

Rachel and I affirm.

Contention One is Securing Food.

Rovirosa 16 finds that,

José E. Calzada Rovirosa 16 (Rovirosa is Mexico's Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, and the former Governor of the state of Queretaro, July 11, 2016. "As the EU Weakens, the Western Hemisphere's Alliance, NAFTA, Needs to Build on Its Success."

<http://www.insidesources.com/as-the-eu-weakens-the-western-hemispheres-alliance-nafta-needs-to-build-on-its-success/> // RH

The decision by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union gives North America a unique opportunity to assert its economic and political leadership among Western democracies. We are already the largest single economic bloc in the world, and, at a time of intense skepticism, we can show how increased trade and economic integration brings prosperity. Our own economic union, the North American Free Trade Agreement, has been working well for a quarter-century. In the face of wave of misguided isolationism, it's time to make it world's most *competitive and* powerful exporting platform. Economic malaise has been haunting Europe for two decades, and the Brexit vote seemed to pin the blame on economic openness. That is precisely the wrong culprit. In fact, as NAFTA has demonstrated, trade is a powerful engine of growth, innovation and investment in human capital — all critical to promoting a more balanced and inclusive economy. *I have been puzzled by criticisms of NAFTA.* Since it went into force, U.S. manufacturing exports to Mexico and Canada have increased 258 percent, with exports of computer and electronic products, furniture, paper, and fabricated metals more than tripling. The U.S. maintains a large and growing manufacturing trade surplus with my country and Canada. We need more trade and integration, not less. That was the message of last month's Summit of North American Leaders held in Canada. That meeting took the first step in developing a

common strategy to face the challenges that the rise of other blocs, especially the Asian Pacific region, are creating. Consider agriculture. **NAFTA has become the world's single most important source of food – and the most reliable supplier** at a time **when**

urbanization and climate change are putting new pressures on agricultural systems all over the world. Mexico is the 12th largest global food exporter, Canada is fourth, and the U.S. is first. All of us promote agricultural practices that boost productivity and protect natural

resources. Mexico is a founding member of the Global Alliance for Smart-Climate Agriculture, a United Nations initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. We have a cooperation project to improve the resilience of agriculture by building climate hubs in arid and tropical zones in Mexico. Last year, Mexico exported \$22 billion worth of agricultural products to the U.S., our number-one market destination while the U.S. sent \$18.5 billion worth to Mexico, the third-largest market for U.S. food exports after China and Canada. Mexico supplies about two-thirds of the horticultural products and about one-third of the fruits entering the United States. Right now, 6 million U.S. jobs depend on trade with Mexico and the number is rising. U.S.

border states are highly integrated to the Mexican economy. Exports from Texas to Mexico totaled \$95 billion last year, or \$12,000 for every Texas household. **By combining**

our respective comparative advantages with existing port and transport infrastructure, the

Western Hemisphere has become an international leader in cereals, pork, beef, fruits and

vegetables, beverages like beer and tequila, dairy and processed products. Mexico is working

hard to further develop its logistics networks for agriculture, improving sanitary inspections, quality controls, stock management

and tracking of goods. We are encouraging small producers, especially, to become part of an integrated and highly efficient value chain that, without a doubt, will be the cornerstone for NAFTA's future competitiveness. Since NAFTA, Mexico has showed a strong commitment to maintain a stable and financially sound macroeconomic environment, plus policies friendly toward trade and foreign investments. Unlike many emerging markets, now in turbulence, our GDP continues to grow briskly and consistently, and we have become a major destination for international investments. Queretaro, the central Mexican state where I was formerly governor, hosts such global companies as Siemens, General Electric, Bombardier, and Samsung. In Latin America, Mexico has taken the lead in promoting cooperation and economic integration through initiatives such as the Pacific Alliance with Chile, Colombia and Peru. And we have a critical role to play in new agreements like the Transpacific Partnership. At a time when the EU is losing its third-largest economy, our own Western Hemisphere alliance needs to grow even stronger. We need more trade and integration, not less. That was the message of last month's Summit of North American Leaders held in Canada. That meeting took the first step in developing a common strategy to face the challenges that the rise of other blocs, especially the Asian Pacific region, are creating.

