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CHANGING THE GAME OR DROPPING THE BALL? MEXICO'S SECURITY AND ANTI-CRIME STRATEGY UNDER PRESIDENT ENRIQUE PEÑA NIETO

Washington, D.C.

Monday, November 17, 2014

PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction and Moderator:

HAROLD TRINKUNAS, Moderator
Senior Fellow and Director, Latin America Initiative
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN
Senior Fellow, Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence
The Brookings Institution

DUNCAN WOOD
Director, Mexico Institute
The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TRINKUNAS: Okay. Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Harold Trinkunas, I direct the Latin America Initiative in the Foreign Policy Program here at the Brookings Institution. It's my pleasure to welcome you this afternoon to an opportunity to release my colleague Vanda Felbab-Brown's new paper; Changing the Game or Dropping the Ball? Mexico's Security and Anti-Crime Strategy under President Enrique Peña Nieto.

This is a new paper that's based on field research that Vanda recently conducted in Mexico. Vanda, as some of you may know, is a recognized expert and on issues of conflict, illicit economies, organized crime, and counterinsurgency, and she's focused on all parts of the world, but she has spent a considerable amount of time thinking about the situation in Mexico. So I'll ask her to lead off our discussion with a review of some of her findings.

After which I'll ask my dear colleague, Duncan Wood, Director of the Mexico Institute, at the Woodrow Wilson Center, to offer some comments on the paper. Duncan joined the Mexico Institute relatively recently, within the last couple of years, but before that was a Professor at the ITAM, one of Mexico's leading universities, where he directed the International Relations Program. He has a long and distinguished career, very familiar with a situation in Mexico, so I'm looking forward to a great discussion.

And once our two speakers have had a chance to make some comments, then I'll open it up to the floor for discussion. But to get us there first, Vanda, why don't you lead us off?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Thank you. Good afternoon. We are meeting here today after several days of an interesting campaign in Mexico on Twitter which played on the words of, somewhat, on the unfortunate words of Mexico's Attorney

General saying, I'm tired of the grueling conference discussing the events in Iguala, and the massacre of students there, or disappearance through the massacre of students there. And at the end of the conference he sort of ended by saying, I am tired, which was picked up on social media, and started a big campaign with many Mexican people, NGOs, activists saying, well we are tired with the violence, we are tired with the impunity.

And the reason why this is an interesting moment is because the Peña Nieto Administration came in to power at the time where there was very much of a sense in Mexico that the Mexican public was tired with the violence, and was tired with the preoccupation on security issues in Mexico. And so President Peña Nieto very much responded to a mood that, among the public, that wanted to focus on economic issues, on social issues, something that he has made key priorities of his agenda.

And it has not meant that the administration stopped focusing on the issue of security, but certainly trying to approach it in a different way than the administration of President Felipe Calderón, his predecessor. And the second irony of course, is that in many ways, although the initial rhetoric of the Calderón administration was one of doing things differently, than, in the security domain, than in the administration of President Felipe Calderón; in many ways, many of the policies adopted were very similar, if not identical, to the policies of his predecessor.

Primarily with law enforcement, policing being, essentially, defined as high-value targeting; at the same time of course, his administration has had to confront the lack of security and fundamental misgovernance in the central part of Mexico in Michoacán, with the rise of militias there, and recently in Guerrero.

During the Calderón era, the hot spots of violence and the key focus of media, were places like the Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, and ultimately Monterrey, areas with violence has gone substantially down, although it's been rising in Tijuana. And to a large

extent that has happened not as a result of government policy, or not fundamentally as a result of government policies, but is a result of the criminal market being carved out once again, among criminal groups, the Sinaloa Cartel being the victor in many areas including in Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez.

But meanwhile, for a variety of reasons, unsettled the balance of power -- unsettled divisions through, as well as a result of the high-value targeting policy being the predominant law enforcement response, violence has escalated in new areas like Tamaulipas, and the Peña Nieto Administration has been very much playing a catch-up mode, putting out fires there, while continuing some of the undesirable side effects -- or facing some of the undesirable side effects of high-value targeting.

Namely, that it generates so much instability among the criminal groups, that they have the capacity to easily replace the leaders, but at the same time, succession wars are triggered. And so, ironically some of the key policies that were stimulating violence during the Calderón years continued being adopted -- continued to be adopted by the Peña Administration, even as much as they have wanted to change the game; and perhaps even walk away from the security issues.

At the same time, much of the momentum on police reform, arguably, dissipated or was misdirected. The Calderón Administration focused very much on Federal Police and progress was made there, but it's hardly resolved, and the Federal Police continues to be challenged. And his agenda of focusing on police reform on the sub-state-level was stalled for a variety of reasons, including the role of the PRI in the Mexican Congress.

Now the Peña people had the chance to really pick up momentum and particularly state and local police, and have chosen to leave it up to states -- the Mexican states, whether they want to combine the local and state police, with the effect being,

essentially, lack of momentum, stalled, unresolved local policing and local governance issues. And they are really at the core of the tragedies and the drama unfolding in Guerrero and Michoacán.

Continually poor governance, and particularly poor law enforcement at the local level, with the state, as well as the federal capital, being far removed and only paying attention when these fires blow up. And so, perhaps, the important outcome of the massacres and tragedy in both -- in Guerrero as well as the proceeding growth of militias and their very visible manifestation in Michoacán, Guerrero and elsewhere is that both the government, the Federal Government, and the Mexico people realize that the public security issues are not one of choice, but they are of deep institutional deficiencies and institutional collapse and hollowing out.

That will take far more than simply one presidency to be resolved. And that the momentum needs to be maintained, it doesn't mean that social and economic issues should be neglected. But at the end of the day a fundamental rebalancing of power needs to take place between the state and the criminal groups; between the criminal groups and Mexican society. And that rebalancing has not yet happened.

Even in the North where violence has gone done, it has largely gone down as a result of new balances of power being established in the criminal market. And the peace is an (inaudible) peace, that the reduction in violence is hardly peace, it's very much at the discretion of the criminal groups, who continue to be still in a very strong position vis-à-vis the state. And fundamental law enforcement, deterrence capacity continues to be lacking in law enforcement in Mexico.

And that is a long process, and it's a process that needs to be maintained, and even if violence goes down that doesn't mean then, that the government should stop focusing on those areas, but instead, become creative and engaged and take

up the opportunities of the narco peace, to change the narco peace into being an actual peace, not simply a reduction in violence at the discretion of criminal groups.

Along with that, of course, needs to come a very strong focus on addressing political corruption which has many causes in Mexico, and there are many structural as well as non-structural reasons for this, it's hardly a new phenomenon, but along with this change of power, accumulating far more on the side of the criminal groups, the balance of power between politicians and criminal groups has also changed. But the nature of corruption has changed, where the criminal groups often dictate to local politicians what they can do.

