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Drug Trafficking, Terrorism, and Civilian Self-Defense in Peru



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Mexican security forces

What ever happened to the Shining Path? According to Steven Zech, its remnants now help protect Peru's illicit narcotics trade, which doesn't sit well with local communities. That's why they're forming tactically savvy civilian self-defense forces to combat what to them is an unwanted threat.

By Steven T. Zech for Combating Terrorism Center (CTC)

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Peru is poised to become the focal point of global efforts to combat the production and transportation of illegal narcotics in South America. Between 2006 and 2011, U.S. agencies provided \$5.2 billion in counternarcotics support to the Andean region of South America to curb the annual flow of hundreds of metric tons of cocaine.^[1] ([#_edn1](#)) Although Colombia received 76% of this funding, Peru is now the world's largest producer of coca leaves and is rapidly expanding domestic cocaine production.^[2] ([#_edn2](#)) In June 2012, Peruvian President Ollanta Humala gave the inaugural speech at the International Anti-Drug Conference in Lima. He assured members from more than 70 delegations that Peru is committed to a global effort to reduce the production, transport, and consumption of illegal narcotics. At the conference, the European Union pledged 34 million euros to help implement Peru's 2012-2016 Anti-Drug Strategy.^[3] ([#_edn3](#)) Since his election in 2011, President Humala has strengthened Peru's ties with the Barack Obama administration and in the coming year the United States will almost double its support for Peruvian counternarcotics and development efforts with a \$100 million contribution.^[4] ([#_edn4](#))

Strong ties between drug traffickers and remnants of the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) insurgency from the 1980s and 1990s complicate counterterrorism and counternarcotics efforts in Peru.^[5] ([#_edn5](#)) Sendero Luminoso, led by philosophy professor Abimael Guzmán, waged a violent campaign against any actor positioned to challenge their Maoist revolutionary program.^[6] ([#_edn6](#)) Guzmán and his followers originally targeted symbols of power in an effort to highlight social and economic injustice, as well as the inability of the state to address the people's needs.^[7] ([#_edn7](#)) The campaign later devolved into the indiscriminate and brutal targeting of civilians, security forces, and political actors alike.^[8] ([#_edn8](#)) After Guzmán's arrest in 1992, state security forces halted the revolutionary group's momentum and eventually defeated the armed insurgency.

Today, however, the remnants of the Sendero movement protect the illicit narcotics trade and use the profits to strengthen their organization and acquire advanced weaponry.^[9] ([#_edn9](#)) Drug traffickers and Sendero militants have disrupted local economies, generated increased insecurity, and stunted post-conflict institutional development in many regions that cultivate illegal coca. As policymakers and state security forces in Peru address these challenges, they must now also contend with a growing number of civilian self-defense forces. Civilian actors played a crucial role in the initial defeat of Sendero Luminoso in the 1990s, and many communities have reactivated local self-defense forces in the last few years. In some parts of Peru, armed civilian patrols confront criminal and insurgent organizations, and they will play an increasingly important role in addressing the challenges associated with state counterterrorism and counternarcotics efforts.

This article offers a summary of Peru's counternarcotics strategy, showing how the Peruvian state has attempted to simultaneously address security issues related to illegal narcotics production and armed Sendero militants. It then identifies the challenges faced by many communities affected by the illicit drug trade, as communities contend with state security forces, "narcoterrorists," as well as legal and economic pressures related to coca cultivation. Finally, the article examines the participation of civilian actors in confronting security challenges. It finds that civilian actors played a critical part in Sendero Luminoso's original defeat and will likely play an equally important role in combating the contemporary "narcoterrorist" threat.