These systems are critical, because, **Harvest Help 12** explains that

Harvest Help, 2012, "Causes of Food Insecurity in African and Other Third World Countries," No Publication, <http://www.harvesthelp.org.uk/causes-of-food-insecurity-in-african-and-other-third-world-countries.html> // RH

Drought and other extreme weather events. The **comparison of the severest food crises in the later history reveals that all were preceded by drought or other extreme weather events. They resulted in poor or failed harvests which in turn resulted in food scarcity and high prices of the available food.**

Not only does NAFTA ensure that more people get safer, easier access to food and are thus able to survive without fear of food insecurity or starvation, but preventing food scarcity prevents conflict.

Koren and Bagozzi 16 explain that

Koren and Bagozzi 16 - PhD Candidate in Political Science at U Minnesota; Bagozzi Assistant Professor of Political Science & International Relations at U Delaware (Ore and Benjamin, 9/15/16 "From global to local, food insecurity is associated with contemporary armed conflicts," *Food Security*, DOI 10.1007/s12571-016-0610-x, Available online at <http://www.benjaminbagozzi.com/uploads/1/2/5/7/12579534/koren-bagozzi-fs.pdf>) // RH

Note that these arguments do not posit that cropland – in and of itself – is at a higher risk for conflict. The onset of violence, as mentioned above, is the result of many different conditions: political (Buhaug 2010 ; Fearon and Laitin 2003), economic (Hegre and Sambanis 2006 ; Collier and Hoeffler 2005), and social (Scheffran et al. 2012). Rather, it posits that within conflict prone regions and countries, **areas with** more access to food, or cropland, but **less food availability** per capita, may **experience more**

conflict, all else equal. A variety of factors, ranging from political structures to economic development to better infrastructure and technology, distinguish the agricultural countryside of Iowa or northern France from that of the Sahel or northern India. The primary models discussed below employ different control variables to account for these different issues. In addition, several robustness models (reported in Tables S1 and S2 in the Robustness Section) further account for the potential that advanced industrialized democracies are effectively immune to (civil) war by treating such cases as zero-inflated and estimating this propensity alongside the primary relationships of interest, or estimating only regions that might be more prone to experiencing (climate change related) conflict. The argument developed here complements current theories by underscoring the independent effect of **food insecurity**

[leads to a] on conflict. Increased access to food resources gives belligerents increased opportunity for confrontation, while decreased availability gives them the willingness to fight over these resources. A better understanding of these violent dynamics can be achieved by highlighting the high premium armed actors place on securing food resources, which suggests – if current food security trends are correct (FAO 2008 ; Barrett 2010) – that we will see an increase in armed conflict related to food resources. The argument developed here accordingly suggests the following two hypotheses: H1: Higher demand, i.e. more access to food resources, increases the likelihood of (civil) conflict. H2: Higher supply, i.e. more availability of food per person within areas that offer access to food, decreases the likelihood of (civil) conflict relationship between food insecurity on one hand, and the occurrence and persistence of social conflict on the other. What do these findings imply about the effect of food insecurity and conflict? Naturally, even the most detailed and elaborate models are simplistic, especially when containing as diverse a range of observations as those examined above. Nevertheless, in terms of conditional probabilities, all models show a statistically significant first difference change of

approximately **+92 % [increase] in the probability of conflict** when a high risk scenario is simulated for an average cell. 4 The conditional probabilities discussed above highlight the inherent complexity of social systems, as a phenomenon as notable as violent conflict ultimately arises due to a variety of stressors. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the above findings should not be interpreted as explaining conflict onset. Conflict can erupt due to various political (Buhaug 2010 ; Fearon and Laitin 2003) or economic (Hegre and Sambanis 2006 ; Collier and Hoeffler 2005) reasons – which may or may not be related to food insecurity – that are beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, the present study more simply suggests that political violence will have a higher likelihood of concentrating in regions that (i) offer more access to food resources and (ii) face low levels of food availability within areas that offer some access to food resources. This study adopts an economic perspective on food security to explain this variation in the concentration of social conflict. From the demand side, violent conflict is most likely to revolve primarily around access to food sources. **When food insecurity produces higher**

demands for food, these demands will directly compel groups and individuals to seek out and fight over existing food resources, rather than leading these actors to pursue and fight over geographic areas that lack any (or have very little) agricultural resources. Thus, access to croplands and food is a necessary condition for food insecurity-induced conflict, which is confirmed in the crop-land analyses presented here. From the supply side, and within those areas that do already offer access to agriculture and/or food, conflict is most likely to occur in regions that offer lower levels of food availability, or insufficient food supplies. This is because lower food availability (or supplies) in these contexts directly implies higher levels of resource scarcity, which can engender social grievances, and ultimately, social and political conflict (Brinkman and Hendrix 2011 ; Hendrix and Brinkman 2013).