Particularly in place is like Guerrero, like Michoacán, and like Chiapas, even in areas that are not so visibly violent, but where nonetheless, the state is fundamentally (inaudible), and the susceptibility of local politicians to coercion or to corruption from criminal groups, remains high.

And here, again, that is a very fundamental role for the federal state, or for states in Mexico to back up municipal politicians, as much as one needs to demand accountability -- along with the accountability also needs to come support, because it's very easy to succumb to pressure if the outcome is that yet another mayor in Mexico will be murdered as a result of pressure from organized crime.

I would make one final comment on socioeconomic anticrime programs that I've discussed in great detail in the report, along with various strategies, such as building up new institutions like the Gendarmerie, such high-value targeting and its meaning and effect. Along with it is a basic thrust and focus on social issues, and economic reforms in Mexico, the Peña Administration also embraced crime prevention and such economic programs to combat crime.

And it was very praiseworthy, but it was often lacking during the

Calderón Administration and even to the extent that the policies were adopted, like Todos Somos Juárez, they often were adopted belatedly. Nonetheless, the design of the, so-called, polígonos approach, the hallmark of the crime prevention, socioeconomic approaches to anticrime issues of the Peña Nieto Administration require some examinations; and I think there are many opportunities to improve those programs.

The Calderón people, when they found -- when they finally adopted socioeconomic approaches, focused almost the entire effort on Ciudad Juárez, and it came out of a particular political crisis, or a particular massacre in Ciudad Juárez, the outcome was then a very large financial package called Todos Somos Juárez.

And in many ways concentrating resources is the key issue that Mexico needs to do in combating organized crime, whether it's concentrating law enforcement resources, or socio-economic resources. But it is very hard to do in a democracy, because at the end of the day, why is one community, however, much suffering, deserving of such large state interventions, and others are not?

And so the Peña people said, well, yes, these economic programs are important, crime preventions important, and we need to spread it, throughout other parts of Mexico, but the outcome of course being, that the financial intervention for each of the so-called polígonos, the areas of intervention, being very limited with its ability to then change, transform the local environment; being very limited.

Another difficulty and challenge for the polígonos approach, is that it's often very fragmented as well as very amorphous. That there -- precisely because of the pressure with democracy to give each community a little bit as opposed to concentrate resources.

The outcomes tend to be, well, let's give this school orchestra here, let's give perhaps a road over there, but how they connect to each other, how they congeal, to

what extent they can have a transformative effect beyond giving a handout is a big question mark. And all too often they become sort of feel-good measures, such as giving children in the school, the opportunity to play on the sports team.

I have absolutely against children being given opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities, and indeed it can strengthen their sense of self-worth and accomplishment; but nonetheless, one has to ask how -- out of the kids that go on the soccer team, how many will end up being criminals later on, having played soccer, or having played on the school orchestra, and now playing violin. Or how many will not have been criminals to start with even in the absence of not having been on the soccer team, or part of the school orchestra.

So, lots of these programs are appealing in their own sake, but the link to then being anticrime measures 20 years later, or so, it's often very questionable, and the ability to monitor and evaluate their meaning beyond being a political handout is often very illusive, and something that needs to be sharpened, the logic of the criminal -- of these anticrime socioeconomic programs, especially those focused on children and youth, needs to be made far more explicit in my view, than it is.

And it also has to be linked to policing, and one of the big thrust of the report and the title, *Changing The Game And Dropping The Ball* is that, yes, reducing violence, is an -- is a key priority for Mexico, it is the right objective. The Calderón Administration was too dismissive of the violence level saying, they don't matter because it's criminals killing criminals. That was a wrong attitude to have. The violence had absolutely devastating effects on the social fabric in Mexico.

Violence needs to be brought down, but how one goes about it really matters. And along with that, there is no escape from good policing, and the Peña Nieto Administration can really redouble its efforts and focus far more than so far, on thinking

about what policing needs to apply in a place where violence has gone down; like Ciudad Juárez. How policing needs to be married with interdiction policy, so that if a couple is arrested there is likely to be explosion in their regional area, or how that can be prevented by prepositioning of troops.

How differently policing needs to be done, in areas where there state is very sporadic, that has traditionally been captured by either problematic politicians, or had a long history of rebellious groups, such as in the center of the country; and how policing needs to be married to the socioeconomic program. They are not replacement one for the other.

And so while changing the game is right in the sense of making reduction in violence the key objective, dropping the game by saying that law enforcement issues have been resolved, or now it's time to focus on socioeconomic issues, and not focused on law enforcement, is not the right take -- is not the right approach.

And now the drama with the past couple weeks, I think that is very much a momentum and recognition again, that public safety requires good policing and the opportunities for thinking how to do policing robustly, and how to push on with effective police reform, as well as with giving real substance through the socioeconomic, broader anticorruption, broader rule of law issues in Mexico.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you, Vanda. I would be remiss if I didn't also note, that Vanda is Scholar with our Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence, as well as affiliated with the Latin America Initiative, for whom she has provided this paper.

Now I'm going to turn to Duncan Wood, Director of the Mexico Institute at the Woodrow Wilson Center to provide some comments.

MR. WOOD: Thank you, Harold, and --

(Interruption, audio static)

Thank you, Harold. Thank you, Vanda, for the invitation to be here. First of all, just let me say that, Vanda's paper is a very, very important contribution to our understanding here in Washington of and what's actually going on in Mexico; providing the context of the last couple of years, as well as a deeper historical context.

But I think that probably the most important thing about this paper is that it's Vanda that wrote it, and Vanda comes at this, not as a Mexico (inaudible), not as somebody who studied Mexico for years, and years and years in general, but as somebody who is an expert in organized crime; somebody who is an expert, an expert on security.

And that's what you brought to this, and I think that, you know -- I know in the past people have criticized you for maybe being too sensationalist. Some people have said that, you know, you don't really understand Mexico. What you've done here is, you've shown not only an incredible understanding for what's happened right now in Mexico, but you have broadened that perspective as somebody who can compare what Mexico is going through with situations around the world.

And some very, very valuable contribution, in addition to the field research that you did down there. One of the things I've almost admired about you is the fact that you actually go out into the field. You put your feet where your mouth is, as it were, and that's a very, very important thing, and not many of us are willing to do that, so well done.

Obviously it's important to put this paper in the context of the recent tragic events, but also to separate out what's important recently, in terms of the short-term versus the long-term impact. And I think that, you know, those of us who follow Mexico very, very closely, who are emotionally invested in Mexico, we see a lot of the daily news, and the controversies and the scandals that have come out of the past couple

of weeks, and we get carried away with them.

We think, well this is going to lead to some kind of governmental meltdown, it's very important to separate out what's important here, from what isn't important. We've seen the scandals over the cancelation of the China -- of the Chinese company's contract for a rail link between Queretaro and Mexico City. You've seen the scandals about the present wife's makeup artist tweeting from the presidential plane. You've seen various comments from the stepdaughter of the President about what is important, what isn't important.

