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**THESIS**

**THE ART OF RIVERINE WARFARE FROM AN  
ASYMMETRICAL APPROACH**

by

Paul F. Willey

March 2004

Thesis Advisor:  
Co-Advisor:

Anna Simons  
George Lober

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**THE ART OF RIVERINE WARFARE FROM AN ASYMMETRICAL  
APPROACH**

Paul F. Willey  
Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy  
B.S., University of Mississippi, 1990

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
March 2004**

Author: Paul F. Willey

Approved by: Anna Simons  
Thesis Advisor

George Lober  
Co-Advisor

Gordon H. McCormick  
Chairman, Department of Defense Analysis

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines U.S. riverine warfare from an unconventional perspective in three Latin American countries to include: Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. U.S. forces in particular NSW was (and remains) instrumental in helping these countries establish riverine units and an active presence on their rivers. These three different programs all have the same mission to deny the uncontested use of the rivers and inland waterways by narco traffickers and insurgent forces for the use of illegal activities. This thesis compares and contrast the three cases and garnishes lessons learned for future endeavors of the same.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>END STATE.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>WHY RIVERS?.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>WAYS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>MEANS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>1. Naval Special Warfare’s Involvement.....</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>2. Operational Art of Riverine Warfare from an Indirect Approach.....</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>3. Country Team.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>F.</b>	<b>MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>G.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>“DIABLOS AZULES”.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>GEOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>POPULATION.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>POLITICAL/ECONOMIC.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>BOLIVIAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE DRUG WAR.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>F.</b>	<b>STRATEGIC UTILIZATION OF BLUE DEVIL TASK FORCE.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>G.</b>	<b>SCHOOL HOUSE IN TRINIDAD.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>H.</b>	<b>EFFECTS ON LOCAL POPULACE.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>I.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>COLOMBIA.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>DEMOGRAPHICS.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>ECONOMY.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>WHY RIVERS?.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>POLITICAL GROUPS.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>F.</b>	<b>INSURGENCY.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>G.</b>	<b>STATE COUNTER-INSURGENCY EFFORTS.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>H.</b>	<b>THE RIVERINE PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>I.</b>	<b>EFFECTS AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>J.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>PERU.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>GEOGRAPHICAL AND ETHNIC MAKE-UP.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>POLITICAL AND ECONOMICAL SETTING.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>COUNTERDRUG PROGRAMS.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>THE RIVERINE PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>F.</b>	<b>COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>49</b>

1.	Phase I. Training and Technical Support.....	51
2.	Phase II. Equipping and Delivery of Assets.....	51
3.	Phase III. Operationalization of Assets.....	51
4.	Phase IV. Financial Responsibility.....	51
G.	THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS .....	52
H.	THE FUJIMORI DILEMMA.....	54
I.	CONCLUSION .....	55
V.	CONCLUSION .....	57
A.	INTRODUCTION.....	57
B.	BOLIVIA AND COLOMBIA.....	57
C.	CONCLUSION .....	60
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	61
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....	65

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Map of South America.....	9
Figure 2.	Map of Bolivia.....	12
Figure 3.	C/N Task Force (From: W. Casas, Personal Communication, June 11, 2003). .....	16
Figure 4.	Bolivian “Blue Devil” Riverine Forces. ....	18
Figure 5.	Map of Columbia. ....	26
Figure 6.	Disposition of Initial RCE’s.....	34
Figure 7.	Boat Composition. ....	37
Figure 8.	Jurisdiction and Disposition of the Riverine Brigade. ....	38
Figure 9.	Map of Peru.....	42
Figure 10.	RIU Location. ....	50

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The majority of the information in this paper was obtained through personal experience, the references provided, and through classroom participation to include other classes and readings.

Most of my factual resources are based on personal interviews with key individuals and MILGP representatives and personal experience. I do not follow a model of unconventional warfare per se. I use the elements of statecraft, but do not go into them too deeply, with the exception of the military. I draw conclusions based on some of the principles of UW.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

When the hour of crisis comes, remember that 40 selected men can shake the world.

-Yasotay (Mongol Warlord)

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Since the break-up of the nation state marked by the collapse of the Soviet Empire in the early 1990's, the world has been plagued by geo-political instabilities. "These instabilities can lead to increased levels of competition, a wide variety of attempts at intimidation, drug trafficking, insurgencies, regional conflicts, weapons proliferation, and civil war" (JCS, 2001, p. I-1), as well as to a world where lawlessness, guerillas, revolutionaries, and narco-terrorist are in vogue. To combat these threats, the U.S. and our allies must use every element of national power at our disposal to include: political, economic, military, and informational (psychological). Nowhere is the intended political strategic end state of such power better articulated than in the National Security Strategy (NSS) of the U.S.

The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom – and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise. In the twenty-first century, only nations that share a commitment to protecting basic human rights and guaranteeing political and economic freedom will be able to unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity. (NSS, 2002)

This paper will analyze a small but important piece of one of the elements of military power and will look at riverine warfare in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. Due to time constraints and length limitations of this paper, the author will focus in particular on the ends, ways, and means of the operational art of riverine warfare.

## **B. END STATE**

One of the first questions that needs to be addressed is, what is the outcome the U.S. wants to achieve in Latin America, especially in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru? The National Security Strategy clearly states, “Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity” (NSS, 2002, p. 1).

Together Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru foster a lawlessness that runs rampant both internally, and transnationally. “Parts of Latin America confront regional conflict, especially arising from the violence of drug cartels and their accomplices. This conflict and unrestrained narcotics trafficking could imperil the health and security of the United States” (NSS, 2002, p. 10). Although there are other countries in the Andean Ridge region with similar problems, this paper references these three countries mentioned previously because they all have riverine programs that the U.S. was instrumental in implementing.

Over the past decade the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) has made resolving the issues identified by the NSS it’s top priority for the region. The following four Combatant Commanders (formerly known as Commander-in-Chiefs), have carried out the military strategy formulated by the tone of the NSS: General George A. Joulwan, General Charles E. Wilhelm, General Peter Pace, and Major General Gary D. Speer. Gen. Joulwan stated, “My top priorities are the war on drugs, followed by a negotiated settlement in El Salvador, strengthening democracy in Panama and enhancing the professionalism of Latin American militaries with emphasis on human rights” (General George A. Joulwan, 1992, p. 32). Later, Gen Pace described drugs (as cited in Kozaryn, 2001), and subsequently echoed by Maj. Gen. Speer that drugs, “are often characterized as a weapon of mass destruction” (“U.S.-Colombia Policy”, 2002).

## **C. WHY RIVERS?**

Before discussing Naval Special Warfare’s involvement and the operational art of riverine warfare in Latin America, this thesis addresses the fundamental question, why are rivers important? Given the physical make-up of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru, combined, these countries contain over 15,000 miles of navigable river or inland



waterways. Officials should not underestimate the vast importance of these networks of rivers for the local populace. They are important for various reasons. Among other things they serve as lines of communication, transportation, and commercial trade.

Take for instance, the small town of Riberalta, Bolivia. Located in Bolivia, it sits at the junction of the Rio (river) Beni and Madre de Dios which feeds into the Amazon and on into Brazil.

These rivers form arteries for commerce and supply because the roadways in Bolivia are part [sic], unpaved and in varying degrees of smoothness. The riverbanks are aligned with numerous wooden hulled riverboats [Kayukas] that traverse the rivers carrying bananas and other food stuffs to Riberalta (ICE, 2002).

This is true for innumerable settlements in all three countries, throughout the Amazon region.

Rivers also serve to do more. In addition to serving the growth and transportation of legal goods, illicit products are commonplace. Coca is a common product grown in these areas and it is used in the production of cocaine.

‘We grow coca for survival, not because we like it. That is why we could eradicate it if we had a viable substitute,’ states a coca farmer here in Southeastern Caqueta state [sic] (Stauder, 2001).

In Colombia, there are more navigable rivers than paved roads, “officials see controlling inland waterways as tantamount to establishing an orderly state presence in large swatches of the country” (LaFranchi, 2001). In that regard, officials see controlling the river systems as one of the fundamental keys to the illicit drug trade and lawlessness.

Eighty percent of the drug-trade-related traffic in [this] area is fluvial, says Major Gonzalo Aladino, commander of (Operation Pirana), the name given to last month’s strike against area drug labs. That alone tells you it’s essential we be on the rivers (LaFranci, 2001).

Controlling the entire riverine area is virtually impossible; however, maintaining an active presence in key strategic areas or choke points along the rivers is vital to Bolivia’s, Colombia’s, and Peru’s national sovereignty.

## D. WAYS

Before progressing it is important to establish common definitions for some terms that will be used throughout this paper. First and foremost is the term War itself, which according to Joint Pub 3-0, is initiated when other elements of national power fail, “The US national leadership may decide to conduct large-scale, sustained combat operations to achieve national objectives or protect national interests, placing the United States in a wartime state” (JCS, 2001, p. I-3). There are two different forms of war: unlimited warfare and limited warfare. A recent example of unlimited warfare occurred in Afghanistan and Iraq, where the U.S. and our allies sought regime change in both instances, and where all elements of statecraft were brought to bear on a sovereign nation, and nothing short of unconditional surrender and regime change was acceptable. Limited war, on the other hand, is where the U.S. chooses to change the current political system of an adversary short of utilizing all available resources and mobilizing a full national effort.

*Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)* falls under the category of a limited war campaign. According to JCS 3-0 (2001),

Military forces may be required to demonstrate US resolve and capability, support the other instruments of national power, or terminate the situation on favorable terms. The general goals during MOOTW are to support national objectives, deter war, and return to a state of peace (p. I-3).

Insurgencies, revolutions, terrorism, and drug trafficking all fall under this category.

This thesis will treat drug trafficking and narco-terrorism as elements of insurgencies. No better example exists in this regard than Colombia, “where guerilla groups both left-wing and right-wing, have down played ideology in favor of decentralized baronies and franchises built on terrorism, narcotrafficking, kidnapping, counterfeiting, and siphoning of oil-pipeline revenues from local governments” (Kaplan, 2003, p. 66). In a broad sense of the word, “an insurgency is a protracted struggle conducted methodically, step by step, in order to obtain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order” (Krepinevich, 1986, p. 7).

There are two forms of military power available to combat these threats. One is the use of conventional forces engaged in a conventional war. The other is the application of power by an unconventional means, using unconventional forces (special forces). Another way of looking at this choice is in terms of a symmetric vs. asymmetric strategy. “Asymmetric strategy aims to counter the enemy’s strengths and to accentuate and exploit his weakness and vulnerabilities by applying non-conventional means” (Vego, 2000, p. 410). The most successful way to execute an asymmetric strategy is through the use of Special Operation Forces in an unconventional manner. This paper will explore riverine warfare by an unconventional means in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. For the purpose of this thesis Unconventional Warfare (UW) comprises a “broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source” (HDOA, 2001).

Similar to various definitions and terminology, riverine operations can mean different things to different people. For the purposes of this thesis, we will use the following broad definition for riverine operations: “Riverine operations integrate and employ various types of ground, maritime, air, and special operations forces to gain and/or maintain control of riverine, coastal, or delta areas” (DON, 1993). To summarize the riverine area, it is that area which includes “inland or coastal area comprising both land and water, characterized by limited land lines of communication (LOC’s), with extensive water surface and/or inland waterways that provide natural routes of surface transportation and communications” (DON, 1993).

## **E. MEANS**

### **1. Naval Special Warfare’s Involvement**

Why utilize Special Forces personnel?

There are a couple of reasons why special operation forces are well suited for this mission. According to Colin Gray, strategic utility reposes most essentially in two qualities, “economy of force and expansion of strategic choice. In the most general of terms, special operations forces (SOF) offer the prospect of a favorably disproportionate return on military investment” (Gray, 1999).

The strategic utility of special operations forces depends at least as much on the imagination and competence of their political and military masters as it does on their tactical effectiveness. First-class special operations forces have the potential for great strategic utility, but political leaders and strategists must understand how to realize that potential. (Gray, 1996, p. 149).

In the riverine environment, NSW has been the force of choice in Latin America. There are several organizations that have been involved in riverine operations in Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru including the United States Marine Corps, United States Coast Guard, U.S. Special Forces (Green Berets), and U.S. Naval Special Warfare (Special Boat Units, SEALs, and NAVSCIATTS). Although all of these entities bring something unique to the table, the brunt of the training and expertise has been provided by NSW. In 1998, NSW conducted three out of the four riverine training missions to Colombia.

The USMC usually provides riverine seminars and helps train the leadership of these programs. They provide, to a limited degree, tactical level training. The U.S. Coast Guard is essential and provides the waterborne law enforcement piece of the equation. Finally NSW provides operational as well as tactical level training through the use of Special Boat and SEAL personnel. The Naval Small Craft Instructor and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS), located at Stennis, Mississippi, provides technical training on small boats, engines, and tactics. Host countries send members to NAVSCIATTS via foreign assistance programs.

