



# Mexico's Knight Templar and Code of Conduct Implications

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Appendix: Mexico's Other Insurgencies by Graham Turbiville, Tribal Analysis Center



LA VIDA REQUIERE DE CABALLEROSIDAD  
Y DE HUMILDAD

*'Life requires chivalry and humility'*<sup>1</sup>

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1. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/14/mexico-knights-templar-publicity-stung\\_n\\_3757742.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/14/mexico-knights-templar-publicity-stung_n_3757742.html)

Dr. Graham Turbiville, Jr., explained the faltering stability process occurring in Latin America as the Cold War ended and its destabilizing external influences were no longer present:

“A central post-Cold War security issue is the fate of insurgent movements that received weapons, equipment and political support for decades from the Soviet bloc and other communist states around the world. In Latin America, where the development and consolidation of democratic regimes often is accompanied by promises of free-market economic and open-trade policies, the virtual shutoff of outside support to insurgents seemed to assure their eventual dissolution. In the 1990s, Central American peace accords and electoral successes and South American counterinsurgency gains, as in Peru, reinforced this view.

“Optimistic assessments based on these events may yet prove to be accurate. But as the century winds down, troubling developments in the Southern Hemisphere suggest that ‘guerrilla’ problems may plague some Latin American governments as they pursue national progress, prosperity and stability. Specialists within and outside the region point to political, legislative and judicial institutions whose reform has been incomplete and whose inefficiencies and corruption have fostered growing popular resentment. In addition, for some Latin American states, faltering free-market economies, shaky financial policies and the failure to deliver on social programs have resulted in greater inequities in the distribution of wealth and opportunity. Although the poorest sectors of society bear the greatest burden, the middle classes are increasingly affected and resentful.

“Crime and violence have increased in some Latin American states as a result of difficult economic circumstances, high unemployment and weakened institutions following years of conflicts. Demobilizing military-and insurgent-establishments has increased the number of unemployed, who sometimes turn to crime and banditry. In some areas, drug trafficking remains a seductive income source, as well as a major contributor to criminal and random violence. The police’s inability to deal with acute crime has forced some states-Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico-to temporarily use their militaries to deal with criminals. This has raised concerns-well founded or not-about militarization and the emergence of ‘populist military leaders’ who may seize power to ensure order and stability.

Graham Turbiville, as was typical of his research, identified some of the reasons that insurgencies tend to “recycle” as guerrilla campaigns devolve to terrorism that is often followed by criminality as the relative power between insurgent and central government shifts against the men intending to displace the former style of governance. The “growing popular resentment” created within an already aggrieved population only grows due to the long recognized “inequities in the distribution of wealth and opportunity,” especially when combined with increased unemployment created by the demobilization of both military and insurgents, failure to deliver on promised social programs, and growing governmental corruption that impacts both the poor and the unstable, small middle class as some portions of the newly emerging criminality class begins to develop political overtones as the insurgency recycles instead of the demobilization process continuing. This appears to be occurring with the Knights Templar of Michoacan.

The Knights Templar Cartel (Spanish: Caballeros Templarios) is a Mexican criminal organization composed of remnants of the defunct La Familia Michoacana drug cartel based in the Mexican state of Michoacán. The Knights Templar Cartel indoctrinates its operatives to “fight and die” for “social justice”. They have taken full control of the now extinct La Familia Michoacana operations in states including Michoacán, Guerrero, State of Mexico, and Morelos. Its armed wing is La Resistencia.<sup>2</sup> They seem to have adopted the social justice plan from a nearly extinct Mexican insurgent moment, the People’s Revolutionary Army, the EPR.

2. Wikipedia, Knights Templar Cartel.

“The story of the EPR harks back to another chapter of Latin American history, when leftist urban guerrillas inspired by Cuba’s Fidel Castro went underground to wage war against dictatorial governments. Some alleged EPR members are said to have been operating clandestinely for many years, though their struggle went largely unnoticed until the Pemex bombings....The EPR launched itself publicly in 1996 in Guerrero, a Pacific Coast state with long traditions of armed resistance to the Mexican government. As many as 100 masked EPR members armed with assault rifles marched into the town of Aguas Blancas as residents were gathering to commemorate the killings a year earlier of 17 members of a peasants rights group by state police. Mexico was by then well into its transition from a one-party state to a multiparty democracy. But to the EPR, Mexico remained a country of political impunity ruled on behalf of a wealthy few.”<sup>3</sup>

In November 2012, alarms regarding the regeneration of the EPR and similar insurgent groups was being sounded, as predicted by Graham Turbiville in 1997:

“The apparent growth of the EPR is worrying. In Colombia, both the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) are still very active, while in Peru, the Shining Path is growing once again, thanks to its increasingly involvement in the drug trade. While the cold war and the civil wars it spawned are over, left-wing rebel groups in Latin America are far from dead.”<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Arturo Munoz provided his views of the shift of a possibly united Knights Templar and the nucleus of the old EPR as they began to shift from criminality toward insurgency and regionalized nationalism after carefully analyzing the Knights Templar Code of Conduct, their “bible.”

“I think that this is such an important document that I went ahead and did a word for word translation.

#### Comments:

“This clearly crosses the line between organized crime and insurgency. The Knights Templar are attempting to recruit people and present themselves to the public as an alternate system of justice. This is the insurgent goal of becoming a government and in many places in Michoacan, the Knights Templar are in fact the local government. Going back to my indicators of insurgent victory, the Knights Templar are demonstrating the ability to tax the people ( they are notorious for taxing avocado growers and lime growers, and in the local market IMPOSING PRICES that are charged locally – very revolutionary indeed) impose justice, and recruit. They have an ideology and an organization and they have an armed component capable of confronting the authorities. They are attempting to gain a mass following. They are appealing to an aggrieved public promising to bring about real justice and maintain social order. I don’t know to what degree the “bible” in question is taken seriously by the Knights Templar themselves but in propaganda terms it good be an excellent initiative aimed at the masses. At the same time they make no bones about being smugglers and outlaws, just a better sort than everyone else.

“Many of the things which the Knights Templar are told NOT to do, such as abuse women, kidnap people for ransom, take drugs, get drunk, abuse their power, are in fact common transgressions that many Mexicans complain about. All those abuses have given rise to the self-defense forces in the light of the failure of the Mexican government to maintain social order. The Knights Templar are offering to impose social order in a manner more effective than the government or the self-defense forces. In their crusade against crime and abuse, they are not only taking on criminals but also corrupt policemen and soldiers

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3. <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/sep/20/world/fg-guerrilla20>

4. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/mexican-guerrilla-groups-rearming>

“The Knights Templar see themselves as a clandestine organization closed to the public, much like the Masons, or the Muslim Brotherhood. They pay a lot of attention to maintaining secrecy and also maintaining a strict chain of command . They repeatedly warn recruits that they will be punished by death if they break the rules. All drug gangs do this but the Knights Templar seem to be the most righteous about it.

“They have a very interesting mix in which they stress faith in God but are very flexible about how that faith is manifested. They go out of their way to say that no one should be criticized as to how they worship God. There is a Free Thinking, Deist flavor to these writings that reminds me of some of our Founding Fathers who often invoked God but were not really very religious in their own lives and I would say were more rationalist and free thinking than religious. I am not familiar with Masonic ideals but maybe that is what we are seeing here. It is definitely not a traditional Mexican approach. Clearly the emphasis on God and morality sets the Knights Templar apart from every other cartel in Mexico and I would say Latin America and that is obviously the impression they want to give.

“The strong emphasis on humility and not appearing to be better than anyone strikes at one of the key characteristics of traditional drug traffickers. From top to bottom they seek to ostentatiously display their wealth . When I was in a certain Caribbean country where drug traffickers were very powerful and well known, the mansions they built for themselves were famous all over the island. They went out of their way to flaunt their wealth. Same as in Colombia, Mexico and other places. Now come along the Knights Templar and they say that members of this drug trafficking cartel should NOT flaunt their wealth. It is a welcome message for the public that is disgusted with the criminals and their flagrant abuses. I think this message has a lot of potential to attract strong popular support. This goes along with all the medieval imagery of knights in shining armor. They are going to great lengths to present themselves as something different and noble.