Harvey 11 finds that

Harvey 11 – environmental correspondent for the Guardian (Fiona, February 2011, "Failure to act on crop shortages fuelling political instability, experts warn," <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/feb/07/crop-shortages-political-instability>) // RH

World leaders are ignoring potentially disastrous shortages of key crops, and their failures are fuelling political instability in key regions, food experts have warned.

Food prices have hit record levels in recent weeks, according to the United Nations, and **soaring prices for staples** such as grains over the past few months are

thought to **have been one of the factors contributing to an explosive mix of popular unrest** in Egypt and Tunisia. The crises in those countries have served as a stark example of what can happen when food prices spiral out of control and [they] add to existing political problems, said Lester Brown, founder of the Earth Policy Institute. "It's easy to see how **the food supply can translate directly into political unrest**," he said.

Richard Ferguson, global head of agriculture at Renaissance Capital, an investment bank specialising in emerging markets, said the problems were likely to spread. "Food prices are absolutely core to a lot of these disturbances. If you are 25 years old, with no access to education, no income and live in a politically repressed environment, you are going to be pretty angry when the price of food goes up the way it is." He said **sharply rising food prices acted "as a catalyst" to foment political**

unrest, when added to other concerns such as a lack of democracy. While food was not the biggest cause of the Middle East protests, there has been widespread discontent over rampant food price inflation that has left millions of poor families struggling to find enough to eat. Egypt is the world's biggest importer of wheat. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation said this week that world food prices hit a record high in January, for the seventh consecutive month. Its food price index was up 3.4% from December to the highest level since the organisation started measuring food prices in 1990. Cereal prices are still about 10% below the peak they hit in April 2008, but have risen about 3% in the past month, after problems with last year's harvests caused by fires in Russia and bad weather.

A poor harvest this year would be catastrophic, said Brown, as global grain reserves are unusually low at present.

Brown warned that the longer term outlook was also bleak. Many arid countries have managed to boost their agricultural production by using underground water sources, but these are rapidly drying up. He cited Saudi Arabia, which has been self-sufficient in wheat for decades but whose wheat production is collapsing as the aquifer that fed the farms is depleted.

Water scarcity, combined with soil erosion, climate change, the diversion of food crops to make biofuels, and a growing population, were all putting **unprecedented**

pressure on the world's ability to feed itself, according to Brown. This **would fuel political instability and**

could **lead to unrest or conflicts**, he said. "We have an entirely new situation in the world. We need to recognise this."

Richer countries such as China and Middle Eastern oil producers have reacted by buying up vast tracts of land in poorer parts of the world, such as sub-Saharan Africa and parts of south-east Asia. **Rising food prices in the next few months could trigger a wave of reactions from**

governments that would exacerbate the current problem, argued Maximo Torero, of the International Food Policy Research Institute. "The big danger is that you get political pressure on countries to put in place restrictions on food, such as export bans on grains. We need to be very careful, as the situation is very tight and any additional pressure could take us to a very similar position to the one we had in 2007 and 2008." There were widespread food riots in 2008 in Africa, Latin America and some Asian countries, as soaring grain prices put staple foods out of reach of millions of poor people. Camilla Toulmin, director of the International Institute for Environment and Development, urged politicians to begin to tackle some of the root causes of food insecurity. "It's not surprising that you are seeing people coming out on to the street to protest, given the price rises. You are going to see a lot more of this unless governments start addressing the fundamentals, such as climate change, water scarcity and dependence on oil. We need to create more resilient systems of agriculture for the future."

