

Qualitative Report 1

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Report:

Panama City, Panama: July 7-15, 2018.

Three members of the research team (Flynn, Martinez Machain, and Stravers) traveled to Panama City, Panama and Lima, Peru to conduct qualitative interviews with members of the following groups: local (present or past) government officials, US embassy and military personnel stationed in these countries, and journalists (as representative of civil society).

Panama City was selected as a location that has had a history of a significant US military presence in the past. Panama City used to host what some locals referred to as a “colonial enclave” in the Canal Zone, which was inaccessible to locals and controlled completely by the U.S. and the U.S. military. We chose this country because locals would be able to compare their situation before and after the U.S. military presence.

To recruit interview subjects, we had two main strategies. In order to contact U.S. government/military officials, we would contact the U.S. embassy, explain what our project was, and ask to speak to personnel that would be able to speak to the topic. To contact local government officials and journalists, we relied on local news sources (such as major local newspapers) and read articles that related to the U.S. military presence. We would then contact the authors of the articles themselves or any government officials that were referenced in the article. We would then use the “snowball” method and ask those who responded for additional contacts.

Panama Interview Subject 1: Former cabinet member, current journalist

Our first interview subject was identified because she had written for a major newspaper in Panama City, regarding the U.S. military presence in Panama, as well as U.S. influence in Panama. We contacted her through social media and e-mail and she agreed to meet us at a local restaurant in Panama City. We introduced ourselves in Spanish, and she then offered to conduct the interview in English so that we would not have to translate it. What follows are our notes from the interview:

Interview Location: Restaurant, Panama City

Date: 2018-07-12

Title: Former Government Cabinet Member, Journalist, Activist

1. Subject provided brief background on US-Panamanian relations. Described canal zone as a “country within a country”. Described restrictions on Panamanians travel within their own country as “unbearable”. Notes that US personnel could move freely in and out of canal zone, but Panamanian citizens faced restrictions on movement into the canal zone.
2. Described longstanding relationship between US and Panama as a “Hate/Love” relationship.

3. Subject noted that locals don't draw a sharp distinction between US civilians and military personnel. Often refer to all US personnel as "gringos".
4. Subject stated that the presence of US personnel did not lead to a discernable increase in crime in/around the canal zone. In describing the environment subject mentioned that people in the canal zone could leave their doors unlocked.
5. Subject notes that there were fears that an American withdrawal would have a negative impact on the Panamanian economy, but claims that there was not serious negative consequences.
6. Subject notes that the primary concerns with current military exercises are less with the US military itself and more that there is a lack of transparency in relations between the US and Panamanian governments. Concerns that Panamanian government will make concessions to the US without proper disclosures and public debate. Also fears certain types of US military activities/presence could increase violence, targeting by drug cartels.
7. Subject also expressed concerns that the US generally neglects Latin America, and neglects the needs of Panama, specifically.
8. Subject argues that negotiations with US are highly asymmetric. US is very demanding in negotiations.
9. Subject notes that USAID did not disburse all of the monies owed to Panama after the invasion. Says the US made some aid conditional on certain reforms that the government of Panama opted to not make.
10. Subject indicated some preference for civilians to do work done by the US military. Aid delivery, for example.
11. Subject sees US as neglecting Panamanian security interests and focusing only on areas that are of concern to the US. Argues that the US has ignored money laundering and financing of terrorism.
12. Subject notes that there are a lot of tall buildings in Panama City with no lights on at night. Claims these are projects designed to launder money.
13. Subject notes that many of the protestors involved in protests on the anniversary of the invasion are family members of people who were killed in the invasion. Subject claims that there is still not an accurate total figure for how many Panamanian citizens died.
14. Subject notes that views of invasion are split in Panamanian society. Wealthy upper classes tended to favor the invasion.
15. Subject notes that US forces were totally unprepared for the stability and policing operations that followed the initial invasion. Noted surge in looting, rioting, etc. Subject also views the invasion as totally unnecessary, and highly excessive given the goal of removing Noriega.
16. Subject notes that Chinese investment has increased substantially, and that the US is worried about losing control. Not just to China, but also to other countries, like Brazil, Italy, and more.
17. Subject notes that there are similar concerns over transparency with China—not just concerns about US.
18. Subject notes that there is no real difference in how Panama is treated under Republican or Democratic administrations. Doesn't see US polarization as having a noticeable effect on relations with Panama. Expressed no fear that it will lead to deteriorating relations, either.

