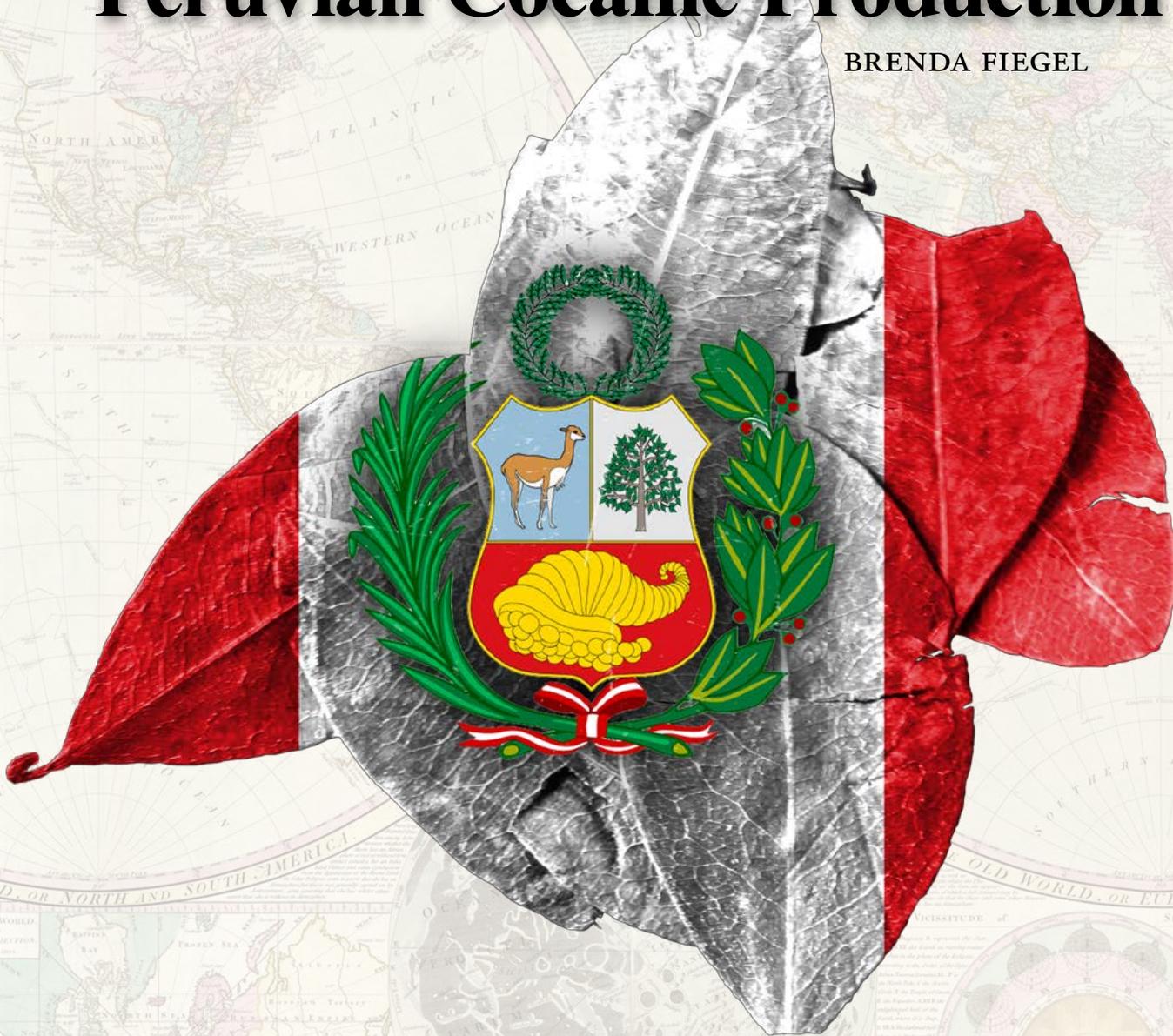


BOWLES'S *NEW AND ACCURATE MAP OF THE WORLD, OR TERRESTRIAL GLOBE*, laid down from the *BEST OBSERVATIONS* and *NEWEST DISCOVERIES*; particularly those of the celebrated *CIRCUMNAVIGATORS*: Illustrated with a variety of useful *PROJECTIONS* and *REPRESENTATIONS* of the *HEAVENLY BODIES*: the most approved *ASTRONOMICAL* and *GEOGRAPHICAL DEFINITIONS, TABLES, and PROBLEMS*. With an easy and familiar Explanation of the most curious and interesting *Phenomena in the UNIVERSAL SYSTEM*. Printed by W. Taylor, Chancery Lane, London.



