



SMALL WARS JOURNAL

smallwarsjournal.com

Criminal Insurgencies in Mexico: Web and Social Media Resources

Robert J. Bunker and John P. Sullivan

The authors of this piece, individually, collectively, and in cooperation with other scholars and analysts, have written about the criminal insurgencies in Mexico and various themes related to them in *Small Wars Journal* and in many other publications for some years now. The *Small Wars* publications alone include [“State of Siege: Mexico’s Criminal Insurgency,”](#) [“Plazas for Profit: Mexico’s Criminal Insurgency,”](#) [“Cartel v. Cartel: Mexico’s Criminal Insurgency,”](#) [“The Spiritual Significance of ¿Plata O Plomo?,”](#) [“Explosive Escalation?: Reflections on the Car Bombing in Ciudad Juárez,”](#) and [“The U.S. Strategic Imperative Must Shift From Iraq/Afghanistan to Mexico/The Americas and the Stabilization of Europe.”](#) Certain truths have become evident from such writings and the raging conflicts that they describe and analyze.

First, the criminal insurgencies in Mexico have been increasing in intensity since the formal declaration of war—penned with the initial deployment of Army units into Michoacán and Ciudad Juárez against the insurgent gangs and cartels—by the Calderón administration in December 2006. Over 30,000 deaths in Mexico, just over ten-times the death toll from the 9-11 attacks, have now resulted from these conflicts with 2010 surpassing the earlier end of year tallies with almost 13,000 total killings.¹ While most of these deaths have been attributed to cartel on cartel violence, an increasing proportion of them include law enforcement officers (albeit many of them on cartel payroll), military and governmental personnel, journalists, and innocent civilians. While some successes have been made against the Mexican cartels, via the capture and targeted killings of some of the capos and ensuing organizational fragmentation, the conflicts between these criminal groups and the Mexican state, and even for neighboring countries such as Guatemala, is overall not currently going well for these besieged sovereign nations. Recent headlines like those stating “Mexico army no match for drug cartels”² and “Drug gang suspects threaten ‘war’ in Guatemala”³ are becoming all too common. Further, it is currently estimated that in Mexico about 98% of all crimes are never solved—providing an air of impunity to cartel and gang hit men and foot soldiers, many of whom take great delight in engaging in the torture and beheading of their victims.⁴

Second, *Small Wars Journal* readers, especially those in the United States, need to appreciate the strategic significance of what is taking place in Mexico, Central America and in other Latin American countries, and increasingly over the border into the United States itself. War and insurgency in Iraq, Afghanistan, Western Pakistan, and in other distant OCONUS locales ultimately represent much lower stakes⁵ than the high levels of strife, establishment of criminal enclaves and depopulated cartel security zones, and rise of narco-cities—such as Nuevo Laredo

under the *Cártel del Golfo* (CDG)—now taking place on our Southern border and extending down through Central America. A chilling example of the criminal insurgencies being waged is the fate of the contested city of Ciudad Juárez—over 230,000 people have fled, primarily the business elite and skilled workers; 6,000 businesses have closed, and tens-of-thousands of homes now stand vacant or have been abandoned.⁶ While Ciudad Juárez may represent an extreme form of urban implosion, this pattern is being repeated in numerous towns throughout Mexico with many such towns and small villages in Northern Mexico now partially or fully abandoned and, even in some instances, burned to the ground.⁷ To add insult to injury, some of the cartel conflict now taking place in the urban plazas and rural transit routes is being described in an almost post-apocalyptic manner with make shift armored pickups and even a ten-wheeled armored dump truck able to carry ten enforcers and with the combatants engaging in firefights with high caliber and anti-tank weapons.⁸ It must now be accepted that the cartels and gangs of Mexico, Central America, and increasingly South America have morphed from being solely narcotics based trafficking entities to being complex, diversified criminal organizations. These criminal enterprises are increasingly politicized and armed with military grade weaponry, backed up with the training and esprit de corps necessary for them to make war on sovereign states. This asymmetric war now being waged is derived from their unique and evolving criminal insurgency tenets using not only the bribe and the gun but also, information operations,⁹ and increasingly, deviant forms of spirituality in order to further dark and morally bankrupt agendas.