Our next set of interview subjects were all staff at the U.S. Embassy in Panama. We e-mailed and called the embassy and explained what the project was about. We noted that we were interested in talking to anyone who was involved in coordinating U.S. military deployments in the country. What follows are the notes from our interviews, all conducted on the same day (2018-07-12)

Interview Location: US Embassy Panama

Date: 2018-07-12

Title: Embassy Intern

1. Subject notes that there are several different types of exercises occurring between US, Panama, and other countries.
2. A few states don't participate in the exercises. Some of those states have received invitations and never show up, others don't receive invitations.
3. Subject notes that lumping exercises together is not necessarily intentional, but probably does not help US messaging effort.
4. Subject notes that exercises promote education and training in both directions—US and Panamanian doctors learn from each other. US doctors get to see how Panamanian doctors conduct procedures with simpler tools, and Panamanian doctors get to see how those same procedures are conducted with more technologically sophisticated tools.

Interview Location: US Embassy Panama

Date: 2018-07-12

Title: State Department Regional Analyst

1. Subject notes that states participating in exercises all typically have some “investment” in the canal/canal zone.
2. Subject notes that exercises do not prompt much public opposition. Speculates that political culture in Panama is more “centrist” and less inclined towards populist anti-Americanism than neighboring states.
3. Subject speculates that part of this acceptance is the result of long-term and widespread US investment in Panamanian infrastructure. Also thinks that this is partly due to strong economy and low unemployment. Also due to the long-term nature of US presence and the strong cultural ties formed between American and Panamanian people. Specifically noted the relatively high frequency of marriages between American and Panamanian citizens. Lots of Panamanian people are educated in the US. All of this contributes to lower overall levels of nationalism/anti-American nationalism, specifically.
4. Subject notes that Chinese investment has increased in recent years, and expresses concern that Chinese business practices will have a negative impact on Panamanian economy and stability. Subject expressed less concern that growth of Chinese influence in this area would have negative consequences for US security cooperation with Panama, which subject regards as strong and durable.

5. Subject noted that there was relatively low level of civil society engagement, not a lot of local NGOs operating here.
6. Subject notes that they see some protests, and most of them involve labor unions or students. Sometimes aimed at protesting US invasion.
7. Subject also notes that some recent local concern over US presence is tied to a recent murder of a Panamanian woman by US service personnel.

Interview Location: US Embassy Panama

Date: 2018-07-12

Title: Embassy Public Affairs Officer

1. New Horizons exercises are well received overall
2. Some recent outburst over a leaked diplomatic note in which US requested immunity for troops participating in New Horizons exercises. Subject the Panamanian government leaked this information.
3. Some attempts to paint the New Horizons exercises as a prelude to invasion of Venezuela. Subject states that while this is false, the narrative does not necessarily hurt the US' broader goals of promoting democratization in Venezuela as it keeps up pressure for reforms.
4. Subject states that publicity for exercises is run through Panamanian government with US government assistance. Panama initiates press releases.
5. Subject states that middle aged Panamanians are probably aware of the routine nature of the exercises, but speculates that younger generations are probably less aware.
6. US government actively tries to assist in combating misinformation (notes that the term "fake news" is not used) within Panamanian journalism. Brought in Washington Post reporter Glenn Kessler to help train journalists in fact checking. Trying to make this a routine part of training.
7. Local politicians and other groups have input over HCA exercises, but subject is unsure how the decision-making processes works between SOUTHCOM and subordinate service units.
8. Subject notes that there are protests every year on December 20 to commemorate the US invasion of Panama. Estimates 50-100 people attend.
9. Subject states that labor unions and student groups tend to be most active protest groups. Suntracs is a union heavily involved in protests. Subject refers to them as "paid protestors".
10. Subject notes that December 2016 protests were larger than normal because they coincided with Trump election.
11. Subject notes that US has a strong interest in Panama for economic and security reasons. Describes Panama as a "choke point" for migration, drugs, and more. Notes that the Panamanian security forces provide some humanitarian relief to migrants crossing the Darién Gap.
12. Also notes that US collects biometric data in this region that is used to combat terrorism.