Try to forget all of that right now, because that's more to do with sort of day-to-day politics in Mexico and not so much about this incident. What is important of course, about the recent tragic events in Mexico, is what they teach us about the underlying conditions in the country. That's the context for everything that has happened, and everything that is being described in Vanda's paper, which is the deep, underlying institutional weakness that exists, not so much at the federal level, but very much so at the local and the state level; and, of course, the diversity or the variety of levels of weakness, strength in institutions across the country. And so when you see that something like this happens in Iguala, Guerrero, or it happens in Michoacán, or it happens in Tamaulipas, that gives an idea of what the institutional strength is at those local -- at the local level in those places.

And it helps us to understand why more of these things don't happen in places like Mexico City, for example, or on other parts of the country. Also very, very important to recognize the human element here and I think that that's one of the things which is perhaps missing from the paper, because it's not really what you are trying to do, but to recognize the human dimension of security in Mexico, and that's what the experience of the past few week has really taught us, it's that this is about people who

live in rather random circumstances.

They are not sure about whether if they go out to work, they are going to come home at the end of the day, or if their kids go off to school, are they going to see them at the end of the day, and that really has to be the priority of this. And again, this takes us to one of Vanda's most important conclusions about; do you target high-level individuals in organized crime? Is the battle against organized crime? Or is the battle really for citizen security in Mexico?

And it's very easy to conflate the two things, and think that you are talking about the same thing, but you are not always. And that's why you have to be, I think, a lot more strategic in the way that you see Mexican security. The deep impact of the past few weeks in Mexico, and you see it as you follow social media, it's heartbreaking to see.

It's heartbreaking from the personal point of view, and it's heartbreaking in terms of what the country is going through at this point in time. So, you know, obviously our thoughts go out to all of those people directly involved and to Mexico in general.

Vanda's critiques of the Peña Nieto security strategy, I think are well-founded, and they go back to conversations that have been going on in Mexico and outside of Mexico since the very beginning. I mean going back to January of 2013, when we first began to look at this and to say, well, what's the strategy here? We saw one word over and over again which is, coordination, and many of us who were observing and critiquing at the time said, coordination is an important factor, but it can't be the entire strategy.

And we are waiting for more elements to come through, and they did come through. The gendarmerie was one of them. The polígonos approach was another

one but, yes, we did seem to fall back very, very quickly into just a continuation of Calderón's approach.

The question is, and I think this is a very, very important question. As much as we can criticize the Mexican government or continuing that approach, what other alternative are there? And this is where the level of institutions becomes abundantly clear. When you have limited institutional options, what can you actually do about a major situation like this?

And so, you know, I'm sure that a lot of people who study Mexican security will say, well you should try to do something new. Well, there's not a lot new out there, that you can actually do, when you have very few institutions that actually do work. You have the federal police, you have the military, you have well-established cooperation with the United States, and then at the local level when you look at your police forces, there are very few that are actually reliable.

Vanda criticizes the Peña Nieto Government for emphasizing a 50 percent drop in homicides during the first six months to one year. I think that -- I mean it's a fair criticism because the words are there on, you know, on paper, they are out there, but the fact is that nobody actually believed that was going to happen, I don't think.

And in fact, many of us were very surprised when the government was able to register around a 16 percent drop in homicides for its first year. Now, whether they were able to claim credit for that, your point is well made, Vanda, which is that we don't know if it was as a result of government strategy, or whether battles had been fought, and wars, or individual wars had been won.

You maybe critiqued that, maybe the strategy of targeting high-value individuals in organized crime was unthought through. Maybe so, but it's interesting. And you recognized this in your paper, that El Chapo's arrest, has not led to a

generalized spread of violence in the region, controlled by the Sinaloa Cartel, that organized crime group, seems to have help together quite well, and we haven't seen a spread of the violence.

So, maybe it's not just, you know, the concept of high-value targeting, maybe it's about what the underlying conditions are within the cartel within the organized crime group. And I think a lot of people would make that argument with the Sinaloa Cartel. It's structurally more robust than other cartels are; less dependent upon individuals.

Using the military, I have to say, that I think that using the military is absolutely the right thing to do because that is an institution, both that people trust, or have trusted in the past. Obviously, its levels of trust have taken a beating over the past few years, but also because you can actually mobilize the military across the country. Now it's led to major problems with human rights abuses, and that's something that needs to be dealt with as well.

But again, when you are having -- when you've got a limited array of, or many options maybe that's what you go with. The critique about police reform that you make is absolutely 100 percent on the mark. Absolutely! This is one of the things that we all recognize is fundamental, that Mexico needs to reform its police force. The Federal Government needs to work more closely with governors and with state-level governments, to try to make sure that their police forces are more reliable, more effective.

And of course we have the example in the State of Nuevo León, of the Fuerza Civil, which was able to form a new police force, which is reliable, which does work, but unfortunately like the gendarmerie, it's a very, very small force. I mean, you're looking at, I was talking to somebody in Monterrey the other day, and it's around 4,900 individuals who make up that police force, of which only 3,500 are actually police officers.

It takes a long time to this, it's very expensive, and it's very energy and financial resource intensive.

Your critique of under-funded social programs that the polígonos is a haphazard approach; again, I agree with you 100 percent here. In fact, I would go even further, which is that the government has missed a golden opportunity to make this a defining element of their administration. When they came in and they said, you know, coordination and the gendarmerie, and then we got to polígonos, and the crime prevention program, well you all stood up and said, that's exactly what you need to do, but are you going to do it?

And the government had some ideas. School program, sports, et cetera, et cetera, including making sure that every child in Mexico can see the blackboard that's in front of them in class, and making sure that everyone has eye tests, which I always thought was a little bit of an exaggeration of the mandate of the Interior Ministry, it should not be the Education Ministry, but they believed it was important.

Unfortunately my conversation with Gobernación, I failed to detect any kind of impact evaluation concern on their part. And this is one of the elements that USAID has been pressing on them, but they don't seem to actually have a plan and a methodology, for evaluating the impact of their programs with communities. This is something that we really need to push them even further on.

A number of very positive contributions, Vanda, that you make towards the end of the paper, that we need vetted anti-kidnapping units, that's vital. I would say that the question of vetting should be generalized. We need to see this applied much generally throughout the Mexican security forces, and I would even say there's a golden opportunity at this point in time, with the political reforms that we saw at the end of last year, that the new national electoral institute can begin to vet political candidates at the

local and state level, in a way they didn't have that authority before; which might possibly avoid this kind of problem in the future, given the fact that Mayor and his wife are so involved with organized crime.

You made the point that interdiction should be more strategic; absolutely. And that when there is a drop in violence the government needs to stay around, one of the constants critiques both of the Calderón Administration and of this one, is that federal forces move in, they resolve the immediate problem, but then they leave. You can just leave that vacuum in place.