Peru's Anti-Drug Strategy

When President Humala first took office in 2011, La Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo y Vida sin Drogas (DEVIDA), Peru's anti-drug agency, announced that it would scale back forced coca eradication and focus efforts on development projects and programs to promote social inclusion.^[10] ([#_edn10](#)) Peru's Anti-Drug Strategy of 2012-2016 emphasizes a holistic, multifaceted approach to combating drug production.^[11] ([#_edn11](#)) The initiatives outlined in the 2012-2016 strategy include alternative development efforts, various forms of interdiction, as well as prevention and treatment programs aimed at drug users. Many of the regions most affected by counternarcotics initiatives, however, have become increasingly militarized as key political leaders and state security forces implement these strategies. Peru has prioritized particular elements of interdiction and eradication as evidenced by Humala's commitment to eradicate 50% more illegal coca plants in 2013 than 2012.^[12] ([#_edn12](#)) Actual eradication surpassed targets with the removal of 23,600 hectares of coca crops in 2013, and DEVIDA has set an ambitious 30,000 hectare target for 2014.^[13] ([#_edn13](#)) Although key policymakers recognize the importance of pairing eradication with development and social inclusion programs, they often prioritize security concerns.^[14] ([#_edn14](#)) The national police (Policía Nacional del Perú, PNP) and the armed forces simultaneously combat the two primary sources of regional insecurity: drug traffickers and the remnants of the Sendero Luminoso insurgency. Until recently, they have prioritized counterterrorism efforts over halting the expansion of drug cultivation and trafficking. For example, the PNP had only one base dedicated to counternarcotics efforts in the communities surrounding the Apurímac, Ene, and Mantaro River valleys (the VRAEM) in 2012, while the armed forces combating terrorism had 29 bases.^[15] ([#_edn15](#)) Counterterrorism efforts in communities cultivating illegal coca generate additional challenges, as the military and police attempt to implement state counternarcotics strategies.^[16] ([#_edn16](#))

Communities in the VRAEM are bracing themselves for the Peruvian state's response to expanding coca plantations and processing sites.^[17] ([#_edn17](#)) Closer ties to the United States and increased dependence on U.S. funding may influence Peru's counternarcotics strategy to mirror past efforts in Colombia that prioritize eradication. A close alliance between drug traffickers and Sendero militants exacerbates the danger of militarizing counternarcotics efforts. Sendero Luminoso militants have taken on a mercenary role, and key political and military decision-makers believe that attacking the insurgent group's financial lifeline will lead to Sendero's defeat.

For example, General Leonardo Longa López, the new head of the VRAEM Special Command, explained recent Sendero attacks and kidnappings after a period of inactivity. Longa suggested that these actions are Sendero's last desperate reaction to the military's efforts to halt drug trafficking in the region. "The production supplies aren't getting through and the terrorist remnants have withdrawn," he said. "There are fewer and fewer [terrorists] because they're abandoning the ranks."^[18] ([#_edn18](#)) He believes that removing incentives offered by illegal narcotics production will eventually eliminate Sendero militants. Carmen Masías, the head of DEVIDA,

also recognized the symbiotic relationship between Sendero and the illegal drug economy. He emphasized the need to focus on eradication: "There are leftover terrorists to attack, but that's not the main problem. This year we've invested three billion [Peruvian] soles in the VRAEM and [coca cultivation] didn't go down a single hectare. When you don't eradicate, it doesn't affect drug-trafficking."^{[19] (# edn19)} For Masías, successful counternarcotics policy must include actively eliminating coca crops. These two key actors in Peruvian counternarcotics strategy think that the key to success includes interdiction (limiting supplies and transport) and eradication (removing crops).

Peruvian security forces have also actively engaged in counterterrorism operations. The arrest of Sendero leader Florindo Eleuterio Flores Hala (known as Comrade Artemio) in the Upper Huallaga Valley in 2012, as well as the deaths of "Alipio" and "Gabriel" in the VRAEM in 2013, removed important obstacles hindering state security forces' ability to enter these regions to combat terrorism and illegal drug production.^{[20] (# edn20)} The December 2013 arrest of Alexander Dimas Huaman (also known as Héctor), Artemio's successor, caused the head of Peru's national drug police to declare that Sendero has disappeared from the Upper Huallaga Valley and that the region has been pacified.^{[21] (# edn21)} Yet despite recent arrests that dealt temporary blows to the Quispe Palomino clan^{[22] (# edn22)} that now controls much of the VRAEM, civilians in that region remain doubtful about the military's capacity and intentions.^{[23] (# edn23)} The Quispe Palomino clan, headed by brothers Víctor and Jorge (aliases "camarada José" and "camarada Raúl"), recently demonstrated their ability to recover quickly from military blows to their organization by reasserting control over key drug routes shortly after sweeping arrests of suspected narcoterrorist actors. Armed columns of narcoterrorists took several communities by force, despite supposedly being under military protection.^{[24] (# edn204)} Furthermore, an indiscriminate military response in some communities left civilians with questions about the military's concern for their well-being. One civilian described the military operation that followed as a barrage of missile fire from a helicopter around the periphery of their village without clear targets.^{[25] (# edn25)}