## **2. Operational Art of Riverine Warfare from an Indirect Approach**

“Operational art is the use of military forces to achieve strategic goals through the design, organization, integration, and conduct of strategies, campaigns, major operations, and battles” (JCS, 2001, p. xii). Operational art helps commanders utilize forces appropriately and determines when, where, and for what purpose forces will be employed.

## **3. Country Team**

The country teams are made up of the U.S. Embassy and all U.S. entities that are in-country working toward a common goal. In these teams is where all the elements of national power are brought to bear against the common enemies of the state and on behalf

of the national interests of the U.S. The country team headed by an Ambassador promulgates a Country Team strategy, which echoes the Theater Engagement Plan (TEP) and the NSS. The Military Group (MILGP) is one section within the embassy that is responsible for all Military-to-Military relations, to include the coordination of all training and support missions for all special forces.

#### **F. MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS**

The operational art used by the U.S. in supporting the countries of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru is unconventional warfare (UW). UW is an asymmetric approach to warfare, exercised through host nation forces. Foreign internal defense (FID) is quiet frequently used synonymously with UW, Krepinevich refers to FID as “formerly counterinsurgency” (Krepinevich, 1986, p. 268); however, this author distinguishes FID from UW in that FID is one element of UW. According to Joint Pub 3-07.1, “The focus of all U.S. foreign internal defense (FID) efforts is to support the host nation’s (HN) program of internal defense and development (IDAD)” (p. vii). In particular, FID is designed, “to free and protect a nation from lawlessness, subversion, and insurgency by emphasizing the building of viable institutions that respond to the needs of society” (p. vii). This is accomplished through training and equipping of HN forces with U.S. personnel.

The U.S. Military places UW and FID under the Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) category. There are 6-principles of MOOTW; for the purpose of this paper two are of interest: objective and legitimacy. According to Joint pub 3-07, “JFCs [US Southern Command, SOUTHCOM] must understand the strategic aims, set appropriate objectives, and ensure that these aims and objectives contribute to unity of effort” (p. II-2). Finally, “legitimacy is a condition based on the perception by a specific audience of the legality, morality, or rightness of a set of actions” (Joint Pub, 1995, p. II-6).

These riverine programs were implemented under the principles of UW and FID: Therefore, basic questions this thesis is designed to address are: First, did the U.S. complete the initial training and equipping of the HN riverine forces? Second, are these

same riverine forces consistently operationally engaged? Finally, did the HN governments legitimately buy into the programs to begin with, or did they agree to these programs and what difference might this make:

- Did the U.S. complete the training and equipping of the host nation forces?
- Are these riverine forces operationally engaged?
- Did the HN government buy into the programs and take it seriously?

## **G. CONCLUSION**

The United States wields varying degrees of national power to include political, economic, military, and informational. This thesis attempts to capture riverine warfare from an unconventional perspective, acknowledging that this represents a small piece of military power. Where time, space, and force play key roles in a period of shrinking resources special operations forces have increasingly proved to be the force of choice. The extent to which they can succeed in the riverine environment of Latin America is the real subject of this thesis. See Figure 1 for a map of South America.



Figure 1. Map of South America.

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## **II. “DIABLOS AZULES”**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The case of the Bolivian “Blue Devils” provides an interesting and relatively recent success story in the unconventional warfare arena. The Blue Devils are the riverine component of the Bolivian Navy. The American military, in particular U.S. Navy SEAL and Special Boat Units (SBU) of Naval Special Warfare (NSW), helped establish the Blue Devil force in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. This establishment was unconventional in the sense that the American advisors trained through, by, and with certain Bolivian Naval personnel in riverine operations to combat narco-terrorists and deny them uncontested use of the Bolivian inland rivers and waterways.

### **B. GEOGRAPHY**

Bolivia is one of two land locked countries in South America, and is bordered by five countries. It joins Brazil to the north and east, Paraguay to the southeast, Argentina to the south, Chile to the southwest, and Peru to the northwest. The country has three natural regions or geographic zones: “the mountains and Altiplano in the west, semitropical Yungas and temperate valleys of the eastern mountain slopes, and the tropical lowlands or plains (llanos) of the eastern lowlands, or Oriente” (Hudson and Hanratty, 1991, p. 52).

The network of river systems provides the local populace with means of transportation and communications throughout the hinterlands, especially in the upper Beni region. “Bolivia has an extensive system of navigable waterways, over 35,000 kilometers in length” (J. Parker, memo to R. Baca, January 26, 1995). According to Hudson and Hanratty (1991), “most of Bolivia’s important rivers are found in the water-rich northern parts of the lowlands, particularly in the Alto Beni (upper Beni), where land is suitable for crops such as coffee and cocoa” (p. 56). The three largest rivers, the Mamore, Beni, and Madre de Dios, all flow northward into Brazil and eventually to the Amazon (see Figure 2).

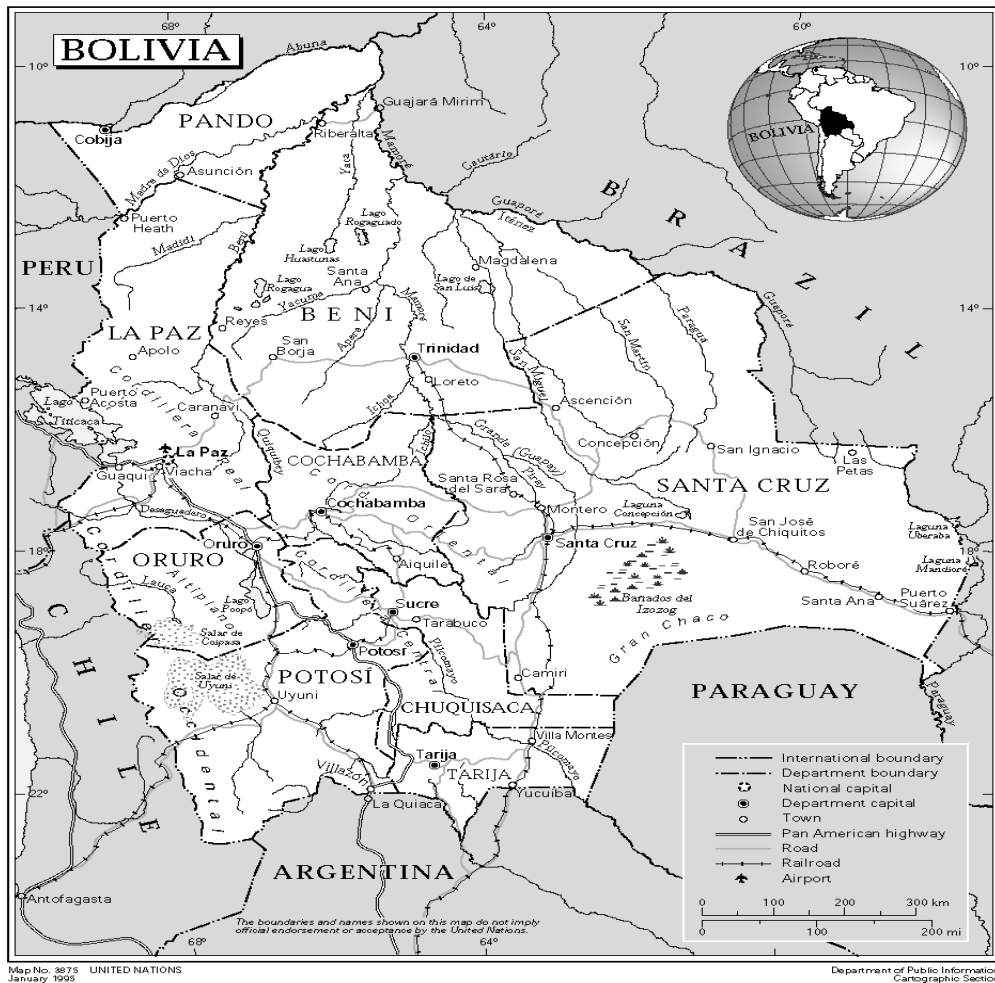


Figure 2. Map of Bolivia.

### C. POPULATION

Bolivia has a very rich and diverse population. It is made up of Spanish, and Indian societies. Demographically, the population is approximately 30% Quechua, 30% mestizo (mixed white and Amerindian ancestry), 25% Aymaran, and 15% white. The official languages are Spanish, Quechua, and Aymara.

In mid-1989 Bolivia had an estimated population of 6.6 million with a projected annual growth rate of 2.5 to 2.6 percent from 1989 to 2000. The death rate was 13 per 1,000 inhabitants and life expectancy was 52 years for males and 56 years for females.

Most of the population was centered in the major industrial areas that provided jobs. The farmers were concentrated in areas such as Cochabamba, Sucre, and Tarija, areas that had easy access to La Paz. According to Hudson and Hanratty (1991), “settlement increased in response to population pressure in the Altiplano and government support for colonization in the decades following land reform” (p. 59).

Major crops included cotton, rice, and sugarcane that farms along the Santa Cruz-Cochabamba highway would produce and transport. “Elsewhere, large ranches, small towns, and settlements clustered along riverbanks where roads had not penetrated” (Hudson and Hanratty, 1991, p. 59). The population consistently utilized the rivers to transport goods to local markets and on to Brazil.

#### **D. POLITICAL/ECONOMIC**

As in so many countries in Latin America, as well as throughout the third world, problems stem less from the illegal markets, than the state itself. As Hernando De Soto (1989) notes, “The informal economy is the people’s spontaneous and creative response to the state’s incapacity to satisfy the basic needs of the impoverished masses” (p. xiv). Democracy came to Bolivia in 1982, and according to Donna Lee Van Cott (2000), “The government also liberalized the economy to restore international capital flows and took steps to shift the engine of economic growth from the bloated and inefficient state to the private sector” (p. 339).

Bolivia in 1982 started privatizing its industry, and the biggest impact from this adjustment came in the mines, where thousands of workers lost their jobs. This transformation required “reducing the number of people dependent upon the state for jobs or access to political influence” (Van Cott, 2000, p. 342). The majority of these displaced workers and their families moved to the rural areas, and to the Chipare and Beni regions of the country in particular.

When Alexis de Tocqueville visited the U.S., one of the main characteristics that he noted was the “general equality of conditions;” almost anyone was able to purchase his own land and the laws allowed that land to be converted into capital. “In the U.S. according to Tocqueville, material equality produced egalitarian sentiments, which in turn formed the basis for the principle of equal citizenship—the mutually recognized right of individuals to participate equally in the making of binding political decisions” (Karl, 2001, p. 2).

However, in contrast to the U.S., Bolivian citizenry’s right to land acquisition was not available until after land reforms. Soon the indigenous people waged protests for territorial rights for the indigenous people and the government, “titled more than two million hectares of land in the names of the Benian groups and established a moratorium on timber harvesting” (Van Cott, 2000, p. 343). This raised the political awareness of the different factions within the country. Indigenous people realized they had a political tool, that extended beyond just an agrarian issues. The government felt the need to satisfy the campesinos and indigenous people due to fear of a guerrilla uprising similar to that which was occurring in neighboring Peru.

At about the same time, Bolivia became dependent on foreign aid, especially from the United States. The U.S. exerted a great deal of influence about where that money was spent, and one of the U.S.’s greatest interests was in stopping the illegal flow of cocaine to the U.S. “By the mid-1980’s Bolivia had become the world’s second most important source of coca leaf and the third largest producer of cocaine hydrochloride” (Van Cott, 2000, p. 346). Even today, the Bolivian government is still dependent on the U.S. economically and the economic assistance is tied to illegal drug interdiction. “Because cocaine is Bolivia’s chief source of income, bringing in more than half a billion dollars in the economy annually, drug interdiction tends to conflict with economic aspirations” (p. 346).

The drug traffickers utilize the river systems for the production of coca paste and to transit their drugs out of the country and onto Europe and the U.S. As De Soto puts it, “When legality is a privilege available only to those with political and economic power, those excluded – the – poor – have no alternative but illegality” (2000, p. xiv). However,

the eradication of cocaine or, in particular, the coca leaf is complicated. In certain areas of Bolivia, growing coca is legal because its used for pharmaceuticals and the indigenous population chews and consumes it for spiritual purposes. The populace uses the river system for transportation and as a means of communication, “The lack of a developed road network, the rainy season that greatly inhibits or prevents the use of land movement, stepped up land and air enforcement efforts, the need for a water source by cocaine laboratories, and the relative accessibility of cocaine refining, storage, and trans-shipment facilities to the waterways [sic]” (J. Parker, memo to R. Baca, January 26, 1995) all contribute to the significance of rivers.