13. Subject argued that aid and investment in the area are essential to security and stability. Specifically noted the importance of a youth bulge and unemployment as causes of instability. Notes that aid/investment don't have to be zero-sum games.
14. Some concern over increasing Chinese investment. For example, US can benefit from Chinese investment if it helps to keep people employed. However, subject notes that Chinese investment can come with corrupt business practices, and may crowd out local firms who could do work on contracts. For example, Chinese might buy out government contracts, depriving local businesses of opportunity.
15. Subject notes that aid delivered by the military helps, but the military is limited in some important ways. For example, military often lacks language and cultural training relevant to the areas in which they deploy. Also notes that some military have a hard time on deployment, complain about things like lack of food in more remote rural areas. Notes that this can make it hard to really connect with local communities in host state. Does say that national guard units are the best at forming enduring relationships with their partnered states.

Our next interview subject was a journalist for a major newspaper of Panama. We identified him as an interview subject because he had written about U.S. deployments to Panama. We contacted him first through e-mail (through an e-mail address available on the newspaper's website) and then coordinated with him over the phone. We met him at a public place, a restaurant in downtown Panama City. He did not speak English fluently, so the interview was conducted in Spanish by Martinez Machain, who translated for Flynn and Stravers. Notes were taken in Spanish and then translated to English.

Interview Location: Restaurant, Panama City

Date: 2018-07-13

Title: Journalist

1. Presence of US troops ended in 1999
2. New Horizons provides humanitarian help related to infrastructures, schools, etc in remote areas. Viewed negatively by groups that are opposed to US military presence. Govt. argues that it is not a military mission, but those opposed to it argue that it is still military personnel
3. Leftists groups, such as university students, are most likely to oppose US military presence. This used to be a stronger movement in the 1990s, not as much anymore. Opposition was greatest from 1990s to 2005
4. When Varela met with Trump, there was a strong reaction against the idea that he could renegotiate US military bases. It had been 10 years since there had been such a strong military reaction
5. Balladares negotiated the CAN (counterdrug center), looking to prolong US military presence. This was rejected by the left (workers, college students, etc.). Recently, Balladares declared that he had been pressured by Clinton to do this

