

# Hemispheric Brief

A Pan-Latin America Politics and Policy Brief

Wednesday, April 6, 2011

## US Ambassador to Ecuador: Wikileaks Casualty #2

US ambassador to Ecuador Heather Hodges was declared “persona non grata” by the Ecuadorean government Tuesday over comments she made in a [2009 diplomatic cable](#) released by the whistleblower website Wikileaks and published by the Spanish newspaper *El País*. The decision was announced at a Tuesday afternoon [press conference](#) where Ecuador’s foreign minister, Ricardo Patino, said he had requested that Ambassador Hodges, [a career diplomat](#), leave the country as soon as possible. The expulsion makes Hodges the second Wikileaks diplomatic casualty.

The first, US ambassador to Mexico Carlos Pascual, [turned in his resignation in mid-March](#) after comments he made about the Mexican government’s anti-drug efforts.

The cable in question in Ecuador seems somewhat innocuous at first glance. But there is a long history here which most reports this morning have neglected to pick up on.

In the cable Hodges details the US Embassy’s views about corruption and illegal dealings within the Ecuadorean National Police (ENP). Much of the focus is on Jaime Alquino Hurtado, the ENP’s commander from April 2008 to June 2009, who, according to the US, was involved in extorting bribes from the country’s taxi union, stealing public funds and allowing trafficking of undocumented Chinese immigrants. Hodges went further, however, saying President Correa himself like knew about these issues when he decided to select Hurtado as the ENP’s chief in 2008. Analysts in the US Embassy, wrote Hodges, “believe that Correa may have wanted to have a (national police) Chief whom he could easily manipulate.”

Those statements seem to have been what most offended the Correa government. The Rafael Correa called Ms. Hodges statements both “unacceptable,” “malicious,” and “imprudent” in a statement released Tuesday.

But a bit of context before moving on. While Hodges’s is the most high profile US Embassy official to have been expelled from Ecuador in recent memory, her removal is not without precedent. In fact, Tuesday’s announcement seems to be the final chapter of a 2009 US-Ecuador spat rather than anything particularly new. [In February 2009 Ecuador expelled two diplomats](#), US customs attaché Armando Astorga and embassy first secretary, Mark Sullivan, after the US threatened to pull \$340,000 in police aid if Correa did not resume the [long-standing practice of letting Washington veto](#) Ecuador’s choice for the head of its Anti-Contraband Operations Unit. Given that Ambassador Hodges comments came five months after those expulsions, it seems that the Correa’s frustration this week stems from the fact that the US continued to criticize Ecuador’s police forces, even after the actions it took in February 2009.

Looking at [US police and military aid numbers over at Just the Facts](#), I’m having trouble figuring out if that \$340,000 did, in fact, ever get slashed. There certainly were some cuts, but parts of the aid looks to have been restored shortly thereafter.

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Less Money, More Problems - With money tight, countries are slashing HIV and TB programs in an attempt to maintain basic, essential services. The programs most frequently on the chopp...  
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### Informed Comment

Oil Billionaires Plot Secret Campaigns against Renewable Energy (duh) - The intrepid Suzanne Goldenberg of the Guardian reveals the secret campaign waged behind the scenes by the greasy oil billionaires, the Koch brothers, and ...  
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### Mercury Rising 鳳女

The Red Queen, in check. Rebekah Brooks answers questions. - Michael Wolf the support of Cameron, the tactical placement of Andy Coulson by Cameron’s side, and her cheek-by-jowl closeness to James Murdoch was part o...  
*6 hours ago*

### ElFaro.Net - El Primer Periódico Digital Latinoamericano

Funes veta a todos los candidatos a dirigir Instituto de Acceso a Información - El presidente hizo uso de la facultad que Â©l mismo se dio por medio del reglamento a la Ley de Acceso a la InformaciÃn PÃblica de vetar discrecionalment...  
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### Americas

Taking from the poor to feed US defence - Republicans in the US House of Representatives on Thursday voted to cut a government subsidy programme known as “food stamps” that allows many low inc...

[Total US military/police aid to Ecuador has grown over the last two years after cuts in a variety of areas were made between 2009 and 2010].

What's interesting about the 2009 row is that things were patched up rather quickly. Exactly one year ago, US Assistant Secretary of State Arturo Valenzuela made a high profile visit to Ecuador, notable for its cordiality – so cordial the Wall Street Journal's conservative pundit Mary Anastasia O'Grady nearly lost her mind over the meeting. That visit paved the way for a visit by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Quito in early June 2010 which was no less friendly. (AFP photographers captured some fantastic photos, in fact). In his announcement of Tuesday's expulsion, Ecuadorean officials were again explicit that the problem was with Ambassador Hodges, in particular, and not with US policy, in general. State Dept. spokesman Mark Toner called Hodges expulsion Tuesday "unjustified" but has not yet indicated if it would respond by expelling Ecuador's longtime ambassador to the US, Luis Gallegos.

