings, donors are assessing strategic entry points for supporting democratic reforms that can bring about improved police performance in providing greater security and greater respect for human rights. Successful police reforms, it is hoped, will also have larger effects on public satisfaction with and support for democracy and in creating a propitious environment for economic and development activities.

Presentations at the conference affirmed that a conceptual framework of "democratic policing" is emerging. United Nations standards for law enforcement, the "Commissioner's Guidance on the Principles of Democratic Policing" developed for Bosnia, and recent academic work display an emerging consensus on the parameters of democratic policing. Participants also observed that there are common technical elements of policing, and one presenter urged that a single body—the United Nations—take on the task of developing basic standards for international police training.

Democratic policing principles provide key guidelines for reformers, but do not obviate the need for context-sensitive assistance. There is clearly no one model of democratic policing that can be simply transferred from country to country. Donors need to be sensitive to local realities, and expect to have to sacrifice some efficiency to the need to understand and adapt to local realities. This becomes an even greater necessity in reforms that are partial or constrained.

Donors noted their need to build institutional memory and capacity in public security assistance and avoid "re-inventing the wheel" with each new program. However, donors must resist the illusion of efficiency in the creation of standard modules that are then taken from one country to the next with translation and minimal adaptation to local norms. Improving police assistance requires improved cooperation between professional police experts, development professionals, and country experts. Communication between the disparate perspectives and cultures that prevail in these three specialties is not easy. It becomes even more difficult when coordination between donors from different countries is also needed. One panelist noted that while judicial reform in Latin America has received important multilateral support, assistance for police reform has tended to be bilateral, increasing the need for coordination.

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Discussion at the conference also highlighted the waste and confusion created by lack of donor coordination and presence of trainers and police experts from different countries all with their own way of doing things. A former police chief from El Salvador argued that local government must take greater responsibility for coordination, developing its own vision and imposing order on offers of assistance. Often, governments receiving police assistance have no clear idea of the model of policing they want to adopt. Police aid does not always provide useful inputs into these considerations, as it is frequently more oriented toward technical rather than institutional issues.

Speakers noted that local ownership of reform is weak when it is externally imposed and insisted that donors need to pay more attention to building greater domestic support. Two strategies arose in discussions: A number of international agencies are developing a “participative police reform model” which prioritizes coordination among donors and with national authorities and local partners to develop some of the reform strategies. A participative approach to reform provides a space in which national decision-makers can develop and invest in their own policing model (within the conceptual parameters of democratic policing), and provides a framework for a better dialogue with donors about their needs.

Many donors at the conference also raised the need for greater civil society participation in police reform processes. It was argued that greater participation could support national consensus-building about the need for and shape of reforms, could increase much-needed political support for reforms, and could provide greater local inputs and feedbacks that would enhance the tailoring of reforms to local contexts. While the civil society analysts were supportive of these principles, their presentations noted difficulties that beset civil society participation. In South Africa, the fragmented nature of communities means that they may generate demands for repressive policing as well as for improved police accountability. In Central America, highly-polarized war-traumatized societies have great difficulty in entering dialogue between historically hostile sectors, and exchanges are further hampered by the lack of civilian know-how resulting from years of militarized internal security practices. Furthermore, civil society groups remain deeply suspicious of the state, which, in the countries studied in Central America, has remained in the hands of conservative governments at the national level.

The discussions made clear that efforts to promote broader engagement and dialogue to build pro-reform consensus will often have to confront shifting public and political concerns that can change the focus of reforms and lead to a redefinition of priorities even as initial objectives remain only partially achieved. In repeated cases, the shift has been from an initial primary concern with issues of democratic and human rights accountability of the police to an over-riding effort to

confront rising crime more effectively.

In addition to environmental challenges to reform, such as rising crime, reformers face profound institutional constraints. South Africa confronted problems arising from a “gap between vision-based policy-making” and the “non-existent capacity of institutions to deliver that vision”. Over-ambitious reform designs have failed to address short-term needs and may even create a perception of failure when the objectives are set unrealistically high. Police reforms must strive to deliver short-term service improvements even as they are recognized as an inherently long-term proposition.

The conference discussions repeatedly focused on the need to move from the attitude that accountable policing must be sacrificed in order to achieve more effective policing, with panelists arguing that evidence indicates that accountable policing is in fact more effective and that repressive or abusive policing in fact impedes improvements in public order and law enforcement. However, no matter how good our arguments to the contrary, the reality in Latin America and in most communities in South Africa is that police effectiveness is seen as requiring repressive approaches that abrogate rights guarantees.

