

Foreword

By Dr. Karen Finkenbinder

Michael Burgoyne has made a valuable contribution to stabilization. The 21st century requires a new way of thinking. U.S. experts such as David Bayley, Robert Perito, and Michael Dziedzic have discussed a security gap in post-conflict and failed states, and promoted ways to close it. The U.S. model of decentralized policing is not it. Rather, as Burgoyne notes, we must look to our partners that have Gendarmerie Type Forces (GTF) Stability Police Forces.

Though others may be able to do stability policing in the short-term, Stability Police made u

Building Better Gendarmeries in Mexico and the Northern Triangle

By Michael L. Burgoyne

Abstract

Mexico and Central America are facing a serious security crisis caused by powerful criminal gangs and transnational criminal organizations. With little hope for an immediate resolution to the problems of militarized criminal violence, some countries are turning to hybrid organizations, mixing police and military capabilities.

the initiative to form a National Quard that is still not operational but promises to be a unique security force combining both military and civilian security forces. Nascent experiences in Mexico and Central America have much to learn from European models of Stability Police Forces (SPF). The French Gendarmerie, Spanish Guardia Civil, and the Italian Carabinieri offer examples of highly capable SPF that can provide a useful context and learning for Mexico and Central America. These European forces share many common characteristics including: a powerful historical narrative, community policing experience, military capabilities, organic investigative powers, and a symbiotic relationship with prosecutors. Their combination of military capabilities with community policing provides a potential response to militarized criminal threats and was successful during the historical beginnings of European gendarmerie forces. While not all of the characteristics of European gendarmeries are applicable in Mexico and the Northern Triangle, they provide insights into a culture of mentorship and professionalism that can help guide SPF development. Furthermore, a lack of

Stability Police Forces

The academic literature has wrestled mightily to define and categorize SPFs. SPFs have been labeled paramilitary forces, militarized police, high-end police, gendarmerie, and constabulary forces. Often SPFs are characterized in contrast with community policing which

strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving

10 The terminology used can help shape arguments and perceptions of the forces being discussed. Labeling is part of an ongoing debate about the effectiveness and use of SPFs.¹¹

- army, military, militarized, and

scholar Roberto Perito rightly points out that the term originally was coined by British journalists to describe Nazi Brown Shirts and has also been used to describe groups like the Irish Republican Army and other violent organizations.¹³ Painting organizations like the French Gendarmerie with the same brush as the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia

connotation, implying that lightly armed community police have been exchanged for heavily armed troops.

bet 14 The term stability police force emerged in the

-torn or chaotic

15 In these situations, deployable police forces gained favor for their suitability in stability operations. Given the level of internal violence present in Mexico and in Central America, stability is an apt mission for security forces operating there. This study accepts a -end police force that engages in a range of tasks such as crowd and riot control, special weapons and tactics (SWAT), and investigations of organized criminal groups. 16

Often manifest in the use of certain terminology, there is a robust debate on the appropriateness of SPFs in general. For some opponents, SPFs represent a tool of state oppression through the militarization of the police at the expense of community policing and democratic norms.¹⁷ Political scientists Stephen Hill and Randall Beger warn of the dangers

focuses on citizen protection and human rights.¹⁸

Proponents of SPFs argue that they are a valuable tool in the current security environment marked by intrastate violence driven by insurgency, civil wars, terrorism, and powerful criminal organizations.¹⁹

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bridge the demands of community policing, complex investigations, and military (light ²¹ Perhaps most importantly for the purposes of this investigation, SPFs have been effective tools in state formation in Europe where they secured roads, maintained interior security, conducted law enforcement tasks, and allowed weak states to expand their territorial control.²²

It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the validity of these arguments in depth. While acknowledging the potential pitfalls inherent in the development and use of SPFs, this study accepts arguments that SPFs do effectively fill a critical security need for situations that exceed regular police capability but are incongruent with military skills and authorities. Although SPFs can operate as a deployable stability force, this study is focused on their ability to operate within their own countries and does not examine their expeditionary capability. Despite the limitations of the study, the examination of these three highly developed SPFs can provide useful data points for further investigation into the control of militarized police forces and capabilities that make them more effective at expeditionary operations. The focus here will be on identifying characteristics that can inform the potential organic development of SPFs in Mexico and Central America, where criminal violence is es struggle to fill.²³

Challenges in Mexico and Central America

On 6 April 2015, a group of 80 armed criminals set up a deliberate ambush position on a local two-

Público) in 2015.⁴² Created by the Honduran Congress, the PMOP has national jurisdiction and is c

43 Despite these efforts, 25 percent of Hondurans indicated that they or a family member had been a victim of a crime in 2017 and the homicide rate was 40 murders per 100,000 citizens.⁴⁴

Guatemala has a lower homicide rate than its Northern Triangle neighbors at 22.4 murders per 100,000 citizens. However, as a transit country for cocaine and a heroin producing country, Guatemala faces endemic corruption and drug violence. Mexican criminal organizations including los Zetas have been active in Guatemala. Police corruption was so severe that Guatemala invited the United Nations to help by granting investigative powers to the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). In 2015, Guatemalan President, Otto Perez Molina, resigned and was tried for corruption.