One final note: while Correa's statement yesterday mirrored his comments made after the expulsion of Astorga and Sullivan in 2009 – in both instances Correa said Ecuador would no longer be treated as a "colony" of the US – Correa decided to cite Lula da Silva Tuesday as the individual who has most inspired his pro-sovereignty position. In his farewell address in late 2010, Correa says it was the former Brazilian president who called on others in the region to keep "thinking with their heads" while never "submitting to anyone."

Today's bullet points:

- Breaking news from the AP, which says the US and Colombian governments are expected to make a joint announcement today that a deal has been reached on a US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. We may see Juan Manuel Santos – in the US this week for a speech at Brown University yesterday and a trip to the UN Security Council in New York today (Colombia has taken over chairmanship of the Security Council) – making a detour to Washington on his way back home. The Wall Street Journal has more – focusing on the Walid Makled extradition case which the Santos government now says it will not have final decision about until April 15. Possible horse-trading? Former Colombian president, Alvaro Uribe, of all people, spoke about the Makled case with Andres Oppenheimer this week. Video here.
- More on Michel Martelly's apparent victory in Haiti. Somewhat conflicting reports from the LA Times and the BBC about whether or not Mirlande Manigat will challenge Monday's preliminary results over allegations of fraud. Pooja Bhatia at the Economist, among others, notes that outgoing President Rene Preval's Inite party will have a strong majority in the new Haitian legislature. Jacqueline Charles at the Miami Herald and the AP report on what Martelly is calling a "mandate" for change. Both note that the former singer has been short on details about what he might take on during his first 100 days. CEPR meanwhile, suggests Martelly's support is much weaker than initial reports indicate. Preliminary indications are that Martelly won with just 716,986 total votes to Madame Manigat's 336,747 – that's just 16.7% of registered voters, and, if those numbers hold up, total turnout looks to be even lower than in round-one when it was just over 22%. The New York Times also highlights early word of very low turnout.
- Ahead of Peruvian elections Sunday, Dow Jones takes a look at how Peru's economic growth-without-redistribution model has fueled Ollanta Humala's rise. Comments from Mario Vargas Llosa this week illustrate how out of touch Peru's elites are with much of their country. He said a hypothetical second-round showdown between Humala and Keiko Fujimori would be like "choosing between cancer and AIDS."

8 hours ago

### **Tim's El Salvador Blog**

FMLN leadership chooses Sánchez Cerén for 2014  
- This week \*El Faro\* reports on a meeting of FMLN top leadership where a vote was taken to designate Salvador Sánchez Cerén as the party's candidate for pre...

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### **LobeLog.com**

Hawks on Iran - In response to a worrying trend in U.S. politics, Lobe Log publishes "Hawks on Iran" every Friday. Our posts highlight militaristic commentary and confront...

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### **The Latin Americanist**

Today's Video: Seeking Justice on Mexico's Mothers Day - Mother's love is peace. It need not be acquired, it need not be deserved. --German psychologist and philosopher Erich Fromm On May 10th, the date that i...

11 hours ago

### **RealClearPolitics - Homepage**

Why Obama's Distractions May Backfire - Alana Goodman, Commentary

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### **Foreign Policy**

Dictators With Mommy Issues - By Uri Friedman  
- Some of the world's most ruthless leaders have had surprisingly close -- if deeply troubled -- relationships with their mothers.

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### **Paul Krugman**

Friday Night Music: Wye Oak - Civilian instead of Civil Wars.

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### **FP Passport**

The Election 2012 Weekly Report: The race evolves - \*The gay marriage fallout\* President \*Barack Obama \*made some history this week by becoming the first sitting president to support the legalization of s...

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Judge and be Judged - Luis Britto Garcia - Correo del Orinoco International Acclaimed author and intellectual Luis Britto Garcia provides a critical look at international a...

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### **Shannon K. O'Neil: Latin America's Moment**

Changes in Mexican Migration - [image: A candidate for United States citizenship grips a small American flag during a naturalization ceremony celebrating Bill OfRights Day in the Federa...

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### **History News Network**

Ed Kilgore: Making Calculations, Making History - \*Ed Kilgore is a contributing writer to the Washington Monthly. He is managing editor for The Democratic Strategist, a senior fellow at the Progressiv...