The analyses presented at the conference raise the issue of sequencing or incrementalism in police reforms. Reforms must consider both the need for both short and long term approaches, with realistic goals and short-term results that can maintain public support for reform despite the slow pace of institutional reform. The challenge to reformers is to consider how to structure an incremental process that builds consistently toward high standards over the long term, and does not sacrifice initiatives to strengthen and consolidate accountability in high crime contexts.

An incremental approach places even greater importance on the establishment of clear benchmarks of progress. Presentations noted a serious weakness of donors’ evaluations of their own programs is the tendency to focus on outputs (for example, numbers of police trained) rather than outcomes (changes in the conduct of policing). Even if benchmarks can be identified, are donors willing to apply them seriously? Discussions noted that despite important progress in defining “lessons learned” about international assistance for police reform, donors repeatedly fail to apply the lessons.

If, as most of the conference participants believed and argued, police reform is becoming part of the assistance arsenal for building democratic governance, it is incumbent on countries and agencies providing assistance to make sure that they learn and apply these lessons in their ongoing aid programs. As is clear to all who engage with police reforms, the risks of police assistance are considerable given the coercive power at play, combined with the common elements of abusiveness and authoritarian bureaucratic cultures, corruption and politicization. If donors are to support police reforms, they should take the challenges seriously and make the necessary investments in their own institutional capacity building. ■

Divergent Trends in U.S.-Cuban Relations

By Lilah Rosenblum

Since last fall, U.S.-Cuban relations have followed two divergent trends—a warming trend on the side of the Cuban government and among parts of the U.S. Congress, U.S. business and agricultural interests, and somewhat frostier winds blowing from the Bush administration.

Warming Trends

Cuba has recently made a number of cordial gestures toward the United States. On September 11, the Cuban government was the first foreign government to respond to the terrorist attacks, condemning the attacks and terrorism more generally, and offering medical assistance to the United States. Cuba also announced its willingness to cooperate with all nations to eradicate terrorism, and ratified the twelve United Nations conventions on international terrorism.

When the U.S. government decided to house Taliban and Al Qaeda prisoners at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo Bay, the Cuban government announced that it would return any prisoner that escaped from the base. This gesture was especially remarkable because of Cuba's historic resistance to the U.S. military presence on the island and because of its opposition to current U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.

In December, in the weeks after Hurricane Michelle hit Cuba, the Cuban government purchased \$30 million in agricultural goods from U.S. producers, and in early March 2002, signed contracts with U.S. producers to purchase an additional \$25 million.

In early March, the Cuban government also arrested a prominent Colombian drug trafficker who had escaped from a U.S. federal prison and was wanted by the Drug Enforcement Administration. He remains in detention in Cuba and is being arraigned on charges of drug trafficking and the use of false documents. Shortly after this arrest, Cuba submitted a set of proposals to the United States on migration, counter-drug cooperation and anti-terrorism efforts.

On the U.S. side, Congress has repeatedly demonstrated its interest in improving U.S.-Cuban relations. Despite the events of September 11 and the new political context that took shape in the following period, a majority in Congress has continued to support an easing of the embargo on Cuba. In mid-December, the Senate voted 61 to 33 to remove language from the agriculture bill that would block a provision to allow private financing of agricultural sales to Cuba. In late April, the House voted 273 to 143 in favor of these financing provisions as well. They were nonetheless removed from the bill by a House-Senate conference committee, under pressure from the Bush administration and House Republican leadership, before final passage.

Additionally, a number of congressional delegations visited Cuba in the months following September 11, including

a number of Members of Congress from both parties interested in agricultural trade with Cuba as well as others interested in lifting travel restrictions.

Freezing Trends

However, the Bush administration has taken a visibly harder line on Cuba during the last few months. The appointment of Otto Reich, a conservative Cuban-American, to the post of Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemispheric Affairs, solidified this hard-line stance. In the months since his appointment, Reich has issued public statements defending current U.S.-Cuba policy and calling for measures that would isolate Cuba even more. The administration is currently conducting a review of this policy, which is expected to result in proposals that would further toughen the U.S. stance toward Cuba.