#### **E. BOLIVIAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE DRUG WAR**

The Bolivian Drug Police, (UMOPAR) or La Unidad Movil de Patrullaje Rural was created in 1982. The police extended their patrols to the hinterlands and into shantytowns similar to that of Puerto Villaroel along the Ichilo river. The UMOPAR acquired six aluminum boats and instructions on riverine interdiction from the U.S. Embassy. However, the police were quick to realize that they were not trained in these types of operations or on this type of equipment. They encountered various problems:

- They could not maintain or operate the boats.
- They did not know the rivers.
- They were not accustomed to operating for, in some cases, days.
- There was an increase in riverine commerce that they were not prepared to deal with.
- Precursor chemicals were new to them.

Therefore, the Bolivian Navy was solicited to assist in riverine operations. Initially, they were to supply logistical support. The Bolivian Navy assigned a Lancha Nodriza, or mother ship, to help the UMOPAR with operations. They were limited to just supplying long-range transportation and ferrying fuel from an area of Puerto Villaroel to the mouth of Chapare River. The mouth of the Chapare River was the limit of their operational boundaries.

The Bolivian government wanted the military involved, but sought a separate task force to support the UMOPAR. Using the military in a supportive role, similar also to that of the U.S., the Bolivians wanted a small unit that was not affiliated with the police, but that would help support the UMOPAR on the rivers and waterways within the country.

The government of Bolivia created the Bolivian military counter-narcotics task force from the three services: the Green Devils Task Force (GDTF) of the Army, Red Devils Task Force (RDTF) of the Air Force, and the Blue Devils Task Force (BDTF) of the Navy. Their primary roles were (and remain) as follows:

The Air Force’s Red Devils task force provides air transportation for eradication and counter-narcotics law enforcement operations that take place beyond the reach of roads. Counter-narcotics missions are the Red Devils’ only responsibility. The Army’s Green Devil Task Force transports police personnel, fuel and commodities. The Blue Devils provide logistical support to the police, and monitor and interdict drug related riverine traffic in drugs and precursor chemicals (U.S. State Department’s International Narcotics Control, 1999, p. 2).

The Counter-Narcotics Task Force (Figure 3) that was created answers directly to the Ministry of the government. The following diagram outlines the chain of command.

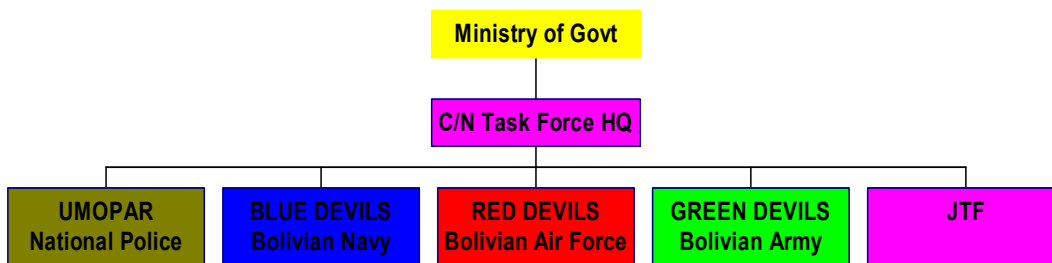


Figure 3. C/N Task Force (From: W. Cassas, Personal Communication, June 11, 2003).

**F. STRATEGIC UTILIZATION OF BLUE DEVIL TASK FORCE**

Throughout the late 1980’s, the Military Assistance Group (MILGP) coordinated training teams at the U.S. Embassy in Bolivia with Naval Special Warfare Unit Eight (NSWU-8), Special Boat Unit TWENTY-SIX (SBU-26), and Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS), all of which were co-located

on Rodman Naval Base in the Republic of Panama. NSWU-8 deployed teams of advisors to Bolivia; the advisors were drawn from SBU-26, SEAL Team FOUR, and NAVSCIATTS. Their objective was to work through, by, and with the Blue Devils to assist them in developing their program and training the BDTF on riverine operations.

Once the U.S. Military and Special Operations Command (SOCOM) got thoroughly involved in the Counter-Drug (CD) war, Mobile Training Teams (MTTs), Deployment For Training (DFTs), and CD deployments dramatically increased. “By late 1991, SOF accounted for 30 percent of all Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6) CD operations along the U.S. southwest border in support of [Law Enforcement Agencies] LEAs. At the same time, in the SOUTHCOM AOR, SOF participation in CD DFTs and MTTs increased by 200 percent over previous years” (Adams, 1998, p. 255). General Joulwan Commander –N- Chief of SOUTHCOM placed CD at the forefront of his priorities in the AOR. According to General Joulwan, “I consider riverine CD training of host nation forces absolutely essential to the overall counter-drug effort. In my opinion, our most successful program to date is the riverine campaign plan” (Pritchard, 1992, p. 34). We should ask what made it successful, and how was the program developed?

The U.S. Chain of Command was relatively short: NSWU-8 would deploy personnel to Bolivia. A SEAL officer attached to the MILGP in Bolivia, kept the Embassy Chain of Command (COC), NSW in Panama, and Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH) informed about the implementation of the Bolivian riverine program. Throughout this period NSW maintained the concept of centralized planning and decentralized execution. The planning was mainly accomplished in La Paz between Embassy personnel and the Blue Devil COC. The execution was accomplished by the ongoing MTTs and DFTs and a continuous rotation of NSW personnel in and out of country.

A plan was developed by the BDTF with the assistance of NSW advisors to strategically place Blue Devil Task Groups throughout the region. The areas that were chosen were: Guayaramerin, Puerto Villaroel, Riberalta, and Trinidad (See Figure 2). Puerto Villaroel was chosen because, “it was located where the merchant activity began in that part of the country and it was necessary for the Narco-traffickers to utilize that

port and transport drugs toward the Brazilian Border” (Cassas, personal communication, June 11, 2003). Guayaramerin was chosen because it was the last major port on the river before entering Brazil, and this was a choke point where the Mamore River meets the Madre de Dios River. The others were chosen either because they were major choke points in the rivers or areas of increased commercialization.

The BDTF was given fiberglass hull 22’ Pirana type boats by the U.S. government (see Figure 4). These boats are powered by twin 150 horsepower outboard motors. In October of 1988, the Blue Devils conducted operations in Guayaramerin, and at first, operated in the Mamore River with the intent to transit and operate in the Itenez River. They wanted to maintain a presence in that area of the country to help deter and monitor the drug flow and lawlessness. However, the water in both rivers was too low and they couldn’t enter into the Itenez River. They were basically inactive until January 1989 when the water level was high enough to enter the Itenez river.



Figure 4. Bolivian “Blue Devil” Riverine Forces.



It was during this period that, according to Cassas, “the Commander Bolivian Navy deployed the Fuerza de Tarea Especial (FTE) to Trinidad, and from there they executed various operations throughout the Mamore and the southern region of that area” (Personal Communication, June 11, 2003). At the same time, the BDTF received training from NSWU-8 personnel (SEALs, and SBU personnel) on riverine operations and small boat tactics. During this time, the Bolivian and U.S. chains of command had a much better vision of the narcotraffic problem and what they wanted to accomplish in resolving it. According to NAS officials in the Embassy, “The goal of the program was to build an indigenous, multi-mission Maritime Law Enforcement Institution that is capable of denying the uncontested use of the rivers of Bolivia to the illicit transportation of narcotics and their precursors, to collect information on all activities on these river systems, and to regulate commerce on the same” (J. Parker, memo to R. Baca, January 26, 1995).

#### **G. SCHOOL HOUSE IN TRINIDAD**

The Waterways Law Enforcement Program (Riverine) encompasses everything involved in riverine operations, from training and administration to operations. “This program supports all counter narcotics-related Waterborne Law Enforcement (WLE) activities conducted by the Bolivian navy in conjunction with UMOPAR forces” (J. Parker, memo to R. Baca, January 26, 1995).

The Bolivian law (Law 1008) restricts the military’s direct involvement. Therefore, the Blue Devils must have UMOPAR present for arrest authority whenever conducting operations. “The Blue Devils are expected to maintain a continuous presence on the Bolivia’s extensive and remote river systems yet this restricted interpretation of Law 1008 greatly inhibits counter-narcotics operations by a highly trained elite counter-narcotics force” (J. Parker, memo to R. Baca, January 26, 1995). Subsequently, the law has been interpreted more loosely, and as indicated by Navy Section Chief CDR Byrne, in “1998 the mission expanded to interdict, seize, and detention authority” (Nicholson, June 2, 2003).

The COC chose Trinidad as the center for riverine operations for various strategic reasons: it would serve as a logistical hub because it had a main road and usable airport, and there are several rivers (Mamore, Eje, and Ichilo) that merge together in that area. Additionally, this was a major commercial area and communications hub for the local populace (W. Cassas, Personal Communication, June 11, 2003).

The U.S. Embassy assisted the Bolivians, with the help of INL funds to construct infrastructure facilities to include a schoolhouse with classrooms, communications and operations, and maintenance and repair buildings at Trinidad. NSWU-8 set up and initiated the courses through Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) and Deployment for Training (DFTs).

The U.S. Coast Guard had been deploying regularly to Bolivia, where it worked with the DEA. However, there was no concerted effort. Naval Special Warfare, through the USMILGP in La Paz recommended that the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) get involved in the riverine school in Trinidad. Thus, Coast Guard detachments started deploying to Bolivia in support of the School in Trinidad in order to instruct the Bolivians on waterborne law enforcement procedures. Throughout the 1990's, the USCG was instrumental in teaching the Blue Devils peacetime law enforcement "board and search," and how to correctly register boats.

The first course for the school was conducted before the facilities were built. The first course began on June 20, 1993 and the U.S. training cadre consisted of 10 navy personnel from SEAL Team Four and SBU-26, and later on two members from the Coast Guard joined them (Nicol, Personal Communication, July 20, 1993). The Bolivian training cadre consisted of two officers from the BDTF. The intent was to add two UMOPAR instructors for the next course. The students consisted of 14 Blue Devil personnel, and the instructors subsequently augmented with 8 UMOPAR personnel for the next course of instruction (COI) (Nicol, Personal Communication, July 20, 1993).

One of the hallmarks of the school was the integration of human rights into the day – to – day training curriculum. Parker states, “With its (school) core course curriculum of Waterways Law Enforcement and human rights it is unique in Latin America” (J. Parker, memo to R. Baca, January 26, 1995). Additionally, the school incorporated international students in May of 1995.

The schoolhouse and the command structure in Trinidad were officially inaugurated in 1994. By January 1995, the U.S. through INL and U.S. Military Assistance funding had developed, equipped, and trained four task groups which were located in Trinidad, Puerto Villaroel, Riberalta, and Guayaramerin. “Each base was outfitted with a minimum of four 22-foot Guardian or Pirana Patrol Boats, one large support vessel, one fuel/water barge, family housing units as well as basic shore-side general berthing/messing/storage buildings, fuel storage facilities, small boat spare parts, and vehicles “(J. Parker, memo to R. Baca, January 26, 1995). Additionally, according to Parker, “NAS supported all personnel costs, including monthly salary supplements, navigation bonuses and food.” During this time the U.S. financially subsidized this program and over the years has vastly reduced the financial aid and the Bolivian government has taken over full responsibility for the program. The following is a breakdown of the budget during this time period:

- NAS 1994 – 1.8 million
- USMILGP 1990-1994 11 million

The money from the U.S. came from various sources to include Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and Section 1004 of the Defense Authorization Act (which covers DOD’s counter drug money).

After completion of the school in Trinidad and once the Task groups were fully operational, there was no need for a full-time U.S. presence. As Parker predicted in 1995, “By FY-96 Bolivian forces engaged in waterways law enforcement activities will be fully capable of carrying out Bolivia’s counter narcotics mission without a continuous U.S. presence and with a significantly reduced budget” (J. Parker, memo to R. Baca, January 26, 1995). However, since 1996 the U.S. has maintained constant engagement with MTTs by U.S. Navy SEALs, SBU, and Coast Guard personnel. This program has seen significant reduction in financial aid, but the U.S. still contributes with minimal

funding. This is in keeping with Parker's 1995 observation that, "failure to provide minimal funding levels would significantly curtail operations and most likely destroy a Bolivian organization that has demonstrated an ability to operate in an independent and professional manner" (J. Parker, memo to R. Baca, January 26, 1995). What are the results at the grass roots level? How does this program benefit the local populace?