Human Capital Needed to Support Peruvian Cocaine Production

BRENDA FIEGEL



Open Source, Foreign Perspective, Underconsidered/Understudied Topics

The Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, is an open source research organization of the U.S. Army. It was founded in 1986 as an innovative program that brought together military specialists and civilian academics to focus on military and security topics derived from unclassified, foreign media. Today FMSO maintains this research tradition of special insight and highly collaborative work by conducting unclassified research on foreign perspectives of defense and security issues that are understudied or unconsidered.

Author Background

Brenda Fiegel is an Intelligence Analyst and the Editor of the Latin American Operational Environment Watch at the Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. FMSO conducts open-source and foreign collaborative research, focusing on the foreign perspectives of understudied and unconsidered defense and security issues. Her specific research expertise includes “US/Mexico foreign relations,” “US/Mexico border security threats,” “Mexican and Central American violence/extremist groups to include drug cartels” and “Conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Mexico and Central America.” She has lectured on these topics in professional military education settings, at Interagency Security Conferences, at Customs and Border Patrol Facilities, and at academic forums.



FMSO has provided some editing, format, and graphics to this paper to conform to organizational standards. Academic conventions, source referencing, and citation style are those of the author.

The views expressed are those of the author and do not represent the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

Human Capital Needed to Support Peruvian Cocaine Production

BRENDA FIEGEL

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Peru has officially surpassed Colombia as the world's premier producer of cocaine for the first time in ten years, although this is not the first time the country has been classified as such. Looking back to the early 90s, Peru was the world's top cocaine producer, but effective Peruvian antidrug policies and a killer root fungus which plagued coca leaves were just some of the factors that resulted in a market shift to Colombia in early 2000. From that time forward Peruvian production continued, but it took almost 13 years to regain 90s-level production. Today, however, Peruvian coca growers are using more land per square hectare to produce cocaine than any other country in the world. Moreover, while cocaine production in and of itself is newsworthy, one overlooked aspect of this increased production is the small army of independent soldiers required to run a successful criminal enterprise. In the case of Peru, approximately 60,000 individuals and 12,000 families are currently involved in Shining-Path-controlled drug-trafficking networks operating in the Valleys of the Apurimac, Ene and Mantaro Rivers (VRAEM) in Peru; those in highest demand are skilled pilots, day laborers, drug mules, and coca leaf farmers.¹

Pilots

On a daily basis, Peruvian authorities detect 3-7 narco flights in the VRAEM and Pichis Palcazu regions of Peru but are not able to shoot them down, as current legislation does not allow for this, despite the fact that previous antinarcotics programs did just that in the early 90s. Instead, authorities most commonly intercept narco flights after they have landed, which increases the odds of success for pilots, as Shining Path intelligence regarding police and military presence is readily available. Reduced risk may also be the catalyst for students flocking to pilot-training programs in Bolivia, where at least ten new aviation schools have opened in Santa Cruz to meet demand. These schools are famous for training narco pilots from Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia at the cost of \$30,000-\$40,000 per student. This tuition can easily be paid back with 2-3 successful cocaine runs, as, depending on the quantity being transported, pilots may earn \$25,000 or more for a single trip. In listening to radio transmissions from pilots, Peruvian authorities are reporting that many of the newest ones are of Bolivian descent. They also reported information indicating that planes utilized for this type of activity in Peru are generally registered in Bolivia and Paraguay.²