FDI 12 explains that

FDI 12 (Future Directions International, a Research institute providing strategic analysis of Australia's global interests; citing Lindsay Falvey, PhD in Agricultural Science and former Professor at the University of Melbourne's Institute of Land and Environment, "Food and Water Insecurity: International Conflict Triggers & Potential Conflict Points," <http://www.futuredirections.org.au/workshop-papers/537-international-conflict-triggers-and-potential-conflict-points-resulting-from-food-and-water-insecurity.html>) // RH

There is a growing appreciation that the **conflicts in the next century will most likely be fought over a lack of resources.** Yet, in a sense, **this is not new.** Researchers point to the French and Russian revolutions as conflicts induced by a lack of food. More recently, Germany's World War Two efforts are said to have been inspired, at least in part, by its perceived need to gain access to more food. Yet the general sense among those that attended FDI's recent workshops, was that the scale of the problem in the future could be significantly greater as a result of population pressures, changing weather, urbanisation, migration, loss of arable land and other farm inputs, and increased affluence in the developing world. In his book, *Small Farmers Secure Food*, Lindsay Falvey, a participant in FDI's March 2012 workshop on the issue of food and conflict, clearly expresses the problem and why countries across the globe are starting to take note. He writes (p.36), "... **if people are hungry**, especially in cities, **the state is not stable** – riots, violence, breakdown of law and order and migration result." "Hunger feeds anarchy." This view is also shared by Julian Cribb, who in his book, *The Coming Famine*, writes that if "large regions of the world run short of food, land or water in the decades that lie ahead, then wholesale, bloody wars are liable to follow." He continues: "An increasingly credible scenario for World War 3 is not so much a confrontation of super powers and their allies, as a festering, self-perpetuating chain of resource conflicts." He also says: "The wars of the 21st Century are less likely to be global conflicts with sharply defined sides and huge armies, than a scrappy mass of failed states, rebellions, civil strife, insurgencies, terrorism and genocides, sparked by bloody competition over dwindling resources." As another workshop participant put it, people do not go to war to kill; they go to war over resources, either to protect or to gain the resources for themselves. Another observed that hunger results in passivity not conflict. Conflict is over resources, not because people are going hungry. A study by the International Peace Research Institute indicates that where food security is an issue, it is more likely to result in some form of conflict. Darfur, Rwanda, Eritrea and the Balkans experienced such wars. **Governments**, especially in developed countries, are increasingly aware of this phenomenon. The UK Ministry of Defence, the CIA, the US Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Oslo Peace Research Institute, **all identify famine as a potential trigger for** conflicts and possibly even **nuclear war**.

In order to prevent North America from becoming the site of this nuclear war, NAFTA is critical to maintaining food security and stability.

Contention Two is Helping the Mexiconomy.

NAFTA creates growth in Mexico in two ways.

The first is opening up the economy.

Breir 17 finds that

Kimberly BREIR 17. Director, US-Mexico Futures Initiatives, Center for Strategic and International Studies; MA, Latin American Studies, Georgetown. "What Could a U.S.-Mexico Partnership Look Like? New Approaches Could Advance Cooperation With Mexico." *Global Trade*. January 3. <http://www.globaltrademag.com/global-trade-daily/u-s-mexico-partnership-look-like>. // RH There have been other encouraging signs as well. Mexico's Congress is no longer the rubber stamp it once was. And, in 2012, Mexico's main political parties passed a reform platform under the Pact for Mexico focused on much-needed internal reforms including in the areas of education, labor, the electoral system, fiscal policy, telecommunications, and the historic opening of the energy sector to private investment. Overall, Mexico is a more democratic country now than it was 20 years ago, although with all of the fits and starts that comes with it. Mexico's economy has also been dramatically transformed over this same period. Prior to the 1990s, Mexico's economy was largely closed to imports, including from the United States. The North American Free Trade Agreement **(NAFTA) played a transformative and positive role in opening up the Mexican economy,**

creating jobs, and in the expansion of Mexico's middle class. Mexico now has 10 free trade agreements involving 45 countries and a host of other investment deals involving another 33. On economic policy in recent years, Mexico has moved to increase competition in telecommunications as well as undertaking the historic opening of the energy sector to private investment following the nationalization of the 1930s. Stalled progress and a critical window of opportunity. Despite the fast-forward transformation of the economy and political system, the reform process for law enforcement and the judiciary is often described by Mexican analysts, foreign investors, and more importantly by public opinion as more disappointing. Despite numerous restructurings of law enforcement, insecurity prevails in many parts of the country. The landmark judicial reform passed in 2008 that is transforming the judiciary from a closed inquisitorial system toward an adversarial model is yet to be fully implemented. The slow progress on rule-of-law issues has created enormous