Guatemala has a long history of using the military in an internal policing role. In April of 2018, the government withdrew the military from its 18-year mission in Guatemalan cities supporting the police in law enforcement functions.⁴⁹ However, the military is still active outside of cities in a counterdrug and border security role.⁵⁰

French Gendarmerie Nationale

The French National Gendarmerie is a descendent of the Royal Maréchaussée formed during the 100 Years War (1337-1457). Initially designed to control military troops and bandits, the force would later expand its mandate to policing civilians as well. In 1791, the National Gendarmerie was officially formed by law.⁵¹ During its early history, the Gendarmerie and its predecessor, the Maréchaussée, played a crucial role in state formation and the consolidation of power by the French government over its territory.

The

securing territory and roadways. The Gendarmerie continues to maintain a hierarchical military structure. There are nearly 3,800 Gendarmerie barracks distributed throughout France. Gendarmerie stations, typically manned by between six and 50 personnel, report to departmental companies which in turn report to departmental groups then to regional headquarters, and finally to the Gendarmerie General Directorate. There are also 109 Mobile Gendarmerie Squadrons available to address civil unrest and reinforce territorial units. In addition, the Gendarmerie maintains special units including the National Gendarmerie Intervention Group (GIGN), a highly trained special response unit for high risk and terrorist situations.⁵²



practice there is significant overlap. Prosecutors play a key role in deconflicting jurisdiction and prioritizing efforts. 65

Members of the Guardia Civil are judicial police and can conduct investigations. One of the

cities. In addition, city and provincial police forces add to the mix of police operating in the same spaces.

Carabinieri are judicial police and conduct investigations and report to prosecutors who shape the investigative response to crimes. Prosecutors in Italy enjoy a high level of authority and are able to designate which police force is best suited to conduct a particular investigation. Similarly, prefects in Italy provide further guidance to the national level police forces. Prefects act as representatives of the national government and coordinators of police forces throughout Italy. They manage law enforcement activities in their areas of responsibility.

The Carabinieri are unique among the three forces examined in this study in their robust military capabilities. In addition to their widespread community policing presence, the Carabinieri maintains a mobile brigade consisting of seven regiments and five battalions. These units provide an internal policing capability to react to large scale public disorder or emergencies. In addition, a second mobile brigade provides units that can deploy

highly capable Carabinieri unit, equipped and trained exactly like a military parachute infantry regiment, but with personnel trained in police tasks. Italy utilizes this unit in overseas missions and also for patrolling in high risk or austere environments within Italy. An example of this type of mission was the deployment of the unit to Scily during the Scilian

Special Intervention Group which provides its counter-terror and high-risk special operations capability.⁷¹

Carabinieri training and recruitment mirrors the Gendarmerie and Guardia Civil. Individuals can enter the Carabinieri as either enlisted personnel, Non-Commissioned Officers (perhaps better translated as warrant officers), or officers. Enlisted personnel attend a six-month course, NCOs attend a three-year course, officers spend two years at the Italian Military

The Carabinieri point to three characteristics as foundational strengths of their organization: the station sergeant, the Carabinieri role in Italian society, and the diversity of experiences in assignments. Station sergeants command the 5,000 stations located throughout the country and lead small and large organizations in their community-policing role. These senior warrant officers, often with decades of experience, mentor junior carabinieri and are the point of contact for the population with law enforcement. Station sergeants often serve for over ten years in the same station and develop unmatched local knowledge of the people in their areas of responsibility.⁷³

has been institutionalized in public ceremonies and parades in which the town mayor, priest, and Carabinieri are represented. Under this system, the Carabinieri are an integral part of the daily lives of their communities.⁷⁴