Sendero Luminoso Threats and the Failure of a Coca Economy

Civilians in Peru feel they are once again caught "between two fires," fearful of violent reprisals from both Sendero and state security forces. One coca farmer in the VRAEM explained the dangers of leaving his modest wooden home during the night and warned, "You should not use a candle or flashlight."^{[26] (# edn26)} He pointed up into the hills to the north. "The military controls that area over there."^{[27] (# edn27)} Then he pointed toward the hills to the west, "And Sendero controls that area over there. Either one of them might take a shot at you if they see a light."^{[28] (# edn28)} Civilians often find themselves in an impossible situation with few options to ensure the safety of their families and improve their lives. Communities must avoid accusations and physical attacks from two fronts: state security forces and Sendero militants.

For example, during a spike in violence in 2008, the military killed numerous villagers in one VRAEM community whom they labeled "subversives."^{[29] (# edn29)} Months later, guerrillas came and abducted the village leader for supposedly collaborating with the military.^{[30] (# edn30)} Today, many communities continue to help Sendero Luminoso out of fear.^{[31] (# edn31)} With punitive violence from both Sendero and state security forces, combined with increased drug eradication efforts that threaten some farmers' livelihoods, many communities in the region want change or to simply be left alone.^{[32] (# edn32)}

Market pressures to grow the most profitable crops with more frequent harvests originally led local farmers to embrace illegal coca production. If local farmers could make a similar living cultivating alternative crops, however, some would voluntarily grow cacao, coffee, and other plants instead of coca. One farmer explained, "Of course! We would eradicate ourselves. We wouldn't need the army or police to do it. It would be magnificent."^{[33] (# edn33)} Coca has not provided a solution to the economic hardships faced by farmers and their families, and few farmers have made substantial profits through illegal coca.^{[34] (# edn34)}

Apart from continued poverty, farmers in the region have also started to recognize the devastating environmental effects of illegal coca cultivation. They have experienced environmental degradation in the form of a disappearing jungle canopy, the elimination of native wildlife like monkeys and parrots, and widespread soil erosion.^{[35] (# edn35)} More frequent harvests drain vital nutrients from the earth, and pesticides used to protect the vulnerable coca leaves have poisoned the soil. The effects of coca cultivation have disrupted the production of other important agricultural staples such as yucca.^{[36] (# edn36)} Collaborating with Sendero and drug traffickers has failed to improve the lives of farmers and has disrupted some indigenous groups' cultural traditions.^{[37] (# edn37)} Forced eradication by state security forces, however, will likely harm communities tied to the coca economy. Eradication does not work without supplementary programs that generate broad and equitable development, and finding sufficient resources to implement these programs is challenging.^{[38] (# edn38)}

Civilian Self-Defense in Peru

The civilian population will play an increasingly important role in Peru's recent push for eradication in the VRAEM. A similar effort in the Upper Huallaga Valley in the mid-2000s disrupted social order and led to widespread violence until the communities were able to organize and provide for their own security.^{[39] (# edn39)} Peru has a long history of civilian self-defense, and armed civilian actors still help to maintain social order in many rural regions of Peru. Communities in the Cajamarca and the Piura regions of Peru originally organized *rondas campesinas*^{[40] (# edn40)} (peasant rounds) in the 1970s to combat rampant cattle thievery.^{[41] (# edn41)} Some credit the presence of these organizations with limiting Sendero Luminoso expansion into these regions when the insurgent group initiated armed struggle in 1980.^{[42] (# edn42)} Another form of civilian self-defense, *comités de autodefensa* (CADs), emerged in the Central Sierras in the early 1980s to combat Sendero Luminoso.^{[43] (# edn43)} Early CADs developed "organically" through the communities' own volition. As the conflict progressed, the armed forces sometimes stepped in to co-opt these nascent organizations to provide them with logistical and material support, or in some cases to compel communities to organize if they had failed to do so on their own. The academic literature on violence during Peru's internal armed conflict recognizes civilian mobilization as a key component in the defeat of Sendero Luminoso.^{[44] (# edn44)} Policymakers and state security forces see the potential benefits of coordinating with community self-defense forces to complement current counterterrorism and counternarcotics operations, but the state has offered only minimal support in terms of financial resources.^{[45] (# edn45)} Civilian support and participation may prove crucial in defeating remnants of the Sendero Luminoso insurgency and halting the expansion of illegal narcotics production.