In its Cuba policy-making, the administration remains beholden to the small, but vocal, Cuban exile community in Miami for two main reasons. Firstly, the president feels indebted to the Cuban-American community in Florida because of his close win over Democrat Al Gore in that state in 2000. He is likely looking ahead to the 2004 presidential elections as well. Secondly, the president's brother, Florida governor Jeb Bush, is up for re-election in November, and the president does not want to compromise his brother's chances for a second term by antagonizing Miami's Cuban-American community. In this bid for votes in Florida, it appears that President Bush is willing to ignore the will of large segments of the American population and the U.S. Congress. Only time will tell whether the overwhelming support within Congress and among the American people, along with the conciliatory efforts of the Cuban government, will eventually loosen this stranglehold on U.S.-Cuba policy. ■

New Publications on Cuba

WOLA recently released two new publications on Cuba. One is an education packet for grassroots activists entitled, "A Time for Change: Rethinking U.S.-Cuba Policy," available in English for \$5.00 plus \$1.75 shipping and handling for the first copy, and \$3.00 plus \$.50 S&H for each additional copy. The second publication is a report based on a conference held in May, 2001 entitled, "Church-State Relations in Cuba: Three Years after the Pope's Visit," available in English for \$3.00 plus \$1.75 shipping and handling for the first copy and \$1.50 plus \$.50 S&H for each additional copy. For bulk orders, please contact WOLA at (202) 797-2171. To order either publication, please send a check, payable to WOLA, to Cuba Publications Request, WOLA, 1630 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20009. Please indicate which publication and how many you are ordering.

Drugs and Democracy

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The country studies and briefs will examine important and timely issues, including:

- In **Colombia**, civilian scrutiny of military activity is limited and grave human rights abuses have been committed which the weak judicial system has been unable to confront. Elements of the military maintain links with brutal paramilitary forces. Coca eradication by fumigation is damaging the environment and endangering the health of both people and animals.
- **Bolivia** and **Peru** both continue to be the focus of U.S. counternarcotics policies, with important consequences for democracy and human rights in both military and civil society spheres. To achieve its counter-drug objectives in Peru, the U.S. government collaborated with—and emboldened—both Vladimiro Montesinos and the National Intelligence Service, responsible for human rights abuses and setbacks to democracy. In Bolivia, U.S. policy has fostered a strategy of “zero-tolerance” for coca cultivation that has generated tremendous social upheaval leading to violent confrontation between coca farmers and security forces, leaving numerous dead in 2001 and in previous years.
- **Ecuador** has become increasingly important because of the U.S. military’s forward operating location (FOL) established

there, increased U.S. support for the Ecuadoran armed forces and spillover effects generated by Plan Colombia, including possible contamination from fumigation, refugees and increased violence in the northern border region.

- In **Central America** the study will set out some of the issues that are common throughout the isthmus, including the relationship between the war on drugs and the loss of public confidence in the capacity of national governments to ensure citizen security, the debate over the role of the security forces, and the challenges of corruption.
- The **Mexico** case study will focus on U.S. support for policies that expand the role of the military in public security and in combating illegal drugs, as well as serious problems of corruption and abuse within public security forces and the justice system.
- The **Southern Cone** and the **Caribbean**, in different ways, also face impacts of the drug trade and of U.S. policies to combat drugs that undermine the effort to build guarantees of democracy and human rights. WOLA will produce regional analyses with case studies of Argentina and Puerto Rico.

For more information on this exciting initiative, please feel free to contact Eileen Rosin, Project Manager, at erosin@wola.org, or 202/797-2171. ■

In Memoriam

Gloria Gaston-Shapiro
1927-2002

We wish to thank a long-time WOLA supporter who has made a generous donation in memory of Ms. Gaston-Shapiro, a retired foreign service officer and former Human Rights Officer on the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. WOLA extends our sympathy to her family.

Making A Will?

Please include WOLA when you are preparing your will. By making a provision for WOLA in your will, you can help ensure that your legacy will continue to help promote human rights and democracy in Latin America. Your bequest will be greatly appreciated and can be in any amount you wish. For more information contact Kathryn Powell, Development Director, WOLA, (202) 797-2171 or kpowell@wola.org.

WOLA Activities

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television media, including the *Christian Science Monitor*, *InterPress Service*, the *Latin America Monitor* of the Inter-American Dialogue, *Bloomberg News*, *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), *El Colombiano* (Medellín), BBC Español, All Things Considered and LatinoUSA on NPR, RCN Radio from Colombia, Pacifica Radio, and Telemundo nightly news.

- Senior Associate Coletta Youngers co-authored a piece with Tamara Feinstein of the National Security Archive on **Peru’s** Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was published in Peru’s monthly *Ideele* journal.
- *Rolling Stone* published a feature article on **Colombia** based on information gathered during a WOLA-led delegation to Colombia in February 2001.
- Senior Associate Coletta Youngers was interviewed by CNN-International, the Lima daily *La Republica*, *Radio Programas del Peru*, *Peru Económico* and others on President Bush’s March visit to Lima, Peru. ■

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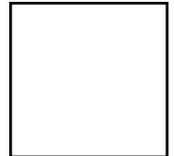
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