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### **Haiti Watch**

Group Warns of Inadequate Cholera Response as UN Concedes "Band-Aid" Approach is Ineffective  
- Doctors Without Borders (MSF) warned on Wednesday that not enough has been done to prepare for the rainy season and the corresponding surge in cholera th...

13 hours ago

### **Americas MexicoBlog**

Two women in Sonora executed - El Proceso:  
Organized crime took the lives of six people in

- A new international arrest warrant has been issued by a Spanish court seeking the extradition of former Guatemalan special forces officer Jorge Sosa Orantes from Canada. Sosa Orantes is wanted in connection to the 1982 Dos Erres massacre in which more than 250 individuals were killed. [AP reports](#) and [Kate Doyle](#) at the National Security Archive comments.
- Well-known Mexican author and columnist Juan Francisco Sicilia has called for nationwide demonstrations in Mexican today, protesting against the Mexican government and its anti-crime policies. Sicilia's son was murdered in Cuernavaca just over one week ago. In an open letter, he says Mexicans are "sick and tired" of their political leaders for "having torn asunder the fabric of the nation" in their "struggle for power." He also says negotiations must begin between the government and Mexican cartels. [AFP reports](#). Narco News posts [a translation of Sicilia's open letter](#) that was originally published by *Proceso*, one of the papers for whom Sicilia writes.
- Meanwhile, DEA administrator Michele M. Leonhart said Tuesday Mexican cartels have gone global. [AP reports](#).
- Journalist [Roberto Lovato](#), at *Altermet*, writes critically of what he calls the growing US-backed militarization of El Salvador and Central America.
- The *LA Times* reports on a new rubber boom underway in Colombia. Rubber tree planting has apparently increased tenfold over the last decade, driven by rising prices. That figure could triple again by 2016, say rubber watchers, as car sales in China, India, and elsewhere continue to rise.
- The *Wall Street Journal* suggests resource nationalism could be on the rise. The paper highlights recent state intervention at Brazilian mining giant Vale as an example.
- Brazil has rejected an IACHR request to stop construction of the giant Belo Monte hydroelectric dam on the Amazon. [NYT reports](#).
- And finally a quick mention of the [new issue of the Harvard journal ReVista](#), which explores the issue of "Journalism Across the Americas." Most of the articles appear to be available online and include pieces by El Faro's [Carlos Dada](#), La Silla Vacía's [Juanita Leon](#), IDL-Reporteros' [Gustavo Gorriti](#), veteran journalist, [Alfredo Corchado](#), among others.

Posted by [J.F. String](#) at [9:05 AM](#) 

Labels: [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#), [Ecuador](#), [El Salvador](#), [Guatemala](#), [Haiti](#), [Mexico](#), [Peru](#)

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Sonora and Mexico City on Thursday, including two women. In the first attack, five people were...  
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#### The Mex Files

I want to export stuff (Barack Obama) - Alas, the "stuff" the U.S. is exporting is weapons (and the effects of the U.S. weapons trade on Mexico always makes the headlines), and crappy food: ...  
Ins...  
14 hours ago

#### UNREDACTED

Document Friday: The Stoning of Nixon's Motorcade in Caracas - On May 13, 1958, Vice President and Mrs. Nixon arrived in Venezuela for a stop on a Latin American goodwill tour. Upon landing, unfriendly Venezuelans "pu...  
15 hours ago

#### Dissent Arguing the World

Surveillance and Occupy - As the various Occupy movements reverberate around the country, we are hearing more and more about government surveillance mobilized against them. Particul...  
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#### London Review Blog

Incite! - Timothy Alborn is the dean of arts and humanities and a professor of history at Lehman College of the City University of New York, and a scholar of Victori...  
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#### The Cable

Obama administration seeks to bolster Bahraini crown prince with arms sales - Bahraini Crown Prince \*Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa\* came to Washington this week to attend his son's college graduation, but he left with hands full of g...  
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#### Just the Facts blogs

Week's Top Articles: May 4-11, 2012 - \* Drug War News this was punctuated by the gruesome murders of journalists in Veracruz. Three photojournalists who covered the perilous crime beat in the...  
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#### The Cuban Triangle

The Alan Gross case: much talk, no movement - CNN has done the service of drawing out both the Cuban and U.S. governments on their positions on the case of jailed USAID contractor Alan Gross. Below i...  
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#### IKN

The Friday OT: Beastie Boys; Body movin' - The news last week came a few hours before the OT was published, but it was too much of a downer to respond in kind. Today's could have been the great Sure...  
17 hours ago

#### [interamericansecuritywatch.com](#)

Argentina's state-owned firms: So far, not so good -  
17 hours ago

#### PFI Latest Content

Stateless and Fancy-Free - Increasingly, rich Americans feel no allegiance to the United States.  
19 hours ago