6. Reaction to Varela meeting with Trump: Trump had declared that US should not have returned the canal to Panama. Fear that this would be mentioned in meeting. Trump perceived as crazy.
7. Panama has a lot of “gringueros” (gringo lovers). Middle class and elite. Media generally in favor of US
8. No perception of US development deployments helping economically. They are small and do not last for long. That same impact could be generated by the local government carrying out those same projects. The Americans do not leave equipment behind, tend to do medical visits. Impact is immediate, short
9. Given the education level and critical analysis skills of people who benefit from the deployments, they do not analyze their political implications. Very little resistance to them.
10. Concerns that US has these programs in place to spy on Latin America. They disguise programs as humanitarian help, but they are still a military presence. The work that they do correspond to local governments.
11. Recently there was a leak that the US embassy had requested that members of military be allowed to deploy with their weapons.
12. Expressed that US embassy personnel are not accessible or open with the press. They provide information, but do not hold press conferences. Information they provide is superficial, what you would be able to observe on your own.
13. Marches: The largest one occurred in 1990, after the invasion. On Dec. 20 2016 the Truth Commission was created, activated citizen response. The people who march are the relatives of victims of the invasion (both civilian and military). The current leader is the widow of a member of the military killed. Students from the University of Panama participate in marches, also human rights activists, journalists (he has participated as well)
14. There have not been other marches besides the ones commemorating the invasion
15. Perception towards China: seen as more economic than military. They are not interested in having a military presence in Latin America. China has a very old history of having a presence in Panama
16. Mentioned Check News event with WaPo journalist organized by US embassy. Open invitation sent out to all journalists. Attended. Embassy PR event organized by Feeley, Feeley was gone by the time it happened. Unclear what topic they were going to discuss.
17. People who reject the US military presence distinguish between the US government and US people in general. These people might be unwilling to talk to members of the US military, but would be okay talking to US civilians.

Lima, Peru: July 15-22

We selected Lima, Peru as our second location because while Peru does not host a large-scale U.S. military presence, it has been the host of the most regionally varied and consistent development-oriented deployments through the Beyond the Horizons and New Horizons programs. In addition, Peruvian military officers frequently receive military training from the U.S. military in their home country.

We note that in Peru we contacted a series of legislators who had made public statements about the US military in Peru. We contacted them before leaving for their trip and while we were in Lima, through various media (e-mail, phone, social media), but received no responses. Thus, our interview subjects in Lima are limited to US personnel and civil society actors.

Our first set of interviews was with Embassy Military Cooperation Officers at the US embassy in Lima. These interviews had been set up before traveling, by again e-mailing the embassy directly and asking to meet with anyone who was willing to talk to us and involved in US military deployments to Peru. We were put in contact with the first interview subject, who brought along two other individuals to the interview. The notes from these interviews follow.

Interview Location: US Embassy Lima

Date: 2018-07-18

Title: Embassy Military Cooperation Officer #1

1. In charge of international training program for Peruvian armed forces. Soft footprint special ops forces. Humanitarian assistance
2. How aware are most Peruvians of military presence? They're not
3. On interactions with local government: Leadership changes frequently. Minister of defense changes often. So does military leadership. Part of my job is educating new people that come in on how much the US is providing them.
4. What do you get out of training Peruvian forces? Making sure we get them the right equipment they need to do their job, including fighting coca production. Making sure they are trained in ISR, can properly identify, intercept. Also human rights training.
5. On resources available: The general consensus is that DoD is doing more with less
6. On arms sales to Peru: The total package approach (selling military materiel with all of the training and equipment needed to actually operate it) strengthens cooperation with the buyer country
7. Notes that by investing in peacekeeping training, the US gets high returns.
8. Benefits of IMET: Immerse them in "our culture". Send their kids to US schools, speak the language. Other programs like counternarcotics (US spend 6-10 million on it) train with Navy, police, do different types of training, but how do you measure the effect? Why isn't coca production going down? Numbers won't lie.
9. When you look at how the US trains the Peruvians in counternarcotics, they know what they are doing at the tactical level, but they are not actually going to the high trafficking areas. No political will. There is a high incentive for farmers to produce coca.
10. IMET billets are few and far between and are viewed as career enhancing. It can be hard to measure dividends in training, but you get leverage from training foreign military officers in IMET. Likemindedness is there. There is a "higher propensity for them to give us what we want." After going to IMET (which is done through grants), now they're willing to pay for training.
11. On polarization in the US: Hasn't affected ability to function and carry out necessary tasks.