#### **H. EFFECTS ON LOCAL POPULACE**

There are some fundamental things that need to be brought to the forefront when trying to articulate the benefits of the riverine program on the local populace. It must for instance be borne' in mind, that before any of these task forces were developed, there was no law and/or little legitimate government presence in these remote areas. Thus, some of the most important benefits are as follows:

- patrolling and interdicting
- constant presence
- legitimate government presence
- safety for the people
- safe passage of commerce

First and foremost, the patrolling and interdicting of illegal substances, whether these be drugs, arms, or chemicals, has helped provide a form of law in an area where lawlessness was all too common. Second, just a constant presence on the waterways helps instill confidence in the local population, so they can go about their daily business without fear of extortion. Third, this constant presence helps signify to the people that the government cares and is trying to look after their welfare. This allows safe passage of commerce up and down the rivers. Finally, there are numerous little things that often add up in the long run. For example, most boats are usually overloaded with people well beyond the maximum safe operating load for these craft. On numerous occasions the Blue Devils have responded to waterborne safety issues, i.e. boats capsizing and people drowning. According to Casas, the local populace have consistently rewarded the Blue Devils with letters thanking them for the work they do. The BDTF has both directly and indirectly helped the population in protecting the river traffic and the fight against narco-trafficking.

## **I. CONCLUSION**

The U.S. Government, and in particular NSW, designed and implemented a riverine program from the ground up through, by, and with surrogate Bolivian Navy forces. This analysis led to implementation of a successful riverine force that can be considered to have engaged in indirect approach to warfare:

- The country of Bolivia is land locked; therefore, there is no other environment in which military forces need to compete for resources.
- The Bolivian Government recognized that the UMOPAR were out of their environment when conducting riverine operations; thus, the government recognized the need for Navy support. Therefore, there was no competing service for resources. The Blue Devils became the experts in that field.
- Also, within the Bolivian Navy the Blue Devils have something similar to a closed loop system. Members of the Blue Devils can spend their entire career in the Blue Devils and not the mainstream Navy. This is similar to the SBUs of NSW. Therefore, the Blue Devils can truly become experts in small boats and riverine operations.
- NSW had a relatively short COC and the embassy officials listened to the experts in the field. This relationship exemplified centralized planning coupled with decentralized execution.
- The Bolivian government was motivated and willing to put forth the effort and put the issue at the top of their agenda.

NSW understood the political and operational environment in which they were involved. They applied their manpower and resources early in the game and at the same time realized the long term effects. NSW personnel to this day support the program through a long term engagement strategy. From day one they also recognized the importance of interagency coordination. The program today reflects a self-sustaining, waterborne law enforcement capability and has provided sustained law enforcement in remote areas where there previously was none. This is an example of how a very small military effort can have significant effects even to the point of improving the everyday lives of thousands of local inhabitants.

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### **III. COLOMBIA**

None of the wicked shall understand but the wise shall understand...

Daniel 12:10

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

It is difficult to speak of insurgency, illicit drug trafficking, terrorism, and pure lawlessness without talking about Colombia.

The future of military conflict-and therefore of America's global responsibilities over the coming decade-may best be gauged in Colombia, where guerrilla groups, both left-wing and right-wing, have downplayed ideology in favor of decentralized baronies and franchises built on terrorism, narco-trafficking, kidnapping, counterfeiting, and the siphoning of oil-pipeline revenues from local governments. (Kaplan, 2003, p. 66)

Colombia's 39-year-old civil war has been marked by unprecedented violence. The country's bio-diversity and geographical make-up make it an ideal haven for illicit products and means. The country's vast jungle areas, rich natural resources, and network of rivers cover over 50% of the country, and allow for commercial trade, both legal and illegal, to go unchecked.

This chapter will analyze the insurgency, in particular the Fuerzas Armadas Revolutionarias de Colombia (FARC), and look at what the state is doing to counter the movement. This paper will focus on the demographic make-up of the region and the importance of the rivers. Finally, it will analyze what the U.S. is doing from an asymmetrical point of view to aid the Colombian government.

#### **B. DEMOGRAPHICS**

The size of Colombia's national territory makes it the fifth largest country in Latin America. The country is as diverse as its people; a population of approximately forty million makes it the 3<sup>rd</sup> most populated country in the region (see Figure 5). "Influenced by climate patterns from two oceans and two continents, Colombian territory includes three ranges of the Andes Mountains, a part of the plains of the Orinoco River and large expanses of Amazonian lowlands, and coasts on the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean" (Kline and Gray, 2000, p. 200).



Figure 5. Map of Columbia.

The agricultural products vary with the altitudes within the country, with everything from potatoes and coffee grown at the higher elevations to sugar cane and platanos (bananas) in the lowlands. Cattle and rice are also grown in the llanos areas, while, according to Kline and Gray (2000), “coca is generally cultivated and processed in



the lowlands of the Orinoco and Amazon, marijuana cultivation is concentrated on the Atlantic coast and opium is grown at higher altitudes in the Andes” (p. 201). Coffee, the number one export in the past, now has been joined by petroleum and drugs.

The ethnic background of the people is predominantly Spanish and Indian or mixed, with a small percentage of blacks. Colombians speak mostly Spanish, a form of which is believed to be the best-spoken Spanish in Latin America. They are predominantly Catholic. There are huge disparities in wealth. “It cannot be overemphasized that Colombia continues to rank among the countries with the worst inequality levels in the world” (Kline and Gray, 2000, p. 202).

### **C. ECONOMY**

During the 1960’s, coffee accounted for 79% of legal export earnings and subsequently dropped to 42% in 1975. In the late 1970’s, increased foreign exchange raised the value of the peso, making it easier for foreign imports to enter the market and damage the local industry and trade. “The damage was exacerbated by illegal commerce in marijuana and cocaine, which by 1979 brought more foreign currency into the country than all legal export earnings combined” (Kline and Gray, 2000, p. 203).

In the mid-1970’s, Colombia lagged behind Mexico and Venezuela as an oil exporter. In fact, Colombia imported more oil than it exported. Officials predicted that in the 1980’s, revenues from oil imports would exceed coffee exports, but this did not occur largely, as Kline and Gray (2000) note, because of “the coffee and drug booms and because more favorable terms for the foreign multinational corporations resulted in the discovery of new oil fields” (p. 203). The result was that Colombia became a major oil and coal supplier in the late 1980’s.

Even though the growth rate was slow during this period, through good fiscal management and credit from the international community, Colombia had one of the better economies of Latin America. A report from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) stated that, “In the previous five years Colombia had had the lowest rate of inflation in Latin America, one of the five highest per capita GDP growth rates, and the lowest foreign debt per capita” (Kline and Gray, 2000, p. 204).

#### **D. WHY RIVERS?**

Colombia's topography, with approximately 9000 miles of navigable rivers and very few modern roads, makes the river networks a necessity. These river systems provide an invaluable form of communications from pueblo to pueblo (town to town). "The rivers are a dominant feature of both the physical and human landscapes of the region. Almost the entire population of the lowlands is settled on or near riverbanks. Rivers, some of which are navigable up to the eastern foot of the Andes, provide the main, if not the only, access to most parts of the lowlands" (Aurelia, 1994, The lowlands section, p. 2).

Additionally, the rivers and inland waterways are the primary means of transportation both internally and internationally. "The river has always been used as a natural means of transportation, first by the ancestors of the *Chibcha* Indians, then by the Caribbean Indians, and finally by the Spanish Conquistadors and later settlers" (Colombian Government Trade Bureau, no date, Geography Section, p. 5).

#### **E. POLITICAL GROUPS**

In tracing the roots of the insurgent forces in Colombia, it is important to first consider the country's political make-up. Colombia historically has been a democratic country except for one military dictatorship from 1953 to 1957. Up until the 1940's, the political parties could largely be distinguished as liberal and conservative. The political elites garnered their support from the peasants or campesinos. The campesinos would back whichever party their patron (boss) or landowner belonged to.

The election of 1946 pitted two liberals against one conservative. Violence broke out and the conservative campesinos took back land that had been taken from them some sixteen years earlier by the liberals. "The civil war that began in 1946 was so dramatically different in scope and intensity from the past ones that Colombians [called] it *La Violencia*" (Kline and Gray, 2000, p. 207). During the following two decades, over two hundred thousand Colombians died from the violence associated with this civil conflict.

As a result of the practice noted above, whereby the “have’s” (Liberals) confiscated land from the “have-nots” (Conservatives), a situation of disequilibrium emerged. According to Chalmers Johnson (1982), “The conditions generated by a disequilibrated social system – social problems – create demands that the system be adjusted, through political action, to the changed circumstances” (p. 94). The state, however, never addressed these conditions or took enough interest in resolution; therefore, violence broke out. During the period of *La Violencia* the countryside experienced turmoil in such areas as: “The Andean region; the llanos of the Orinoco region; and, although less intense there, the Caribbean coastal region” (Kline and Gray, 2000, p. 207).

Finally, younger Colombians grew up thinking that violence was a way of life. The disequilibrated system also allowed for the underground to flourish. “Political elites failed to incorporate new groups into the system or to diminish structural unemployment, and consequently guerrilla movement, drug trafficking, and an underground economy flourished” (Kline and Gray, 2000, p. 209).

The outcome was that until 1990 there were four main guerrilla groups operating in Colombia: the FARC, the Army of National Liberation (ELN), the nineteenth of April Movement (M-19), and the popular Army of Liberation (EPL). (The latter two were disbanded in 1990). For the remainder of this chapter, the focus will be on the FARC, because they are the largest, most militant, and best equipped movement, and they have the broadest support base.

## **F. INSURGENCY**

The FARC were spawned in the aftermath of *La Violencia* – a traditional civil war where poor conservatives fought poor liberals for political power. In 1964 a small group of peasants in the region of Marquetalia of the Tolima department opposed the government. This small group of farmers, “demanded roads to transport their products, schools for the education of their children and guarantees against the activities of the [pajaros], the paramilitary gangs of that time” (Secretariat of the Central General Staff FARC-People’s Army, 2000, Our History Section).

Fighting broke out, and allegedly over 15,000 men supported by the state and backed by Washington D.C., sought “48 men poorly armed and with insufficient resources, commanded and oriented by Comrade Manuel Marulanda Velez, [who] turned into an armed revolutionary nucleus infused by our people’s tradition of struggle [sic]” (Secretariat of the Central General Staff FARC-People’s Army, 2000, p. 4). In an area where there was virtually no government presence, this was a classic case of the information advantage trumping the force advantage. This small band of guerrillas had a support base and the sympathy of the people; therefore, they had the eyes and ears of the population, and they knew the lay of the land. In this case, given the FARC’s ability to successfully lead the people in pursuit of their goals, Thomas Hobbes’ dictum, “In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king” amounts to an understatement.

The changes taking place in the *environment*, as Colombian society moved from being traditional to modern, led to clashes between landlords and peasants, and between urban and rural dwellers. There are two features that can be said to have fueled these clashes: inequities and isolation. Those in the FARC’s support base experienced a great deal of inequity. “Inequities in the distribution of wealth, income, education, and opportunity are [sic] chronic and widespread, and the pain that accompanies them is often felt more acutely as modernization begins to open up the possibility of remedies and evoke promises and aspirations that move ahead of the remedies” (Leites and Wolf, 1970, p. 30). Similarly, isolation, the second feature to fuel Colombia’s social clashes, is compounded by the fact that throughout the rural areas there are very few paved roads or roads adequate enough to transport goods from one locale to the next, and Colombia’s rivers provide an invaluable informal mode of communication from town-to-town. “Villages, districts, towns, provinces, and cities are in imperfect and intermittent contact. They are often in isolation from one another and particularly from the capital city and the institutions of the central government concentrated there” (Leites and Wolf, 1970, p. 31).

Given this *internal (endogenous)* environment, the FARC has relied on the local populace for recruits, information, shelter, and food. The FARC financed a great deal of their effort through drugs and the protection of drug lords. The FARC utilized both persuasive as well as coercive means.

Persuasion may take many forms: ideological preparation, education, discrediting of established authority and practices and payment (rewards). Coercion may also take many forms: the threat and carrying out of kidnapping, assassinations, torture, forcible tax collection, and destruction or confiscation of property, including crop and land seizure (Leites and Wolf, 1970, p. 33).

The FARC, like any insurgency must have a recruitment base. They must have a sympathetic population from which to recruit and/or an attractive ideology that will appeal to potential recruits. However, the *population* base doesn't have to be large to be effective. "In other words, a small popular minority can be operationally a quite satisfactory underpinning for rebellion with a generalized impact that may be relatively large" (Leites and Wolf, 1970, p. 42).

The *external* (exogenos) support base for the FARC includes coca and chemicals from neighboring countries, extortion, and safe havens across borders, i.e. Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru. "External provision of leadership, money, intelligence, training, sanctuary, propaganda, and diplomatic pressure may have an importance in the emergence and growth of the rebellion which is not adequately measured by the flow of tons of supplies, or numbers of people, across a contiguous border" (Leites and Wolf, 1970, p. 39). The FARC pushes drugs, chemicals, weapons, and other illicit activities across borders via planes, vehicles, and rivers.