A couple of suggestions of my own that I'd like to add here, which is that the community approach is -- the community-based approach is going to become ever more important, and I think we've seen this with the recent events and the public outcry in Mexico.

You used the title, you know, *Has the Game Changed, Did they Drop the Ball*? I would say that actually the game in Mexico has changed from the last time that the PRI was in power, now you see how strong civil society is, how wiling civil society is to stand up and protest, and to demand things from the government. And the PRI as a party has, traditionally, not had to do deal with that; they've been able to bring in forces, social forces and opponents within their structure.

That's not the game in Mexico; that has come to an end. So working with communities, making sure that there is an interactive dialogue with them is very, very important. And lastly the opportunity that exists here, if it is appropriate to talk about opportunities, is that with society demanding more from the government, this is their opportunity to double-down on the community-based approach, to making sure that institutions at the local and state level are strengthened by working between the three levels of government, civil society and the private sector. Thank you.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you very much, Duncan, for those very thorough and thoughtful comments. We are going to go to the floor now for questions and answers. I'd folks to raise your hand, I'll keep a list, when -- there will be microphones for people to speak into, so once I call on you, if you could just wait for the microphone to get to you, and if you could just state your name and institutional affiliation before you do so. And while I wait for some answers to rise, maybe I'll lead off with the first question.

Vanda, I think one of the issues that you raised about police reform, in Mexico, is exactly how do you address the weakness of state and local police forces? One of the early proposals that I think, you know, observers were quite hopeful about, and the Peña Nieto Administration's whole idea of a national gendarmerie. But over time as we observed the administration come office and get to work, that institution became smaller and smaller, reforms were delayed.

And maybe you could go into sort of, telling a little bit about why that proposal fell behind, because it seems to me that compared to other situations we've observed in the region and even around the world, those nationally-trained and overseen law enforcement units that have the kind of capacity and fire power to deal with heavily-armed criminal organizational have proven to be a good solution in other places, what about Mexico?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: My view is that the gendarmerie was, to some extent, a distraction. A distraction that dissipated energies, that the key issue that Mexico needs to resolve is having good police forces with sufficient density, permanently present throughout the territory. They can be part of a federal entity or national entity, but they certainly cannot be simply parachuted in when crisis breaks out. In order to get to know the criminals, one needs to get to know the community. That means having a sufficiently

positive, as well as a sufficiently dense presence in the local communities.

I'm thinking, for example, about the Colombian Cuadrantes program which has tried to do, that the results are not as optimistic as one would -- or not as good as one was originally hoping, but the basic idea is that there needs to be police forces, permanently stationed. And the gendarmerie was, in my view, a distraction because it was thought to build the new institution which would have been difficult, while at the end of the day, if it had not ended being a new institution, it needed up being into the Federal Police.

The military forces refuse to sacrifice further the bodies -- for supplying law enforcement, and this was a thing of the Calderón Administration for the past two, three decades. Mexico has dealt with police reforms by reaching into the military to staff various law enforcement institutions.

And what, at the end of the day, happened with the gendarmerie that has been deployed, was deployed for anti-kidnapping. Well, I'm not sure that's appropriate for the Gendarmerie, but specialized anti-kidnapping units that are just as good, or probably much better, to respond for that kind of issue, has certainly not been sent out to the areas where it was meant to be deployed. Like Guerrero, like Michoacán, like Chiapas -- well, Chiapas is more special because of the preexisting density of police, but also military, but some of the Central and Southern States, and it costs a tremendous amount of institutional energy and focus, they are doing very little.

I think that energy would have been better spent, on either expanding the Federal Police, or focusing on strengthening the Mando Único, perhaps not leaving it to states, but the basic fundamental issue is increasing the accountability, effectiveness as well as density of local police forces. Whether one folds them into one national police force, like in Colombia, that's often brought as a model, or one continues to have a very

fragmented law enforcement design, like the United States, in my view is not the key issue.

The issue is addressing local policing, in a far better way. And the Gendarmerie, in my view was not, getting at that issue, and has not got at that issue. And that continues to be one of the big holes of policing and law enforcement. The other comment I would make, sort of responding to Duncan's comments, is that, not even so much a matter of building an institution or sending in the military, I agree there is no way to pull the military back right now.

My question is, what purpose does one deploy them with, and whether this is the Calderón Administration or the Peña Administration, often, whether it's the Federal Police or the military, they are deployed with an extremely vague mandate, and to what they are actually supposed to do. What is the mission to be? Are they supposed to go and round up the key -- criminal bosses in the neighborhood? Are they supposed to simple deter the visibility of violence because of their presence?

And this continues to be unresolved in areas where violence has not broken up like Chiapas, or Quintana Roo, where violence has gone down like, you know, and the areas that are ablaze, Tamaulipas, Michoacán, Guerrero. So what is it that the police that are being inserted are actually supposed to do in practical terms? And you know, manning check points, and snarling at traffic down the road, is arguably not the most effective way to use those forces.

MR. TRINKUNAS: A point about the gendarmerie, I think it was rather indicative that you have this idea of a rapid reaction force that goes in, that tries to solve the problem and then withdraws. That not the issue in Mexico, and as I said earlier on, this is what people have been complaining about in rural areas in Mexico for a long time; which is that maybe the military is sent it, they calm down the violence but then they

leave.

What you need to hear is the gendarmerie is part of a bigger strategy, and the strategy has to be okay, you sent in the gendarmerie as a rapid reaction force. And remember in the early days how it was, you know, a few months ago, they were talking about this economic police force of some kind, that's fine, if there's an urgent need for that institution to go in and resolve an immediate problem, but then what happens? It's that next stage after the gendarmerie leaves that's the real challenge. How do you avoid this from happening again?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: And they've almost never resolve the issue. Perhaps, whether it's the Federales or the gendarmerie or military, perhaps their presence suppresses, or deters violence, but it almost never resolves it. Adaptations might take place in the criminal market, like in the North, but they have a temporarily paused breathing effect, you can exhale, but then you need to think about how you design law enforcement on a permanent basis and what you need to do to get law enforcement to have a deterrence capacity, which continues to be fundamentally lacking in Mexico.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Absolutely. I believe, let's start here in the front row, and then Margaret, and then I've got two more; again, if you'll just state your name and affiliation when you ask your question.

MR. TUCKER: Bill Tucker, I'm an attorney and a consultant, and I've done a lot of work in Mexico. And my question is; why doesn't Mexico do much about -- or do more about the violence in Northern Mexico where they know there's a tremendous oil field? The oil field in Texas that is producing a million barrels a day extends into Northern Mexico, and Mexico needs the oil, they need the revenue, and why they wouldn't post the -- either military or police, whatever they have to do to protect the oil

companies that would go in and drill and produce this oil, is beyond me.