Interview Location: US Embassy Lima

Date: 2018-07-18

Title: Embassy Military Cooperation Officer #2

1. Subject says most Peruvians are probably not aware of the US military presence within Peru.
2. Notes that military personnel do not wear uniforms while they are deployed to the country and working out of the Embassy. Try to keep a low profile.
3. Relationships with DOS
 - a. Subject works with foreign military financing (FMF)
 - b. FMF monies typically come from DOS.
 - c. DOS does not micromanage, but allows DOD staff significant latitude in disbursing/using funds.
 - d. Recent years have seen cuts to FMF budgets
 - e. Funds for counter-narcotics operations have been cut.
4. Foreign military equipment sales are often used to help finance other operations, but Peruvians have scaled back their buying in recent years. Another subject noted they were “good window shoppers”.
5. Regarding Peruvian military cooperation in areas like counter-narcotics and anti-drug trafficking, subject notes that Peruvian military counterparts of very risk averse. Reluctant to go into coca producing areas and take too much action.
6. Subject noted that changes/rotations in leadership can make it difficult to build on relationships formed during exercises.
7. Subject notes that there is some minor wariness of US military presence in Peru, but does not seem to be any clear, widespread opposition.
8. Sees competition from Russia and China in Peru
 - a. Both countries provide training and equipment
 - b. US provides “total package” when it makes foreign military sales to Peru and other Latin American countries. Provides technical support, software upgrades, training, etc.
 - c. Russians and Chinese typically just provide weapons, and either rake the money and run, or they don’t sell essential upgrades and support, charging more in the long run for the added system support.

Interview Location: US Embassy Lima

Date: 2018-07-18

Title: Embassy Military Cooperation Officer #3

1. Subject works with mil-to-mil cooperation and training
2. Works with global peace operations program (GPOP) which helps to train local military forces to work with US military.

3. Don't wear uniforms to help keep a low profile. Also don't want negative public perceptions to result from random accidents, like a uniformed US servicemember getting into a car accident in a highly visible/public place.
4. Subject noted that Peru doesn't have any high-level military exercises here, like Panamax
5. Regarding DOS relationship, subject says he's never run into roadblocks from DOS. Smooth working relationship.
6. Goals for working with Peruvian military
 - a. Promote interoperability between Peru and US militaries
 - b. Promote similar doctrine
 - c. Strengthen the Peruvian NCO core. Subject noted that many Latin American countries don't have a history of strong NCO core.
 - d. Some training in basic tactics
 - e. More of an emphasis on big picture strategic goals, ideas, and values
7. Subject states that US doesn't pay much attention to Latin American, or as much as it should.
 - a. Focus on Islamic terrorism takes emphasis away from Latin America
 - b. Notes that many of the most dangerous cities in the world are located in the Americas.
 - c. Foreign military sales fund operations and exercises.
8. Subject notes that IMET programs do a lot to promote long-term relationships between service personnel from participating countries. People stay in touch for a long time after. Most of their enduring power is the result of individual relationships, not institutionalized policies to promote continued contact.
9. Thinks locally-hosted military exercises might be too brief for meaningful relationships to form, or to have much of an impact on participating personnel.
10. Subject says political polarization at home doesn't appear to affect their work much in Peru. Says that Latin American people have a long history of dealing with governments that don't necessarily represent their people well, so they're good at distinguishing between governments and the citizens they rule over.

When we were conducting our first set of interviews at the US embassy in Lima, our interview subjects noted that there was a 4th military cooperation officer who they thought would be interested in talking to us. The next day we received a phone call from the embassy noting that this individual would be able to meet with us. The notes from this interview, conducted at the US embassy as well, follow:

Interview Location: US Embassy

Date: 2018-07-19

Title: Embassy Military Cooperation Officer #4

1. Last year Peruvians hosted UNITAS. There were some demonstrations surround it. El Nino had unprecedented effects and ate into their budget, but they did follow through. Schope was greater, went off without a hitch. Peruvia-led anti-submarine exercise. Unique AOR. Invited non-UNITAS countries, like Colombia. UNITAS like a a capstone.