Past and present civilian participation in combating insurgent violence in this region is complicated. Although many contemporary civilian self-defense organizations in jungle communities have largely chosen not to become involved in issues related to drug trafficking and terrorism, many of the mountain communities leaving the VRAEM have recently reactivated patrols to respond to these challenges. For example, 24 communities around Luricocha coordinate with each other to train, organize patrols, and confront contemporary security challenges that the state is either unable or unwilling to address.^{[46] (# edn46)}

These cases allow for a glimpse into the actual process of civilian mobilization. Small groups of civilians armed with 12-gauge Winchester shotguns aim to deter drug trafficking and to protect the population from groups of bandits along the highway leading out of the jungle.^{[47] (# edn47)} Civilian patrols set up temporary roadblocks on the dirt highway an hour outside of Luricocha en route to the jungle. They stop and search automobiles and trucks traveling in the middle of the night.^{[48] (# edn48)} These actions generate great risks for the participants, but many of these individuals have previous military experience or belonged to civilian self-defense forces during the civil war.

Many policymakers oppose civilian efforts to militarize. The press, politicians, and academics often debated the matter in the media during the internal armed conflict of the 1980s and 1990s. Many were hesitant to arm civilians, fearful that by supplying rural communities with weapons they would arm the same militants they sought to defeat. In some cases, civilian militia leaders have committed human rights abuses or became involved in drug trafficking.^{[49] (# edn49)} For the most part, however, their fears never materialized and armed civilian actors never took on a large political role in their communities during the post-conflict period.^{[50] (# edn50)} Furthermore, Peru has developed a legal framework regarding civilian self-defense that facilitates state oversight and control of these organizations.^{[51] (# edn51)} Although the groups

operate autonomously, they coordinate with the armed forces. For example, one group near Huanta, in the Ayacucho region of Peru, carries out joint patrols with other groups and they meet once a month at a local military base for training and weapons maintenance.^{[52] (#_edn52)} Groups from the region also meet annually to commemorate their role in the initial defeat of Sendero Luminoso and reaffirm their support for the armed forces and police in pacification efforts as well as socioeconomic development.^{[53] (#_edn53)} Civilian self-defense initiatives collaborate with state security forces, which can generate better human intelligence. Community members who organize and participate in civilian self-defense know the terrain and the people, and they often share their knowledge with security forces.^{[54] (#_edn54)} These individuals also cater security provision to local needs. Civilian self-defense organizations have generated stronger relationships between local intermediaries and the state to help coordinate and implement development efforts.

Civilian Resistance in Peru and Beyond

Civilian participation in security provision can lead to drastically different outcomes. While the Peruvian case generally experienced fewer instances of predatory behavior by armed civilian self-defense forces, in other cases these types of groups exacerbated existing armed conflicts. Scholars and policymakers should not make broad generalizations about the benefits of armed civilian mobilization. The conditions in which armed civilian groups emerge often affect their goals and behavior.

For example, in Colombia, paramilitaries emerged to defend against violence tied to revolutionary groups and the drug trade. The Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, AUC) emerged as an umbrella organization coordinating disparate civilian paramilitaries. In Colombia, however, armed civilian defense mostly formed to protect private interests.^{[55] (#_edn55)} Paramilitary groups emerged as private protection organizations for landowners, cattle ranchers, or other business elites with interests in regions with conflict.^{[56] (#_edn56)} Large landholders in Colombia might pay armed civilians to protect their property and guarantee their safety.