“The emphasis on the sovereignty of Michoacan fits with its unique identity and history. Michoacan was not part of the Nahuatl-speaking orbit of Mexico. I do not believe it was ever conquered by the Aztecs. Its Tarascan Indian population base was always different than other indigenous groups in Mexico and always had a very distinct identity. Notice in the news story below the support expressed by an Indian community leader who I assume is Tarascan.”

From the article:

MEXICO CITY — A group of farmers and businessmen from the western Mexico state of Michoacan demanded Wednesday that the government stop sending thousands of federal police to fight a local drug cartel. While the group denied any links to the Knights Templar cartel, its news conference in Mexico City coincided with a rare public relations push by the gang, whose leader raged against federal police in a videotaped statement posted over the weekend on social media sites.

Both the cartel and the group, which calls itself Peace with Dignity for Michoacan, also railed against “self-defense” groups set up by residents in several Michoacan towns to resist Knights Templar gunmen.

The self-defense groups say the cartel’s gunmen subjected residents to systematic extortion demands for “protection payments.”

But the Peace with Dignity group said such payments were levied only on part of the population, such as big avocado plantations, and were helpful in some cases, or at least a necessary evil.

“We avocado farmers were getting robbed a lot” by thieves sneaking into orchards, farmer Nicolas Aguilar said. “We were told there was a payment being collected to help with security, and since then we haven’t had any more problems with theft.”

The group also cited a list of alleged abuses by federal police, who they said were bothering local women and scaring away tourism, one of the main sources of revenue for the hilly, pine-clad state.

“We don’t want any more federal police,” said a Purepecha Indian community leader, Miguel Aguilera....

It is rare for leaders of Mexico’s drug cartels to speak publicly, but Gomez has posted videos of lengthy speeches at least twice in the past.

Some cartels have been known to sponsor front groups or demonstrations against police in Mexico.

Misael Gonzalez, a leader of the self-defense force in the Michoacan town of Coalcoman, said he didn’t know if Peace with Dignity is linked to the Knights Templar, but said that “in several towns, there have been ‘narco marches’ organized by the Knights Templar” to demand the withdrawal of federal police.



[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/14/mexico-knights-templar-publicity-stung\\_n\\_3757742.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/14/mexico-knights-templar-publicity-stung_n_3757742.html)

Gonzalez said he is happy to have federal officers in his town, a view shared by Hipolito Mora, leader of self-defense force in the town of La Ruana.

“We need the federal police and the army here,” Mora said. “If they leave, the killing will start again.”<sup>5</sup>

“Also see this typical picture of Knights Templar justice. It takes on more meaning after you read their code. These are 7 criminals executed by the Knights Templar and their bodies displayed publicly with placards explaining their crimes. I think most locals would react thinking ‘good riddance.’”

“I googled Tarascans and Knights Templar in Spanish to see if a link came up. I did not see one specifically but I did see a reference to a vigilante group that called itself the “Tarascan Group” that executed criminals in the 2008 period but are no longer active or at least are not making public statements. I am looking for evidence of Tarascan ethnic nationalism to see if that has anything to do with the independent Michoacan theme espoused by the Knights Templar. Another article said that when La Familia fell apart due to the death of its bible-toting leader, six groups vied

5. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/14/mexico-knights-templar-publicity-stung\\_n\\_3757742.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/14/mexico-knights-templar-publicity-stung_n_3757742.html)

to replace it, to include the Knights Templar. One of those six groups is a little known group known as "The Tarascans" but there is no information if they are the same as the Tarascan Group. It is interesting that they identify themselves by ethnicity.

"What I did find is various videotaped speeches by "La Tuta" on You Tube. He is the supreme leader of the Knights Templar. He used to be third in command of La Familia and he is the one with the leftist guerrilla links. I have copied below the link to his press announcement in which the Knights Templar openly declare war on the Gulf and Sinaloa cartels and the Zetas in particular. Notice in La Tuta's office two pictures of Che Guevara on the wall alongside the big statue of a Knight Templar and a huge sword. He also has the Mexican flag and a picture of Pancho Villa. He cites the extreme number of people being killed in Mexico, 150,000, and says that this carnage must stop. He also refers to the thousands of disappearances and says they must stop also. He declares that the Knights Templar are doing the best they can to eliminate the criminals doing these murders and kidnappings and therefore the Federal Police are misguided when they target the Knights Templar. He calls on the commander of the Federal Police by name to come to his senses and realize that the Knights Templar are only trying to help the Mexican people. He also professes great respect for the Mexican military, referring to them as guardians of the nation, and calls on them to treat the Knights Templars as allies not enemies, in the existential struggle to end criminal violence in Mexico. See La Tuta's press announcement at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYVvhHSJls0>

"There are also Knights Templar corridos (folk ballads) on the internet same as for the other narco cartels. See below a crude video illustrating a Spanish language rap song extolling the Knights Templar focusing on their patrols to defend the community. Presumably the armed teenagers appearing on the veranda are members of the Knights Templar or somehow connected. If they really are Knights Templar then there seems to be no effort at clandestinity in this area. They seem pretty relaxed lounging around armed in the open. This seems to be typical propaganda in all wars trying to convince young men that war is fun and being armed and on duty is a neat thing to do. I think it is poorly done but the message gets across. This organization has come a long way from its inception in 2011 to being the third largest cartel in Mexico, so they are doing something right.

<https://www.facebook.com/corridos.templarios?ref=stream>

"Corridos Templarios is on Facebook. To connect with Corridos Templarios, sign up for Facebook .

"In the following video of the capture of the Knights Templar cell operating in Patzcuaro, Michoacan, you can see a huge banner that was cap-



tured with the crusader cross on it and a Knights Templar slogan underneath the eagle and serpent of the Mexican flag. Patzcuaro is a famous town for the butterfly nets used on the lake by the Tarascan fishermen; it is part of the Tarascan heartland. See arrest video at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0zurd2lGuw>

“The Mexican press by the way obviously has copies of the Knights Templar “bible” because they refer to it in their reports.”

## **Code of the Knights Templar of Michoacán**

“This struggle is for your people, my people, for ourselves and for our future generations.”

Code of the Knights Templar of Michoacán

This code is obligatory for all those who form part of the Order of the Knights Templar of Michoacán.

The Knights Templar of Michoacán are born on 8 March 2011. Their principal mission is to protect the inhabitants and the sacred territory of the independent, sovereign and secular state of Michoacán.

To enter this order it is necessary to receive approval from the Council composed by the brothers of greatest experience and good judgment.

Every individual who becomes a member of the Knights Templar of Michoacán does so for all his life and cannot abandon the order.

+ “A man with ideas is strong but a man with ideals is invincible.”

All members of the Order of the Knights Templar of Michoacán should be under oath, which is administered via a ritual established by the Council. This oath will be kept under pain of death.

Every knight is obligated to behave with Honor, dignity, absolute discipline, loyalty and honesty, as dictated by the sacred canons of the Order.

All the knights should respect the CODE OF SILENCE; it is absolutely prohibited to divulge our activities and secrets.

The Knights Templar should love and serve all humanity in a disinterested manner.

+ “A long journey begins with a first step.”

“Love, Loyalty, Equality and Justice.”

A Knight Templar understands that there is a God, a life created by Him, an eternal truth and a divine purpose in the service of God and Mankind.

The members of the Order should struggle against materialism, injustice and tyranny in the world, beginning with their own home, community, city, state and country.

It is the duty of all the knights to prepare and equip themselves for battle and attain the objectives of the Order.

We Knights Templar will wage the ideological battle that confronts us in order to defend the values that sustain a society based on ethics that have been developed over the centuries.

+ “In seeking the welfare of our fellow men, we will find our own.”

The Order will struggle against the disintegration of moral values and the destructive elements that prevail today in human society.

The Order sustains natural justice and the fundamental rights of man, recognizing the right of all peoples and nations to govern themselves within their own natural economic environment.