opportunity costs for Mexico in terms of trade and investment, and public confidence in institutions remains low.¶ The next two years in Mexico are a critically important window for reform implementation. Moreover, the population's perception of the success of implementation may be even more important than formal passage of reform bills into law. Justice reform implementation amid continuing impunity for the political class will not be perceived as a real change. Energy and telecommunications reforms that do not deliver benefits to average Mexicans are not likely to be seen as transformative, even though the rules on paper are a dramatic departure from the status quo ante. A failure by the Mexican government to fundamentally shift the momentum against the cartels and against corrupt practices in the public sector will further erode confidence in institutions and governance. The opportunity to strengthen the Mexican state and consolidate the reforms rests in the hands of the Mexican political class.¶ Much of Latin America has seen the winds of political change blowing through the region in the past two years. For Mexico, it may well be that public perception of the political class and its actions in the next two years will influence how strong the winds of change blow in Mexico in 2018. This is of critical importance to the United States, because political uncertainty on the southern U.S. border could impact bilateral cooperation across the range of issues in the relationship.¶ The U.S.-Mexico relationship¶

The second way is by increasing investment.

Zarsky 04 elucidates that

Zarsky, Lyuba, and Kevin P. Gallagher. "NAFTA, foreign direct investment, and sustainable industrial development in Mexico." *Americas Program Policy Brief* 28 (2004).
<http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/Pubs/rp/AmerProgFDJJan04.pdf>

On the surface, the strategy was, at least until recently, a dazzling success. Between 1994 and 2002, **FDI inflows into Mexico ballooned to a yearly average of \$13 billion, nearly three times more than the yearly average [before NAFTA]** of \$4.5 billion between 1988 and 1993. Indeed, Mexico ranks among the top three developing country recipients of global FDI. Moreover, as hoped, **about half of the FDI flowed into manufacturing. Exports increased by nearly 50% after the passage of NAFTA** in 1994 **and manufactures accounted for nearly 90% of total exports.** In the face of the failure of many developing countries to attract FDI—despite the embrace of integration policies—Mexico became a poster child for neoliberal globalization.

Ultimately, Rubio 17 concludes that

Rubio 17 (Luis, Chairman @ Mexican Council on Foreign Relations, "Keep the Trade Deal; the U.S. Needs Mexico to Prosper," 1/30,
<https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2017/01/30/new-terms-for-nafta-7/keep-the-trade-deal-the-us-needs-mexico-to-prosper>) // RH

Mexico has gone a long way in reforming its economy and Nafta is a critical part of that process. There are plenty of issues Mexico needs to address **in order to become a full democracy,** and it is here where **Nafta is most important.** A stable, prosperous Mexico is critical to both Mexican and American interests and security. Nafta is far more than a trade agreement — it is Mexico's engine of growth. It needs upgrading and updating, and that is exactly what happened during the negotiations that took place in the context of Trans-Pacific Partnership. But it is also crucial to regional stability, which is in the U.S.'s interests. Nafta does not confer on Mexico any advantages or privileges. It is a symmetrical arrangement in which Canada, Mexico and the U.S. are equal partners. There is, however, a big asymmetry in the importance of the trade agreement to each nation: Even though certain industrial sectors profit enormously thanks to their Mexican business interests, Nafta's impact on the U.S. is relatively minor. The opposite is not true: The impact of U.S. economic and political decisions in regarding Mexico can be extraordinary, as witnessed by the devaluation of the peso over the last few months.

The impacts of continuing Mexican economic growth are threefold.

The first is spurring change.

Villareal 17 finds that

Villareal, M., and Ian F. Fergusson. "The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)." (2017). <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42965.pdf>
Well before NAFTA negotiations began, Mexico was liberalizing its protectionist trade and investment policies that had been in place for decades (see page 9 of this report). The restrictive trade regime began after Mexico's revolutionary period and remained until the early- to mid- 1980s when the country was facing a debt crisis. It was at this time that the government took unilateral steps to open and modernize its economy by relaxing investment policies and liberalizing trade barriers. The trade liberalization measures that began in the mid-1980s shifted Mexico from one of the world's most protected economies into one of the most open. Mexico now has 12 FTAs involving 46 countries.⁵ Mexico's first steps in opening its closed economy focused on reforming its import substitution policies in the mid-1980s. Further reforms were made in 1986 when Mexico became a member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). As a condition of becoming a GATT member, for example, Mexico agreed to lower its maximum tariff rates to 50%. Mexico went further by reducing its highest tariff rate from 100% to 20%. Mexico's trade-weighted average tariff fell from 25% in 1985 to about 19% in 1989.⁶ Although Mexico had been lowering trade and investment restrictions since 1986, the number of remaining barriers for U.S. exports remained high at the time of the NAFTA negotiations. Mexico required import licenses on 230 products from the United States, affecting about 7% of the value of U.S. exports to Mexico. Prior to its entry into GATT, Mexico required import licenses on all imports. At the time of the NAFTA negotiations, about 60% of U.S. agricultural exports to Mexico required import licenses. Mexico also had numerous other nontariff barriers, such as "official import prices," an arbitrary customs valuation system that raised duty assessments.⁷