#### **G. STATE COUNTER-INSURGENCY EFFORTS**

The Colombian government along with the U. S. must exercise all elements of national power including political, economic, military, and informational (psychological) to undermine or counter the rebellion. The U.S. is supporting the Colombian government on a variety of fronts. According to Kaplan, Colombia is "the third largest recipient of U.S. Foreign aid, after Israel and Egypt, and the third most populous country in Latin America, after Brazil and Mexico" (p. 66). In the National Security Strategy (NSS), meanwhile, President George Bush specifically puts Latin America, and Colombia in particular, as the forefront of strategic international interests; it is not an afterthought.

Militarily speaking, the following list highlights some of the more important efforts the U.S. has undertaken to support the Colombian government:

- The airbridge denial program encompasses various air assets for monitoring, tracking, and interdiction including A-37's, various over-the-horizon radar (ROTHR), surveillance planes, such as P-3's, AWACS and E-2's, and Blackhawk and Huey II helicopters.
- Colombia's Counter Narcotics Brigade has been trained by U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Berets). "United States trainers performed staff and light infantry training for almost 2,300 troops. The Brigade headquarters and the second battalion of the brigade completed training and began operations in December 2000" (Speer, 2002, Counter-narcotics Brigade section, p. 1).
- The U.S. military has aided with military infrastructure development including Forward Operating Locations (FOLs), airstrips, helicopter pads, and maintenance facilities.
- Human rights and professional development have been major areas of U.S. emphasis over the past decade.
- Finally, the U.S. has been instrumental in the development of Colombia's riverine program. "To date five riverine battalions, composed of thirty riverine combat elements, have been developed and are operating throughout Colombia" (Speer, 2002, Riverine Capability Section, p. 2).

The remainder of this paper will be devoted to the riverine program. According to Gen. Speer, "The goal of the riverine forces is to permit the Colombian government to exercise sovereignty throughout the vast regions where other governmental entities are otherwise absent" (Speer, 2002).

The Colombian riverine program represents an interesting asymmetric approach to the narcoterrorist problem. "The riverine program was developed in conjunction with the Colombian government as a counterdrug security assistance program that would fulfill U.S. counterdrug policy in Colombia" (Gonzalez, 1995, p. 5). This program was a product of the *Andean Ridge Initiative*. "In 1989, former President Bush authorized the Andean Ridge Initiative, which allowed for counterdrug funding to the Andean Ridge countries of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru, for drug interdiction programs" (Gonzalez, 1995, p. 5).

## **H. THE RIVERINE PROGRAM**

The basis of the Colombian riverine program centers on the riverine Combat Element (RCEs). The original plan was implemented from Fiscal Year (FY) 1990 to FY 1994 and called for the development of 15 RCEs to be placed at 11 different locations throughout the country (Figure 6). Each RCE would consist of the following:

- *Three 22-foot Piranha-class patrol boats.* Each boat carries one three-man crew and up to nine combat-loaded Marines. These boats are armed with one M-2 .50 caliber and four M-60 7.62 machine guns.
- *One ground combat element of 22 Marines.* The RCE's combat power is based on a ground assault team consisting of one officer, three noncommissioned officers, and 18 infantrymen.
- *One 35-foot riverine Assault Craft (RAC).* (Gonzalez, 1995, p. 15)

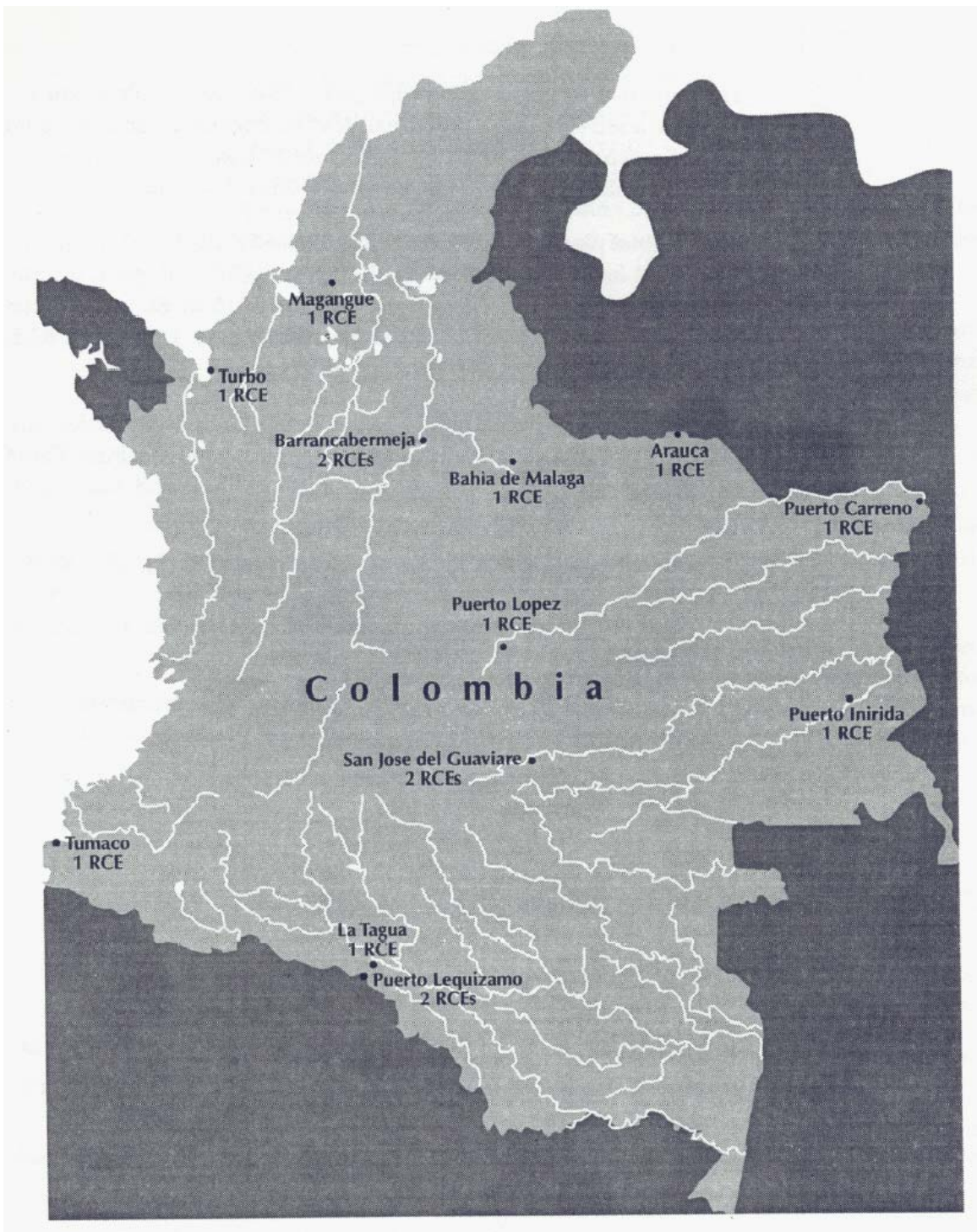


Figure 6. Disposition of Initial RCE's.



The United States Marine Corps had the lead in implementing and managing the Colombian riverine program in conjunction with the Colombian Marines Corps (COLMAR). Why COLMAR? Because the COLMAR had the riverine responsibility.

The rationale for the Colombian Marine involvement was that the riverine counterdrug mission would complement the Colombian Marine ancillary missions of exercising control over rivers, patrolling riverine traffic, and interdicting drug transport, as well as assuring safe passage for civilian riverine traffic. Therefore, the Colombian Marine Corps became the service responsible for patrolling the rivers and interdicting drug production sites located on and near the river's edge. (Gonzalez, 1995, p. 14).

The USMC created the organizational foundation for the program, which included the following:

- Boat procurement – Initially they procured Boston Whaler-type Piranhas.
- Riverine seminars – These were five-day long seminars to teach senior Colombian Officers the concepts and doctrine of operations.
- Infrastructure – They utilized Navy Construction Battalions (Seabees) to improve selected riverine bases. They helped build boat ramps and maintenance facilities. “Construction efforts supported two bases-the base at San Jose del Guaviare (completed in November 1993), and in Puerto Lopez (completed in February 1994)” (Gonzalez, 1995, p. 21).
- The Riverine Integrated Logistics System (ILS) – This was the logistics system to get and maintain parts at the FOLs. “The Colombian Marines are learning the concepts of logistics, inventory control, periodic maintenance of equipment and parts resupply” (Gonzalez, 1995, p. 21).
- The Colombian Riverine School – The school is located at Puerto Leguizamo on the Putamayo River. The USMC upgraded the airstrip to make it C-130-capable and changed the bureaucratic structure of the school.

The above highlights detail what the USMC did to implement specific supporting functions of riverine operations, but what about the mechanics of riverine operations themselves? Where does the rubber meet the road? The USMC quickly realized it did not possess the capability to teach or implement the operational art of riverine warfare. Therefore, the Marines turned to U.S. Special Forces and, in particular, Naval Special Warfare (NSW).

NSW became and still is the center of gravity (COG) for the training needs of the COLMAR. NSW involvement in Latin America originally included Naval Special Warfare Unit Eight (NSWU-8), Special Boat Unit TWENTY-SIX (SBU-26), and Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS), all of which, were located on Rodman Naval Base in the Republic of Panama, in the early 1990's.

The USMC, in conjunction with NSW, conducted Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) to train the COLMAR in riverine warfare. The MTTs provided the lion's share of training to the Colombians. "The MTT contains a headquarters, a riverine-tactics section, and a ground-tactics section, which parallel ground and riverine training throughout the course" (Gonzalez, 1995, p. 19). NSW provided (and still does today) the majority of the riverine expertise. "The team [MTT] itself, which is reconstituted twice yearly for a three month series of courses, includes one Naval Special Warfare officer and four enlisted men from SOUTHCOM units [Panama]. These personnel are the riverine expertise within each team" (Shemella, 1992, p. 38).

Gradually, over time, the training and infrastructure development has paid off and helped provide the COLMAR with a robust riverine program. The program today includes the following:

- The 22 foot Boston Whalers that were mentioned above, to include 26 foot Whalers as well. (Figure 7)
- Mother ships (Buque Nodriza)
- Patrol Boat Riverine (PBR's)

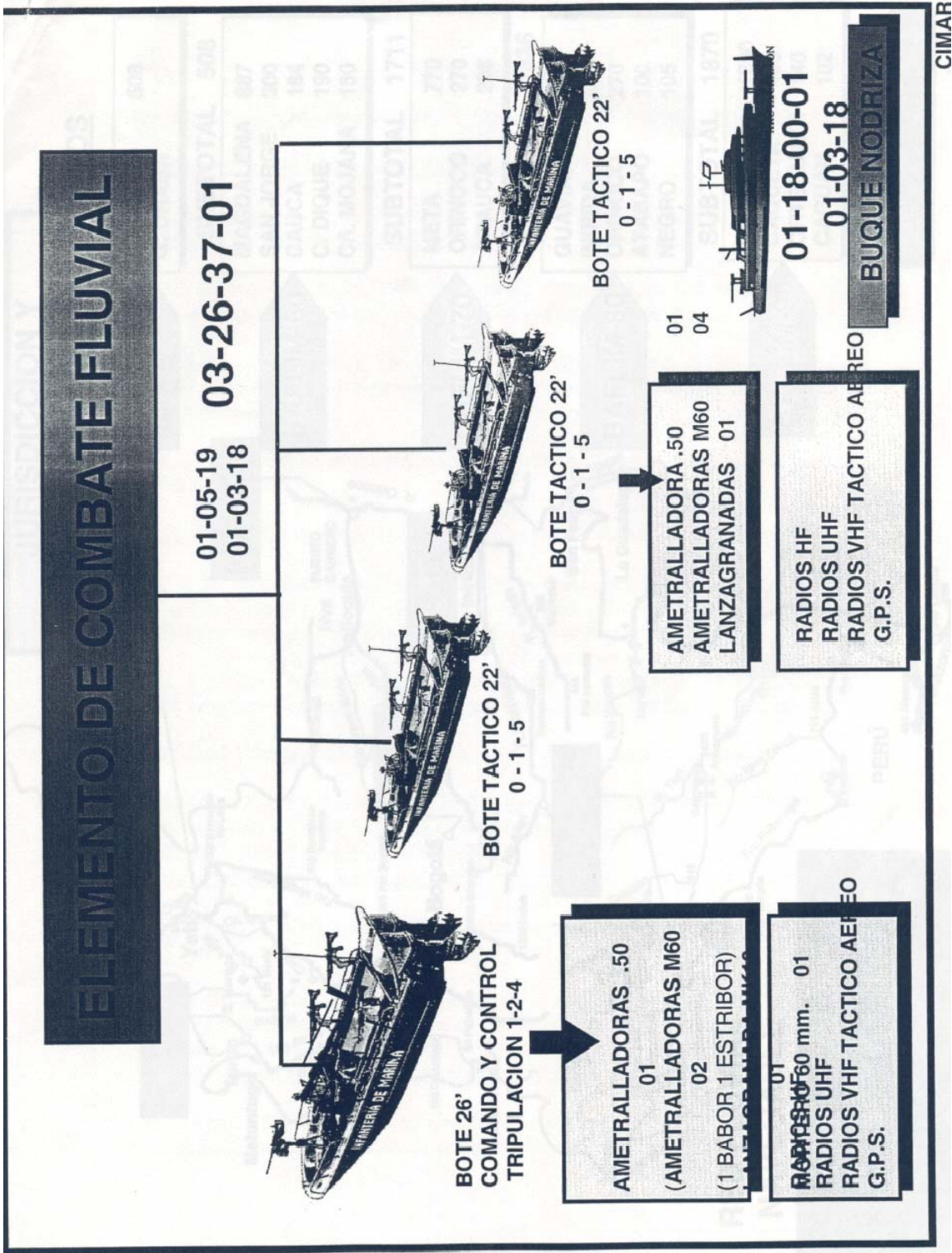


Figure 7. Boat Composition.