Alternatively, in Peru, collective custodians and small landowners coordinated together to mobilize and protect their own collective interests. The formation of civilian self-defense forces in Peru must be understood as “the expression of a massive, autonomous decision on the part of the rural population.”^{[57] (#_edn57)} Continued coordination with state security forces and legal accountability helped minimize the risk of rogue paramilitary mobilization.

In addition to addressing immediate security concerns in this case, the Peruvian experience may shed light on other contemporary cases where armed civilian actors confront threats to social order. As many Mexican communities organize “self-policing” efforts to combat drug traffickers, and towns in northern Nigeria mobilize civilians to confront the Boko Haram Islamist insurgency, policymakers will benefit from a better understanding of the dynamics behind civilian resistance.^{[58] (#_edn58)} Peruvian civilian self-defense forces varied in their origins, behavior, levels of support they received from the military, and their post-conflict trajectory. The Peruvian case provides a unique opportunity for policymakers to learn from successes and failures when civilians help to combat security threats.

^{[1] (#_ednref1)} Counternarcotics Assistance: U.S. Agencies Have Allotted Billions in Andean Countries, but DOD Should Improve Its Reporting of Results (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012).

^{[2] (#_ednref2)} Perú Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca 2012 (New York: UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013).

^{[3] (#_ednref3)} “Peru: Uniting Against Drug Trafficking,” *Diálogo*, October, 1, 2012.

^{[4] (#_ednref4)} Simeon Tegel, “As US Ups Aid to Peru’s Drug Battle, Farmers Say They Will Fight to Defend Cocaine Source,” *NBC News*, October 12, 2013.

^{[5] (#_ednref5)} For more on the historical relationship between Sendero Luminoso and drug traffickers, see Gabriela Tarazona-Sevillano and John B. Reuter, *Sendero Luminoso and the Threat of Narcoterrorism* (New York: Praeger, 1990); Bruce H. Kay, “Violent Opportunities: The Rise and Fall of ‘King Coca’ and Shining Path,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 41:3 (1999): pp. 97-127; John T. Fishel, “Coca, Cocaine, Sicarios and Senderistas,” in Graham H. Turbiville ed., *Global Dimensions of High Intensity Crime and Low Intensity Conflict* (Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago, 1995): pp. 184-203; David Scott Palmer and Alberto Bolívar, “Peru’s Shining Path: Recent Dynamics and Future Prospects,” *Western Hemisphere Security Analysis Center*, 2011.

^{[6] (#_ednref6)} *Ibid.*

^{[7] (#_ednref7)} *Ibid.*

^{[8] (#_ednref8)} *Ibid.*

^{[9] (#_ednref9)} William Neuman, “Guerrilla Faction Leader is Captured in Peru,” *New York Times*, February 12, 2012; Kelly Hearn, “Shining Path on New Road as Drug Smugglers,” *Washington Times*, April 25, 2012; Kelly Hearn, “Peru Guerrillas Set Aside Rebellion for Drug Money,” *Washington Times*, April 26, 2012.

^{[10] (#_ednref10)} John M. Walsh and Coletta A. Youngers, “International ‘Anti-Drug’ Summit in Peru Attempts to Maintain Drug War Status Quo: Will It Succeed?” *Washington Office on Latin America*, June 22, 2012.

^{[11] (#_ednref11)} The full document, *Estrategia Nacional de Lucha Contra las Drogas 2012-2016*, is available at www.peru.gob.pe/docs/PLANES/11793/PLAN_11793_Estrategia_Nacional_de_Lucha_contra_las_Drogas_2012-2016_2012.pdf. The summary and implementation plan for DEVIDA, *Estrategia Nacional de Lucha Contra las Drogas 2012-2016*, is available at www.devida.gob.pe/images/documentosdisponibles/PPT_ENLCD_2012-2016.pdf.

^{[12] (#_ednref12)} In his annual address to the Peruvian public, President Humala noted that in 2012 they eradicated more than 14,000 hectares of illegal coca plants and in 2013 they sought to eradicate 22,000 more. See “Mensaje a la Nación del Señor Presidente Constitucional de la República Ollanta Humala Tasso, con motivo del 192º Aniversario de la Independencia Nacional,” *Presidencia de la República del Perú*, July 28, 2013. More recent figures place DEVIDA eradication goals at 30,000 hectares. See Vanessa Romo Espinoza, “Devida afirma que se entrará al Vraem para erradicar hoja de coca,” *El Comercio*, January 3, 2014.