I mean, I just can't understand why a country would not do that and protect its natural resources that they have and they need, and both the U.S. and Canada have produced theirs till almost are energy independent. It's known that similar resources exist in Mexico, so why wouldn't the leadership produce it like they have in the U.S. and Canada?

MR. TRINKUNAS: Let me take a round of three or four and then come back to the panel.

SPEAKER: Both of you have kind of lamented the lack of a consistent, coherent strategy, emphasize the need for community-based approaches, and I agree with that. But I'd like you perhaps to address the challenges that federalism in Mexico poses to the success in making these choices, and building national institutions versus local institutions. If we take the case of Juárez, is that was really a local initiative on which the national government was able to build, but that tension in capacities I think is worth commenting on.

MR. TRINKUNAS: thank you, Margaret. And I think, let's take one more behind, just two rows, right there. Yes?

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is (inaudible), I'm a consultant, and Vanda, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions. First, there seems to be -- I'm from Mexico -- There seems to be, I'm from Mexico, so one of the things that I have observed is that there's a lot of class cut in terms of policing like. You go to neighborhoods where you have middle classes in Mexico, and they seem to be secure. Yet, other neighborhoods that are poor do not get the right security which, say, Monterrey has gotten.

Like, you know, there's an investment in that security, Mexico City, you go to Roma, Condesa, you know, and you feel safe because there's a lot of policing. So

to what extent the government is to think about a strategy that also considers, you know, these class issues and to address that situation, because I see -- I think that that's an area --situation happening in Mexico.

The other thing is, I read this article (inaudible), in this Collantes thing, in *Nexus Magazine*, long ago, but it's still, he argued, he analyses violence in Mexico, that in places where the military has been deployed, states where the military has been deployed, there are some indications of higher levels of violence. And the reason he has speculated, because I don't think there's a lot of evidence on that, is that when the military comes it changes the power of relationships at the local level, because power looks at -- you know the -- they don't have the same amount of power.

So that people tend to take, you know, the justice by themselves too. I mean, apart from organized crime, so that it really creates more violence, so that's one of the questions I have in the intelligence of really deploying the military as the best strategy in that regard. Thank you very much.

MR. TRINKUNAS: So, Vanda, first, and then Duncan. Just to answer any round of comments or questions.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Sure. Tamaulipas is one of the latest, but big shale gas reserves, and then one of the key areas for Mexico's energy, as you will hear probably in more detail from Duncan. And certainly the Peña Administration has been very active in Tamaulipas, they have made major deployments. They have responded now, they have -- it would not be fair to say that they've ignored the issues.

I think the bigger problem is that they responded after high-value targeting helped trigger fighting, and transfer fighting there between the Zetas and their rivals. And so my frustration is not that they are not enough in Tamaulipas, but that there continues to be a series of hits, essentially on the basis of random in all -- sounds bad to

say -- completely random but on the basis of opportunistic intelligence flows without consideration, while if they arrest this Zeta leader here we can expect this kind of vacuum to emerge and these rivals to push in.

So we need to preposition forces then to deter or respond, that is not happening, so the level of strategic intelligence analysis continues to be lacking, and thinking about what kind of interdiction hits will trigger, what kind of power contestation. So they are doing a lot, there's a lot of force in Tamaulipas, the question is how effective that force is that are both the Federales, Federal Police as well as the military.

And, you know, in one of the big recommendations I make in the point in (inaudible) detail is to move away from high-value targeting to focus on middle-layer targeting, which is the way interdiction is done in the United States, Great Britain, in Germany. But I also discuss that the reason why they have not been able to move to that, is because it requires a certain institutional robustness and it requires a trust in one's own institution that intelligence will not leak out.

And given the extraordinary level of penetration of police forces, including at the very high Federal levels, by organized crime, this trust is not there. What essentially one wants to do is to arrest as much of the middle layer that makes criminal groups function at once as possible, but that might mean sitting on intelligence for months and months. That also risks that intelligence will leak out, and it's very tempting to get a signal hit on a capo and go arrest him because it's symbolic, because it has moral value, but it's also a very risky strategy, as we have seen.

But to move away to more strategic interdiction as much as that needs to happen, such as middle-layer targeting requires, not just strategic planning but it also requires enough vetting and calibrating of an institution to be willing to sit on intelligence for months and months before one moves.

Margaret, yes, I know federalism complicates all manner of issues in Mexico including public safety. But I also think it's not prohibitive. So the United States as a federal system has an extremely fragmented law enforcement. And in fact the key to law enforcement reform in the U.S. was precisely federalism.

You come out of the '40s, '50s with very, very corrupt local police forces, and it was Bobby Kennedy, who deserves much credit, using the FBI and justice system to force down anticorruption measures and use the Federal system to improve corrupt police forces. So, yes, it complicates things, but the critical issue is at the federal level, continually presses, works with, listens to input from local institutions to move on resolving local policing issues, and this cannot be sporadic. This needs to be robust and maintained across administration, because police reform, under the most auspicious circumstances takes a decade, it takes a generation of officers to change, and Mexico is working from not very auspicious circumstances.

And, yes. You know, the comment about policing and class is true, and not just about Mexico, but it's true about Latin America in general. The rich can rely on private security forces, or perhaps designed special institutions like the Fuerza Civil, but also often with very limited resources. There is reason why the force is so small because the rich in Monterrey are no longer interested in paying the extra tax for hiring more.

And the poor often rely on the criminals themselves for street policing. As much as the criminals are the source of violence, they often suppress certainly levels of predatory crime. They are the principal arbitrator of life on the street, and that needs to change in Mexico.

MR. WOOD: And just, I mean, to touch on Bill's point, I think that it would be highly problematical if you, as a government said, look, we know there's a lot of oil on the ground, we want to bring in the oil company. So we are going to suppress

violence, we are going to use all of our resources to stabilize Tamaulipas because that's what; we want the oil companies to come in. It's not going to look good for a start.

And second of all, if you did do that, there's a good chance the oil companies wouldn't come anyway, because the problems of doing business in Northern Mexico go far beyond just security. It's about dealing with local institutions that don't necessarily function, it's about dealing with a lack of infrastructure which you need, either there in place already or that you work with the local authorities to put in place.

And a third point I make there is that the big money in the short term is not going to be made in shale anyway. The big money in the short term is going to be made offshore and in some of the mature fields that exist onshore, but in a different part of the country.

Now, does that mean it's not a challenge? Absolutely, it's a big challenge, and that's one of the things that the government needs to work with. It's one of the questions I get most frequently when I'm speaking to oil companies is, you know, what do we have to worry with regards to security in Mexico? But in fact, they are more concerned about the rule of law, respecting contracts of property rights than they are about security; because, let's face it, they do business in all parts of the world that are more complicated.