The jurisdiction of the COLMAR covers the entire country and its vast river networks. The battalions and bases are spread strategically throughout the country (Figure 8).

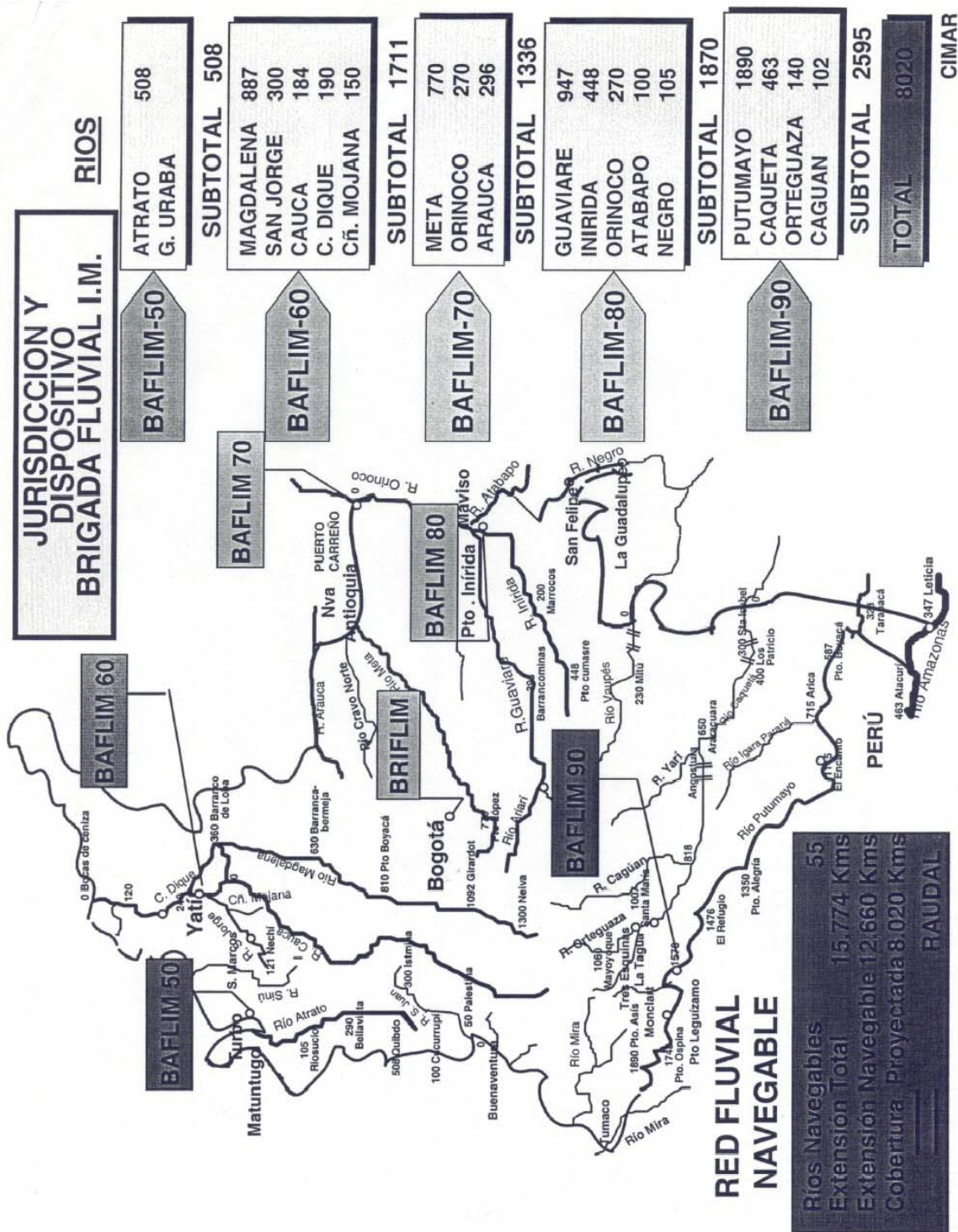


Figure 8. Jurisdiction and Disposition of the Riverine Brigade.

## **I. EFFECTS AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL**

Similar or almost verbatim what was/is experienced in Bolivia, that was articulated in the last chapter, the benefits for the local populace. To restate the obvious before legitimate riverine forces patrolled the rivers there was a huge void in most if not all exterior rivers and inland waterways. Thus, some of the most important benefits are as follows:

- patrolling and interdicting
- constant presence
- legitimate government presence
- safety for the people
- safe passage of commerce
- intelligence network

First and foremost, the patrolling and interdicting of illegal substances, whether these be drugs, arms, or chemicals, has helped provide a form of law in an area where lawlessness was all too common. Second, just a constant presence on the waterways helps instill confidence in the local population, so they can go about their daily business without fear of extortion. Third, this constant presence helps signify to the people that the government cares and is trying to look after their welfare. This allows safe passage of commerce up and down the rivers. Fourth, as legitimate government forces operate in these remote areas and establish close friendly ties, they have the ability to create an informal Human Intelligence (HUMINT) network.

Continuous government presence on the rivers denies traffickers the major lines of communication they need (especially if they are forced by eradication to move further into the bush). Presence also builds confidence among the civilian population who use the same rivers for their livelihood (and generates human sources of information) (Shemella, 2001, p. 4).

Finally, there are numerous little things that often add up in the long run. For example, most boats are usually overloaded with people well beyond the maximum safe operating load for these craft, therefore the riverine forces often conduct waterborne safety missions, similar to Coast Guard.



## **J. CONCLUSION**

Colombia provides the ultimate model for what happens when a government neglects its people in the rural regions for too long. Even though the rural regions contain a small percentage of the population, they comprise a significant percentage of Colombia's geographical area. This chapter analyzed the operational art of an insurgency through time, space, and force. The FARC started out with approximately 48 combatants and with time has grown to over 16,000 members. Over time and with ample geographical space in which to maneuver, the insurgency grew to a point where the state had to deal with it. Through time and space the FARC were able to "feed the beast" and they have built a force that is the only authority in much of rural Colombia.

After roughly thirty years of neglect, the Colombian government sought the help of the U.S. in the early 1990's. The U.S. aided Colombia in all efforts of state craft including: political, economic, military, and informational. In particular, the U.S. aided Colombia with economic and military aid. Throughout the 1990's the insurgency and narco-traffickers were intrinsically linked. "As ground and air routes are increasingly blocked by Plan Colombia, rivers have become the latest frontier in Colombia's 40-year war on drugs" (Stauder, 2001, p. 1). The Colombian government implemented several military programs to include the Colombian riverine program under the leadership of the COLMAR. This program has been essential in helping the Colombian government reestablish itself within its own borders and control its vast inland waterways.

## IV. PERU

### A. INTRODUCTION

The Andean Ridge Mountain range extends to the heart of Peru, where the country itself has several climate regions. See Figure 9. Along with this unique position geographically, Peru is complemented by possessing one of the most diverse populations in the western hemisphere. Another factor that makes Peru unique is its long history of Spanish conquest and its ties to the Inca civilization.

Peru's terrain is made up of over 50% jungle with a vast network of rivers that provide most of the population in the hinterland with transportation from town to town. This network of rivers also serves as a viable and often the only means of communication. This huge jungle area of Peru is important and is the focus of this chapter because it is a haven of natural resources, and lawlessness that goes unchecked due to little or no government presence.

The 1970's and 1980's lacked government authority and over time filled the vacuum of lawlessness. Peru is bordered by Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil and Bolivia, all of whom exert very little authority over their border regions. Vessels on the rivers, transporting goods across borders under the right of free passage go virtually unchecked. This allows a constant flow of both legal and illegal commercial products.

Peru was the world's leading producer of coca leaf, the main substance used in producing cocaine. Narco-traffickers transported illegal coca leaf and cocaine to neighboring countries via land, air, and rivers. The terrorist group Sinderio Luminoso (Shinning Path-SL) provided protection and was integrally involved with the illegal narcotics trade until its downfall in the early 1990's. The SL and drug traffickers often used the rivers to transport illegal substances from one place to another. The illegal flow of drugs became important to the U.S. due to the national interest the U.S. placed on the 'War on Drugs' in the late 1980's.



Figure 9. Map of Peru.

President Ronald Reagan declared a War on Drugs, and then the Bush administration increased the funding. Most of the funding and assistance went to the Andean Ridge countries of Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador. The U.S. provided assistance and funding in some form or fashion through all the elements of state craft to



include: Political, economic, militarily, and informational. To analyze all the elements of national power is beyond the scope of this chapter. Therefore, this chapter will concentrate on a small area of the military, in particular the riverine program.

## **B. GEOGRAPHICAL AND ETHNIC MAKE-UP**

Peru's inability not to take into account its diverse ethnic history has hindered the country's governmental control and its ability to fully represent the populace. There are three main cultural factors that can still be seen today in Peruvian society. First, the extent of the ancient civilization of the Inca Empire in the Andean mountains still has an impact on society. Second, the clash of the Spanish conquistadores with the Andean peoples marked one of the first clashes between Western and non-Western civilizations in the New World. Finally, the extent to which outsiders had a say society the governmental decisions helped shape and still impacts politics in Peru. The results, Peru became divided between largely a native hinterland and more urbanized mestizo coast. "At the apex of its social structure, a small, wealthy, educated elite came to dominate the vast majority of Peruvians, who, by contrast, subsisted in poverty, isolation, ignorance, and disease" (Hudson, 1992, p. 3). This division of society and Peru's inability to overcome inequities prevented not only development, but effective government consolidation.

With a population of twenty-six million, Peru has large clusters of highland Indo-Americans, scattered communities of jungle counterparts, descendants of the Spanish conquerors, later colonists, Afro-American slaves, European, Middle Eastern Chinese, Japanese, and Korean immigrants: a number of Peruvians are mixed race mestizos" (Palmer, 2000, p. 228).

Peru's geography is similar to its cauldron of ethnic diversity. However, the country can be geographically broken into three main regions: The coast, sierra, and the selva (jungle). "Peru is the nineteenth largest nation in area in the world and the fourth largest Latin American nation" (Hudson, 1992, p. 63), and is ranked fifth in population.

“The Costa, Sierra, and Selva, each comprising a different and sharply contrasting environment, form the major terrestrial regions of the country” (Hudson, 1992, p. 63). Each area contains different climates, animal specimens, and societal norms. However, not discounting the importance of other areas, this chapter will concentrate on the Selva.

The jungle area of Peru covers about 63% of the country and contains only about 11 percent of the population. This area of the country is covered by a network of rivers of which the three main rivers; “the Ucayali, Marañon, and the Huallaga, join...to form the Rio Amazonas (the Amazon) above Peru’s “Atlantic” port of Iquitos” [sic] (Hudson, 1992, p. 63). Even though these networks of rivers serve a relatively small percentage of the population, the importance of rivers and their impact on society cannot be overlooked.

The rivers of Peru provide the local populace with a means of transportation from town to town. According to Hudson, “The streams and rivers constitute a serpentine network of pathways plied by boats and canoes that provide the basic transport through the forest [jungle]” (p. 71). The rivers also in some areas are the sole means of communication. The inhabitants of these jungle towns deliver their goods to local markets both internally in Peru and across borders to neighboring countries including: Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, and Bolivia.

### **C. POLITICAL AND ECONOMICAL SETTING**

Peru’s history is marked by a struggle for power between the military and civilian elites. According to Felipe Aguero, “The study of civil-military relations during a military regime, for instance, is facilitated by a clear view of the circumstances that launched that regime, the political alignments that made it possible, and the institutional arrangements that defined it in the early stages” (as cited in Pion-Berlin, 2001, p. 195). Nowhere is this more evident than in Peru. This see-sawing of power by civil-military elites dates back to the Spanish conquest which allowed a great deal of foreign influence in the internal affairs of the country. This chapter will deal with three basic periods of governmental which are reflected in the civil-military relations of these periods; “the reformist military rule (1968-1980), full civilian democracy (1980-1992), autogolpe and its aftermath (1992-1993), and direct democracy (1993-present)” (Palmer, 2000, p. 231).