Web and Social Media Resources

It is with these truths in mind that the need for informed insight for U.S. law enforcement, military, governmental, and policy makers concerning these criminal insurgencies, is the reason that this short piece has been written. It provides an overview of the more useful and informative web and social media resources, in both English and Spanish that exist concerning this homeland security and hemispheric threat to the United States, Mexico, and many other countries extending south into Latin America. Not only do these resources outline the contours of Mexico's criminal insurgencies and drug war, but they also illuminate the influence of the new communications space (horizontal communications) on the conflict environment. As Tracy Wilkinson reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, journalists are under siege, causing reporters to “practice a profound form of self-censorship, or censorship imposed by the narcos.”¹⁰ As a result, many reports assert that social media, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs—such as *El Blog del Narco*—are taking the place of traditional media. Wilkinson notes, “Social media networks such as Twitter have taken the place of newspapers and radio reports, with everyone from security officials to regular people tweeting alerts about a gun battle here, a blockade there.”¹¹ As a consequence of the battle to control information, journalists, the public, and the cartels themselves have embraced “new media” technologies (*i.e.*, social networking sites, Twitter, blogs, and other forms of horizontal mass self-communication). These resources are as follows: Text marked with * is directly quoted from web and social media sites for accuracy.

Blog Del Narco (<http://www.blogdelnarco.com>): This Spanish language blog has received notoriety for filling the gap caused by narco-censorship. It was established in March 2010 and reportedly receives close to four million hits per week. It includes current reports, YouTube videos, and a forum. It maintains a Facebook page and Twitter account (@Infonarco). Graphic photos and comprehensive, timely coverage make it not only an excellent reference site, but also

an important source for indications and warning (I&W) for placing emerging threat streams into context. **Información acerca del narcotráfico* (Information about narco-trafficking). ***En Español/Resource in Spanish.***

Borderland Beat (<http://www.borderlandbeat.com/>): This is a comprehensive site with good imagery and information and useful links. Earliest blog postings began in mid-2009. Seven contributors are listed for this site which also contains a Twitter feed (@Bordelandbeat) and Facebook social plugin. *This blog is a reflection of the issues affected by crime and drugs along the border between Mexico and the U.S. It gives a perspective of issues related to the complicated issues of both neighboring countries and how the activities from one side impact the other. It is important for both sides of the border to understand how mayhem and ruthless violence from organized crime touches the people on the borderland and the misery it brings to every day social conditions we sometimes call civilization. Consider this a huge source of information related to crime on the borderland. Knowledge is power. *Info provided: Most of the information and content is derived from open source media, unconfirmed individual sources, and personal viewpoint of the author. Most content is for information purposes only and is not from direct official sources and, in most cases, is not confirmed. Some content is graphic and discretion is advised. Anonymous contributions and donations solicited.

Border Reporter (<http://borderreporter.com/19/>): This site was established in December 2005 and is administered by an organized crime reporter focusing on the U.S.-Mexican border and the activities of the Sinaloa Federation. The site carries lead stories, limited photos and videos, hot documents, and recent news along with field productions, investigations, and resource links and archives. The site accepts donations and also contains a Twitter feed (@borderreporter), Facebook social plugin, and other media links. *BorderReporter.com, specializes in intelligence and analysis from the border, uncovering government malfeasance and feature stories from the region not covered by other media. As an expert on border issues, he [Marizco] won several regional and state awards for his work along the Arizona-Mexico border. Stories appearing on *The Border Report* are regularly cited by national news media, from *CNN* to the *Dallas Morning News*, *El Universal*, and *Proceso* magazine. Marizco is available for freelance assignments. He lives in Tucson, Arizona.