2. Perception of US military: society doesn't know what they're doing. We all know what we're doing, not too many people know about it. We don't have that big of a footprint, members of the population don't even think about the military presence
3. Trying to build goodwill, Outreach and public outreach is done by public affairs.
4. Elites: President was supposed to attend military exercise, couldn't, so one of the VPs, who is now the President, attended. Lots of veterans in the elites, hope that they have a positive perception of the U.S. Once took a Peruvian 3 star general to the US, did a tour with him.
5. What do you look for in cooperation w Peru? "We want to be the partner of choice" Look for partner nations that can do it. There has to be some strategic interest.
6. Do not do counternarcotics. Focus on amphibious warfare, diesel-electric subs, rely on partner nations to send their submarines.
7. Peru leads in deployments to the US. They have 6 submarines. Cooperation gets tricky. There is no cooperation. Secondary benefit is stronger relations. That's an area that we can cooperate with. Silent forces exercises. "We want them to always side with us."
8. Continuing Promise did not go to Peru. But subject worked with CP in Colombia in 2007. Very similar to the exercise that was carried out there 30 years earlier. Some locals still remember the deployment from 30 years ago. "They were elated to have us there." The exercise engaged in 22,000 contacts (people they treated). It was like a big party, they were happy to see us. That was a phenomenal "jornada."
9. We did it with the Colombians. They had this sentiment of "it's the American doctors and they must be better than ours." Sometimes the mayor tries to take the credit for it, but it's hard to do so because it's so obvious that it's the Americans.
10. Work with health director's staff. It was very organized, we had people's names. People know about the exercise and would come in. They heard about it through word of mouth, radio, through the military.
11. Did a lot of community outreach. Positive demonstration of US military
12. The USNS Comfort is not used for Continuing Promise anymore. Smaller scope of CP, it is dwindling. Last year's CP, compared to what it was in 2007, pales in comparison. People don't see it as a continuous deal, look at it as a one-off,. Resources for CP are limited (USNS Mercy)
13. On China: You definitely see China moving in on non-military issues. They throw money at these countries. They bring workers. Customs and culture don't usually jib. More so with the money they bring. People think it's just the economy, but you get more embedded, there are other areas they are influencing. Little by little, you have to look at the whole picture.
14. There's a lot of Chinese presence in these countries. A lot of governments are corrupt, will acquiesce when they show them money. It happened in Argentina. They will sell off a lot of public assets. Leaders will then leave the country.
15. The Peruvian Navy is buying from the Russians. Not any factual evidence, make the transaction. They go, they see the exercise. SOUTCHOM → can't compare to others
16. Do you feel underresourced? There has been a shift of vision to the Indo-Pacific region. There is a failure to see that these countries are also part of the Pacific. It's not just Asia. Should be utilizing these countries more. They are closer and better partners. The US should be leveraging them more.

17. Soft vs hard power. Aside from assisting with information exchange, we do small training teams, etc. Don't do too many kinetic things, no Sendero Luminoso. Weighted more towards soft power.
18. Challenges: The bureaucracy. Things are way slow here. But no problems negotiating
19. We are not so political tied. Talk sailor talk and let's cooperate. I think the Peruvians realize that politics are separate and de-couple us from that. The Navy is unique because a sailor knows what another sailor has been through. The sea is the sea. Are insulated from politics. Stable leadership within the Navy. We're insulated by the fact that we're military.
20. Haven't run into any impediments from State. It's a joint effort.
21. Peruvians don't have suspicion of the US. A US captain actually started their naval academy. In the Peruvian military they have an affinity towards the US and the Navy. The local population noticed that after mudslides that occurred in March, the US were the 1st responders. At the micro-level, they remember that for the rest of their lives.

Finally, back in the US we had contacted a journalist who had reported on members of the Peruvian Congress who had expressed public stances on the US military presence in Peru. We communicated with him through e-mail and then over the phone. We met him at a restaurant in Lima. He was not fluent in English, so the interview was conducted in Spanish by Martinez Machain, who translated for Flynn and Stravers. What follows are our notes from the interview, translated from Spanish into English.