[13] (#_ednref13) Charles Parkinson, "Peru Sets Record Coca Eradication Target for 2014," InSight Crime, January 6, 2014. To reach these new goals, Peru will need to expand eradication efforts to areas controlled by criminal organizations and Sendero militants protecting the coca crop.

[14] (#_ednref14) For example, the head of DEVIDA, Carmen Masías, and Peru's new president of the Council of Ministers, César Villanueva, both suggested that eradication must be accompanied by development efforts. See Sebastian Ortiz Martínez, "Devida: Villanueva 'contribuirá a reforzar' lucha antidrogas en el Vraem," El Comercio, October 31, 2013. When asked about his new role, however, Villanueva suggested that he will prioritize security. See Gerardo Caballero and José Santillan, "Cambio ministerial: los detalles de la llegada de Villanueva a la PCM," El Comercio, October 31, 2013.

[15] (#_ednref15) Hans Huerto Amado, "¿Qué es el Plan VRAE y por qué no funciona?" El Comercio, April 16, 2012. The VRAEM region produces the most illegal coca in Peru and is home to the strongest holdout of Sendero Luminoso insurgents. The VRAEM and the Upper Huallaga Valley are the two regions with the strongest Sendero and drug trafficking presence.

[16] (#_ednref16) Pablo G. Dreyfus, "When All the Evils Come Together: Cocaine, Corruption, and Shining Path in Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley, 1980 to 1995," Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice 15:4 (1999): pp. 370-396.

[17] (#_ednref17) Although total coca cultivation in Peru actually decreased 3.4% in 2012, cultivation levels rose in many regions, including in the VRAEM. See Perú Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca 2012, p. 26.

[18] (#_ednref18) Raul Mayo Filo and Vanessa Romo Espinoza, "Recrudescen los ataques terroristas en la zona del Vraem," El Comercio, March 2, 2014.

[19] (#_ednref19) Espinoza. The exchange rate between the nuevo sol and the U.S. dollar is about 2.75 to 1.

[20] (#_ednref20) For more on the arrest of "Artemio," see William Neuman, "Guerrilla Faction Leader is Captured in Peru," New York Times, February 12, 2012; "Peru Shining Path Leader Comrade Artemio Captured," BBC, February 13, 2012. For more on "Alipio" and "Gabriel," see Oscar Castilla, "Cabecilla de Sendero pidió a terroristas reagruparse tras caída de 'Alipio' y 'Gabriel,'" El Comercio, August 17, 2013; Mariella Balbi, "Jaime Antezana: 'El clan Quispe Palomino no volverá a ser igual,'" El Comercio, August 19, 2013.

[21] (#_ednref21) "Con captura de 'Héctor,' Sendero Luminoso desaparecería en el Huallaga," El Comercio, December 9, 2013.

[22] (#_ednref22) The Quispe Palomino clan is a powerful drug producing and trafficking organization operating in the VRAEM. The group focuses on drug trafficking, but maintains at least a nominal connection to Sendero Luminoso and their political ideology. The family and their organization had close ties to the revolutionary movement and its leadership dating back to the conflict in the 1980s and 1990s. The current leadership are the children of Martin Quispe, one of the founding members of Sendero Luminoso, in Ayacucho. For more information on the Quispe Palomino clan, see "La historia de la última generación de Sendero: el clan Quispe Palomino," Panorama, August 18, 2013; "Clan Quispe Palomino es una poderosa organización de la droga, afirman," RPP Noticias, April 22, 2012.

[23] (#_ednref23) Contemporary drug production is organized around clans or firmas based on local kinship or friendship ties. These groups maintain close relationships with groups of peasants that cultivate coca leaves and control drug trafficking out of the region. Some clans form alliances with Sendero members while others directly participate in Sendero Luminoso activities. Sendero simultaneously assists peasants involved in coca cultivation and provides protection for drug traffickers. See Vanda Felbab-Brown, Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2010), pp. 66-67.