CASEDE (<http://www.seguridadcondemocracia.org/>): The Mexican research site is maintained by the Colectivo de Análisis de la Seguridad con Democracia A. C in Mexico City. Essentially a think tank, the Collective's president Raúl Benítez Manaut is an eminent Mexican academic and long-time analyst of Mexico's narco-conflict. Other notable SMEs include Jorge Chabat and Luis Astorga. The site covers crime and public security in Mexico. In addition to access to recent reports and publications (books, monographs, working papers), it has archival reports and statistics on crime in Mexico and maintains research links to Mexican resources, and a virtual library with sections on drugs and narco-trafficking, organized crime, and the Mérida Initiative. ***En Español/Resource in Spanish.***

Gabriel Regino (<http://www.gabrielregion.com/>): The Spanish language site is maintained by a Mexican lawyer. It provides analysis and insight into public security and cartel activity in Mexico. It also maintains an extremely valuable Twitter feed (@gabrielregino). Coverage on

Mexican crime and cartels is excellent! A good I&W resource. **Abogado, Académico y Twitero* (Lawyer, Academic and Twitterer). *En Español/Resource in Spanish.*

GroupIntel (<http://www.groupintel.com/>): This open source intelligence site seeks to serve as a catalyst for collaborative analysis and the “co-production of intelligence.” It contains a public blog and a members’ only collaborative space. The public blog contains several essays on the Mexican situation including “Frontlines of Criminal Insurgency: Understanding the Plazas” and “Santisma Muerte: A Troubling Trend in Radicalization.” The members’ only “GroupIntel Network” (<http://network.groupintel.com>) contains 150 discussion threads including: “Mexico’s Criminal Insurgencies,” “Transnational Organized Crime and Gangs,” “Guatemala Under the Gun,” “Expanding Cartel Reach,” “Energy Security and Resilience” (including discussion on PEMEX attacks and resource extraction), “Police Reform in Mexico and Latin America.” In addition to the discussions, several specialty groups including “The Rise of the Vigilante,” “Boyd, 4GW Theory, and Criminal Insurgency,” and “Terrorism Early Warning” round out the site, which also includes individual member blogs and collaborative research tools.

InSight—Organized Crime in the Americas (<http://www.insightcrime.org/>): InSight Crime is a virtual think tank. Its website became active in December 2010. The organization was founded in April 2010, under the auspices of the Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP) in Bogotá, Colombia, and with funding from the Open Society Foundations. In August, American University’s Center for Latin American and Latino Studies became a sponsor. InSight currently has offices at the FIP in Colombia and at American University in Washington DC. The site contains news, investigations, group profiles, and a crime map. It also maintains a Facebook page and a Twitter feed (@InSightCrime). *InSight’s objective is to increase the level of research, analysis and investigation on organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean. To this end, InSight has created this website where it connects the pieces, the players and organizations and gives a cohesive look of the region’s criminal enterprises and the effectiveness of the initiatives designed to stop them. InSight’s staff also writes analysis and does field investigations, providing the type of on-the-ground research absent in other monitoring services.

Internet Resources for Latin America (<http://lib.nmsu.edu/subject/bord/laguia/>): Provided by New Mexico State University and Molly Molloy, who tracks the Ciudad Juarez narco killings, this is an invaluable research site. The links on this site include selected current events contained in English and Spanish publications including *Frontera Norte Sur* and *Reforma*; Latin American web directories; subscription and general databases; selected library catalogues; organizations; and news sources. This email address is also of importance: *To receive current updates on U.S.-Mexico border issues, send an email to mollymolloy@gmail.com.

Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas (<http://knightcenter.utexas.edu/>): The Knight Center tracks issues related to journalism in the Americas. This site is especially valuable due to its coverage of impunity of cartel actions and attacks against journalists in Mexico and Latin America. In addition to a blog with current news and reports, it maintains a Twitter feed (@utknightcenter). See especially the Knight Center map of threats against Journalism at <http://knightcenter.utexas.edu/blog/new-knight-center-map-pinpoints-threats-against-journalism-mexico> . A larger version of the Journalist Threat Map is found at at Google maps: <http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=103960216204540664>

660.00048f4d72b6a3a226539&ll=24.327575,102.945411&spn=14.726415,12.091995&source=embed.