The Order supports freedom of expression, of conscience and of religion; collective self-defense and positive measures to eradicate the poverty and injustice that threaten world society.

The Templars should not have a negative attitude against any man because of the way he addresses God, even if this should be different or strange. On the contrary, the Templar should try to understand how others seek God.

+ “Destiny deals out the cards, but we are the ones who play them.”

A soldier of the Templars should not be enslaved by sectarian beliefs or narrow opinions. God is truth and without God there is no truth. A Templar should always seek truth because in truth there is God.

The Order foments patriotism, expressed in pride in one's own land and its achievements and the awareness of its place among nations and the duties towards all mankind.

The Knights of the Order should conduct themselves with humility and be the most honorable, the most noble, the most polite, the most honest and the most gentlemanly, as a worthy Knight of the Templars.

A Templar should serve the Order and not expect to be served by it. What collaboration is given should be in the service of God and there should be no expectation of reward other than the knowledge that the Order has been honored by his devotion.

+ “I swear and promise to always fight to protect the oppressed, the widow and the orphan.”

+ “There is a past that is gone forever, but there is a future that is ours.”

Templars must not offend in any manner another person or other being. For all, the Templar should be a model of gentlemanliness.

No woman should fear a Templar, neither his actions nor his words. No child should fear a Templar either. No man, should fear a Templar, but on the contrary should feel his protection.

Never should a Templar dishonor another Templar, because such conduct will dishonor himself and will discredit the Order.

In his conduct, a Templar will avoid the following: brutality, drunkenness in an offensive manner, immorality, cowardice, lying and having malicious intentions.

+ “Never surrender, create your own path.”

+ “Life requires gentlemanliness and humility.”

A knight should not seek positions of aggrandizement in the Order. He will be content with those positions which he has been given so that he can serve best.

A Templar should not judge anyone by his possessions or his social position. On the contrary, people should be judged by their character and their charity towards others, or lack thereof.

Members of the Order must submit completely to the principles of the Templars and obey its officials in all things related to the Order.

For the Knights Templars of Michoacán, discipline is constant and obedience is always given; we come and go depending on the instructions given by those in authority.

Every member of the Order must remain firm and constant in the just causes of God.

All Knights Templar of the Order are under obligation to live a common life of sobriety and happiness, always maintaining a low profile so as not to attract notice.

All knights must treat their companions and leaders with respect.

Work undertaken by all those in the Order must be for the benefit and progress of all the Knights Templar and not for personal benefit of any individual.

+ “If you can dream it, you can make it happen.”

+ “For cowards, the future is uncertain, for the brave it is the great opportunity they are waiting for. “

The conduct of a knight should be unblemished, therefore abusing the innocence of virtuous women and minors, utilizing deception or power to seduce them, is prohibited.

For all members of the Order, the use of drugs or any mind altering substance is strictly prohibited.

A Knight Templar never gives the impression he is superior to others.

All members of the Order of the Knights Templar of Michoacán should inform the Council regarding all matters of relevance that occur in their personal lives.

+ “I swear and promise to spill my blood, if need be, to comply with all my oaths, and to assist my brothers.”

+ “Man is a God when he dreams and a pauper when he reflects.

Kidnapping for the purpose of making money is strictly prohibited for all members of the Order.

The leaders of the Order and their personnel must periodically submit to antidoping (sic) tests and inform the Council of the results of these tests.

Absolute coordination must take place among all members of the Order, in compliance with the organizational chart, to fulfill correctly all functions.

No one can leave their assigned position without permission from his superior; in the case of the leadership there should exist good communication with the rest of that elite (sic); the deputies of the leaders should coordinate effectively the functions of all personnel.

+ “Thinking with your head is not the same as thinking with your heart.”

+ “No one has more pride than a Templar: He has the forest for his house and the sky as a window. “

To use lethal force, authorization from the Council is required.

The Knights Templar of Michoacán should never be seen as lazy or getting involved what is none of their business.

Knights Templar in leadership positions will behave in an exemplary manner: they will be intelligent, astute, humble, prudent, efficient, audacious and discreet: they are under obligation to improve themselves and learn.

Any knight who has a need to move outside his work zone, must inform immediately as soon as he enters the other zone, irrespective of his position in the hierarchy.

At the moment of the move, all necessary security precautions must be taken, including sending out an advance party and traveling with caution during the entire trajectory.

For security reasons, all knights must be on alert 24 hours a day.

If a knight commits a fault against a member of the Council and violates the code of silence of the Knights Templar of Michoacán, he shall be punished with death.

The Knights Templar of Michoacán impose justice and because of that, no element should kill wantonly or for money. When that decision is made, it should be first investigated thoroughly and if there are sufficient reasons then proceed.

+ “A man's strength emanates from his mind.”

+ “A brave man does not turn away from life's battle.”

A Knight Templar of Michoacán is a crusader at all times, committed to a dual struggle against flesh and blood temptations while at the same time confronting the spiritual forces of the heavens.

A knight should always be conscious that he is a soldier of the Templars and always see to it that his works are an example to others.

Every knight should advance without fear, but being careful what may happen to the right and to the left of him, with his chest uncovered and his soul fortified with faith.

The knight that betrays the Templars shall be punished by death and his properties will be expropriated, and his relatives will suffer the same fate.

+ “Wine is strong, the king is stronger and women are very strong but the truth vanquishes all of them.”

+ “If you persevere, your dreams and desires will become reality.”

Where there is weakness, the Templar should bring his force. Where there is no voice, the Templar should raise his. Where poverty is greatest, there the Templar should distribute his generosity.”

+ “Because the manner in which we comport ourselves today, will be the example for our people in the days to come.”

### [Código De Los Caballeros Templarios De Michoacán](#)

[Original Spanish Version ~ pdf 1.52 MB](#)

## APPENDIX:

Graham Turbiville researched this article in 1997 and it is excellent background on Mexico's insurgent groups that have received little attention in the United States. Graham is no longer with Tribal Analysis Center as he has passed away, but his work will continue to be associated with the Center. His scholarship and gentlemanly mentorship is greatly missed.

**Mexico's Other Insurgents**  
**by Dr. Graham H. Turbiville, JR.**  
**From Military Review. US Army Command and General Staff College.**  
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A central post-Cold War security issue is the fate of insurgent movements that received weapons, equipment and political support for decades from the Soviet bloc and other communist states around the world. In Latin America, where the development and consolidation of democratic regimes often is accompanied by promises of free-market economic and open-trade policies, the virtual shutoff of outside support to insurgents seemed to assure their eventual dissolution. In the 1990s, Central American peace accords and electoral successes and South American counterinsurgency gains, as in Peru, reinforced this view.[1]

Optimistic assessments based on these events may yet prove to be accurate. But as the century winds down, troubling developments in the Southern Hemisphere suggest that "guerrilla" problems may plague some Latin American governments as they pursue national progress, prosperity and stability. Specialists within and outside the region point to political, legislative and judicial institutions whose reform has been incomplete and whose inefficiencies and corruption have fostered growing popular resentment. In addition, for some Latin American states, faltering free-market economies, shaky financial policies and the failure to deliver on social programs have resulted in greater inequities in the distribution of wealth and opportunity. Although the poorest sectors of society bear the greatest burden, the middle classes are increasingly affected and resentful.[2]

Crime and violence have increased in some Latin American states as a result of difficult economic circumstances, high unemployment and weakened institutions following years of conflicts. Demobilizing military-and insurgent-establishments has increased the number of unemployed, who sometimes turn to crime and banditry. In some areas, drug trafficking remains a seductive income source, as well as a major contributor to criminal and random violence. The police's inability to deal with acute crime has forced some states-Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico-to temporarily use their militaries to deal with criminals. This has raised concerns-well founded or not-about militarization and the emergence of "populist military leaders" who may seize power to ensure order and stability.[3]

In this late 20th-century environment, where democratic leaders are trying to solve difficult political, economic, social and security issues, some old guerrilla movements are showing signs of life. "Revolutionary" programs include toppling existing regimes, seizing power, redressing enduring

