Negative: Honduras

Affirmative plan cancels US military support for Honduras. Many of the problems cited by the Affirmative are receding in the Status Quo. And the real root cause of the violence in Honduras is drug trafficking, not US weapons. We could put a stop to that either by giving them more weapons, or by legalizing drugs in the United States (to bring it above board and take the criminal element out of it).

By Katherine Baker and “Coach Vance” Trefethen

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US security aid to Honduras has reduced violence, combatted corruption and improved efforts to fight crime 10

NEGATIVE: Honduras Security Aid - GOOD

NEGATIVE PHILOSOPHY / REVERSE PLAN ADVOCACY

Support for the Honduran military has risks, but the dangerous situation justifies it

Michael Shifter 2012. (M.A. sociology, Georgetown Univ.; President of the Inter-American Dialogue; Adjunct Professor of Latin American Studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service; directed the Ford Foundation's governance and human rights program in the Andean region and Southern Cone) 8 May 2012 NEW YORK TIMES, “Military Aid Is Unattractive, but Unavoidable” <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/05/08/should-us-troops-fight-the-war-on-drugs/military-aid-is-unattractive-but-unavoidable>

Policy options are not good, but in today’s Honduras a government of any stripe would turn to the military to fight drug violence. There are considerable risks associated with building up militaries in countries like Honduras, with precarious governance and a history of rights abuses. But such risks have to be weighed against the risks of the current, deteriorating situation, which has taken a tremendous human toll and poses a serious threat to the rule of law.

MINOR REPAIR / COUNTERPLAN #1: More US training of Honduran military/police

Police refused to enforce curfew over election dispute. Respect for democracy could be attributed to US aid

David Adams, 2017. (Senior Editor, Univision News. Univision is an American Spanish-language broadcast television network) “Was U.S.-training as factor in Honduran police taking a pro-democracy stand?” 6 DEC 2017. <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/was-us-training-as-factor-in-honduran-police-taking-a-pro-democracy-stand>

The brief refusal of Honduran police to enforce a curfew in the wake of violence over disputed presidential elections stunned observers this week and was celebrated as a rare sign of democratic restraint in a country notorious for police brutality. It also sparked debate as to whether the police action could partly be attributed to a multi-million dollar U.S. government program to train Honduran police to better combat drug and gang-fueled violence that has stained the country with one of the world’s highest murder rates, as well as provoking a massive wave of migration to the U.S.-Mexico border.

US aid went to police who allowed protesters to continue

David Adams, 2017. (Senior Editor, Univision News.) “Was U.S.-training as factor in Honduran police taking a pro-democracy stand?” 6 DEC 2017. <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/was-us-training-as-factor-in-honduran-police-taking-a-pro-democracy-stand>

Last year alone, the U.S. Congress approved $200 million in funding for Honduras in 2016, mostly for justice and law enforcement training, violence prevention and counternarcotics. A share of that went to training of elite police units who were at the forefront of this week's police rebellion. “We want peace, and we will not follow government orders – we’re tired of this,” a police spokesman told reporters outside the national police headquarters on Monday night. “We aren’t with a political ideology. We can’t keep confronting people, and we don’t want to repress and violate the rights of the Honduran people,” he added. Crowds of anti-government protesters greeted the announcement with cheers. Extraordinary scenes were broadcast on TV of people singing - and even praying - with police.

US training motivates Honduran police to uphold human rights

David Adams, 2017. (Senior Editor, Univision News.) “Was U.S.-training as factor in Honduran police taking a pro-democracy stand?” 6 DEC 2017. <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/was-us-training-as-factor-in-honduran-police-taking-a-pro-democracy-stand>

"We have done a lot of training to bring these units up to speed in their capacity and human rights," said Frank Mora, director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center at Florida International University (FIU) and a former deputy assistant secretary at the Pentagon in Obama's first administration 2009-2013. "I like to think that all the training had an effect. they seem to be acting in defense of the people." The training included human rights, crime scene management, community policing, and police combat training, he said. While it was funded through the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), training was carried out by Colombia's crack police anti-narcotics commandos, known as the 'Junglas'.

Example: TIGRES (US-trained Honduran quick reaction force) is known for exercising restraint.