Day Laborers

In addition to augmenting their pilot force, traffickers are also building more clandestine airstrips not only in traditional production areas such as the VRAEM, but also in Satipo, where the topography is flatter. The maintenance of airstrips in jungle regions is high, and because they cannot be built without locals knowing, traffickers commonly contract villagers to work as day laborers to build and maintain them. What is interesting to note about clandestine landing strips is that they are generally built in close proximity to one another.³ This is because pilots are usually informed of their final destination only minutes before landing in case the authorities are present. If they are, day laborers and collaborating villagers can quickly move shipments from one location to the next and coordinate last-minute changes if necessary. For this work, day laborers and supporting villagers are paid a lump sum of \$10,000 each time a cocaine flight successfully departs.⁴

Mochileros (backpackers)

If cocaine shipments do not depart from Peru via air, ground or water routes may be utilized by individuals known as “mochileros.” These mochileros are responsible for hauling 15-30 cocaine bricks (usually weighing around 1 kilogram each) out of the jungle to their point of departure, which is generally a port, an airport, or a principal roadway.⁵ They are paid \$20-30 for each kilogram that is safely delivered to its final destination. Peruvian authorities have identified ten routes commonly utilized by mochileros in the VRAEM region and indicated that those areas with strong Shining Path presence are the most secure. In order to protect their shipments from possible seizure or theft, the Shining Path mandates that mochileros travel in groups of 4-15 and

A Look at the Drug Routes Used by Human Drug Mules

- ▶ Poverty and lack of employment opportunities in Peru make the “easy” money earned by trafficking cocaine look appealing to the youth population.
- ▶ The majority of traffickers have not finished grade school and very few have high school education.
- ▶ Drug mules commonly find work opportunities through friends that are already involved in the business.
- ▶ Drug mules travel in groups of 3-4 and are almost exclusively male.
- ▶ Shining Path members (Peruvian based terrorist group) are known to provide mochileros with route information.



Ref: ●—● Route 1 ●—● Route 2 ●—● Route 3



commonly provides each individual with weapons and a radio communications device. Regarding the trip itself, total travel from start to finish ranges between 2-5 days and is conducted at night or during the early morning hours to avoid detection. As reported by La Republica, most mochileros are able to make 6-10 trips before being arrested. This source further reported that those willing to do the work of a mochilero are most commonly males between the ages of 18 and 25.

Cocaleros (Coca Leaf Farmers)

Cocaleros are individuals who are responsible for growing and harvesting coca leaves. They are key to the success of drug traffickers in Peru, because to produce a single pound of cocaine, traffickers need roughly one metric ton of dried leaves. This means that traffickers actively co-opt the purchase of these leaves through intermediaries and are willing to pay higher prices for the leaves than ENACO (Peruvian official buyer of coca leaves for legitimate uses, such as medicines and teas). In many cases there is no question that farmers will choose to grow coca leaves and sell them to intermediaries instead of ENACO. First, the intermediaries pay up to eight times more. Second, coca leaves can be harvested up to four times a year and generate exponentially higher profits than cacao or coffee.⁶ Moreover, despite the fact that coca leaves deplete the soil of nutrients needed to grow future crops for years to come, many families are willing to take this risk in exchange for the immediate financial return. During an interview a cocalero identified as Teodoro Alzamora underscored this idea by saying “Coca is what gives us clothes to wear and medicine when we are sick. It feeds our children. We are not ‘narcos.’ What else are we supposed to do? When we grow cassava or bananas no one wants to buy them. But they come almost every day to buy our coca.”⁷

As evidenced by previous examples, increased cocaine trafficking in Peru is largely dependent on human capital. From a financial perspective, drug trafficking and activities needed to support it pay more than other economic alternatives in the VRAEM region. Despite the financial incentives drug trafficking provides to day laborers, mochileros and farmers, however, the Peruvian

government is looking to provide this large work force with financially feasible alternatives by adapting current antidrug tenets such as coca-leaf eradication. In doing this, the hope is that citizens will be able to thrive on legal financial activities, such as growing coffee or cocoa beans, and that once again Peru will fall from its undesired ranking of being the world's premier producer of cocaine.