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6. <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/mexico/mexico.htm>

national problems and even entering the political process. While at least echoes of old Soviet, Cuban, and Maoist versions of Marxism-Leninism and anti-imperialist rhetoric and ideology remain, issues of national or local power and personal or organizational profit are becoming movement motivators. Although communist state support has generally ended, mobilized foreign leftist interest and lobbying have not. Traditional rallies, newsletters, visiting delegations, “peace brigades” and even the Internet-whose real impact is yet to be determined-are ways revolutionaries influence populations and supporters.[4]

More specifically, Latin America's recent “old guerrilla” activity includes resignation and indifference as well as efforts to win integrated government roles.[5] It has also included actions ranging from well-planned surprise strikes against specific targets to preparation for major new campaigns and offensives. For example, in Chile, a faction of the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR) executed the stunning December 1996 helicopter escape of four FPMR leaders from a maximum security prison near Santiago. The FPMR action immediately brought the group into the public spotlight again, raised the specter of other impending strikes and introduced a sensitive new issue into Chilean internal politics regarding the current “threat of radical groups.”[6]

Despite being badly damaged by Peruvian security forces throughout the 1990s, both the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) and the larger Maoist Sendero Luminoso (SL), or Shining Path, have sustained themselves with funding from drug trafficking, kidnapping and robbery, as well as with international support. The MRTA's successful December 1996 seizure of important Peruvian and international hostages, followed by four months of posturing and negotiations before Peruvian security forces successfully ended the crisis, momentarily re-established the group as a serious threat to Peru .[7] The SL's reorganization attempts have been accompanied by periodic attacks in Peru's urban and rural areas and a frequently stated promise that the “people's war will continue.”[8] Both groups have Internet sites.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the smaller National Liberation Army pose the greatest armed threat to a Latin American state. With longstanding ties to narcotrafficking and skilled in extortion, robbery and kidnapping, these groups have vowed that 1997 will see an intensification of the “internal war.”[9] Overall, events of the past six months suggest that even small, badly damaged Latin American groups possess:

- A capacity to use stunning strikes and successes to surprise the governments they oppose.

- An ability and willingness to sustain themselves with drug trafficking, kidnapping, robbery, extortion and foreign donations.

- An ability to attract sympathizers and activists internationally.

- A continued willingness to cooperate in joint ventures

- Skill in exploiting enduring political, economic and social problems.

Mexico presents special concerns. It is vital to Mexican and US security that existing and incipient insurgent movements be examined, understood and resolved. This is an undertaking as complex and challenging as any in Latin America, which forms a backdrop to what may be happening in Mexico. This article addresses the spectrum of Mexican insurgent groups over the years and highlights some complexities that make Mexican guerrillas an important topic for research and assessment.

Old Guerrillas, Zapatistas and the Lucio Cabanas Legacy

Demographic projections from the 1995 Mexican census indicated that Mexico's population would grow to about 93 million by the beginning of 1997.[10]

Like the rest of the industrialized and industrializing world, Mexico's population had become more heavily urbanized than just five years before.

With urban populations concentrated primarily in northern Mexico's large cities, the largely rural south presents a striking contrast in development, wealth and opportunity. Land distribution and agricultural reform are particularly contentious issues. Recent severe national economic setbacks have exacerbated poverty in the south. As Mexican commentators in and out of government have noted, rebellion in Chiapas, a series of highly publicized assassinations, institutional corruption, drug traffickers' growing power and rising crime rates have led to popular dissatisfaction with the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and its free-market/open-trade economic program (dubbed "neo-liberalism" throughout Latin America). These problems-far from unique in the hemisphere or elsewhere in the world-have preoccupied President Ernesto Zedillo and the Mexican leadership for the last three and a half years and have been joined by the proliferation of guerrilla groups in the south and elsewhere. While Mexico has been spared the tragedy of major regime-threatening insurgencies, the country does have a history of communist and other radical group insurgency and terrorism.

More than 20 years before "Subcomandante Marcos," Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) spokesman and leader, became world famous, Mexico's most celebrated guerrilla leader was a former rural schoolteacher named Lucio Cabanas Barrientos. Leading the military arm of his Party of the Poor (Pdlp), Cabanas operated successfully for years in the rugged mountains of Mexico's Guerrero state. For many Mexicans, the Pdlp's Peasant Brigade of Justice ambushes of military and police units, kidnappings, bank robberies and other armed actions were an unwelcome specter of communist revolution that by the late 1960s and early 1970s seemed to be gaining ground in Mexico as it had in other parts of Latin America. To others, however, Cabanas was a strong champion against an oppressive local regime and an indifferent central government whose policies had perpetuated the poverty, lack of opportunity and brutality that characterized day-to-day life in much of rural Mexico. Cabanas had a multipoint program that called for defeating the government of the rich and installing a new regime; expropriating factories and facilities for the workers' benefit; enacting broad financial, judicial, educational and social welfare reforms that focused on workers, peasants, Indians and women; and removing Mexico from the colonialism of the United States and other foreign countries.[11]

When Cabanas and several key followers were finally hunted down and killed in Guerrero by the Mexican army in late 1974, it was cause for both official Mexican celebration as well as deep disappointment among some in Mexico's southern Sierra Madre who saw Cabanas as a romantic revolutionary leader fighting for justice in rural Mexico. North of the border, however, Cabanas and his comrades' deaths earned only a short notice on the New York Times' back pages and limited commentary thereafter.[12] The United States, focused on a host of Cold War security issues, had only passing interest in the death of an obscure Mexican insurgent whose group posed no serious military threat to the Mexican government.

Numerous rural and urban groups-mostly small and transitory-emerged during the 1960s and 1970s. Their most notable leaders, such as Cabanas or Guerrero's Revolutionary National Civic Association leader Genaro Vazquez Rojas, developed loyal local followings that generated popular ballads and enduring legends celebrating their careers.[13] The popular, romantic, revolutionary images of Cabanas and Vazquez seemed to be inspired more by Mexican inequalities than some larger communist vision and represented only one dimension of the 1960s, and 1970s insurgent and terrorist groups.

Clearly, many groups were encouraged, materially supported and sometimes trained by communist regimes abroad. Inspired by late 1950s' student activism and fueled by real inequities in wealth, opportunity and justice, small Mexican groups became increasingly militant and inclined to armed action in the 1960s. Radical groups became associated with Soviet, North Korean, Cuban and Maoist ideologies. They debated the relative merits of these various ideologies, however far removed they may have been from Mexican realities. Not infrequently, they angrily split into factions

over differences regarding, for example, the value of Cuban foco guerrilla strategy versus a Maoist-style “prolonged people’s war” approach to establishing socialism in Mexico.

The Revolutionary Action Movement (MAR) is a notable example of a group supported by foreign communists. The MAR was fully established in 1969 and became active principally in Mexico’s Federal District and the state of Veracruz, although MAR elements existed in some other states as well. MAR originated in the late 1960s in Moscow, where Mexican students attending Patrice Lumumba University—thanks to scholarships from the Mexican-Russian Cultural Exchange Institute in Mexico City and Monterrey—formed a “studies circle” that developed a concept for what became the insurgent group. The group received support from Soviet ally North Korea, and in 1968, the first small Mexican cadre was dispatched to a training center near Pyongyang for ideological and extensive guerrilla training. At least two other MAR contingents followed in 1969 and 1970. North Korean military personnel provided the instruction. The group sought to create instability in Mexico and establish the conditions for a Marxist-Leninist regime there. They recruited and trained new members in Mexico, supported themselves with bank robberies and kidnappings and conducted numerous armed assaults and acts of sabotage against regime targets. MAR structure included an urban guerrilla wing designated 2 de Octubre del MAR and a rural wing, Ejército Popular del MAR. The group was nearly destroyed by Mexican security forces in the 1970s and apparently disappeared by the early 1980s.[14]

By the end of the 1970s, earlier insurgent dangers in Mexico were fading from public view. The army and police had largely destroyed or dispersed small rural and urban groups, and the country turned its attention to modernization and development. Nevertheless, the memory of Cabanas and other 1960s’ and 1970s’ armed resistance figures continued to influence rural peasants and Indians in the southern mountains and disaffected citizens elsewhere in Mexico.