#### Stephen M. Walt

A heated rant about climate change - Strategy is all about setting priorities: Deciding which problems merit the most attention and allocating the right level of resources to each challenge...  
19 hours ago

#### IPS Inter Press Service - Latin America

Chile's Native Communities Find Ally in

Supreme Court - Indigenous groups in Chile celebrated a recent court ruling that represented the latest victory in the struggle for respect for their right to be previousl...  
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**RealClearWorld**

Israel's Spies Are Revolting - Natan Sachs, Foreign Policy Something has gone very wrong with Israel's posture on Iran's nuclear program. While Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defen...  
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**NYRblog**

Fear and Literature - Tim Parks Christopher Anderson/Magnum Photos A man driving through Catia, a violent slum in Caracas, Venezuela, 2005 Is the novel a space of intense en...  
*20 hours ago*

**TripleCrisis**

The Path to a Stronger Democracy Lies in Strengthening Community - Jeff Madrick Two new books examine how putting capitalism before community has distorted the economy and put democracy at risk. I participated in a panel d...  
*22 hours ago*



**Central American Politics**

Recasting the Security Policy in Central America - José Miguel Cruz, a visiting assistant professor in the department of politics and international relations at Florida International University and long tim...  
*22 hours ago*



**Democracy Now!**

Stop the Drug War: Mexican Poet Javier Sicilia Condemns U.S. Role in Widening Drug Violence - We end the week with part two of our interview with renowned Mexican poet Javier Sicilia. Last year, Sicilia's 24-year-old son, Juan Francisco, was murdere...  
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**Bloggings by boz**

Humala's Shining Path problem - Peru's Minister of Defense Otarola and Minister of Interior Lozada resigned yesterday rather than face sanction from Congress. The criticism is over how the ...  
*23 hours ago*

**Latin America News Dispatch**

Chilean Congress Approves "Zamudio Law" Against Discrimination - Top Story - Chile's Congress passed a long-delayed anti-discrimination law on Wednesday night in a vote of 25-3, seven years after the law was initially in...  
*1 day ago*



**Caracas Chronicles**

Daunted, much? - Datanalisis's April number is out. I only have the headline figures, but: 1,300 people surveyed. Chavez 43% Capriles 26% Yes, it's an early poll. ...  
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**Glenn Greenwald**

Various matters - \*(1) \*On Wednesday, I was on Cenk Uygur's Current TV show with Michael Hastings discussing the Yemen bomb plot, and the video of that seven-minute segmen...  
*1 day ago*

**Americas Quarterly**

Is There a Consensus on Gay Marriage in North America? - President Barack Obama's pronouncement in favor of gay marriage certainly qualifies as both historic and courageous, not only for its content but also for...  
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**Honduras Culture and Politics**

Westport Energy Contract Update - This is an

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overdue update on one of the many dicey energy contracts that blossomed in the wake of the 2009 coup. Back in November, 2011, the then-head of t...

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### Latest Activity on Haiti Rewired

Steven Bell commented on Laura Morris's blog post ICT in Conflict & Disaster Response and Peacebuilding Crowdmap - Steven Bell commented on Laura Morris's blog post ICT in Conflict & Disaster Response and Peacebuilding Crowdmap

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### CIPER Chile

Ley SEP: Contraloría revela masiva pérdida de recursos destinados a educación de los más pobres - De entre los miles de millones de pesos que se entregan a la educación pública y particular subvencionada, los recursos vinculados a la Ley SEP son probabl...

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### Quotha

Journalist kidnapped, State and Lobo act concerned - Articles from AFP and EFE highlight the kidnapping of another journalist and the Honduran government's reaction in the wake of Erick Martínez's murder, a...

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### Turtle Bay

Rise of the Lilliputians - They are called the S-5, or the Small Five, a group of small and middling U.N. member states that have been informally\* \*meeting since 2005 to try and ch...

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### Mexico Institute

AL DÍA: ¿Qué opinan? Firmas del día: 5/10/12 - The Mexico Institute, AL DÍA: News and Analysis from the Mexico Institute, 5/10/12 Each morning, through the Mexico Portal feature, “¿Qué opinan? Firmas de...

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### Secrecy News

Same-Sex Marriages: Legal Issues (CRS) - The laws and policies governing same-sex marriages were exhaustively surveyed in a newly updated report from the Congressional Research Service. See Same-S...

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### The Economist: The Americas

Central America's gangs: A meeting of the maras - - An alleged gang member arrested during a raid in Mejicanos, a suburb of San Salvador. Source: AFP - More than 13 members of the "Ma...