David Adams, 2017. (Senior Editor, Univision News.) “Was U.S.-training as factor in Honduran police taking a pro-democracy stand?” 6 DEC 2017. <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/was-us-training-as-factor-in-honduran-police-taking-a-pro-democracy-stand>

"All U.S. training programs for the Honduran National Police incorporate respect for civilians and human rights as essential functions of the police," the spokesperson added. "We believe this training has led to an improved response by the national police in the current situation." U.S. officials cite the example of one U.S.-supported elite police unit, the TIGRES, a Quick Reaction Force. "The TIGRES are known for exercising restraint when conducting high-stress operations, a product of U.S.-sponsored training," the spokesperson said. They also receive first aid training and act as first responders at protests.

MINOR REPAIR / COUNTERPLAN #2: Strike at the root cause. Legalize cocaine and marijuana.

Root Cause: Cocaine and marijuana trafficking into North America is the real root cause of violence in Honduras

David Agren 2012. “Honduras suffocating in grip of drug violence and poverty,” USA TODAY, March 6, 2012, <https://www.pressreader.com/usa/usa-today-us-edition/20120307/289777150166738>

“The U.N. International Narcotics Control Board said last month that Honduras, Costa Rica and Nicaragua had become major transit countries for traffickers smuggling cocaine and marijuana to North America. Mexican drug cartels, under pressure from police, shifted bases to Central America, resulting in increased levels of violence, kidnapping, bribery, torture and homicide, said the agency's annual report for 2011. Central America is home to about 900 "maras," or streets gangs, which have 70,000 members. When he won the presidency, Lobo promoted reconciliation with Zelaya, who was allowed to return to Honduras last year, but the cutoff of aid and contact had a lasting effect. "The lack of external credibility and isolation and the lack of money flowing in made poverty increase," said Father Germán Calix, Honduras director for Caritas, the Vatican's charitable arm. "It was a void for new money from narcotics trafficking to circulate in the country."”

Solvency/Advocacy: Honduran President says, Cancel the US “war on drugs” and legalize them, to reduce violence in Honduras

Juan Carlos Hidalgo 2008 (Master’s in international commerce and policy; was a policy analyst on Latin America at the Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity. Previously he was Latin America director of the International Policy Network.) 14 Oct 2008 “President of Honduras Calls for Drug Legalization” <https://www.cato.org/blog/president-honduras-calls-drug-legalization>

It seems that there is a growing trend in Latin America to openly challenge Washington’s war on drugs. Yesterday, Manuel Zelaya, president of Honduras, openly [called](http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20081014/wl_afp/hondurastraffickingcrime_081014025942) for the legalization of drugs as a way to tackle drug-trafficking violence. The venue for Zelaya’s plea couldn’t be less welcoming: a ministerial summit of the UN Office of Drugs and Crime. However, Zelaya is not alone in Latin America. In Argentina, the current government of Cristina Fernández is promoting the decriminalization of drug consumption. In Mexico, where drug related violence is tearing the country apart, the PRD, the biggest opposition party, has also openly called to legalize drugs.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. A/T “Corruption in Honduras”

Corruption isn’t a good justification for US disengagement. Working with Honduras will pay off in the long run

[Ana Rosa Quintana](https://www.heritage.org/staff/ana-rosa-quintana) and Ryan Carpenter 2018. (Quintana - Senior Policy Analyst, Latin America and Western Hemisphere, Heritage Foundation. Carpenter - Spring 2018 member of the Young Leaders Program at The Heritage Foundation) 7 Feb 2018 Why the U.S. Must Keep Working With Honduras, Despite Cases of Corruption <https://www.heritage.org/americas/commentary/why-the-us-must-keep-working-honduras-despite-cases-corruption>

Recurring instances of corruption within Honduras’ government, such as the case of Aguilar, should not cause the U.S. to disengage. The U.S. must continue to work alongside its Honduran partners to [strengthen and develop its institutions.](https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/the-united-states-needs-expand-security-cooperation-honduras) Doing so will pay off in the long run. Strengthening Honduras’s institutions will increase their capacity and ability to cooperate with the U.S.