A few groups reorganized and endured. The Revolutionary Clandestine Workers’ Union Party of the People (PROCUP) formed in 1971 to succeed the People’s Union (UP). PROCUP declared a “prolonged people’s war” to liberate Mexico “from the bourgeoisie and North American imperialism.”[15] The group, primarily active in Oaxaca and Guerrero, eventually achieved “ideological unification” with the remnants of Cabanas’ Pdlp, forming PROCUP-Pdlp by 1980.[16] Following a doctrine that combined traditional Marxist-Leninist and Maoist concepts, PROCUP-Pdlp continued minor, sporadic activity in the 1980s, including assassinations, robberies and kidnappings. Although emerging infrequently in public view in the 1980s, the group maintained its identity and its goal to establish a proletarian dictatorship and socialism in Mexico. It also expanded its cells to include at least rudimentary cadres in other states, reportedly including Jalisco, Puebla, Michoacan, Hidalgo, Morelos and Veracruz, as well as the Federal District.[17] Emphasizing the old linkages, David Cabanas Barrientos, Lucio’s brother, became a principal PROCUP-Pdlp leader and was jailed in 1990 for his alleged role in an assassination.

Cadres of what became the EZLN began to secretly organize in the early 1980s. The EZLN claims it was founded in 1982. Formed in part by members of old splintered groups and drawing on a predominantly indigenous following, EZLN’s evolution was complex and is still debated.[18] During its formative years, the group gave little indication of its existence, a posture that fit well with most Mexicans’ perception that guerrillas were an issue of the past.

However, the guerrillas were not gone from every area of Mexico. In the early 1990s, leftist posters still littered the back streets of Guerrero municipalities, invoking Cabanas’ memory. Reports of secretive armed groups training in the mountains were as commonplace locally as they were heatedly denied by Mexican authorities.[19] PROCUP-Pdlp conducted a series of bombings and attacks in Guerrero, Oaxaca and the Federal District in 1990 in an unsuccessful bid to win the release of jailed members. These acts were characterized as the crimes of a few die-hard radicals. Occasion-



al violent encounters between armed groups and Mexican army or police elements were publicly attributed to attacks by narcotraffickers or bandits—a plausible explanation that was probably partially correct.

On 1 January 1994, 15 years of official government and public complacency ended abruptly when the EZLN publicly announced its existence with the brief occupation of several towns in Chiapas, resulting in sharp clashes with the army that left nearly 150 dead. Stunned by the event and its implications for the rest of Mexico—and initially uncertain about the EZLN's origins and presence in other areas of the country—Mexican authorities and the media focused more closely on traditional areas of insurgency as potential outbreak sites.[20] Guerrero quickly moved to the forefront as an area that appeared ripe for revitalized insurgent activity. Hints from Subcomandante Marcos concerning EZLN links to other Mexican armed groups and Guerrero's proximity to the troubled states of Oaxaca, Puebla, Michoacan and Morelos led authorities to believe that some areas in Guerrero were likely leftist guerrilla strongholds which had the potential to destabilize other areas.

Guerrero state—about the size of West Virginia—has a population of more than 2.6 million dispersed throughout some 75 municipalities.[21] The population includes a substantial Indian component. The Sierra Madre del Sur mountain range parallels Guerrero's Pacific coast and was a traditional guerrilla operating area for Cabanas and Vazquez. The mountains help define the rural region's character and contribute to its natural beauty, isolation and enduring poverty. While the capital of Chilpancingo is an important administrative and cultural center, the famed resort of Acapulco, together with a few tourist areas such as Taxco and Iguala, are far better known to North Americans and other foreigners. Guerrero presents as striking a contrast between wealth and poverty as any Mexican region.

As the Zapatista uprising settled into a stalemate including on-and-off peace talks; simmering, low-level, periodic violence; and remarkable international media success for the EZLN, guerrilla variants began emerging in Guerrero and surrounding states. For example, the Clandestine Armed Forces (FAC) announced its existence in 1995. The FAC was reportedly active in Guerrero's Costa Grande, particularly among radical groups in the Coyuca de Benitez community.[22] The Liberation Army of the Southern Sierra (ELSS) also surfaced in 1995. Reportedly comprising a diverse collection of armed groups operating in Guerrero's coastal mountains, the ELSS claimed to have once planned a massive uprising but reorganized into cells to support the group's activities for a sustained time period. Numerous other groups announced themselves or were reported in Guerrero and elsewhere from January 1994 to June 1996. Information about their composition and activities varies greatly and in some cases is limited only to the group's name and the circumstances under which it was identified.

Of particular note is reported guerrilla activity in Oaxaca state, which has both a tradition of insurgency and shares Guerrero's poverty. By spring 1996, antigovernment and other armed groups were reported in several areas of Oaxaca. While guerrilla activity in the state was sporadic for more than 30 years, rumors concerning Oaxacan armed groups intensified following the EZLN's appearance. Two groups illustrate the Oaxacan “insurgent” problem and its heavily indigenous composition. The Clandestine Indigenous National Liberation Army claims to operate in Oaxaca's mountains and urban areas and to include Indians from 16 ethnic groups. A second group, the Movement for Trique Unification and Struggle, purports to represent disaffected, poverty-stricken Trique Indians who live in the mountains.

These and other disaffected organizations decry the extreme poverty and diminishing prospects in a state with the greatest number of family dependents per worker in the country. Large numbers of Oaxacan teenagers are now reaching working age and do not have any job prospects, making them potential recruits for guerrilla or criminal groups. In both Oaxaca and Guerrero, the extent of actual guerrilla activity is clouded by the simultaneous activities of strong narcotrafficking and bandit gangs as well as so-called White Guard armed groups employed by local landowners

and political bosses.[24] While the proliferation of groups in the Sierra Madre del Sur and elsewhere raised the threat of broader guerrilla activity in Mexico, the appearance of a new armed group made the threat real.

### The Popular Liberation Army and Other Groups

On 28 June 1995, 17 campesino activists with the Southern Sierra Campesino Organization were murdered by Guerrero State Judicial Police at the Aguas Blancas (White Waters) community near Coyuca de Benitez. The automatic weapons attack was captured on videotape and generated a firestorm of protest and violence that eventually led to the Guerrero state governor's dismissal and the arrest of several state police officers. The action galvanized campesino organizations, including the armed groups whose announced existence had been followed with little action. The attack revived the memory of a state police attack 28 years earlier against protesting teachers led by Lucio Cabanas at the town of Atoyac, 40 km northwest of Coyuca. That incident sent Cabanas into the mountains with his guerrillas.

One year after the 1995 massacre, dozens of masked, armed men in uniforms attended a 28 June 1996 commemoration of the murders to announce to several thousand assembled people that Mexico's newest guerrilla movement had arrived.[25] In a communique read at the scene by the masked "Captain Emiliano"-and thereafter designated the Aguas Blancas Manifesto-the group identified itself as the Popular Liberation Army (EPR) and stated its goals:

Remove the "illegitimate" Mexican government and the foreign forces sustaining it.

Restore popular sovereignty.

Implement economic, political and social change.

Establish fair international relations.

Punish those guilty of crimes against the people.