And just to emphasize Margaret's point, I think that federalism is a major factor here, and in fact I think it's not just that it's a federal country it's the process of decentralization of power that Mexico has experienced over the past 30 years of so. That led to a situation where you devolve power to state and local governments, without any higher standards of transparency and accountability, where you've given them increasingly more money.

And in fact the PRI as party, when it was in opposition, was one of the

parties that really drove this, you know. And one of the reasons why the power base for the party remains at the local and state level, and it makes it very difficult to take it back at this point. And the Mexican Government makes the point that there are constitutional limits to its power. Absolutely, there are, but there are also exceptions, or rather, other kinds of pressure and force that you can use to change the situation.

One of my -- you know, one of the most respected analysts of the Mexican security, Alejandro Hope, has made the point that there's also a moral hazard problem here, which is that if the Federal Government goes into every state which is failing, in terms of security, then all the other states have no incentive to fix the problem themselves.

Now, I don't know whether that argument actually follows through, but I think there is a good point there, but perhaps it comes down to more than just the moral hazard, it's about resources. There are limited resources in Mexico. You can't cover all Tamaulipas, Michoacán, Guerrero, and still hope to, you know, implement your public security strategy in the rest of the country.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you. I think we have the middle, back then the front, and then Abe.

MR. RICO: Thanks. Bernardo Rico of the World Bank IFC. Thanks for the great presentation. Given that the private sector in Mexico is experiencing, or maybe it's more of a perception than reality, a big renaissance in its economic growth. A lot of it had been pushed through by reforms from the current government.

How does that -- how does the private sector, particularly the large companies having people like one of the most wealthy -- wealthiest human beings on this planet, reconcile this kind of renaissance, and its economy with, you know, events that continue to happen with continued significant institutional weakness, crime and violence

and the recent events? And how do they see what their role in actually helping to solve the problem?

MR. TRINKUNAS: Bud, and then back to right over here.

SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you, Vanda, for an excellent report. Thank you, to Harold and Duncan. Study after study, analyst after analyst, have emphasized the tremendous challenge that corruption and impunity pose for any anti-crime and violence strategy, in Mexico and elsewhere. You mentioned the case of Iguala, just the most recent of which brings about the idea of doing something about corruption and impunity in Mexico.

President Peña Nieto has talked about forming, you know, reaching another pact with the political parties and doing something about corruption. What do you think, to what extent can it be done in terms of really, for the first time in the last eight years, doing something serious and effective to fight corruption and impunity in Mexico? Thank you.

MR. TRINKUNAS: If we can get one more question from Abe Lowenthal.

MR. LOWENTHAL: Thank you. Abe Lowenthal, from both Brookings and the Wilson Center. I'm interested in asking about the U.S. role. Is there a significant role in this issue for the United States, unacknowledged or acknowledged, civilian or military, governmental or nongovernmental? If so, how would you characterize it, and do you have any recommendations for improving it?

MR. TRINKUNAS: Vanda?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Sure. The reaction of the business community or broadly the elite in Mexico to do with violence, I think it's been very varied. To a large extent people who live in Mexico City, have been with some exceptions quite immune

and removed from a lot of the violence. One of the consequences of violence not being uniform and not affecting everyone with same intensity, or not affecting everyone (inaudible), is that those with sufficiently deep pockets, can respond by hiring private security companies. Or they don't even come into contact.

Now in the other areas we have seen that the business community was a key factor in mobilizing response. Monterrey would be a prime example. In Ciudad Juárez as well, it was a combination of business community and civil society. To what extent they can be replicated elsewhere in Mexico is a big question, and in both places the situation has improved, but it's hardly resolved, and we are seeing the limitations typical of when the situation stops burning so acutely tax payers, whether they are the middle class or they are the upper classes. stop being motivated to be spending extra money on security, Monterrey, and limitations, and lack of expansion of the Fuerza Civil, and even a lot of weakening of the momentum in Ciudad Juárez, but it was also very much linked to Todos Somos Juárez, and the end of the program under the Peña Nieto Administration, also led to lots of the civil society groups, business groups in the city, losing the energy and motivation they had when violence was critical.

But nonetheless the issue is; how does one anchor in and use the energies and the resource capacity of the elite, and the business community to push for reforms? On the other side of the business community, of course, is the sponsoring of militias and the militias are not just Michoacán and sort of peasant groups rising up, you have a lot of other cleansing going on in the country with private security companies moonlighting in various highly-problematic behaviors, extrajudicial killings and the business community has a role in that. And staying away from that, not resorting to that road is critical.

My hope will be that the events of the summer will motivate a serious

drive on addressing, or starting to tackle corruption. It's not something that can happen quickly. And traditionally when anticorruption drives have been effective is where they serve, politically, those who promoted them. But the key issue is making the jump from political convenient tool, anticorruption to something that becomes an inadvertent habit. And that not often happens in countries, and we are yet to see that.

Now, the good thing that Mexico has, as Duncan pointed out, is a big robust civil society demand for accountability, demand for transparency, compared to that of other countries that tackle corruption with far weaker civil-society-base to push for it. But it's a long-term process that has not had, often, the robustness of political support that it needs. And especially in a system which is deeply corrupt, pervasively so, the question is how does one create sustainable momentum that can spread beyond pockets of individuals that might make a difference, perhaps, in the local area, but nonetheless will end up being (inaudible) by the system?

And how one, then, politically rewards the anticorruption efforts? So for anticorruption to be effective it needs to start generating political benefits, strong political benefits for its sponsors, and we are yet to see that in Mexico. And, yes, I think there are many opportunities for the U.S. to engage, the United States has been engaged. Certainly there has been drop off in the Mexican desire for U.S. engagement under the Peña Administration.

Go back to the Calderón Administration while they are continuing calls for the reducing the demand for drugs, cracking down on money laundering, cracking down on arms trafficking. Those are all good goals and the policies can be perhaps made more robust, but frankly there is no way that demand reduction in the U.S. will resolve Mexico's problems, because it's not going to drop.

There are limitations to what even more robust efforts on arms trafficking

can accomplish, and the key is to bring more effective law enforcement to Mexico, and that's something that U.S. can assist in helping Mexico build the institution. But ultimately it has happen in Mexico. It's not something that the U.S. can do on its side.

MR. WOOD: Let me just make a quick point about resilient communities in the private sector. You know, the example of Monterrey is very telling, which is, it's the industrial heartland, it's the wealthiest part, or the greatest concentration of wealth in Mexico, and that city fell to violence in a way that nobody expected. What was extraordinary is how it came back again afterwards.

And that's where the concept of resilience becomes so important. It's not about resisting violence. It's not about resisting organized crime, that's what you need strong institutions for. It's whether a community is strong enough to come back afterwards. Monterrey showed it was possible to do that, but under very, very specific circumstances. Where you had the three levels of government, the private sector and civil society working together, largely because civil society is financed almost exclusively by the private sector in that city.