Security corruption is being cleaned up in Honduras

PR Newswire 2020. “The articulated security strategy is key in reducing organized crime in Honduras” 12 Feb 2020 <https://apnews.com/press-release/pr-prnewswire/b05408c2e1a3ababf101d7dfdb0e5726>

Another cornerstone of the Hernández administration’s strategy is the national-level inter-agency task force (Fuerza Nacional de Seguridad Interinstitucional -FUSINA), which brings together Armed Forces, National Police, Directorate of Investigations and Intelligence, and representatives of the Ministers of Defense and Public Security and the Supreme Court of Justice, to successfully coordinate efforts against organized crime, gangs and extortionists and to restore urban security. The intervention of the National Police, which was infiltrated by organized crime and criminal gangs, was key to cleaning up the structure of the institution, through a purging process that had the backing of the church and civil society.

2. A/T “Crime & Violence in Honduras”

Murder, crime and corruption problems are getting better now in Honduras

Ambassador James Nealon and Dr Kurt Alan Ver Beek 2018. (Nealon – was US Ambassador to Honduras 2014-2017. Ver Beek – PhD, sociology professor at Calvin College, has lived in Honduras since 1988) How U.S. Aid Is Contributing to Anti-Corruption Efforts in Honduras <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/how-us-aid-contributing-to-anti-corruption-efforts-honduras>

In our April article we made the case that, with the help of international and especially U.S. assistance and a vibrant civil society, things are slowly getting better in Honduras. The murder rate has been more than halved; progress has been made on addressing impunity and corruption; and drug traffickers continue to be arrested and extradited to the United States. But, we warned, an unholy alliance of corrupt politicians and criminal elements were fighting back against reform, seeking to take Honduras backwards into lawlessness and dysfunction. In short, the empire was striking back. Since then, through sustained effort by Honduran leaders and their civil society and international partners, some of these threats to progress have been beaten back.

Reformed law enforcement units are now able to combat crime in Honduras

PR Newswire 2020. “The articulated security strategy is key in reducing organized crime in Honduras” 12 Feb 2020 <https://apnews.com/press-release/pr-prnewswire/b05408c2e1a3ababf101d7dfdb0e5726>

Along with ongoing efforts to root out corruption in the police force, President Hernández also promoted the creation of special forces that have become a threat to criminal gangs such as the Military Police for Public Order (PMOP), the Police Investigation Directorate (DPI), the National Directorate of Investigations and Intelligence (DNII) and the Communications Intervention Unit (UIC). Likewise, in mid-2018, the Honduran president created the National Anti-Maras and Gangs Force (FNAMP), which has become the terror of criminal groups engaged in extortion and other crimes that threaten peace and security of the population.

US aid programs are successfully reducing violence and pressure on youth to emigrate out of Honduras

Sonia Nazario 2016. (Pulitzer prize winning journalist) NEW YORK TIMES 11 Aug 2016 <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/14/opinion/sunday/how-the-most-dangerous-place-on-earth-got-a-little-bit-safer.html>

Three years ago, Honduras had the highest homicide rate in the world**. [END QUOTE**] The city of San Pedro Sula had the highest homicide rate in the country. And the Rivera Hernández neighborhood, where 194 people were killed or hacked to death in 2013, had the highest homicide rate in the city. Tens of thousands of young Hondurans traveled to the United States to plead for asylum from the drug gangs’ violence. [**SHE GOES ON TO SAY LATER QUOTE:]** This summer I returned to Rivera Hernández to find a remarkable reduction in violence, much of it thanks to programs funded by the United States that have helped community leaders tackle crime. By treating violence as if it were a communicable disease and changing the environment in which it propagates, the United States has not only helped to make these places safer, but has also reduced the strain on our own country. Two years ago, some 18,000 unaccompanied Honduran children showed up on the United States border. Now community leaders say the number of youngsters heading north from this neighborhood has been cut by more than half. Honduras has dropped from first place to third among Central American countries sending unaccompanied children to the United States illegally.