The first cycle involves an extreme right wing government led by General Velasco. His radical reforms involved state sponsored businesses, land reform, labor and capital reforms, and protection and promotion of industry. Basically, “the armed forces tried to modernize the Peruvian economy and society by putting into practice a semi-generic military doctrine of national security and national development” (Kruijt and Tello, 2002, p. 35).

The Velasco government had close ties with the army officer corps, and certain portions of the public including organized labor, urban masses, and peasant organizations. However, the government’s strengths would be its undoing. According to Kruijt and Tello, “Unlike the military governments of Chile and Brazil, the Peruvian military did not bond with business elites of traditional bourgeoisies” (p. 41).

Following the downfall of the Velasco regime, General Francisco Morales Bermudez came to power by a coup in 1975. “During the Morales Bermudez years, popular unrest and national strikes paralyzed the country” (Kruijt and Tello, 2002, p. 42). The Morales Bermudez regime didn’t carry on with the programs and reforms started by Velasco. The congressional assembly of 1978 produced a constitution for the year 1979, “which set up national elections every five years and municipal elections every three years, beginning in 1980” (Palmer, 2000, p. 238). This opened the way for the transfer of power to civilians.

The second cycle was centered on civilian democracy, but plagued with internal conflict. The opening for civilian control brought back a previous overthrown president for a second term. The civilians controlled the transition from a post-authoritarian regime to a full civilian-led government. However, the military had a great deal of say- so in the transition. Felipe Arguero argues that similar conditions found in the new civilian-led democracy had existed during previous the regime. This would be Belaunde’s second term. According to Kruijt and Tello, “during the last months of the military government, three junta members [military elite from Bermudez regime] decided to maintain the continuity of military command” (p. 42). Through negotiations with Belaunde, three top military governmental officials from the previous regime nominated themselves as heads of the Army, Navy, and Airforce. According to Arguero, “the military like any large

complex organization, seeks to advance its institutional prerogatives” (Pion-Berlin, 2001, p. 199). Therefore, the first years were rather peaceful due to Belaunde’s relationship with the military hierarchy. However, the economic turmoil that encompassed an increase in inflation of 60% to 100% by 1984, and a deepened recession paved the way for the next civilian presidency of Alan Garcia.

Alan Garcia was an extreme left wing politician supported by the political party, American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA). This was the first time APRA came to power. However, the Garcia presidency was plagued by the worst economy in Peruvian history. During the 1980’s, the economic downward spiral coupled with the threat of internal combustion posed by guerilla movements, especially that of the *Sindero Luminoso (SL)*, brought the end of the Garcia regime. “By the end of the Garcia government (1985-1990), casualties exceeded twenty thousand and direct and indirect damages” (Palmer, 2000, p. 239), cost the equivalent of U.S. \$14 billion.

There is no clear-cut consensus on how Alberto Fujimori came to power, other than that people were tired of traditional politicians and looked for something new to cling to. He appeared to appeal to the center. His theme for his campaign was “Work, Honesty, and Technology” (Hudson, 1992, p. 245). Fujimori was elected and quickly looked for political allies both within his administration and congress. He found allies in congress, but also found allies in the military. Vladimiro Montesinos became a friend and political and military advisor. General Nicolas Hermoza Rios, whom Montesinos promoted to General and made commander of the army in 1992, was appointed as head of the military and became a close advisor to Fujimori. “This triumvirate – Fujimori, Montesinos, and Hermoza would characterize most of the Fujimori era, [and its downfall]” (Kruijt and Tello, 2002, p. 46).

The Fujimori administration attacked the crippled economy. Fujimori redrafted the constitution tailoring, it to support his economic policies. The Fujimori administration “designed a constitution in neo-liberal style, that eliminated many of the social security, trade union, and labour codes” (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 46). This set the stage for what was to be known as autogolpe – a form of self-coup. These reforms

would eventually turn the country around for the better. The populace did not resist the shock therapy policies applied by the Fujimori regime. The people were preoccupied with the Terrorist threat at a time when the SL were at their operational apex.

The SL organization's strategic concept was to separate the urban areas from the rural hinterland. At the height of the SL movement, the organization controlled well over a quarter of a million people, mostly in areas such as Ayacucho, Huancavelica, and Apurimac. "The control was based upon a barren, totalitarian regime of terror and fear, exercised by a total institution with fundamentalist traits and devotion" (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 47).

The Fujimori regime brought an end to the SL terrorist organization by using counter-insurgency techniques: popular support, tactics, and intelligence. "The key principles of the new anti-subversive doctrine were to try to obtain the sympathy and confidence of the population; to provide local development programs" (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 47). The government aimed to establish a presence and provide some form of law and order where in the past there had been a void. Finally, through an intelligence network set up by SIN, the military in September 1992 captured the head of the SL – Guzman and 16 other personnel amounting to over 60% of the leadership of the entire organization.

Here it is important to point out the connection between the insurgency, coca, and rivers. Since the 1960's metals and petroleum have been the most important exports from Peru. Additionally, "agricultural exports were much lower than those from the mining sector, but the four major products – coffee, cotton, fish meal, and sugar added up to 19 percent of total exports in 1988" (Hudson, 1992, p. 167). Then, there are Coca's economic implications. Illegal coca brought in roughly U.S. \$1.6 billion in 1986-89 and over 300,000 people throughout the hinterland were and are still dependent on this cash crop. "Growers in the main producing region, the Upper Huallaga Valley, are estimated to earn about U.S. \$4,500 per year for each hectare in coca, compared with about U.S. \$600 in coffee" (Hudson, 1992, p. 171). No amount of alternative development could have made a significant difference. The SL protected the drug trade and traffickers using the usual methods of coercion, and often brutal tactics. Finally, the coca and cocaine

were produced in river areas and often, if not always, transported via rivers to local clandestine airstrips and flown or shipped to neighboring Brazil, Ecuador, and Colombia. Therefore, there was a need for the GOP to develop capable counterdrug programs to combat this growing threat.

#### **D. COUNTERDRUG PROGRAMS**

In the late 1980's President Ronald Reagan declared illegal drugs to be a national security threat. Subsequently, President George H. W. Bush increased funding and assistance to the Andean Ridge countries of which Peru was at the epicenter. "Thus, the cocaine wars of 1988-90 focused U.S. attention on [the Andean countries] at a time when the U.S. was also moving towards an international counterdrug interdiction policy" (Gonzalez, 1995, p. 10). U.S. military involvement came about when then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney directed DoD to become actively involved in interdicting drugs in the source zone. Secretary Cheney stated, "U.S. military support would increase the effectiveness of foreign force's efforts to destroy drug-processing laboratories; disrupt drug-producing enterprises; and control the land, river, and air routes" (Gonzalez, 1995, p. 11).

Although the U.S. increased its funding on demand reduction, there were several programs that started aiming at interdiction. Programs supported not only interdiction, but also eradication coupled with interdiction at the source zone. Eradication of illegal coca leaf and alternative development became a huge effort. The interdiction programs such as the air bridge denial program were quite successful for a time. The air bridge denial program became the responsibility of the Peruvian Air Force (FAP), which tracked and shot down "illegal flights to Colombia from clandestine airstrips in the north central region of the Huallaga Valley" (Hudson, 1992, p. 288).

Another program that hasn't known the success of the air bridge program is the Peru riverine program. The Peru riverine program is important to analyze for several reasons: first, this program is really all about civil-military relations and the extent to which the government legitimizes the military and its subordinate programs or not. Secondly, the importance of rivers on the welfare of Peru cannot be underestimated. However, before analyzing the riverine program this chapter must establish some sort of criteria or measures of effectiveness by which the program can be judged.

The riverine program of Peru was implemented under the principles of UW and FID; therefore, what are the basic questions that need to be addressed? First, did the U.S. complete the initial training and equipping of the HN riverine forces? Second, are these same riverine forces consistently operationally engaged? Finally, did the HN government legitimately buy into the programs to begin with, or was the HN government just cooperating to pacify the U.S.?

#### **E. THE RIVERINE PROGRAM**

Before 1998, the Peruvians had a ragtag riverine force that consisted of a few small ships similar to frigates and smaller craft. “The Amazon River Force had four river gunboats and some twenty small craft, most at the main base at Iquitos, with a subsidiary facility at Madre de Dios” (Hudson, 1992, p. 285). Therefore, in 1998 the USSOUTHERN Command (SOUTHCOM), in conjunction with the U.S. Embassy Country Team (Peru) and the Peruvian Government signed the Combined Peru Riverine Implementation Plan (CPRIP), which initiated the training and equipping of a permanent riverine force in Peru. The CPRIP would later be superseded by the Bilateral Peru Riverine Plan (BPRP). The CPRIP implemented the training and equipping phase of the program, and the BPRP would operationalize the program.

The mission of the Peru riverine program can be stated as follows: “The mission of the riverine program is to provide a riverine law enforcement capability to the Government of Peru (GOP) forces in order to deny use of the rivers as a trafficking route for coca products, precursor chemicals, and related contraband” (U.S. Embassy, 2002, p. 3). The riverine program is centered on two main entities: First, the Peruvian National Police (PNP) which by law has the counterdrug mission. Second, the Peruvian Coast Guard (PCG) which has the responsibility of commerce control of the rivers and to deny illegal use of the rivers. Before launching into the specifics of the program its important to describe some of the entities and concepts involved.

#### **F. COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM**

- Riverine Interdiction Unit (RIU) – A RIU consists of four (4) patrol boats, floating maintenance facility (FMF) or Floating maintenance Base (FMB), a floating boat hangar, fixed-shore connection and dedicated personnel. See Figure 10.

- FMF – A barge-like facility that is used for the logistics support and maintenance of the boats as well as a base of operations for the boats.
- FMB – This is an extended version of the FMF with extra room for the personnel to live on the FMB, up to 25 personnel.
- Floating Support Base (FSB) – Similar to a small ship without propulsion, it is used for housing troops, fuel, and logistical support for two RIU's for extended periods of time.
- Forward Operating Locations (FOL) – A strategic location within Peru, where the RIU's deploy to conduct riverine operations.
- Joint Planning Assistance Team (JPAT) – These are temporary U.S. DoD and Coast Guard advisors assigned on a rotational basis to provide the Peruvians technical and training support to the PNP and PCG.
- Joint Peru Riverine Training Center (JPRTC) – The JPRTC is located at the naval base in Iquitos, Peru, and was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the JPRTC is the primary training center for GOP personnel involved in riverine operations.
- Riverine Coordination Center (RCC) – This was also constructed by the USACE located in Iquitos, Peru, and was to be the command and control facility for all PNP and PCG conducting joint operations.



Figure 10. RIU Location.



### **1. Phase I. Training and Technical Support**

The first JPAT advisors to initiate this program were deployed to Iquitos, Peru in June of 1997. This deployment consisted of Army SF and Navy SEAL/ Special Boat personnel. This was under the auspices of the JPRTC (defined above) which was subsequently established in 1998 with the initial riverine course in February of 1998. This was spearheaded predominantly by DoD and MARFORSOUTH (The Marine component of SOUTHCOM). This phase continued until the end of the construction of the school and included improvements in the curriculum.

### **2. Phase II. Equipping and Delivery of Assets**

This phase encompassed delivery of all major riverine assets to include: boats (22 and 25 ft Boston Whaler type), barges, floating hangars, and other support equipment. The majority of the equipment was delivered during the first four years of the program.

### **3. Phase III. Operationalization of Assets**

This phase addressed what happened when the equipment arrived and the personnel were trained up. The success of such programs always rests with, the extent to which the HN government is willing to engage operationally with these assets. In the case of Peru, these operations included joint operations between the PNP and PCG. A big piece of this phase was the GOP's ability to develop standard operational procedures (SOPs), preventative maintenance programs, personal qualification programs, daily training, daily control of spare parts and tools, and the ability to perform first and second echelon maintenance at the FMB and FMF. Success in these areas will influence future support from the U.S. government.

### **4. Phase IV. Financial Responsibility**

This phase addresses the shift in financial responsibility for maintaining the daily operations of this program. The USG is providing the following: all major equipment, spare parts and tools, initial funding for counternarcotics operations, and support to the JPRTC (school). The GOP developed a financial plan to support the JPRTC and assume responsibility for the school. DOD has provided estimated costs for the school and initial costs for the operationalization of the RIUs.

## **G. THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS**

The U.S. government met its obligation by successfully training and equipping the Peruvian riverine forces with the appropriate equipment and technical expertise. The GOP began operations and assumed financial responsibility by signing the BPRP. Are the PNP and PCG actually operating effectively?