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### **Livewire - Amnesty International blogging for human rights**

“Perdonamos, pero no olvidamos” - Por Lisa Sherman-Nikolaus, investigadora de Amnistía Internacional sobre Sierra Leona Amnistía Internacional habla con sobrevivientes del brutal conflicto ...

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### **TomDispatch - Blog**

Tomgram: Michael Klare, Oil Wars on the Horizon - Conflict and intrigue over valuable energy supplies have been features of the international landscape for a long time...

*1 day ago*

### Two Weeks Notice: A Latin American Politics Blog

Polling in Venezuela - Venezuelan state media reports that 57% would vote for Hugo Chávez, and only 21% for Henrique Capriles. Further, Chávez has 66% approval, at least among th...

*2 days ago*

 **Setty's notebook**

**Coming late to the indignation party:** Chile - Monday and Tuesday, Chile charged eight emergency response bureaucrats with negligent homicide for calling off a tsunami warning after the 8.8-magnitude ea...  
*2 days ago*

 **The Devil's Excrement**

**Watching Some "Strategic" Companies In Bolivarian Venezuela** - Over in Caracas Chronicles, Juan Nagel wrote an article criticizing Capriles' stance on keeping industries in the hands of the State, which prompted a resp...  
*3 days ago*

**NACLA Online News**

**Che: Behind the CIA's Killing of a Revolutionary** - Author: Hobart Spalding Date: Tuesday, May 8, 2012 Teaser: In *\*Who Killed Che?\**, radical attorneys Michael Ratner and Michael Steven Smith...  
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**The Havana Note**

**Radio-TV Marti and the not-so-great disappearing hatchet job** - William Booth of the Washington Post broke an exceptionally important story this weekend about an editorial published on the website of Radio and TV...  
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 **Patricio Navia**

**Coaliciones: Dime a quien atacas y te diré a quién temes** - La mejor forma de saber lo que piensan las coaliciones políticas sobre sus posibles rivales en la próxima contienda presidencial es identificando a los b...  
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 **The Narco News Bulletin**

**A Life of Challenge to the Dogma of "Objectivity"** - *\*Richard Bell Is Practiced at Juggling Journalism, Advocacy and Politics\** By Kirsten Han School of Authentic Journalism, Class of 2012 May 7, 2012 http...  
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 **The Washington Note**

**Romney vs Obama on Afghanistan, Terrorism, & bin Laden** - photo credit: Reuters The anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death has spiked public interest in the foreign policy positions of President Obama and Mitt Romney...  
*1 week ago*

 **Gancho**

**End of an Era** - Not a shocker, but a bummer to hear that Pep Guardiola is on his way out in Barça. Hopefully Tito can keep the machine humming. Here's Sport's send-off, w...  
*2 weeks ago*

 **malcolm beith**

**Close but no cigar** - Apologies, it's been a while since I last blogged. Been busy, studying up on counterinsurgency and how it might be applied to Mexico. Also finished writing...  
*1 month ago*

 **David Rothkopf**

**Brazil's new swagger** - *\*As of today, David Rothkopf's blog will be replaced by a weekly column. For the next few weeks, his column will also appear in this space. \* While Amer...*  
*2 months ago*

**El Blog del Narco**

**Aviso Urgente: cambios en BlogdelNarco** - Amigos, en los últimos días www.blogdelnarco.com ha experimentado algunas complicaciones, así que queremos informarles que a partir de hoy tendremos cambio...  
*6 months ago*

**HaitiAnalysis.com - Home**

Brazil Needs to Quit Haiti - \* Mark Weisbrot (CEPR.net) \* U.S. diplomatic cables now released from Wikileaks make it clearer than ever before that foreign troops occupying Haiti for m...  
*9 months ago*

**Plaza Pública**

Éste es un archivo de 3 meses. Siganos: plazapublica.com.gt - Plaza Pública cumplió sus primeros tres meses y ha migrado a la plataforma que nos permitirá ser interactivos, más dinámicos y más una plaza pública. ...  
*11 months ago*

**N The Nation Blogs: Jeremy Scahill**

Lawmakers Ask Hillary Clinton to Explain Erik Prince's Mercenaries in the UAE - Jeremy Scahill  
"The implications of allowing a US citizen to assemble a legion in any foreign country, and especially in a combustible region like the Midd...  
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## About Me

### J.F. String

Based in New York, I write on Latin American politics and history. I am currently a Ph.D. Candidate in Latin American History at New York University.

And I have done work with the Open Society Institute, the National Security Archive, and the Institute for Policy Studies, all in Washington, D.C.

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