[24] (#_ednref24) Gustavo Kanashiro Fonken, "El clan Quispe Palomino se ha recompuesto y recupera fuerzas en la selva," El Comercio, October 18, 2013.

[25] (#_ednref25) Ibid. Also, one coca farmer an hour outside Llochegua noted an increase in the frequency of helicopter flights overhead with no change in the presence of armed state actors on the ground. See personal interview, coca farmer, Peru, May 14, 2013.

[26] (#_ednref26) Personal interview, coca farmer, VRAEM, Peru, May 14, 2013.

[27] (#_ednref27) Ibid.

[28] (#_ednref28) Ibid.

[29] (#_ednref29) Simon Romero, "Cocaine Trade Helps Rebels Reignite War in Peru," New York Times, March 17, 2009.

[30] (#_ednref30) Ibid.

[31] (#_ednref31) "En el Vraem hay pobladores que se sienten obligados a ayudar a SL, dice José Cueto," El Comercio, August 20, 2013.

[32] (# ednref32) A teacher in one community stated, "What we want is that neither side interrupts our lives." See Joshua Partlow, "In Peru, a Rebellion Reborn," *Washington Post*, November 12, 2008.

[33] (# ednref33) Tegel.

[34] (# ednref34) Isaias Rojas, "The Push for Zero Coca: Democratic Transition and Counternarcotics Policy in Peru," *Drug War Monitor* 2:1 (2003). Coca farmers have traditionally made more than those who cultivate other agricultural goods, although these individual financial gains have not led to broader regional economic development or facilitated social mobility. See Felbab-Brown, pp. 37-38.

[35] (# ednref35) Personal interview, nephew of a coca plantation owner, VRAEM, Peru, May 14, 2013. He recently returned to the region after more than 20 years away and described the numerous environmental changes he observed as a result of transitioning to coca cultivation. Other crops yield harvests around twice a year, while farmers harvest coca leaves four or five times per year.

[36] (# ednref36) One coca farmer's wife explained that yucca used to be easier to find and much larger. Since they began to use so much pesticide for coca leaves, however, she has noticed a difference. See personal interview, coca farmer's wife, VRAEM, Peru, May 14, 2013.

[37] (# ednref37) For example, some indigenous communities in parts of the VRAEM (e.g., the Ashaninka) subsist largely on yucca and have resisted changes to their traditional way of life.

[38] (# ednref38) Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy, "Finding an Alternative to Illicit Opium Production in Afghanistan, and Elsewhere," *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 68:3 (2001): pp. 373-379.

[39] (# ednref39) Mirella van Dun, "The Drugs Industry and Peasant Self-Defence in a Peruvian Cocaine Enclave," *International Journal of Drug Policy* 23:6 (2012): pp. 442-448.

[40] (# ednref40) Rondas campesinas translates to "peasant rounds" and describes both the organization and the act of patrolling.

[41] (# ednref41) Dun.

[42] (# ednref42) Segundo Vargas Tarrillo, *Crisis, violencia y rondas campesinas*, Chota – Cajamarca (Tacna: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad Privada de Tacna, 1994); Orin Starn, *Nightwatch: The Making of a Movement in the Peruvian Andes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

[43] (# ednref43) Elsewhere these organizations may also be referred to as comités de defensa civil, defensa civil antisubversiva (DECAS), or rondas contrasubversivas.

[44] (# ednref44) For example see José Coronel, Carlos Iván Degregori, Ponciano del Pino, and Orin Starn, *Las rondas campesinas y la derrota de Sendero Luminoso* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1996); "Informe Final, Tomo II, Capítulo 1.5. Los comités de autodefensa," Comisión de la verdad y Reconciliación, undated, pp. 437-462; Carlos Iván Degregori, "Reaping the Whirlwind: The Rondas Campesinas and the Defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Ayacucho," in Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt eds., *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America* (New York: Zed Books, 1999); Oscar Espinosa, *Rondas campesinas y nativas en la Amazonia peruana* (Lima: Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica, 1995); Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-Rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg, 2003); Carlos Tapia, *Autodefensa armada del campesinado* (Lima: Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Participación, 1995).

