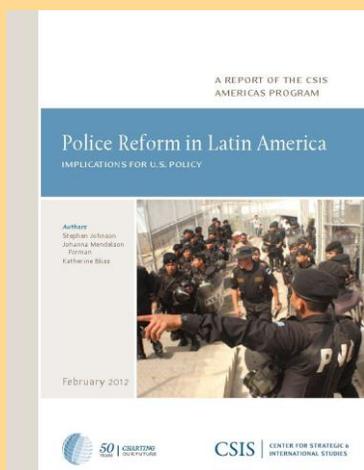


*Program News*Americas Program
Releases New Reports

February 29, the Americas Program released *Police Reform in Latin America: Implications for U.S. Policy*. The report examines the current state of police reform efforts throughout the region, focusing on countries with the most urgent reform needs as well as current multilateral efforts to address the problem. It concludes by offering recommendations for reforming U.S. police assistance to better address modern challenges. To access the full report, please [click here](#). *More* →

In Depth

Colombia: Growing Trade Relations with Japan

Colombian minister of foreign affairs María Ángela Holguín met in February with Japanese minister of foreign affairs Koichiro Gamba in Tokyo to advance an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) expanding a reciprocal investment treaty signed last September. The EPA will address economic and technological cooperation, as well as a free trade agreement. The ministers agreed to finalize negotiations in Bogotá. This would be Japan's fourth commercial agreement in the region, after Mexico, Chile, and Peru, and Colombia's first in Asia.

Imports and exports have more than doubled between 2003 and 2010, and improvements in citizen security have made a partnership more feasible. Japan, with a high-speed train system, subways in nine cities, and experience building transit links in rugged geography, could be a potential partner in expanding transportation infrastructure. Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos has said that Bogotá remains one of the largest cities in the world without a metrorail.

Against the backdrop of growing trade between Latin America and East Asia, ongoing Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, and Colombia's goal of tapping China as an investor, establishing ties with Japan is a step toward a more extensive strategic relationship with Asia.—**Michael Lopesciolo**

In the News

North America: Mexico

Mexico's interior secretary Alejandro Poiré warned that organized crime could interfere with federal elections this coming July, thanks to ongoing vetting issues in Mexico's state police forces. Although he said that the vast majority of the federal constabulary had gone through a rigorous accreditation process, members of local forces have not been so thoroughly investigated. Ten states have police that are still in the process of certification, or have yet to begin the process.

—*Excelsior (Mexico)*

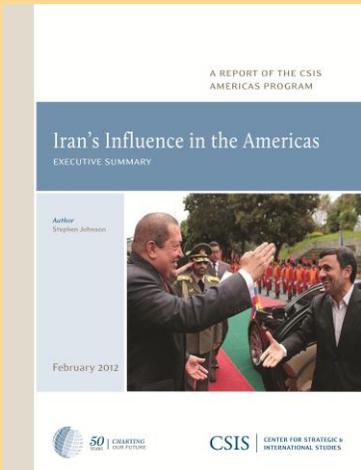
Central America: Panama

With 20 agents and a helicopter and patrol boat, Panamanian security forces were able to capture a 33-foot go-fast boat loaded with 1.4 tons of cocaine off the coast of Veraguas Department. Three Colombians were reportedly captured aboard. The operation resulted in Panama's largest drug seizure of the year, according to Ramón Donato López, operations chief of SENAN, Panama's aero-naval security force.—*Latin American Herald Tribune (Venezuela)*

El Salvador/Guatemala

The governments of El Salvador and Guatemala recently signed an agreement to modernize the customs processes at the land borders of both countries. The customs integration plan will facilitate trade and passage of people through a single bi-national procedure and a special coordinating commission.

—*La Pagina (El Salvador)*



March 12, the full report *Iran's Influence in the Americas* was released by the Americas Program. The report provides a view into Iran's outreach into Latin America and whether its activities pose a security risk to U.S. interests in the region. The report also focuses on bilateral trade relations between Iran and countries throughout the Western Hemisphere. It concludes by offering recommendations on how the United States can counter Iran's influence in Latin America, mainly by repairing its own relationships with governments in the region. To access the full report, please [click here](#).

In Case You Missed It

Podcasts: [Diana Negroponte on Vice President Biden's Central America Trip and the Future of U.S. Security Assistance to the Region](#)

Blog Posts: [Young Mexicans, Young Democracy](#)

Guatemala

Korean investors announced a two-year, \$600 million investment to build a car plant in Guatemala, the first in Central America. The factory will be built on Guatemala's Pacific coast in Escuintla, near Puerto Quetzal, and could generate 20,000 jobs directly and 30,000 more indirectly. Workers will assemble compact sedans, minivans, and pickup trucks for Kia, Daewoo, and Hyundai.

—[Prensa Libre \(Guatemala\)](#)

Caribbean: Haiti/Dominican Republic

Ambassador Irene Horejs of the European Union and Domingo Jiménez, the Dominican Republic's national coordinator for European Funds signed an agreement for the EU to donate 42 million Euros to the Dominican Republic and to Haiti to support trade, the development of a binational market near Dajabón, and environmental protection in the two countries.

—[El Caribe \(Dominican Republic\)](#)

South America: Venezuela

On March 14, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela suspended the membership of the governor of Monagas state, Jose Gregorio Briceño, for alleged misconduct. Briceño disagreed with the Chávez administration over the reopening of a water treatment plant following an oil spill on February 4, maintaining the water there was still contaminated. —[Venezuela Analysis \(Venezuela\)](#)

Colombia

President Juan Manuel Santos sent 300 more military troops to Western Colombia in response to a pick-up in FARC guerrilla activity. Santos also established a permanent army battalion to guard highways and improve area transportation. The move came after Choco governor Luis Gilberto Murillo and other authorities claimed that locals were beginning to doubt the central government's commitment to protecting area citizens.

—[Colombia Reports \(Colombia\)](#)

Argentina

The governors of the Argentine provinces of Chubut and Santa Cruz announced the cancellation of oil concessions belonging to the Spanish oil company YPF, citing "lack of investment." Two areas in Chubut include high-value reserves. Speaking before a rally of some 10,000 assembled citizens, the governors gave YPF 90 days to settle their accounts. Besides the governors, backup in the persons of Energy Secretary Daniel Cameron and Planning Vice Minister Roberto Barata came to represent President Cristina Fernández's administration.

—[Clarín \(Argentina\)](#)

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