Los Angeles Times— *Mexico Under Siege Series* (<http://projects.latimes.com/mexico-drug-war/#/its-a-war>): *Since June 2008, *LA Times* reporters and photographers have chronicled, from both sides of the border, the savage struggle among Mexican drug cartels for control over the lucrative drug trade to the U.S. The conflict has left thousands dead, paralyzed whole cities with fear, and spawned a culture of corruption reaching the upper levels of the Mexican state. This extremely important site—one of the best covering this threat— provides a complete listing of dozens upon dozens of *LA Times* articles with topic and location filtering, an interactive map, multimedia gallery, and video Q&A by series editor Geoffrey Mohan. The site contains introductions to the topical area by David Shirk, Jorge Chabat, Sam Quinones, and others, user comments, and a Twitter feed (@mexicodrugwar) (this site is featured in this piece).

Mexican and Colombian Drug Cartels— *FBI Library Subject Bibliography* (<http://fbilibrary.fbiacademy.edu/bibliographies/mexicanandcolombiandrugcartels.htm>): This 2010 resource is an annotated listing of books, chapters, articles, and DVDs which provide information related to Mexican and Colombian Cartels. It was created for use by FBI National Academy students and others who utilize the FBI Library in Quantico, VA, by one of the authors of this piece.

Mexico Institute (<http://www.mexicoinstitute.wordpress.com>): The Mexico Institute is a specialty research program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. In addition to sponsoring research and publications—including the recent *Shared Responsibility U.S.-Mexico Policy Options for Confronting Organized Crime*, edited by Eric L. Olson, David A. Shirk, and Andrew D. Selee—it maintains a current news site the *Mexico Portal* and a Twitter feed (@MexicoInstitute). See also the Mexico Portal at the site at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=5949. * The Mexico Portal provides comprehensive and timely news, analysis and studies on Mexico. It covers a wide range of crucial issues, including migration, security, the economy, development, energy, and elections.

Mexico's Drug War (http://borderviolenceanalysis.typepad.com/mexicos_drug_war/): This small blog site is administered by *Sylvia [Longmire]...an independent consultant, author and freelance writer, and [who] contributes regularly to Homeland Security Today magazine and website. She is currently working on a book on Mexican cartels and how they've infiltrated America, which was picked up for publication by Palgrave Macmillan in Fall 2011. The administrator is a retired U.S. Air Force Captain with former experience as a Latin American desk officer. The site contains introductory level essays on the various cartels, resource links, social media feeds, archives, and category listings focused on *border incidents, border tunnels, commerce, corruption, current affairs, drug smuggling, DTOs, gangs, general violence, government and politics, human smuggling, in focus, kidnapping, terrorism, travel, and weapons trafficking.

MEXIDATA.INFO (<http://www.mexidata.info/>): Mexidata is a comprehensive Mexico area studies site. In addition to robust coverage of topical issues in Mexico's drug war, it contains

links to current research, Mexican press reports, and current events. This is an excellent sit for gathering I&W and placing current events in context. The essays (original and reprints) are of a consistent high quality. The site also maintains a Twitter feed (@MexiData_info).

Narco Mexico (<http://narcocartels.blogspot.com/>): This omnibus site covers Mexican cartel and “narcocultura” events in English and Spanish. Good historical coverage, although updates are sporadic. Contains a glossary and blog entries that recap Mexican media reportage. A good first stop for English speakers seeking to gain a deeper understanding of events in Mexico. (Caveat: Needs updating, currently good for historical perspective).

The Narco News Bulletin (<http://www.narconews.com/>): This Progressive/Left site covers narco violence and drug policy in Mexico and Latin America. It contains user/member generated content and is especially strong on contextual analysis. In addition to the blog it maintains a Twitter feed (@Narco_News). **Reportando sobre la guerra contra las drogas y la democracia desde América Latina* (Reporting on the Drug War and Democracy from Latin America).