For Mexico, an [NA]FTA with the United States represented a way to lock in the reforms of its market opening measures from the mid-1980s **[and] to transform Mexico's formerly statist economy after the devastating debt crisis** of the 1980s.⁸ The combination of the severe economic impact of the debt crisis, low domestic savings, and an increasingly overvalued peso put pressure on the Mexican government to adopt market-opening economic reforms and boost imports of goods and capital to encourage more competition in the Mexican market. An FTA with the United States was a way of blocking domestic efforts to roll back Mexican reforms, especially in the politically sensitive agriculture sector. NAFTA helped deflect protectionist demands of industrial groups and special interest groups in Mexico.⁹ One of the main goals of the Mexican government was to increase investment confidence in order to attract greater flows of foreign investment and spur economic growth. **Since the entry into force of NAFTA, Mexico has used the agreement as a basic model for other FTAs Mexico has signed with other countries.**¹⁰ For the United States, NAFTA represented an opportunity to expand the growing export market to the south, but it also represented a political opportunity for the United States and Mexico to work together in resolving some of the tensions in the bilateral relationship.¹¹ An FTA with Mexico would help U.S. businesses expand exports to a growing market of 100 million people. U.S. officials also recognized that imports

from Mexico would likely include higher U.S. content than imports from Asian countries. In addition to the trade and investment opportunities that **NAFTA represented**, an agreement with Mexico would be **a way to support the growth of political pluralism and a deepening of democratic processes in Mexico.** NAFTA also presented an opportunity for the United States to spur the slow progress on the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.¹²

The second impact is benefitting the United States.

Rubio 17 finds that

Rubio 17 (Luis, Chairman @ Mexican Council on Foreign Relations, "Keep the Trade Deal; the U.S. Needs Mexico to Prosper," 1/30, <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2017/01/30/new-terms-for-nafta-7/keep-the-trade-deal-the-us-needs-mexico-to-prosper>) // RH

Mexico has gone a long way in reforming its economy and Nafta is a critical part of [Mexican economic reform] that process. There are plenty of issues Mexico needs to address in order to become a full democracy, and it is here where Nafta is most important. **A stable, prosperous Mexico is critical to** both Mexican and

American interests and security. Nafta is far more than a trade agreement — it is Mexico's engine of growth. It needs upgrading and updating, and that is

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The third impact is stopping the violence.

Breir continues that economic reform solves for organized crime and weakens the influence of cartels.

.¶ Further, Mexico's prosperity is in the interest of the United States. A stronger Mexican economy means fewer Mexicans will leave their homes seeking opportunity in the United States. (Net immigration flows from Mexico are already less than zero, according to a 2015 Pew study.) **Strong growth and job creation in Mexico also** spur

the expansion of Mexico's middle class and make Mexico a better partner as citizens' demands, for **improved security and rule of law** for example,

dovetail with U.S. security interests.¶ Outside of the economic relationship, the United States has a direct stake in Mexico's success in

strengthening its security and rule of law. The U.S. Mérida Initiative was conceived to support implementation of Mexico's rule-of-law reforms,

recognizing the fundamental importance of working with Mexico **to address organized crime**, violence, **and** impunity and its effects in both countries. There is

much more that could be done **to weaken the influence of the cartels** responsible for exporting drugs into the United States, but success will depend

primarily on U.S.-Mexican intelligence and law enforcement partnerships and the mutual sharing of information. That is, success in this area will center around trust and would be at risk in a climate of confrontation.