2015 Study: Violence in Honduras exaggerated and declining. Migrants use it as the excuse, but the real reason is poverty

Kausha Luna 2016 (master’s degree from G. Washington Univ. Research Associate for the Center for Immigration Studies) 9 Feb 2016 “Survey Shows Main Cause of Honduran Emigration Is Economics, Not Violence” <https://cis.org/Luna/Survey-Shows-Main-Cause-Honduran-Emigration-Economics-Not-Violence>

[According to a report](http://www.cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/2015%20Report.pdf) by the Reflection, Research, and Communication Team (ERIC-SJ as it is known in Spanish), Hondurans primarily migrate for economic opportunities, not to flee violence. **[END QUOTE**] The report by ERIC-SJ, a Jesuit-run research and social action center in Honduras, is based on a survey of public perceptions of the country's social, political, and economic situation, as well as the performance of the government of President Juan Orlando Hernandez. ERIC-SJ conducted the survey from November 25 to December 5, 2015, with a national sample of 1,571 valid questionnaires, which is representative of all persons over 18 who live in the country. The survey has a sampling error of +/- 2.5 percent and a 95 percent confidence level. [**THEY GO ON TO SAY QUOTE**:] Regarding migration, the survey confirmed the economic crisis in Honduras as the main cause for migration. Of the respondents that had a family member who had migrated in the last four years, 77.6 percent did so due to lack of employment and a search for better opportunities. **[END QUOTE]** Meanwhile, 16.9 percent migrated due to violence and insecurity. In comparison, [the 2014 ERIC-SJ survey](http://www.cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/2014%20Report.pdf) showed that 82.5 percent migrated for the former causes and 11 percent migrated for the latter. So while violence and insecurity have grown in importance among causes for migration, they continue to lag far behind economic factors as the primary cause. **[THEY GO ON TO SAY QUOTE**:] [Homicide rates in Honduras](https://www.sepol.hn/artisistem/images/sepol-images/files/Estadistica%20Tasas%20Enero%202016.xlsx.pdf) have been decreasing since 2012.

96% of Hondurans apprehended in the US admit they migrated for economic reasons

LOS ANGELES TIMES 2018 (journalist Kate Linthicum) 14 Dec 2018 “Homicides have fallen dramatically in Honduras. So why are people still fleeing?” <https://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-honduras-violence-20181214-story.html>

The economy is a shambles, with nearly two-thirds of the labor force either unemployed or underemployed. Endemic corruption and political instability have also been major factors. [**END QUOTE**] “We’re seeing an accumulation of crisis upon crisis upon crisis,” said Lester Ramirez, director of investigations at the Assn. for a More Just Society, a nonprofit that has received U.S. aid for its anti-violence work. “A lot of people have just lost hope.” [**THEY GO ON TO SAY QUOTE:]** Among Hondurans deported from the U.S. in 2016, [96% cited economic hardship](https://www.pewhispanic.org/2017/12/07/rise-in-u-s-immigrants-from-el-salvador-guatemala-and-honduras-outpaces-growth-from-elsewhere/) as a main reason for migrating, according to the Pew Research Center.

2017 Study: Violence in Honduras exaggerated and declining even more. Migrants use it as the excuse, but the real reason is poverty

Kausha Luna 2016 (master’s degree from G. Washington Univ. Research Associate for the Center for Immigration Studies) Survey Shows Hondurans Emigrate for Economic Reasons 16 Apr 2018 <https://cis.org/Luna/Survey-Shows-Hondurans-Emigrate-Economic-Reasons>

The report confirmed the economic crisis in Honduras as the main cause for migration. Of the respondents that had a family member who had emigrated in the last four years, 82.9 percent did so due to lack of employment and opportunities to generate an income. Meanwhile, 11.3 percent migrated due to violence and insecurity. **[END QUOTE**] In comparison, the [2015 ERIC-SJ survey](https://www.cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/2015%20Report.pdf) showed that 77.6 percent migrated for economic reasons and 16.9 percent migrated due to violence. When respondents were specifically asked about emigration due to violence, they reiterated that violence is not the primary reason for Honduran migration. The survey asked, "Do you know if any acquaintance, relative, or neighbor has emigrated due to violence?" Of those surveyed, 66.8 percent responded that those who had emigrated had not left because of violence. Only 31.3 percent responded in the affirmative, and 1.9 did not know or respond. [**THEY GO ON TO SAY QUOTE**:] The declining relevance of violence as a push-factor may be a result of the decreasing levels of violence in the country. [Homicide rates](https://www.sepol.hn/artisistem/images/sepol-images/files/Estadistica%20TASA%20Marzo%202018.xlsx%282%29.pdf) in Honduras have continued to fall since 2012. The number of homicides in Honduras decreased by [24.97 percent](https://www.sepol.hn/artisistem/images/sepol-images/files/Estadistica%20Diaria%20Diciembre%202017.xlsx%287%29.pdf) in 2017 compared to the previous year.