Narcotráfico en Mexico (<http://narcotraficoenmexico.blogspot.com/>): This Spanish language blog provides current news updates and links to Mexican social media sites on narco issues. Similar to *El Blog del Narco* in content, it provides a valuable Twitter feed (@narcoenmexico). Good for current intel, context, and I&W; the Twitter feed is especially valuable. **Portal de noticias sobre el trafico de drogas* (News portal about drug trafficking). *En Español/Resource in Spanish*.

National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) (<http://www.justice.gov/ndic/>): This U.S. governmental site is primarily useful for its links to drug war related publications. These publications include the *National Drug Threat Assessment*, *National Gang Threat Assessment*, and various Drug Assessments, Bulletins and Briefs, and Situation Reports. Information concerning Mexican cartels and gangs is highly authoritative yet typically outdated because of the long publication lag times involved. The publication *Cities in Which Mexican DTOs Operate Within the United States--Situation Report (2008)* is of immense importance for gaining an understanding of cartel geographic penetration into the United States. The site also provides information on SENTRY (A Synthetic Drug Early Warning and Response System) and the multiagency training course “Introduction to Basic Drug Intelligence Analysis”.

Small Wars Journal— Roundup; Americas (<http://smallwarsjournal.com/>): Daily roundup provided by Dave Dilege. Lists top news stories from *Associated Press*, *BBC News*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Reuters*, *Washington Post*, et. al., with many articles focusing on Mexican and Central American gang and cartel activity and violence and state response. This premier Small Wars site utilizes various social media plugins and Kindle updates. **Small Wars Journal* publishes contributed content from serious, authentic voices from across the wide spectrum of participants and stakeholders in small wars. *About: *Small Wars Journal* facilitates the exchange of information among practitioners, thought leaders, and students of small wars, in order to advance knowledge and capabilities in the field. We hope this, in turn, advances the practice and effectiveness of those forces prosecuting Small Wars in the interest of self-determination, freedom, and prosperity for the population in the area of operations. **Small Wars Journal* is NOT a government, official, or big corporate site. It is run by Small Wars Foundation, a non-

profit corporation, for the benefit of the Small Wars community of interest. The site accepts donations and advertising with the foundation dating back to 2008. *Small Wars Journal* itself was launched in 2005.

Southern Pulse (<http://www.southernpulse.com/>): This site is administered by Samuel Logan (*This is for the Mara Salvatrucha*; 2009) and has been in existence since 2006. Useful pulses provided concerning gangs, cartels, and criminal activity in Latin America within the larger streams of information available. *Pulses are blocks of intelligence within the Southern Pulse network and database. Each pulse is a 2-5 sentence briefing of an internal piece of information, known as an Intel Feed. Pulses are intended to be direct and objective. The database contains pulses dating back to 2006 and can be searched with specific keywords. *Southern Pulse: Networked Intelligence is an information gathering and dissemination organization that uses field contacts and in country media sources to gather open source information on security, politics, energy, and business in Latin America. This fee service is \$14.99 a month with access to over 3,800 pulses, field notes, briefs, and network query (human search engine) answering.

STRATFOR—Tracking Mexico’s Drug Cartels (<http://www.stratfor.com>): Stratfor is a significant player in open source intelligence (OSINT). The Stratfor Mexico desk is a valuable resource for understanding the current and developing situation in Mexico’s criminal insurgencies. Stratfor’s analysts were among the first on the Mexican Drug War beat and regularly provide incisive analysis and projections about trends and potentials in the narco-conflict. Their *Mexico Security Memo* is an essential resource. While we don’t always agree with their assessment, we would never miss it! Their products are essential reading. See especially http://www.stratfor.com/theme/tracking_mexicos_drug_cartels.

Third Generation Gangs and Child Soldiers— FBI Library Subject Bibliography (<http://fbilibrary.fbiacademy.edu/bibliographies/thirdgenerationgangs.htm>): This 2007 resource is an annotated listing of books, chapters, articles, and DVDs which provide information related to Third Generation Gangs (politicized and military-like) and Child Soldiers. Such gangs and soldiers are found in the criminal insurgencies now taking place in Mexico and other regions of Latin America. It was created for use by FBI National Academy students and others who utilize the FBI Library in Quantico, VA, by the authors of this piece.