Ramirez 16 determines that Latin American

Byron RAMIREZ 16. Adjunct Professor of Strategic Management, University of La Verne; PhD, Economics and Political Science, Claremont Graduate School. "The Criminal and Terrorist Threat of Narco Submarine Technology." Geopolitical Monitor. June 7. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/the-criminal-and-terrorist-threat-of-narco-submarine-technology/>. // RH

The conceivable threats to international security become increasingly complex and acute when we recognize that some **drug trafficking organizations have**

been linked with terrorism. For over 50 years, FARC has carried out bombings, extortions, assassinations, and kidnappings throughout Colombia. In an effort to

finance its agenda, FARC has engaged in drug trafficking operations that include the use of narco submarines. **There are** also the cases of individuals with suspected **ties to**

Al-Qaida, the Taliban, and Hezbollah who have been involved in drug related activities. Some of these funds from drug trafficking activities have been

used to finance terrorist activities. It is not clear to what extent criminal organizations are involved in financially, logistically, and operationally supporting the efforts of terrorist groups. Yet,

there are indications that **these networks** could **facilitate** the **movement of** terrorist **operatives or weapons** of mass destruction

toward U.S. borders as well as high-value targets in the Western Hemisphere. Despite the fact that law enforcement has seized several vessels, many other narco

submarines have traveled undetected and almost completely unrestricted. This makes them increasingly perilous to international security. It is feasible that criminal-terrorist cooperation could deliver great damage via the use of narco submarines that could carry weapons or parts of weapons of mass destruction, biological warfare agents, and chemical weapons. Terrorist organizations have in the past used the international illicit marketplace to finance their activities, purchase equipment, and potentially could deploy narco submarines as vessels of mass destruction. Hezbollah has supporters in Lebanese diaspora communities in Latin America. There have been illicit activities such as money laundering and drug trafficking in the Tri-Border Area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, which generated revenue that was later transferred to Hezbollah. For decades, Iran has funded, provided weapons, and trained terrorists. During the past several years there has been increased cooperation between Iran and Ecuador, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Cuba. Although the nature of the cooperation appears to be related to economic exchange,

US participation in NAFTA uniquely curtails the power of cartels, preventing terrorists from gaining easy access to the US.

Critically, **Cusick 10** explains that

Cusick 10 (Tyler, Associate @ Boston Consulting Group + Research Partner at Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, Harvard Political Review, "Not our backyard but still our neighbors," [//RH](http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:wsBUXHilWFKJ:harvardpolitics.com/world/not-our-backyard-but-still-our-neighbors/+&cd=21&hl=en&ct=clink&gl=us)

As the revolt in Quito showed, despite the gains in democracy, Latin America appears to be as volatile as it was thirty years ago. All it took for an attempt to shutdown the democratic regime in Ecuador was an unpopular austerity measure that looked to cut benefits for public servants. Faced with social distress, mobilization into militant revolts still appears to be a viable option for dissidents, just as it was under the authoritarian regimes and corrupt democracies of the previous century. As Honduras demonstrated to the world in the summer of 2009, **military**

overthrows of democracies still happen in the western hemisphere, right on the United

States' doorstep. With vested military allies in neighboring nations Peru and Columbia, the United States revealed its continued interest in the stability of its southern neighbors by voicing its support for the Correa administration (despite the Chavez-leaning tendencies of the aforementioned leftist president). And there is ample reason that the US should care. President Correa of Ecuador being taken from hospital where he was held hostage by revolting police. With newly appointed Colombian president and US ally Juan Manuel Santos on the verge of realizing the goal of the Plan Colombia legislation and finally ridding his nation of its FARC menace and making large gains in the war on illegal drug trafficking, **there is**

little room for unrest in [Latin America] the region. Couple that with the United States' large military presence in Colombia and Peru, and there is genuine reason for the US to take a general interest in the maintenance of stability in the region. With Nicaragua, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador all fronted by heads of state who are decidedly anti-America and marred by large disparities in wealth as well as exorbitant rates of subsistent poverty, **the tension for a potential**

destabilizing event remains a very real fear. With the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and Iraq underway, Washington does not want to have to deal with a refugee crisis in one of its southern allies or a failed state in the western hemisphere. The rise of popularly elected figures like Chavez and Correa who ran on anti-American platforms implies a general animosity towards continued American influence in Latin America, and whose to say that this anger could not be channeled into a militant organization a la Al

Qaeda or Al-Shabaab. **A failed state in the Latin America could spell disastrous for the US** in a world as interconnected as our own. Whereas enemies from across the Atlantic are one thing, **having terrorism emerge from a neighbor in the West would**

be both **horrifying** and a direct slap in the face of America's movement towards world democracy.

The only way to prevent this conflict is through NAFTA and the reform it uniquely creates.

Thus, we affirm.