DISADVANTAGES

Link to DA 1 and DA 2: We need to maintain support for Honduras because it’s key to blocking drugs and illegal immigration

[Ana Rosa Quintana](https://www.heritage.org/staff/ana-rosa-quintana) and Ryan Carpenter 2018. (Quintana - Senior Policy Analyst, Latin America and Western Hemisphere, Heritage Foundation. Carpenter - Spring 2018 member of the Young Leaders Program at The Heritage Foundation) 7 Feb 2018 Why the U.S. Must Keep Working With Honduras, Despite Cases of Corruption <https://www.heritage.org/americas/commentary/why-the-us-must-keep-working-honduras-despite-cases-corruption>

In light of these revelations, some [progressives](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1299/text) are now questioning whether the U.S. ought to continue working with the Hondurans. But disengaging would be a critical mistake. Honduras has long been a vital partner for the U.S. in helping to counter threats to both the region and the U.S. homeland. Honduras is uniquely positioned to help the U.S. stem the tide of drug trafficking and to help mitigate the flow of unlawful immigration.

1. Fueling US drug crisis

Link: Drug trafficking into the US, and the Honduran government isn’t strong enough to fight it

Ana Quintana, 2014. (Research Associate for Latin America in the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign and National Security Policy, Heritage Foundation.) “U.S. Foreign Assistance to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador” July 8, 2014. <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/us-foreign-assistance-mexico-guatemala-honduras-and-el-salvador>

It cannot be denied that Mexico and Central America’s Northern Triangle countries—Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador—are all facing chronic citizen and economic insecurity crises. Rampant corruption and weak state institutions have made it virtually impossible to combat threats posed by violent transnational gangs and organized criminal groups. [**END QUOTE**] Coupled with the issue of endemic corruption, the regional debt crises and weak state institutions plague the region. Honduras has the world’s highest homicide rates, averaging 91 per 100,000 citizens. El Salvador is fourth in the world with an average of 41 per 100,000, and Guatemala is fifth at 40 per 100,000. (In comparison, the U.S. average is five per 100,000.) [**SHE GOES ON TO SAY QUOTE:]** Located along a critical trafficking route, the isthmus is particularly vulnerable to illicit smuggling. Honduras alone is a layover spot for upwards of 79 percent of northward-bound drug flights.

Link: Major transshipment point for illicit narcotics and US security aid is attacking it

Peter J. Meyer, 2020. (Analyst in Latin American Affairs. Report for Congressional Research Service) “Honduras: Background and U.S. Relations” 27 Apr 2020. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34027.pdf>

Honduras is a major transshipment point for illicit narcotics. In 2018, approximately 53% of South American cocaine bound for the United States was shipped through Central America. The Caribbean coastal region of Honduras is reportedly particularly vulnerable to trafficking due to its remote location, limited infrastructure, and minimal government presence. The U.S. government has sought to strengthen counter narcotics cooperation with Honduras to reduce illicit flows through the country. [END QUOTE] Although the United States has not provided the Honduran government with any assistance that would support aerial interdiction since Honduras enacted an aerial intercept law in 2014, close bilateral cooperation has continued in several other areas. U.S. agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), have used CARSI funds to establish and support specially vetted units and task forces designed to combat transnational criminal organizations. These units, which include U.S. advisers and selected members of the Honduran security forces, carry out complex investigations into drug trafficking, money laundering, and other transnational crime. [HE GOES ON TO SAY QUOTE:] The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) provides additional counter narcotics assistance to Honduras. This support includes equipment intended to extend the reach of Honduran security forces and enable them to better control their national territories. It also includes specialized training.