The EPR asserted that conditions facing Sierra Madre del Sur peasants were "similar to those which in 1967 and 1968 caused Comandantes Lucio Cabanas and Genaro Vazquez to take up arms against exploitation and oppression." After laying a wreath made from plants that "witnessed the cowardly murder" in 1995 and firing their AK-47 and AR-15 rifles into the air 17 times in memory of the murdered campesinos, the EPR disappeared. [26] Within hours, however, EPR elements distributing Manifesto copies engaged Mexican police in a fire fight near the Guerrero capital of Chilpancingo, wounding several policemen and a civilian. This was the beginning of a series of attacks and armed actions that established the EPR as the most serious armed threat to Mexico's stability.[27]

Mexican civilian authorities quickly characterized the EPR as bandits and criminals and-in the interior minister's words-a "pantomime." Meanwhile, army units were rushing to Guerrero in truck convoys, Panhard Lynx armored vehicles, high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles and helicopters. A 2 July 1996 EPR communique warned of "imminent" armed clashes with the army and police.[28] The army, whose internal intelligence assessments were always more informed and accurate than government press releases indicated, had already concluded that the EPR was a genuine guerrilla force-better equipped and organized than the EZLN-and should be dealt with immediately.[29]

This view was underscored by a 17 July 1996 attack on an army patrol in southwestern Guerrero, where several soldiers were reportedly wounded and a civilian was killed, and by an ambush of a navy patrol two weeks later that resulted in a wounded officer. The EPR confirmed it was a genuine force in a 7 August interview with selected journalists at a hidden spot in the Sierra Madre del Este, a mountain range that runs north through Oaxaca, San Luis Potosi, Veracruz, Hidalgo and Tamaulipas. The interview was held hundreds of kilometers from the site of the EPR's first appearance.

At this EPR “tactical camp,” representatives of the group’s “general command” disclosed the organization was established 1 May 1994. By 18 May, the EPR had joined with other resistance groups to form “a single political-military structure,” designated the Revolutionary Popular Democratic Party (PDPR).[30] The PDPR, governed by a “central committee,” coordinated the activities of 14 guerrilla and opposition groups.[31] A few of these groups had announced their existence earlier, while others went public for the first time. The most notorious of the 14 was clearly PROCUP-Pdlp, which linked Mexico’s guerrilla past with the present. The Mexican government asserted that the PROCUP-Pdlp was the EPR’s armed wing and heart.[32] The complexity of Mexico’s guerrilla past, however, makes any such facile judgment questionable. Continued evaluation of the EPR/PDPR’s origins, constituent members and affiliations is necessary.

On the day of the interview, EPR snipers killed an army cook and wounded several others in a Guerrero attack. Three days later, an army patrol was ambushed in Guerrero, and two soldiers were wounded. The EPR’s Comandante Jose Arturo acknowledged that the group robbed banks and conducted kidnappings to raise funds and stressed that many other armed groups were active in Mexico. Implying that many EPR attacks were unreported, commanders claimed that from 28 June to 25 August 1996, some 59 Mexican army soldiers were killed in Guerrero engagements alone.[33]

Whatever the accuracy of that figure, EPR armed actions on 28 and 29 August exceeded all government and popular conceptions of the group’s organization, strength and capability. A coordinated multistate attack against army, police and other government targets in Oaxaca, Guerrero, Puebla and the Federal District left as many as 18 people dead and more than two dozen wounded, according to media reports. The EPR claimed 41 officials were killed and 48 were wounded.[34] Guerrillas operated in groups of up to 130. EPR guerrillas blocked roads and distributed pamphlets in Chiapas and seized a radio station in Tabasco.[35] Shootings and propaganda activity were reported in Guanajuato state, evidently without casualties.

This series of assaults marked the beginning of periodic EPR armed actions that have continued into 1997. According to knowledgeable Mexicans and the EPR itself, these attacks have been greatly underreported. Ambushes and raids have inflicted military and police casualties in prime EPR operating areas and elsewhere. For example, the day after the August strikes, 40 armed men in civilian dress-presumed to be EPR-attacked an army convoy in Michoacan state and killed one soldier and wounded several others. The EPR’s presence may extend into as many as 11 states.[36] Interviews, communiques, two election cease-fires and proselytizing activities have kept the EPR in the public eye, even as the Mexican army and police arrest suspects and establish a large, visible presence in all affected areas. The EPR’s December seizure of two Oaxaca radio stations-and its announcement that it was prepared to carry out “liberty suicides” to topple the government added a strange and surprising dimension.[37]

After several months of relative quiet early in 1997, EPR clashes with the army in late May left at least five government troops dead and others wounded. These two firefights- both in Guerrero State- also left four guerrillas killed. At the same time, other armed groups-which may or may not be associated with the EPR-have continued to appear, including the Guanajuato Revolutionary Army, which surfaced in August 1996; the Revolutionary Army for Popular Insurrection, which issued a November 1996 “Declaration of the North” calling for political and economic reform, expressing support for the EZLN and EPR and generating a security alert as far north as Tijuana on the US border; and the Armed Front for the Liberation of Marginalized People of Guerrero (FALPMG), which issued a two-page communique in Atoyac in early December calling for truly free elections, better living conditions and an end to the persecution of other opposition forces.[38] The FALPMG followed up its initial declaration with a January 1997 communique largely reiterating its earlier demands and reminding readers that Guerrero peasants rebelled in the 1840s to reclaim appropriated land.[39] No armed actions by these groups-if indeed they constitute real organizations-have been documented.

As the new year began, yet another guerrilla group-this one with more visible teeth-made its presence known with the murder of four people 90 miles east of Acapulco in the Guerrero district of Copanatoyac. Uniformed men with AK-47s sought out and executed the individuals for unspecified crimes. The group members left behind a statement identifying themselves as Justice Army of Defenseless People representatives and decry-

ing the lack of justice for oppressed people.[40] Such actions may be the violent resolution of a local dispute, a government provocation, an armed encounter between drug-trafficking rivals or an assault by a private paramilitary group. On the other hand, Mexican commentators, such as Indian affairs specialist Carlos Montemayor, note that for 200 years, “the epithet ‘guerrilla’ has always been used synonymously with bandit, gunman, traitor to the fatherland or common criminal,” characterizations that obscure the violence and social problems that sometimes lead to outright armed opposition.[41]

While the true nature, strength, affiliation and even actual existence of such self-declared groups are unclear, their proliferation is an escalating problem. Mexican security concerns surrounding the guerrilla groups also include the large influx of arms into the country, many of which come from the United States.[42] Mexico continues to investigate reports that foreign subversives-such as the Basque Fatherland Party, Peru’s SL and the remnants of various Central American groups-are collaborating with Mexican guerrilla

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Despite its rich guerrilla past, Mexico’s insurgency problems over the last 40 years have never been as intense as those of Central and South America. Nevertheless, some Mexican commentators see similarities in a resurgence of Latin American guerrilla activity and the proliferation of armed groups in Mexico. At the beginning of 1997, an editorial in a leading Mexican newspaper drew analogies among the MRTA in Peru, the FPMR in Chile, guerrillas in Colombia, the armed seizure of land in Brazil and parts of Central America and the emergence of serious guerrilla activity in Mexico. The common thread was judged to be neoliberal economic policies in Mexico and elsewhere that have caused widespread unemployment, a sharp reduction in standard of living, disruption of social relationships and a loss of sovereignty to foreign economic interests.[45] Whatever this assessment’s merits, opposition groups in several Latin American states cite similar reasons for the revival-or creation-of armed resistance movements.

Virtually no specialist has said the EPR/PDPR-or the EZLN-can overthrow the Mexican government by force. Indeed, it is unclear whether the EPR and its associated groups and other announced movements are more or less than what they seem to be. However, it is evident that armed resistance movements in Mexico are far more complex than generally recognized, that elements of the EPR/PDPR have strong links to mythic past movements and that these groups constitute a violent response to enduring grievances. Although they lack the capability to pose a serious armed threat to government security forces, they have the military capacity to generate local and even national instability. While thus far falling short of EZLN standards, the EPR/PDPR are effectively using the national and international media to draw attention to their causes and points of view. They are also effectively raising funds, acquiring arms and conducting raids, ambushes and attacks on government forces and state targets. In terms of national and international attention, the contrast between the EPR/PDPR and the groups led by Cabañas and V-zquez 25 years ago is striking. The latter two

groups received scant attention beyond Mexico and Guerrero, while the EPR/PDPR's activities are closely scrutinized by international media as the guerrillas demonstrate their ability to execute armed actions, hold press events and issue communiqués.