Coca-Leaf Eradication vs. Coffee and Cocoa Production

For decades the Peruvian government has supported coca-leaf eradication efforts in an attempt to thwart growth. This fractious strategy did negatively affect drug traffickers and the Shining Path, but it also affected the much needed income that coca-leaf growth directly or indirectly provides to thousands of day laborers, mochileros and cocaleros in the VRAEM region. Past policy also created a conflictive rather than collaborative relationship with Peruvian citizens working in the drug industry, as their profit margin directly decreased through eradication efforts.

In an attempt to address the effects of eradication on citizens, Peruvian President Ollanta Humala announced the implementation of a new antidrug strategy in June 2014 aimed at incentivizing the voluntary take-up of licit crops in an attempt to limit land used to produce coca leaves. More than a plan to support citizens, the new approach is proactive in the sense that it prevents coca-leaf from being planted by farmers in the first place. As part of this program, the government will aid farmers in converting 5,000 hectares of coca leaves to alternative crops such as coffee and cocoa in the unruly Apurimac and Ene River Valley (VRAE).⁸

Disrupting the Peru-Bolivia Cocaine Air Bridge

Peru is also taking steps to disrupt the air bridge utilized by narco pilots to shuttle cocaine from the VRAEM region to Bolivia. To do this, Peruvian Defense Minister Pedro Cateriano reported that the Peruvian government plans to purchase several military planes, in addition to installing four antidrug radars and ten military bases in the VRAEM. He further stated that the government would obtain two C-27J transport aircraft, along with other aircraft to support armed forces in the

region. As reported by La Republica, these efforts have been met with fierce opposition from the Shining Path in the form of attacks against soldiers.⁹

In creating new antidrug strategies in the VRAEM region, the Peruvian government will face multiple challenges. First, incentivizing the voluntary take-up of licit crops will necessitate large governmental expenditures that may not be sustainable in the near future. Additionally, any renegeing of financial promises made to already skeptical citizens in the VRAEM region could undermine the entire effort and possibly prompt their return to coca-leaf production. Second, dedicated growers may not be able to cooperate with government incentive programs despite their desire to do so, as the Shining Path still holds considerable control over many rural villages and producing areas in the region. Finally, government attempts to militarize the Shining-Path-controlled VRAEM region will be fiercely defended, as illustrated by multiple attacks against military personnel earlier this year.

END NOTES

1. Spanish Source: “El Hogar De La Senorita Coca” (The Home of the Cocaine Madame), *El Universal*. Accessed on 09 October 2014 from <http://www.domingoeluniversal.mx/historias/detalle/El+hogar+de+la+se%C3%B1orita+Coca-2462>
2. “Las rutas de tráfico de cocaína en Perú se multiplica.” *El Pais*. Accessed on November 21, 2014 from http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2014/01/16/actualidad/1389886085_763693.html
3. “El Hogar De La Senorita Coca” [Since you’ve already cited this source, you do not need to repeat all of the bibliographical information]
4. Perú y cultivo de hoja de coca. *La Republica*. Accessed on October 10, 2014 from <http://www.larepublica.pe/columnistas/punto-de-vista/peru-y-cultivo-de-hoja-de-coca-26-09-2013>
5. Los ‘Mochileros’ del VRAE. Carretas. Accessed on December 05 2014 from <http://www.caretas.com.pe/Main.asp?T=3082&idE=825&idS=263#.VIIIzNF0ztw>
6. “El Hogar De La Senorita Coca”
7. “Peru: Cocaine King’s Riches Don’t Reach Growers.” *Global Post*. Accessed on November 25, 2014 from <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/americas/peru/131014/cocaine-coca-vrae-farmers-drug-war>
8. Humala: Perú dejará de ser mayor productor mundial de cocaína. *El Comercio*. Accessed on November 5, 2014 from <http://elcomercio.pe/politica/gobierno/humala-peru-dejara-mayor-productor-mundial-cocaina-noticia-1760098>
9. Perú y cultivo de hoja de coca. *La Republica*. Accessed on October 10, 2014 from <http://www.larepublica.pe/columnistas/punto-de-vista/peru-y-cultivo-de-hoja-de-coca-26-09-2013>