Link: Honduras corruption doesn’t justify US disengagement. Long-term it pays off as their ability to cooperate with us increases

Ana Quintana and Ryan Carpenter 2018. (Quintana - Senior Policy Analyst, Latin America and Western Hemisphere, The Heritage Foundation. Carpenter, member of the Young Leaders Program at Heritage Foundation) 7 Feb 2018 “Why the U.S. Must Keep Working With Honduras, Despite Cases of Corruption <https://www.heritage.org/americas/commentary/why-the-us-must-keep-working-honduras-despite-cases-corruption>

 Recurring instances of corruption within Honduras’ government, such as the case of Aguilar, should not cause the U.S. to disengage. The U.S. must continue to work alongside its Honduran partners to [strengthen and develop its institutions.](https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/the-united-states-needs-expand-security-cooperation-honduras) Doing so will pay off in the long run. Strengthening Honduras’s institutions will increase their capacity and ability to cooperate with the U.S.

Link & Brink: Honduras is the gateway to drug trafficking and disengagement would be a mistake

Ana Quintana and Ryan Carpenter 2018. (Quintana - Senior Policy Analyst, Latin America and Western Hemisphere, The Heritage Foundation. Carpenter, member of the Young Leaders Program at Heritage Foundation) 7 Feb 2018 “Why the U.S. Must Keep Working With Honduras, Despite Cases of Corruption <https://www.heritage.org/americas/commentary/why-the-us-must-keep-working-honduras-despite-cases-corruption> (the last sentence is grammatically incorrect, but was written that way in the original)

In light of these revelations, some [progressives](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1299/text) are now questioning whether the U.S. ought to continue working with the Hondurans. But disengaging would be a critical mistake. Honduras has long been a vital partner for the U.S. in helping to counter threats to both the region and the U.S. homeland. Honduras is uniquely positioned to help the U.S. stem the tide of drug trafficking and to help mitigate the flow of unlawful immigration. Honduras sits right at the intersection of the drug producing countries in South America and the drug consuming population in the United States. Honduras is a doorway between these two regions that could either stay open to narcotrafficking and other illicit goods.

Impact: Death, disease and emotional harm

US Dept of Justice, National Drug Intelligence Center 2010. *National Drug Threat Assessment 2010* <https://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs38/38661/drugImpact.htm>

The consequences of illicit drug use are widespread, causing permanent physical and emotional damage to users and negatively impacting their families, coworkers, and many others with whom they have contact. Drug use negatively impacts a user's health, often leading to sickness and disease. In many cases, users die prematurely from drug overdoses or other drug-associated illnesses (see [text box](https://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs38/38661/drugImpact.htm#textbox1)). Some users are parents, whose deaths leave their children in the care of relatives or in foster care.

1. Illegal Immigration #1 – Social Cost

Link: Honduras is our largest source of illegal immigrants and we should be increasing security cooperation to deal with it

Ana Quintana, 2014. (Research Associate for Latin America in the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign and National Security Policy, Heritage Foundation.) “U.S. Foreign Assistance to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador” July 8, 2014. <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/us-foreign-assistance-mexico-guatemala-honduras-and-el-salvador>

Increase security cooperation with Honduras. As the home of the world’s highest murder rate, Honduras is also the largest source of unlawful immigrants. Yet U.S. restrictions on security assistance have been in place since FY 2012.

Link: If we cut security assistance, illegal immigration to the US will increase

Ana Rosa Quintana 2014 (Senior Policy Analyst, Latin America and Western Hemisphere) 17 July 2014 “Misguided U.S. Policies Fuel Central American Immigration Crisis” <https://www.heritage.org/immigration/commentary/misguided-us-policies-fuel-central-american-immigration-crisis> (“Northern Triangle” = Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador)

Security cooperation with the Northern Triangle countries must be expanded. The Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) was conceived as a supplement to Mexico’s Merida Initiative. Follow-up efforts have proven to be insufficient. Burdensome cooperation restrictions must also be lifted. Since fiscal 2012, Congress has withheld at least 20 percent of promised security cooperation funding to Honduras. In FY 2014, that increased to 35 percent. These same prohibitions limit Washington’s ability to help Guatemala secure its porous 600-mile-long border with Mexico. As Congress deliberates how to address our border crisis, it needs to look beyond securing our border and fixing a broken immigration system. Lawmakers must also reconsider whether funding restrictions are in America’s national interest. If security conditions in those countries continue to deteriorate, the incentives to flee to the United States will only increase.