US security goals place a premium on stability in Mexico and other states in the hemisphere. The United States has condemned EPR/PDPR armed actions as terrorism and reprehensible while expressing full confidence in the Mexican government and army to deal with them. Following the EPR's multistate attacks in August 1996, then US Ambassador David Jones offered Mexico support, including information exchanges and training. While US-Mexican military cooperation remains a sensitive, complex issue on both sides of the border, this slowly evolving relationship will be shaped by a recognition that "the two nations share ties of history, culture and friendship."<sup>[46]</sup> There is clearly a case to be made that many US-Mexican and hemispheric security problems-which are transnational and affect many countries-will become more common. Thus, cooperation is vital for their resolution and the elimination of their root causes.

## NOTES

1. These include the 1992 El Salvador peace accords that ended 12 years of civil war and brought the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) insurgents into the political process; the Sandinistas' loss of political power and electoral defeats in Nicaragua; Peru's presumed near defeats of the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso [SL]) and smaller Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) insurgencies; and Guatemala's peace with the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca [URNG]) in January 1997, ending 35 years of civil war.

2. For data on specific countries and issues, see Henry Raymond, "Upsurge of Guerrilla Movements Rekindles Militarism," *O Estado de Sio Paulo* (22 September 1996), as translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)-LAT-96-206; "Latin America's Backlash," *The Economist* (30 November 1996), 15-16; "The Backlash in Latin America," *The Economist* (30 November 1996), 19-21; and Katherine Ellison, "Guerrilla Warfare Stalks Latin America," *Miami Herald* (21 December 1996).

3. Raymond.

4. As widely reported, a new generation of guerrilla hobbyists and more serious activists are thriving on the Internet in support of subversive groups around the world. Indeed, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Argentina-born Cuban insurgent killed by Bolivian security forces 30 years ago, still generates much interest on the Internet and throughout the world. See "Che Stages a Comeback: Revival in the Shops as Real Guerrillas Fight On," *Latin America Weekly Report* (12 September 1996), 414-15. The suspected operational communications used by group cadres, drug traffickers and criminal groups are more serious. See Nestor Martínez, "Traffickers Claimed Using Internet," *La Jornada* (7 December 1995).

5. For example, a bid to enter Argentinian politics by the former leader of the Montoneros (the extreme leftist Peronistas from the 1970s) was met with rejection and public scorn. Former supporters of the one-time leader of the violent People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) show no interest in winning his release. See "Terrorism Returning to Southern Cone? Attacks in Chile & Argentina Foster Fears," *Latin America Weekly Report* (2 May 1996). In Brazil and Venezuela, former guerrillas have successfully made the transition into politics, government, business or humanitarian organizations. Remnants of old insurgent groups in Paraguay, Uruguay and Ecuador are largely inactive, while some former guerrillas in Argentina, Chile and elsewhere are widely believed to be working now for the very government intelligence services they used to fight. See Raymond; Ellison;

Abraham Lama, "Where Have All the Rebels Gone?" Interpress Service (6 May 1996); and Abraham Lama, "Rebels Retreat as Ideologies Crumble," Interpress Service (3 May 1996).

6. Hugo Guzmán, "Rearticulación rodriguista?" Reforma (31 December 1996); and Federico Quilodran, "Chile Hunts for Guerrillas," Associated Press (31 December 1996). The Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (FPMR) has been periodically accused of attacks since civilian rule was restored in Chile in 1990. See "Terrorism Returning to Southern Cone?"

7. The MRTA is notable for its links to other insurgent groups in Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile. Among its most ambitious plans has been creating an Andean Liberation Army (Ejército Andino de Liberación [EAL]) with Bolivian and Chilean guerrillas to escalate insurgency in the three countries. See "Los Condenados de Tupac Amaru," Reforma (21 December 1996); Abraham Lama, "Who Is 'Comandante Huerta,' and What Does He Want?," Interpress Service (23 December 1996); "MRTA Reportedly Attempts to Create Andean Liberation Army," Radio Broadcast Service Notimex, 1002 Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) (18 December 1996), as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-244; and Tim Johnson, "Piecing Together a 'Spectacular Attack' Plan Could Have Been Hatched By a Small Group, Experts Say," Miami Herald (20 December 1996).

8. Some months before MRTA seized the hostages at the Japanese ambassador's compound in Lima, Peru, President Fujimori noted that "several years more of SL and NMTA actions were possible." (Reuter News Service, 4 August 1996.)

9. "Hundreds Killed in Colombian War in 1996," Reuter (8 January 1997). In addition to hundreds of Colombian armed forces and guerrillas killed in direct actions, Colombia had nearly 26,000 murders, some associated with insurgent activity, in 1996.

10. Antonio Castellanos, "M-s de 91 millones de habitantes en México hasta noviembre de 95," La Jornada (16 December 1996).

11. Juan Miguel de Mora, *Las Guerrillas en México y Jenaro Vázquez Rojas* (Mexico City: Editora Latino América, S.A., 1972), 293-94.

12. "Mexican Guerrilla Leader Reported Killed By Troops," New York Times (3 December 1974).

13. After several years of robbing, kidnapping and attacking state targets in Guerrero, Genaro Vázquez Rojas was killed in a 1972 car crash in Michoacán state. See Tom's Tenorio Galinda, "Una vieja visión de la guerrilla," Reforma (16 July 1995); "The Announced Guerrilla Movement," *El Financiero* (18 November 1994), as translated in FBIS-LAT-94-226, 12-13; and Orlando Ortíz, Genaro Vázquez, 3rd ed. (Mexico City: Editorial Disgenes, S.A., 1973).

14. Salvador Castañeda, a prominent former MAR member, has written about its activities. Among his observations was that MAR failed to establish necessary support bases outside their immediate operating areas before undertaking armed actions. See "Revolutionary Action Movement," Tom's Tenorio Galinda, "Una vieja visión de la guerrilla," Reforma (16 July 1995); "The Announced Guerrilla Movement," Juan Miguel de Mora, *Las Guerrillas en México y Jenaro Vázquez Rojas* (Mexico City: Editora Latino América, S.A., 1972), 409-25; Salvador Castañeda, "Things are Going to be Difficult for the EZLN," interview, January 1995, in "Documents on Mexican Politics," edited by Alex López-Ortíz, for the Internet from a published version in the German-language magazine *Analyse & Kritik*, No. 373.

15. The People's Union (UP), formed by Guatemalan Jose María Ortíz Vides, reportedly advocated the proletariat use short, medium and long phases to seize power. An intermediate organization was designated the Clandestine Revolutionary Organization (Organización Revolucionaria Clandestina [ORCUP]) existed from 1972 to 1976. See Tom's Tenorio Galinda, "Una vieja visión de la guerrilla," Reforma (16 July 1995); "The Announced Guerrilla Movement"; Pedro Matías and Ignacio Ramírez, "Militarización y 'alerta roja' en Oaxaca: el Ejército busca grupos armados

relacionados con la guerrilla,” Proceso (8 January 1996); “El Ejército busca grupos armados relacionados con la guerrilla,” Proceso (8 January 1996), 20-21; and Notimex, 0455 GMT (31 August 1996).

16. Ignacio Ramírez, “El PROCUP-Pdlp Reivindica Actos de Sabotaje en Solidaridad con el EZLN y Expresa: ‘Vivimos la Militarización del País,’” Proceso (24 July 1995), 16-21; “Sí: Hay Guerrilla en Guerrero,” El Norte (24 July 1995); and Ignacio Ramirez, “ ‘Alerta Roja’ en la sierra de Guerrero por la actividad de grupos guerrilleros,” Proceso (7 August 1995), 9.

17. Notimex, 0455 GMT 31 August 1996.

18. Among the old groups whose members reportedly formed cadres for EZLN organizational activity are the National Liberation Forces (Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional [FLN]), formerly the National Liberation Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional [FALN]); the Committee for Revolutionary Struggle (Comite de Lucha Revolucionaria [CLR]); and the Mexican Insurgent Army (Ejército de Insurgentes Mexicanos [EIM]).