Trans-Border Institute (TBI) (<http://www.sandiego.edu/peacestudies/tbi/>): The TBI site belongs to what is becoming a premier university peace research institute, with one area of interest for *Small Wars* readers being that focused on Mexican security and justice issues. The Institute Director is David Shirk (away on Sabbatical) with Charles Pope currently serving as the Interim Director. *The Trans-Border Institute (TBI) was created in 1994 with two main objectives: 1) to promote border-related scholarship, activities, and community at the University of San Diego, and 2) to promote an active role for the University in the cross-border community. To realize these objectives, the Institute engages in a variety of programmatic activities and initiatives. The Institute is also soliciting donations to build up its endowment. The site provides information on current projects including: U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation Project, USD-UABC Legal Education Program, Justice in Mexico Project (Crime Indicator Database), Mapping Project, and Border Interview Series. *To sign up to receive the free monthly Justice in Mexico news report, please contact justiceinmexico@sandiego.edu. Past projects are also listed along with briefs,

funded research documents, publications, course information, photo gallery, research links, and blog listings. The site has numerous social media links.

The Washington Post—Mexico at War Series (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/interactives/mexico-at-war/>): *The Mexican government’s war against powerful drug cartels has far-reaching ramifications for both Mexico and the United States. *Washington Post* correspondents working north and south of the U.S.-Mexico border are reporting on the impacts of the drug war in both countries. A report emailing function exists for this site, however, no social networking plugins were noted. The site contains articles, archive blog, videos, and photos going back to mid-2010, making it a less comprehensive resource than the more established *Los Angeles Times* site going back to mid-2008.

Conclusion

Mexico’s Drug War—which we view as a set of interlocking criminal insurgencies—challenges Mexico and sovereignty in general. This post-modern conflict (criminal insurgency and crime wars are likely to be on the rise as a significant form of future war) is dynamic. As the conflict matures and spreads to other points (consider the now and future “Criminal Insurgencies in the Americas”¹²), on-going research, intelligence analysis, and policy assessment will be required. It is hoped that this resource set will assist in those analytical endeavors.

Notes

1. From January through November 2010, a total of 12,456 killings took place. See Jens Erik Gould and Thomas Black, “Mexico Drug War Death Toll Climbs to 30,196 Since 2006, Government Says”. *Bloomberg*. December 16, 2010. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-12-16/mexico-drug-war-death-toll-climbs-to-30-196-since-2006-government-says.html> (Accessed 31 December 2010).
2. Tracy Wilkinson and Ken Ellingwood, “Mexico army no match for drug cartels”. *Los Angeles Times*. Thursday, December 30, 2010: A1, A6. Online version variant; <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/dec/29/world/la-fg-mexico-army-20101230> (Accessed 31 December 2010).
3. Associated Press (Guatemala City), “Drug gang suspects threaten ‘war’ in Guatemala”. December 28, 2010. http://www.forbes.com/feeds/ap/2010/12/28/general-lt-drug-war-guatemala_8227446.html?boxes=financechannelAP (Accessed 31 December 2010).
4. Alfredo Corchado, “Obama condemns U.S. consulate killings in Mexico”. *The Dallas Morning News*. Monday, March 15, 2010. <http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/latestnews/stories/031410dnintmexicoconsulate.1a8bdb848.html> (Accessed 3 January 2011).
5. This perception is in variance to the primacy of current U.S. foreign and defense policies focused on eliminating the Al Qaeda and Taliban enclaves in Afghanistan and Western Pakistan, stabilizing that nation as a fledgling democracy, and eliminating Al Qaeda influence in Iraq and bringing about some sort of democratic covenant between the competing Sunni, Shia, and Kuridish populations so that Iraq does not fragment into three smaller sovereign entities. Where higher stakes do exist is with the security of the nuclear weapons and materials in Pakistan—all

agree that Al Qaeda and affinity group access to such weapons and materials would likely see them used against Western Europe or the United States.