Impact: Billions of dollars saved. Each illegal immigrant costs taxpayers over $8000

Matt O'Brien and Spencer Raley, 2017. (Matt: Director of Research for Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). Spencer: conducts research, and writes content for FAIR’s publications and website.) “The Fiscal Burden of Illegal Immigration on United States Taxpayers” September 27, 2017. <https://www.fairus.org/issue/publications-resources/fiscal-burden-illegal-immigration-united-states-taxpayers>

At the federal, state, and local levels, taxpayers shell out approximately $134.9 billion to cover the costs incurred by the presence of more than 12.5 million illegal aliens, and about 4.2 million citizen children of illegal aliens. That amounts to a tax burden of approximately $8,075 per illegal alien family member and a total of $115,894,597,664. The total cost of illegal immigration to U.S. taxpayers is both staggering and crippling. In 2013, FAIR estimated the total cost to be approximately $113 billion. So, in under four years, the cost has risen nearly $3 billion. This is a disturbing and unsustainable trend.

3. Illegal Immigration #2 – Gangs

Link: Honduras is a big source of illegal immigration and we should increase security cooperation to solve it

Cross apply the link in DA-1

Link: Immigrants from Honduras join violent gangs in the US

John Michael Siebler 2018 (Heritage Foundation Legal Fellow, directed the Foundation’s project to counter abuse of criminal law) 4 June 2018 Gang Violence: Has the Threat Been Exaggerated? <https://www.heritage.org/crime-and-justice/commentary/gang-violence-has-the-threat-been-exaggerated>

Angel Melendez, who leads Homeland Security Investigations for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in New York City, said unaccompanied male children originally from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala are, even without prior gang affiliation, particularly susceptible to MS-13's violent recruitment and retention tactics.

Impact: Crime and harm to society

John Michael Siebler 2018 (Heritage Foundation Legal Fellow, directed the Foundation’s project to counter abuse of criminal law) 4 June 2018 Gang Violence: Has the Threat Been Exaggerated? <https://www.heritage.org/crime-and-justice/commentary/gang-violence-has-the-threat-been-exaggerated>

Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., said he “can't emphasize enough how serious the MS-13 threat is.” MS-13 members committed 17 murders in 18 months in his district. In 2012, the Obama administration designated MS-13 a transnational criminal organization based on a “multitude of crimes that directly threaten the welfare and security of U.S. citizens.”

4. Crime & chaos in Honduras

Last time we suspended US security assistance, drug dealers took over and murder rates spiked

Ana Rosa Quintana 2014 (Senior Policy Analyst, Latin America and Western Hemisphere) 17 July 2014 “Misguided U.S. Policies Fuel Central American Immigration Crisis” <https://www.heritage.org/immigration/commentary/misguided-us-policies-fuel-central-american-immigration-crisis>

Consider the Obama administration’s response to Honduras’s constitutional crisis in 2009. For months, it tried to reinstate Manuel Zelaya, Honduras’s legally deposed president — a man who had blatantly violated his country’s constitution. Rather than support the democratic ambitions of a traditional partner, the administration responded by declaring the legal impeachment a military coup. It suspended critical aid and joint military operations, much in the form of counternarcotics assistance. Control over the country’s Caribbean coastline quickly fell to the drug traffickers. Predictably, homicide rates spiked.

US security aid to Honduras has reduced violence, combatted corruption and improved efforts to fight crime

PR Newswire 2020. “The articulated security strategy is key in reducing organized crime in Honduras” 12 Feb 2020 <https://apnews.com/press-release/pr-prnewswire/b05408c2e1a3ababf101d7dfdb0e5726>

As part of the setting up of elite bodies, and with the support of the United States government, personnel from the National Police and the Technical Agency for Criminal Investigation (ATIC) were trained as specialists in weapons and tactics, being the first group of Swat agents in Honduras, Deputy Security Minister Luis Suazo said. Both President Trump and the head of U.S. Southern Command, General John Kelly, has praised Honduras for its progress in reducing violence, combatting corruption, and cooperating with the U.S. in areas such as extradition. As part of his security strategy in the search for peace and the eradication of violence, President Hernández has also made special emphasis on strengthening criminal investigation and police intelligence and for the first time the country has police crime scientific laboratories, with state-of-the-art technology.

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