Interview Location: Restaurant in Lima, Peru

Date: 2018-07-20

Title: Peruvian Journalist

1. Every time that the US carries out a military exercise, people think it's about drugs. 2 positions on it. From the right, there is no problem with it. From the left, there are two reasons why people are opposed. The first is that they want to defend Peruvian sovereignty. The presence is an imposition of force and a violation of the country's autonomy. The second is a nationalist sense. There is a foreign country telling Peru what to do about its drug problem.
2. From the left you get opposition from socialists, progressives, liberals. It's more the nationalist side. There is fear about a US presence inside the Peruvian government because of interventionism during the Cold War.
3. The average citizen is not troubled by any of this. Very little awareness of US military presence, it would go unnoticed if the media did not point it out. Even in the media it does not get much attention. No examples of crimes involving the US military.
4. Among the general population, those with nationalist sentiment or who know about negative US presence in other places, like college students, are more likely to oppose the presence. Even among populations such as college students, there are people who don't care.
5. Regarding the Chinese, there is no similar sentiment of dislike. It doesn't feel like a major power. They invest in textiles. It is not seen as being done in a negative way,

Chinese investment is seen as something positive. “I would love it if Peru could produce its own clothing, instead of importing from China, but the demand is too large. Production cannot satisfy demand. So Peru imports from China.”

6. There are no security concerns regarding China. Trump’s arrival feels closer, in terms of his “nefarious” policy towards Latin America. You feel that a lot more. There is in Peru a feeling of empathy towards other Latin Americans.
7. When Trump bombed Syria, in an arbitrary manner, over UN protest, Peru maintained a distant posture, something that would have been inconceivable before.
8. In Peru we do not feel as large of a sense of danger from Trump as people in Mexico do. For students, the fear is about nuclear weapons. There is a fear that Trump will “throw a tantrum” during his meeting with Kim Jong-Un.
9. Whether we like it or not, Trump must represent the views of some Americans, but in Peru still are able to identify Trump as a person separate from the rest of Americans.
10. Within Peru there are radical difference in perceptions. Each region has its own culture different from Lima. Perceptions vary depending on size of impact. For example, Arequipa is more nationalist, they do not allow outside interference. Its because of cultural reasons.
11. Ayacucho, Valles de Rios, Cusco, Ayacucho, y Huancavelica. Emergency zone, lots of drug trafficking and Sendero Luminoso. Armed groups collaborate with narcos. Narcoterrorism. Coerce local governments, financed through narco trafficking.
12. Counterdrug. There’s a US base in Amazonas in Santa Lucia. They equip and arm local armed forces. Amazonas is on the border with Colombia, Ecuador
13. How do those areas perceive the US military presence? It has not been a significant presence. In Lima, the fight against drugs is perceived as being effective, there are sometimes attacks against army convoys. But the drug war is not really militarized, there are other tactics used. There is a program to control plantations. Switch out drug plantations for ones that grow coffee or chocolate. Have worked with US embassy on this.
14. Non-violent strategies have been more effective than militarized strategies. Comision Nacional para el Desarrollo y Vida Sin Drogas (DEVIDA) has been effective in cooperating with the US embassy.
15. Tocaché used to be a dangerous zone. Now the level of danger has been brought down thanks to these crop substitution programs. With the government’s support, drug plantations are substituted by cacao plantations.
16. Cultivos alternativos (crop substitution). Though he notes that coca leaf has a cultural significance, used for medicinal purposes.
17. In Peru there have been no concerns about human rights violations by US troops.
18. There is a stereotype about gringos. They are “muscular men waving the flag and yelling about Liberty and Democracy.” There is a concern that if oil deposits are found, Americans will show up for them. The stereotype is “Murica, rednecks, super patriotic.”