

## The Fifth Summit of the Americas: Recommendations for Action

### Strengthening Human Security Vanda Felbab-Brown

#### Executive Summary

Despite the ever-growing intensity of interactions between North and South America, crucially facilitated by immigration to the United States from the South, U.S. national security policy in the Southern Hemisphere has been increasingly at odds with the security preoccupations of the Latin American governments and populations. While the United States has focused on keeping unfriendly actors out of power in Latin America and illicit flows from the region out of the United States, the governments and publics in Latin America are primarily concerned with human security issues. A joint effort at multidimensional state strengthening in Latin America, however, can bring the two perspectives into congruence and address security concerns of both the United States and Latin American countries.

Human security includes not only the physical safety from violence and crime, but also economic safety from critical poverty, social marginalization, and fundamental underprovision of elemental social goods, such as infrastructure, education, and health care. Chronically, Latin American governments have been lacking in the provision of all three.

Changes in the political landscape in Latin America and in the United States provide unique opportunities for strengthening human security in the Hemisphere. The Americas' agenda of critical policy initiatives should include the expansion of state-strengthening efforts that improve public safety and the quality and accessibility of the justice system; and economic development of the region not only through steadfast promotion of free trade, but also through determined effort to assist national governments with the development of socioeconomic periphery areas.