6. Will Weissert, "Countless Juarez residents flee 'dying city'". *Associated Press*. Wednesday 29 December 2010. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/40844625/ns/world_news-americas/

(Accessed 31 December 2010). Information on vacant and abandoned homes provided by a source to one of the authors on a non-attribution basis at a Trans-Border Institute (TBI), University of San Diego, invitation-only roundtable on 'Drug Trafficking, Violence, and Public Security in Mexico' on December 10, 2010.

7. Associated Press, "Mexico Cartels Empty Border Towns." Saturday, April 17, 2010. <http://www.borderlandbeat.com/2010/04/mexico-cartels-empty-border-towns.html> (Accessed 31 December 2010).

8. Mark Stevenson, "Residents not returning to town hit by Mexico drug war." *Associated Press*. November 23, 2010. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/40321769/ns/world_news-americas/ (Accessed 31 December 2010).

9. Information operations (info ops) aimed at securing freedom to operate are an increasingly important element of the drug war. See John P. Sullivan, "Cartel Info Ops: Power and Counter-power in Mexico's Drug War," *MountainRunner* (www.MountainRunner.us), 15 November 2010, for a discussion of this dimension.

10. Tracy Wilkinson, "Caught behind enemy lines," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 November 2010. <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/nov/06/world/la-fg-mexico-cartel-rule-20101106> (Accessed 9 January 2011).

11. Ibid.

12. See Hal Brands, "Third-Generation Gangs and Criminal Insurgency in Latin America," *Small Wars Journal*, 4 July 2009 at <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2009/07/thirdgeneration-gangs-and-crim/>; John P. Sullivan, "Criminal Insurgency in the Americas," *Small Wars Journal*, 13 February 2010 at <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2010/02/criminal-insurgency-in-america/>; and Max G. Manwaring, *A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty: Gangs and Other Illicit Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) in Central America, El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica, and Brazil*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008 at <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=837> for discussion of the now and future prospects for criminal insurgencies in Latin America.

Dr. Robert J. Bunker holds degrees in political science, government, behavioral science, social science, anthropology-geography, and history. Past associations have included Futurist in Residence, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA; Counter-OPFOR Program Consultant (Staff Member), National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center—West, El Segundo, CA; Fellow, Institute of Law Warfare, Association of the US Army, Arlington, VA; Lecturer-Adjunct Professor, National Security Studies Program, California State University San Bernardino, San Bernardino, CA; instructor, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA; and founding member, Los Angeles County Terrorism Early Warning Group. Dr. Bunker has over 200 publications including short essays, articles, chapters, papers and book length documents. These include Non-State Threats and Future Wars (editor); Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency (editor); Criminal-States and Criminal-Soldiers (editor); Narcos Over the Border (editor). He can be reached at bunker@usc.edu.

John P. Sullivan is a regular contributor to *Small Wars Journal*. He is a career police officer and currently serves as a lieutenant with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies on Terrorism (CAST). He is co-editor of *Countering Terrorism and WMD: Creating a Global Counter-Terrorism Network* (Routledge, 2006) and *Global Biosecurity: Threats and Responses* (Routledge, 2010). His current research focus is the impact of transnational organized crime on sovereignty, intelligence, terrorism, and criminal insurgencies.

This is a single article excerpt of material published in [Small Wars Journal](#).

Published by and COPYRIGHT © 2010, Small Wars Foundation.

Permission is granted to print single copies for personal, non-commercial use. Select non-commercial use is licensed via a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 3.0 license and per our [Terms of Use](#). We are in this together.



No FACTUAL STATEMENT should be relied upon without further investigation on your part sufficient to satisfy you in your independent judgment that it is true.

Contact: comment@smallwarsjournal.com

Visit www.smallwarsjournal.com

Cover Price: Your call. [Support SWJ here.](#)