The training and technical expertise from the U.S. came predominantly from the U.S. Special Operations Forces [Green Berets, SEALs, Special Boat personnel], a few U.S. Marines, and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). The lion's share of riverine and small boat experience came from the SEAL/SBU personnel. However, a mistake the U.S. may have made was to back both the PCG and PNP in this endeavor. This meant the U.S. was backing two organizations that were both fundamentally different in terms of both manpower and modus operandi, not to mention that the PNP and PCG historically loathe each other.

This lack of foresight on the part of the U.S. planners, in setting up the initial training affected the Peru riverine program in more than one way. First, the riverine component in both the PCG and PNP had to compete with their own organizations; the big Navy and the overall National Police, for resources and manpower. Similar to Colombia, Peru is a landlocked country, and the riverine component of the Navy must compete with the big blue water Navy, (in contrast to Bolivia where the country is landlocked and most of the Navy is concentrated on the rivers). Second, the missions of both the PNP and PCG were convoluted. As Paul Shemella points out when discussing roles and missions of the armed services, "For countries with weak police forces, especially those where the terrorist threat resides at home, police-military role clarification can be particularly challenging" (Shemella, 2003, p. 12). This was certainly the case in Peru.

Manpower was another issue all in itself. Neither the PCG nor the PNP had, or have, dedicated personnel to riverine operations. The PNP, for example, often use conscripts, who one day are conducting eradication operations, and the next day show up to go on a riverine operation. The PNP or PCG have never implemented anything similar to the U.S. Naval Special Boat Teams (within the SEAL community) or the Bolivian

Blue Devils (riverine component to the Bolivian Navy): In both those organizations the Special Boat personnel can spend their entire careers conducting small boat and riverine operations. More to the point still, in the SBU teams and Blue Devils, individuals develop riverine expertise and this becomes their primary specialty within the military. Having a branch with riverine expertise leads to expertise in the operational art of riverine warfare. Unfortunately, the PCG rotate through the riverine program; they stay only for two years and never return. Therefore, they lose that expertise and have to reinvent the wheel with the next set of people coming through the pipeline.

Other organizational issues have also precluded the PNP and PCG from fully engaging in riverine operations. For instance, there was and is no incentive structure. The officers in the military and police earn barely enough to sustain a living for themselves and their families. Often even the more senior officers have side jobs/businesses. The enlisted ranks must work other jobs and often resort to illegal activities/corruption. Secondly, the PNP and PCG have a centralized organizational view about how to operate. From the 1970's to the 1990's Peru had a close relationship with the Soviet Union, buying more than \$1 billion dollars worth of equipment and assistance. "This included the training in Peru and in the Eastern Bloc of several hundred army and air force personnel each year and up to a hundred Soviet advisers in Peru" (Palmer, 2002, p. 248). The Soviet Union has a very centralized way of conducting business. Therefore, similar to the Eastern Bloc countries, the Peruvian military and police were very centralized in their operational approach. Additionally, the Peruvian legacy of peonage seems to persist in Peruvians inability to take any initiative. The peons were often, "obliged to provide other services on demand to the administrator or landlord, such as pasturing animals, serving as maids and servants in their homes, running errands of all types, and providing all manner of labor from house construction to the repair of roads" (Hudson, 1992, p. 103). One can't help but conclude that both this; centralized mentality and the peon legacy continue to influence the PNP and PCG, preventing them from either seizing the initiative or decentralizing their decision-making processes.

Finally, the last area that adversely affected the riverine program, not to mention all the counterdrug programs and the military as a whole, was the downfall of the Fujimori regime.

## **H. THE FUJIMORI DILEMMA**

Fujimori controlled the military by a couple of means, “in the first place; by new legislation on military status and career paths; and by a keen system of internal espionage executed by SIN” (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 48). Montesinos, referred to earlier, was Fujimori’s point man and he weeded out any disloyal military officers. Additionally, in 1991 Fujimori passed a new law allowing him to appoint commanding officers personally. Fujimori forced the retirement of many high ranking officers and finally, in 1995, passed an amnesty law which, “established immunity from prosecution for human rights violations in war situations” (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 49). Therefore, control over the military chain of command was consolidated.

Control over the intelligence sector was spearheaded by Montesinos. Montesinos, as mentioned before, was in charge of SIN, the military’s intelligence. He established intelligence networks on top of networks throughout all of society. “What before had been a low-key, discreet activity – obtaining information on the whereabouts and activities of political opponents; spying on officers of the armed forces and the police; keeping tabs on academics, journalists, union leaders, TV directors and owners of mass media-now became the core activity of the intelligence community (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 50). SIN provided access to all areas and levels of society from the military, political parties, congress, cabinet members, to its own internal organization SIN itself. “Civil servants were closely checked by security people, vigilantes and colleague-informers” (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 51).

Last but not least, two other vital areas the Fujimori government controlled were the justice system and the media. Due to terrorism and subversive activity, the judicial system was predominantly military. “By and large, all cases related to high treason, terrorism, drug trafficking, murder and extortion could be treated by military magistrates, recruited under military lawyers, advocates, solicitors, attorneys, prosecutors, even medical experts” (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 53). Fujimori positioned his regime to be judge, jury, and executioner. Control over the media was no less severe, where the regime openly preached freedom of the press, yet something else behind the scenes was

taking place. There are examples where owners and directors of news media, “who crossed a boundary, or who displeased the president, his advisory team or the high command” (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 53) were punished.

How did Fujimori lose control? Easy, certain members within the military chain of command became tired of the abusive nature of the regime. After Fujimori won an unprecedented third election it was business as usual with fraud, intimidation, and bribery as the underlying common denominators. “On 15 September 2000 a surprised Peruvian TV audience watched a video – apparently released by military opponents of the duo [Fujimori-Montesinos] – in which Montesinos tried to bribe a reluctant opposition member in parliament by a cash payment in dollars to cross over to the Fujimori camp” (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 56). Shortly after this Montesinos fled the country, but returned and is currently in prison awaiting a court appearance. Fujimori resigned his office and fled to his home country of Japan. When Fujimori fled, the Peruvian congress elected as provincial president Valentin Paniagua. Paniagua’s first objective was to get control of SIN and the military. “Apart from economic, social and political reforms, one of the most urgent priorities is the clean-up of SIN and of the armed forces, until the very end of the Fujimori regime an extremely dominant political player” (Kruijt and Tello, 2000, p. 57).

During this clean-up, all higher ranking promotions were put on hold. The Minister of Defense changed 3-4 times over the course of about a one (1) year period. Most of the senior officers expecting to put on flag level (General or Admiral) did not make it; the new civilian government began to purge all the Fujimori supporters. All programs, including the counterdrug programs: eradication, air bridge denial, and the riverine program came to a screeching halt.

## **I. CONCLUSION**

Given everything that occurred in Fujimori’s final days, it should not be surprising that especially in the jungle crisscrossed by a network of rivers and lacking any government or legal authorities, have made these areas the perfect haven for illegal activities.

The new civilian democracy has been making changes, but the future is uncertain. The exposure of abuses during the Fujimori regime has brought about the reemergence of the SL. Just as the future of the government itself is uncertain, so is the future of the military and police, not to mention any counterdrug program.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Recent Latin American history has been marked by illicit drug trafficking, insurgencies/terrorists, social and economic upheaval, and just plain lawlessness. These factors have made the countries of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru of special strategic interests to the United States (U.S.), because of turmoil caused here and abroad by dependency on coca, illegal drugs, and illicit behavior of narco-terrorists. In an effort to help these nations relieve their dependency on such activities, President George W. Bush has encouraged the U.S. to develop, “an active strategy to help the Andean nations adjust their economies, enforce their laws, defeat terrorist organizations, and cut off the supply of drugs, while-as important-we work to reduce the demand for drugs in our own country” (NSS, 2002, p.10).

The geo-political makeup of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru is strategically vital to the U.S. These countries, with their vast array of river networks, are both a rich source of natural resources and represent a haven for subversive activities. These rivers and inland waterways have long been a natural means of transportation and communications both commerce and illicit activities and products.

The U.S. has been instrumental in aiding the governments of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru in all the elements of national power including: political, economic, military, and informational. This thesis focused on a small element of the military assistance-the riverine programs in those respective countries. What has become clear is that the riverine programs in Bolivia and Colombia can be considered more successful than that in neighboring Peru.

### **B. BOLIVIA AND COLOMBIA**

Although implementing the riverine programs in these two countries posed their own unique challenges, they have been relatively successful considering the three questions posed at the outset of the thesis. In addition, the principles of MOOTW were adhered to, in particular the principles of achieving the objective and maintaining

legitimacy. In contrast, even though Peru is the youngest of the three programs, it has had trouble getting started. Bolivia can be considered the most successful due in part to the following:

- Bolivia's geography makes it unique among the three because it is the only country that is land-locked. Therefore, the riverine program competes very little with a big blue water navy.
- Diablos Azules (Blue Devils) are the riverine component of the Bolivian Navy and both enlisted and officers can make the Blue Devils a career track. This creates a closed loop system or warfare specialty similar to the Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Special Combatant Craft specialty that is inherent to the U.S. Navy SEAL teams. The benefit of a closed loop system is the Blue Devils do not lose any expertise. They maintain resident expertise, area familiarization, and continuity.
- The one service in Bolivia that controls the rivers and inland waterways is the Bolivian Blue Devils, and this responsibility is not shared with anyone.
- The government of Bolivia has been behind the program since its inception and has given the Blue Devils appropriate recognition and notoriety. The bottom line is that the government of Bolivia has fully legitimated its riverine capability and forces. The Bolivian government has thereby placed the fight against subversive activity in the country's hinterland on the national agenda.

By comparison, Colombia's riverine program has also been apparently successful for some of the same reasons mentioned above. However, Colombia is not a land locked country, and is bordered by two oceans. Therefore, the riverine forces must compete and are hindered by inter-service bickering for resources. In other words, the riverine forces must compete with all the other players in the Big Blue Water Navy.

The Colombian Marine Corps (COLMAR) has the responsibility for riverine warfare within Colombia's borders. Therefore, there is one service/agency that has the sole responsibility for Colombia's rivers, riverine warfare, and inland waterways. This eliminates any internal fighting about who does what between services or agencies. The following are some reasons why the author advocates the successful status of the Colombian riverine program:

- The COLMAR is in charge of the riverine program and no other service or agency shares that responsibility. This helps maintain continuity, not to the extent we see in the Bolivian program, but better than many other places.



- The COLMAR and Colombian military are operationally engaged on a daily basis and their government has put the fight against subversion/insurgency on the forefront of their agenda. Therefore, both the Colombians and the United States have lent legitimacy to this cause.

The Bolivian and Colombian riverine programs from the perspective of the author have been Successful. Factors contributing to the program's success include personnel continuity, the dedication of a core group of personnel, valuable military-to-military contact benefiting both the United States and Colombia, [and Bolivia] and the initial U.S. focus on counterdrug policy" (Gonzalez, 1995, p. 55).

In contrast, the Peru riverine program, although it is in the earlier stages of development, has not had even the initial success of these other two programs. The U.S. Southern Command located at Miami Florida, through the Military Advisory and Assistance Group (MAAG) located at the U.S. Embassy in Lima Peru, completed the training and equipping phase. This lasted roughly five years, from 1998 to 2002. The Peru program has been slow to become operationalized for several reasons:

- Peru, like Colombia, is not a land-locked country; therefore, the riverine forces have to compete for resources with the big blue water navy.
- The riverine forces have two masters; the Peruvian Navy (Coast Guard) and their National Drug Police (DIVANDRO). Therefore, the Coast Guard and Police have competing interests and culturally dislike each other. The DIVANDRO by law have the counternarcotics mission and the Coast Guard has the responsibility for the rivers and inland waterways within the country. Additionally, the Coast Guard has the ability to detain, but not arrest.
- Neither the Coast Guard nor DIVANDRO have a closed loop system, where in their personnel are constantly assigned to a riverine detachment or can work in the riverine system. The Coast Guard and Police might work in the riverine program for 2-5 years, then they leave and never return, so they lose continuity.
- Finally and most importantly, Peru's program lacked mission focus and legitimacy from the government. The riverine program was never put into the forefront by government officials either Peruvina or U.S. The timing of this riverine program was such that Fujimori was on his way out and the Peruvians chief concern was corruption, to include those in the military hierarchy.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

The U.S. has been very successful with UW and FID in Latin America. In particular, the U.S. military has been very successful in implementing riverine programs in Bolivia and Colombia. The riverine program of Peru has met with some difficulties and has been slow to engage operationally. Bolivia and Colombia maintained clear objectives, unity of effort, and their governments, along with the U.S., legitimized the programs. Peru has been plagued by internal conflict among the Military and Police and the program has lacked legitimacy at the national level. Finally, the Peruvian government has been trying to just survive and the brown water navy has been the furthest thing from its mind.

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