[45] (# ednref45) Personal interview, self-defense force leader in Luricocha at the municipal government meeting of the "Commission for Peace in Luricocha," Peru, May 9, 2013. The interview subject suggested that the reasons for the lack of support reflected a combination of limited resources, corruption in the allocation of funds, and prioritizing the funding of state-controlled institutions.

[46] (# ednref46) *Ibid.*

[47] (# ednref47) Jungle community self-defense forces often respond to domestic disturbances and other issues, but stay clear of insurgents and drug traffickers out of fear (e.g., in Pichari and Llochegua). The author bases this observation on comments from an interview with self-defense organization leaders on May 13 and May 15, 2013. Near Huanta, the patrols reorganized several years back and have brought increased order to their communities. Some interview subjects suggested that two or three years ago one could not walk the streets at night, but now the streets are safer. This author's research on civilian self-defense forces finds that community narratives play a crucial role in explaining the emergence of these groups and their behavior during the conflict. Community narratives help leaders bring meaning to the changing political landscape and define inter-group relations among the various armed actors.

[48] (# ednref48) This author accompanied a commander and six other armed men on patrol on May 29, 2013, to observe civilian self-defense forces in action. They set up a roadblock from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. to stop passing cars. They were especially interested in automobiles carrying only groups of young men.

[49] (#_ednref49) For example, several interview subjects suggested that the infamous Comando Huayhuaco, a fearsome civilian militia leader in the late 1980s, had previously organized members of his community to collaborate with the Sendero insurgency. But, later on, he saw the devastation they brought to the region and he switched sides. After organizing and patrolling throughout Ayacucho to help defeat the Sendero insurgency, he later became involved in drug trafficking, leading to a national scandal and stoking fears of an armed peasantry tasked with security provision.

[50] (#_ednref50) This assertion is based on interviews in dozens of communities in Ayacucho and Junín, April through June 2013, and on comments made by participants of a regional congress for victims and displaced people in Junín, April 27-28, 2013.

[51] (#_ednref51) For more on legal issues pertaining to armed civilian actors in Peru, see Alejandro Laos F., Edgardo Rodríguez Gómez, and Pastor Paredes Diez Canseco, *Rondando por nuestra ley: la exitosa experiencia de incidencia política y cabildeo de la Ley de Rondas Campesinas* (Lima: Red Interamericana para la Democracia, 2003).

[52] (#_ednref52) Personal interview, self-defense force leader, Huanta, Ayacucho, May 29, 2013.

[53] (#_ednref53) "Comités de autodefensa del VRAEM celebran XXI aniversario de lucha contra el terrorismo," Presidencia del Consejo de Ministros, May 22, 2013. Communities have formed self-defense forces in parts of the VRAEM as well, sometimes seeking aid from the state security forces. For example, see María Elena Hidalgo, "Comités de Autodefensa solo tienen 18 escopetas para combatir al 'camarada Gabriel,'" *La República*, July 16, 2012.

[54] (#_ednref54) *Ibid.*

[55] (#_ednref55) Felbab-Brown, p. 94.

[56] (#_ednref56) *Ibid.*

[57] (#_ednref57) Carlos Basombrio, "Militarization of Public Security in Peru," in Hugo Frühling, Joseph S. Tulchin, and Heather A. Golding eds., *Crime and Violence in Latin America: Citizen Security, Democracy, and the State* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2003), p. 161.

[58] (#_ednref58) For more on cases of Mexican communities organizing "self-policing" efforts, see Ioan Grillo, "Mexico's Vigilante Militias Rout the Knights Templar Drug Cartel," *CTC Sentinel* 7:4 (2014); Karla Zabudovsky, "Mexican Violence Prompts Self-Policing by Civilians," *New York Times*, January 26, 2013; Linda Pressly, "Mexico's Vigilante Law Enforcers," *BBC News Magazine*, April 16, 2013; Katie Orlinsky, "Mexico's Female Vigilante Squads," *Daily Beast*, October 5, 2013. For more on the case of civilian self-defense and an emerging "vigilante war" in Nigeria, see "Nigeria's Vigilantes Take on Boko Haram," *BBC*, July 23, 2013.

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