Military training is closely tied to the dependency of the institution within their government. The Gendarmerie and Guardia Gvil are both under the control of their Ministries of the Interior. The Carabinieri are under the Ministry of Defense. All three forces were initially under their respective armies. Mexico and the Northern Triangle countries will need to decide where to form their SPFs based on the unique political circumstances of the country. Corruption and the effectiveness of civilian leaders within the Ministry of the Interior must be considered. Likewise, the potential to provide too much power to the Ministry of Defense could be a concern in countries like Guatemala with a history of military rule. Dependency relationships will naturally be a combination of budgetary and ope-3(u.0.000et8(n)on3(al)-59(r)4(esp)-

Table 1. Comparison of European SPF Units⁷⁹

| | French | Spanish Guardia | Italian |
|--------------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| | Gendarmerie | Civil | Carabinieri |
| Doctrine/ Missions | , , | Full spectrum: Community policing to military deployment | • |

presence since Porfirio Diaz. Smaller Central American states face fewer obstacles to the development of national police forces due to their size. However, the generation of an additional community policing force on top of their existing national police forces could be redundant. It is important to note, however, that all three European nations examined in this study have duplicative national law enforcement agencies. This perhaps inefficient system provides a check on corruption and creates healthy competition between police forces.

Although often vilified as militarized police, the Gendarmerie, Guardia Civil, and Carabinieri spend the majority of their efforts in traditional community policing roles where they work with the communit

through problem-solving strategies and police -

Gendarmerie Force (EUROGENDFOR), found

80 This experience

-organized.

is seen as vital when they are required to operate in more dangerous environments with more robust military equipment. In fact, service in units like the Carabinieri mobile brigades, the GIGN, or the Rapid Action Unit require initial service in a community-policing role. SPFs do maintain a robust military capability, but the community policing exp

personnel are just as vital as its equipment. This dynamic is misunderstood as politicians and security policy makers seek out powerful police units to take on militarized criminal threats. When searching for answers to these threats, it can become easy to latch onto the military capabilities of SPFs without realizing the importance of community policing experiences to their effectiveness.

Closely linked to community policing, all three SPFs instill judicial investigatory power in their personnel. This is possible due to the robust training plan and competitive recruitment process each force maintains. Without this capability, police become proximity police, no better than soldiers, only able to react when a crime is occurring immediately in front of them. Investigatory authority empowers officers and enables more effective policing.

With investigatory power comes a requirement to work closely with effective prosecutors. The prosecutor is a critical link between the judicial system and the SPF. Without functioning and capable prosecutors, SPF forces will not be able to achieve lasting public security results. The combination of investigatory powers and effective prosecutors allows SPFs to target organized crime elements and root out the most dangerous criminal elements.

Another common characteristic among the forces was a focus on mentorship. SPF personnel have long career timelines and mentoring subordinates is an honored tradition. Carabinieri

someone through a school. A Carabinieri is the combination of instruction, mentorship, and

81 Mentorship of this caliber can be difficult to manage in Mexico and Northern
Triangle countries where police units are frequently disbanded and formed, and where often
toxic mentorship poisons junior members with corrupt standards.
International cooperation offers a valuable solution to mentorship challenges. The European

Carabinieri was in part formed through a close partnership between Italy and Chile. Consistent and long-term efforts between a developing SPF and an existing SPF can develop a culture of mentorship based on honest and effective police work. In addition, opportunities for long-term exchanges at the junior level could provide opportunities for personnel in developing SPFs.

Finally, military capacity varied among the forces with the Carabinieri maintaining the most robust capabilities. However, the historical formation of these units tells a different story. In the beginning, these units maintained a significant military capability to take on bandits and insurgents. The current criminal situation in Mexico and the Northern Triangle is

development and prosecutor training. A great example of a judicial development program is the U.S. effort assisting the Mexican government in the transition to the accusatorial system from the inquisitional system. U.S. security cooperation under the umbrella of the Merida

federal judges. In addition, a \$87 million program for judicial transformation is working in support of federal authorities and all 31 Mexican states.⁹⁰ Simultaneously developing a functioning judiciary system is imperative for an effective SPF.

Mexico and the Northern Triangle face serious criminal threats and are all pursuing variations of SPF type forces to respond to these threats. The French Gendarmerie, Spanish Guardia Civil, and the Italian Carabinieri offer examples of highly capable SPFs. Their combination of military capabilities with community policing provides a potential response to militarized criminal threats and was successful during the historical beginnings of European gendarmerie forces. While not all of the characteristics of European gendarmeries are applicable in Mexico and the Northern Triangle, they provide insights into a culture of mentorship and professionalism that can help guide SPF development. Furthermore, a lack of U.S. expertise in SPFs speaks to a necessity to partner with European allies to achieve security cooperation goal

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