Now, if you look at the area of Monterrey known as San Pedro Garza, one of the wealthiest areas of the country, which also has a very poor neighborhood, or poor neighborhoods in it, what they've done, moving ahead, is to recognize that you cannot just make the richer areas safer, you have to actually take care of all the areas around it as well. So there are a lot of community-based programs there right now which are trying to help local kids stay in school, they are trying to provide employment opportunities, et cetera, and it seems to be having an impact in a very small area; a very, very small area.

But that's something which, you know, gives us hope, now there was a paper that we published earlier on this year as part of a book on resilient communities by

Matthew Ingram, and he looked on, and he speaks to Miriam's point earlier on. His argument is, it's that, if you just focus on making areas wealthier, in fact security deteriorates in the short term.

And why is that? Because if this area is wealthy and it's surrounded by poor areas, then everybody comes in to steal stuff from you, it's logical. And so what you have to do, is you have to adopt regional approaches to security, and that's what the polígonos approach was partly based on, but also what the role the private sector has to be. They did a similar thing, I would say, I noticed in Ciudad Juárez and in Tijuana where the ministry of both Tijuana and (inaudible), which is being very successful in bringing about sustained economic growth to that city.

So, the private sector can play a big role. Patricia's point about corruption impunity, the incentive structure is out of whack isn't it? I mean, if you have a 3 percent chance of actually ever being convicted for a murder, you know, there is not a lot keeping you from murdering somebody if that's what you want to do. I'm not saying that everybody wants to murder, but that's going to make you some money, or if that's going to get you ahead.

Now, that's where I think justice reform becomes so important. I mean, that's the institutional reform that more than any other, I would say, at this point in time needs to be a focus of the Peña Nieto Administration recognizing that it's going to take a lot longer than this administration to make it work. They've got to make every effort right now to move towards that deadline of 2016. And they are not going to make it, but you say, you get as much done as you possibly can, and you keep working on it. You don't put this down afterwards.

That's where the Federal Government can really push with local and state-level governments. And Abe's point about the U.S., or question about the U.S. role,

I would say that intelligence-sharing has been fundamentally important in terms of the high-value targeting. But if you look at the four pillars of the Merida Initiative, they are still highly relevant today.

I mean one of the ideas was building resilient communities. And other one is strengthening institutions, training. In the early days of the Peña Nieto Administration was a difficult for the bilateral relationship in security. There was a lot of a kind of feeling out and distrust, particularly from the Mexicans towards the Americans, that apparently has improved a great deal in recent months. Now there seems to be a much healthier relationship between the two, and programs to do with training are moving ahead in a positive way.

And I think there's been learning on both sides. The Americans have learned that there's only so far they can push, because ultimately it's the Mexicans who are going to decide what's possible. And the Mexican side has learned that they do actually benefit a great deal from the -- particularly intelligence-sharing and training.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you. I think front row, and then right behind.

MS. DORHOI: I'm a Risk Specialist -- My name is Monica Dorhoi, and I'm a Risk Specialist in banking sector, but I'm also an Anticorruption, and Safeguard Specialist, I have a PhD in anti-corruption; and also economics, so it's double. My question to you is, there are many attempts in Mexico, to have anticorruption or anticrime strategies or pushes or fights, what is it the system -- why it's different?

And I would like, if you can phrase this question in terms of state versus federal or local versus federal. You know, the governors or the -- you know, the leaders of provinces are really -- or is it a push from -- and by the way, very, very good job, and we love you. We need to have more of this, so.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Thank you.

MR. TRINKUNAS: I think in the next row, in the back.

MR. MACETTA: Mike Macetta, PBS Online, News Hour. Even though you admonished us not to get too wrapped in the headlines, the headlines at the moment are the President's in a lot of political trouble. Where do you see this playing out? Does this mean that the Members in the Congress are going to pay less attention to him? Because presumably, his term goes on no matter what, it's not a parliamentary system.

What is the -- and the fact that he has this huge head of steam at the moment in the populace, but does that just sort of blow over and then we are sort of more back to business as usual?

MR. TRINKUNAS: I think there's one more.

MS. ATUESTA: Hello. My name is Laura Atuesta, I'm a Professor in the Drug Policy Program in the Centro Investigación y Docencia Económica in Mexico. I have a question about the deployment of the Federal Police and how effective it could be. And it's getting into your point that I think you didn't answer, that it seems that they already implemented a lot of military operations in Mexico, and I don't think the resource is very good.

Actually there are some experiments that they took out all the Municipal Police and they put all the Federal Police in place, and it didn't work at all. So I'm wondering when you are talking about, like putting the Federal Police in place, what should be different, what happened when they did it the first time and it didn't work? So why is it going to be working this time?

MR. TRINKUNAS: It's getting close to the end our time, maybe we can take one more in the back row, and then come back to the front.

MR. LALUSA: Hi. Mike LaLusa from the Security Assistance Monitor --

excuse me -- I was hoping that you could talk a little bit, more about the autodefensa Movement, and how that plays into your argument about police reform, when people just take up arms and basically reject the police. What do you do in that situation, how would you address that?

MR. TRINKUNAS: And we actually have -- and we have two more people who want to go. Do we just take one big round and --

MR. WOOD: Do it, yes.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Okay. I think there's one more up here. Oh, Desmond, do you want to?

SPEAKER: Yeah.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Okay.

SPEAKER: Hey. Thank you, for calling on me. This was a really interesting discussion. I was wondering about given, you know, the changes in crime control issues that are affecting Mexico today, how this is affecting Mexico's ability to control migration from Central America into Mexico and Mexico into the United States?

MR. TRINKUNAS: And I think we have one last one, last word here, in the front row; right up here.

SPEAKER: Hi. Thank you very much. I'm Carolina Yeller from the Mexican Embassy. It's just -- it's not a question, it's just a brief comment. It is clear that we face a lot of challenges, but I just want to mention that Mexico, as you all know, has passed very important reforms that we expect will contributed to improve conditions in Mexico, economic, social conditions; conditions that as a whole that we translate in safety conditions.

For example, I just want to mention that we reform our criminal law, instead of having 13 -- sorry -- 33 states' codes, criminal codes; we just have one

national code, which I think it's very important. And also, the political reform now allows for reelection of municipal authorities, which I think will contribute to accountability, that it's very important. Thank you.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you very much for that. So let's go back to -- Duncan, do you want to go first this time?

MR. WOOD: Yeah. Okay. Let me just pick up --

MR. TRINKUNAS: And then Vanda will --

MR. WOOD: Let me pick up a couple of things. I mean, first of all, Mike, you know, your point is, is the movement going to play, what's the next step for the government? We hope that that the government takes the reaction from Mexican society as an opportunity to engage with them, and actually to redouble efforts. To date, I don't think we've seen too many encouraging signs on that, but we hope that there are conversations going on behind closed doors that will allow them to do that.