19. In 1991, for example, a US Army officer specializing in Mexican security affairs noted such posters on the back streets of Taxco, Guerrero, which is frequented by foreign tourists. Similarly, there have been reports that graffiti praising Cabañas’ group and its successors has been spotted in remote Guerrero towns. See Anita Snow, “Mexico Rebels Have Violent Past,” Associated Press (2 September 1996).

20. PROCUP-Pdlp’s detonation of a bomb in a Mexico City shopping center and their abortive rocket attack on a Federal District Army base (Campo Militar Número Uno) to signify their support of the Zapatistas raised the specter of broader terrorist attacks. Fortunately, such attacks did not materialize.

21. Guerrero has an area of about 25,070 square miles, compared with West Virginia’s 24,181 square miles. The total population of Mexico in the 1990 census was calculated to be 81.2 million. For more statistical data, see James B. Pick and Edgar W. Butler, *The Mexico Handbook: Economic and Demographic Maps and Statistics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc., 1994).

22. The group has also been referred to as the Clandestine Armed Forces of National Liberation (Fuerzas Armadas Clandestinas de Liberación Nacional [FACLN]). See Ramírez, “ ‘Alerta Roja’ en la sierra de Guerrero.”

23. Ibid. The reorganization reportedly took place following the PRI’s success in the August 1994 elections.

24. Matías and Rodríguez.

25. The guerrillas numbered from as few as 38 to as many as 100, according to varying reports. The most prominent weapons were AK-47s. Their green uniforms and boots were described as good quality.

26. The text of the Aguas Blancas Manifesto, distributed in Spanish and partially in the Indian (Aztec) Nahuatl language, was published in some Mexican newspapers, including *La Jornada*. For a summary, see the Internet report, MEXPAZ Analysis-Special Issue (29 June 1996). MEXPAZ is an electronic journal.

27. Gloria Leticia Díaz and Gerando Galarza, “Indicios, rastros, pistas, testimonios de grupos armados en Guerrero desde 1992 a la fecha,” Proce-

so (30 June 1996), 21-23 and 25-27; "Mexico Rebels in First Confrontation," United Press International (29 June 1996); and Phil Gunson, "Tradition Supports Mexico's New Guerrillas," Guardian (12 September 1996).

28. " 'Inminente un choque armado' con el Ejército o la policía, informó el grupo armado," La Jornada (3 July 1996).

29. Carlos Marín, "Conclusión de la Secretaría de la Defensa: El EPR es una verdadera guerrilla, amalgama de grupos radicales, con mayor decisión y mejor equipo que los zapatistas," Proceso (7 July 1996), 24, 27, 29 and 31.

30. In Spanish, PRPD is Partido Democrático Popular Revolucionario.

31. Tzinia Chellet, "Clandestine Armed Groups Announce New Party," Reforma (9 August 1996), as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-156; and Maribel Gutierrez, "EPR To Continue 'Armed Self-Defense,' La Jornada (27 October 1996), as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-214.

32. Fernando Mayolo López, "Transfiguraciones de una 'pantomima,' armada que hace bolas al gobierno," Proceso (1 September 1996), 13-17.

33. Salvador Guerrero Chipres, "EPR Commanders on Strength, Army Casualties," La Jornada (25 August 1996), as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-169.

34. Henry Tricks, Reuter (15 September 1996).

35. Salvador Corro, "En una sangrienta noche de terror, las fuerzas del EPR destruyeron el mito de la pantomima," Proceso (September 1996), 13-17; and Guillermo Correa, " 'El fuego, el golpe y la maniobra, tema central del Curso Básico de Guerra del EPR,' Proceso (1 September 1996), 18-23.

36. Steve Fainaru, "Mexico's War Within," The Boston Globe (17 September 1996).

37. "Mexican Guerrillas Vow Suicide Attacks," Associated Press (4 December 1996).

38. Reports of an "army of Sierra Negra" along the Oaxaca-Puebla border also have circulated. See "Another Guerrilla Movement?" Mexico Update, No. 100 (27 November 1996); "New Rebel Group Emerges, Issues Declaration," Broadcast Service EFE, 1717 GMT 21 November 1996, as translated in FBIS-LAT-96-227; "Manifiesto Claims New Mexican Guerrilla Group Born," Reuter (21 November 1996); "Fourth Mexican Guerrilla Group Proclaims Existence," Reuter (5 December 1996); "Mexican Rebel Group Emerges, Another Holds Rally," Reuter (5 December 1996); and "EPR Strikes in Seven States," MEXPAZ Analysis, No. 87 (30 August 1996).

39. "Third Alleged Rebel Group Demands Relief for Poor," Associated Press (4 January 1996).

40. La Jornada (4 January 1997), as cited in "Two New Rebel Groups Demand Relief for Poor," Associated Press (4 January 1997).

41. Carlos Montemayor, "Chiapas, Again," La Jornada (12 February 1995), as translated in FBIS-LAT-95-032.

42. David Aponte and Juan Manuel Venegas, "Red internacional trafica armas aquí," La Jornada (2 January 1997). Fears about the guerrillas having increasingly effective weapons available are reflected in the report of the seizure of "three surface-to-air missiles" from alleged EPR members in Chiapas. The report was challenged by the 7th Military Region commander, who said the captured weapons included a rocket launcher and three 70mm missiles intended for use against vehicles. See Julio César López, "Supuestos militantes del EPR, detenidos con un lanzagranadas en la sierra chiapaneca," Proceso (24 November 1996), 21.

43. "Tradition Supports Mexico's New Guerrillas;" and "Zapatista Supporters in Mexico See Civil War Risk," Reuter (5 September 1996). The



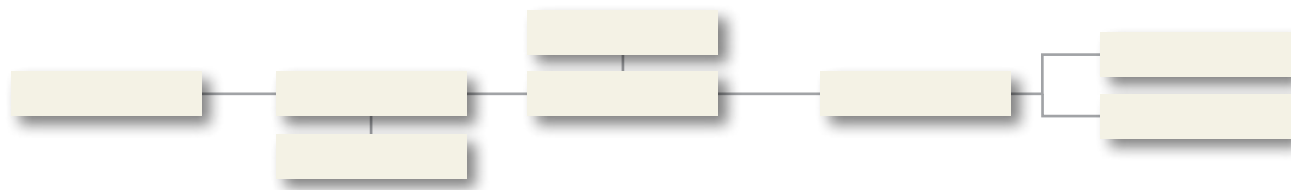
EZLN's political arm, the Zapatista National Liberation Front (Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional [FZLN]), has felt some pressure and defensiveness in its on-again/off-again negotiations with the government, given the contrast between the EZLN/FZLN negotiating posture and EPR/PDPR armed actions.

44. Victor Ruíz Arrazola, "Secretos, la vinculaci3n entre EPR y sociedad civil," La Jornada (17 September 1996).
45. "Violencia: Un Terreno Abonado," La Jornada (5 January 1996).
46. Voice of America editorial, "Rebel Insurgency in Mexico" (5 September 1996); and Reuter (10 September 1996).

# TRIBAL ANALYSIS CENTER

Traditional anthropological research conducted among tribes inhabiting remote areas where insurgents and criminals operate has become increasingly difficult to implement. Studies carried out among people living in small-scale societies now are nearly impossible due to the physical dangers associated with the civil and religious unrest found in those areas. Swat, for example, has become so dangerous that Frederick Barth's studies only could be repeated at the risk of the investigator's life. Similar research is not feasible among Burma's Rohingya tribes located on both sides of the border with Bangladesh, as well as with the Pashtuns in Afghanistan's interior and within Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, where even Pakistan's army enters with reluctance.

Given the difficulties of conducting direct fieldwork in conflictive areas, the Tribal Analysis Center utilizes an indirect approach. Using multidisciplinary research, we seek to collect and analyze data obtained from a wide variety of sources, both current and historical. In the absence of new ethnographic fieldwork to update our base of knowledge, the Tribal Analysis Center compiles and summarizes existing research and documents on tribal societies, combining this material with contemporary press reports and articles. We assume that much can be gleaned from well-informed observers who are not anthropologists, ranging from journalists and travelers to government officials.



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