And somebody mentioned the idea of a pact for security earlier one. That something that the -- you know, the problem is, it's that you can't really deal with the other political parties at this point in time, because they are so weak and divided themselves. The PRD is having a legitimacy crisis; the PAN has been pulling itself apart because of the leadership contest.

So who do you actually deal with? It has to ultimately come down, I think, to the Federal Government to go out there and to listen to society, and start to say, look, that we already have a lot of the tools already in place. The justice reform, the Mando Único, we've got to push on those; we've got to give them resources that they need. One of the questions that you ask though, is what happens with the movement now? And I think there's an important date to remember here, which is that we are just under a month away from December 12th.

And December 12th being, you know, the Festival of Virgin of Guadalupe. You know, that's the beginning of the Christmas celebrations in Mexico really, and things were really beginning to wind down around that point. You know, any kind of sustained social movement is going to -- not fall apart, but I mean, people's enthusiasm will diminish, and let's face it, Mexico as a society doesn't really come back until around January the 15th. That's a long gap to sustain a social movement.

I think, you know, you are going to have the hardcore people who will remain committed, but there's going to be a lot of distractions in between. And so that's something I think to look out for there. Mike's point, the question about the autodefensas; I think it's a very, very important question because it highlights one of the strengths of Mexico society, not the kind of strength that you want necessarily, but I think it points to the importance of engaging with society.

Which is, if you don't, if you don't give Mexican society the right kind of tools to resist and to be resilient to organize crime they'll find their own way; that's what we saw in Michoacán, and then of course that creates a whole other range of problems. And so the autodefensas problem has not gone away in any sense, it's still there in Michoacán, some of them are being disarmed, other ones have sprung up, it's spread in some ways to other states. That's something which I think we need to keep a tab on.

And the last point which is, you know, about transmigration, Central American migrants. It's a very, very big problem, and the weakness of police institutions, the weakness of the justice system, only compounds that problem. Because these people are essentially unprotected on their journey through Mexico in so many ways; in many senses, at least in the past, they've been falling prey to the institutions of public security, to police, and corrupt justice systems.

And again, it emphasizes why, you know, not in isolation, but one of the

most important things you can do is to strengthen both the justice system and police systems.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you. Vanda?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: I will pick up with the border issue. A lot of the recent policing efforts in Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez, particularly Tijuana, have, partially responding to U.S. pressures, focused on migrants that return from the United States, often in ways that I think were counterproductive, and almost policing would be social cleansing in core business areas, while policing in the colonias continue to be very limited.

So although there seems to be a level of responsiveness or satisfaction, in my view lots of the local policing, having to do with border management, have actually not been effective, and has picked up vulnerable group of people, perhaps violating laws to some extent, but certainly not being the predominant source of problems, and yet it would make the city centers in Tijuana seem cleaner; while the colonias continue to struggle with tremendous problems.

In the South the border is very porous, yes, the Mexican Government has committed itself to tightening the border, the U.S. has been putting a lot of pressure on them to do so, and in practice they really cannot, and my expectation is that -- one consequence that it will be upping the level of bribery that needs to be paid to institutions and the level of abuse the migrants will face.

So I'm fairly skeptical about the southern border efforts, and so one of the risks, in fact, is that perhaps that could even create a strengthening of relations between local communities and migrants, and organized crime groups. The Zetas are around, certainly the Sinaloa are there, they have -- these areas have not exploded into violence but I posit that it has nothing to do with good policing, and these areas are very

vulnerable into exploding to violence.

Meanwhile the migrants and being cordoned, what's being done on the border, it's not in my view getting at the core, issues of the police or law enforcement accountability. Look, my take on the police is what I have said before. I don't really have so much problem with sending the Federal Police in, even sending the military, often local and municipal police are rotten. They are weak and corrupt, and one cannot work with them until something changes.

The key problem in my view is what kind of mandate are they sent in with, to do specifically what? And that has been lacking, there is a crisis, so sending the Federales and sending the military, to do what? Check cars, set up checkpoints and check loots? Really not going to get at the core issue. The length of the deployment, the transition when the situation is "resolved" which it almost never is, but when violence seems to go down, how do you hand over, to whom?

That's what needs to take place. I don't see that one can escape from using the military any time soon, or for that matter of the Federal Police, the question is, with what mandate? What kind of cooperation? What kind of institutional anchoring and local prosecutors' offices, they are sent in with, and the relationship to violence of course, is highly complex. They are often sent to areas where violence will start escalating to start with, then they make much of interdiction and arrest which only up violence further. But nonetheless, to say that they are simply the trigger of violence is perhaps not too fair.

And let me then link that to the militias or autodefensas, I think is an extremely unhealthy development for Mexico; it's not new. Militias have been in Mexico in one form or another for decades. And decades is also not new in Michoacán. Or Guerrero they have existed, they are visible today, and they are, sadly in my view, becoming more popular.

One looks at polling nationwide and as well as Michoacán and Guerrero specific polling, the support for the autodefensas has risen over the past year, year-and-a-half among the Mexican public. Very much symptomatic of the lack of faith in the state with the security, but it's also extremely unhealthy, and the Mexican Government I think has reacted fairly reasonable in suggesting that they have to be folded into the state if they cannot be stopped altogether.

And now the question is, how effective the state will be in delivering on the arrangements that have been made, that have been violated in the Michoacán, many of the groups did not disarm. They did not follow the terms of the agreement and they continue existing.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Okay. Well, I think we are just about at the end of our time; if you don't have any final comments to make.

MR. WOOD: Just one about the anticorruption, which we didn't touch on. Which is that, I think that, you know, you can say that Mexico has had a lot of success in some anticorruption at the Federal level; you know, things are a lot better in Mexico than they were 20 years ago. Things were -- they are a lot better than they were 10 years ago, to be honest with you.

Now if you go back 10 years, in the early years of the Fox Administration, when you had the drug tsar being directly linked to organized crime; you know, you don't find that anymore in Mexico. That's a big success, but that hasn't happened at the state and local level. And in part that's because of the decentralization of power without subsequent or consequent improvements in accountability and transparency in those governments.

And so that's a major challenge moving ahead is, you have to try to sort that out throughout the country. They are doing it at the level of the Federal Government

was the easy part in many ways, and you probably have to pick your battles pretty carefully, because you can't attack the problem across the country in one go. And so dealing with particularly difficult areas, whether it's Tamaulipas or with -- you know, in Guerrero, should probably be a priority.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you, Duncan, for taking us out on a slightly more optimistic note. And thank you, all, for joining us to discuss Vanda Felbab-Brown's new paper on security in Mexico. One of many different reforms that the Peña Nieto Administration is undertaking and, please, download it or grab a copy on your way out, because I think you'll find it a great read with some very thoughtful policy recommendations.

Thank you, all. Thank you, to Duncan, for joining us. And thank you, to Vanda as well for writing a wonderful paper. Thanks. (Applause)

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Expires: November 30, 2016