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**AT: Amazon – Resilient**

**Amazon resilient**

**NASA 07** Amazon Forest Unexpectedly Resilient to Drought 09.21.07 <http://www.nasa.gov/centers/goddard/news/topstory/2007/amazon_green.html>

The extensive forests of South America's Amazon are turning out to be tougher than expected when it comes to withstanding the onslaughts of a changing climate. A team of U.S. and Brazilian scientists using the insightful eyes of two NASA satellites has shown that one of the worst droughts in decades could not stop the undisturbed regions of the Amazon forest from "greening up." The Amazon drought of 2005 reached its peak just as the region's annual dry season was beginning, from July through September. Although the double whammy of the parched conditions might be expected to slow the growth of the forest's leafy canopy, in much of the drought-stricken areas the canopy became significantly greener -- an indication of increased photosynthetic activity. “Instead of ‘hunkering down’ during a drought as you might expect, the forest responded positively to drought, at least in the short term," said study author Scott R. Saleska, an assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University Of Arizona. "It's a very interesting and surprising response." The new finding contradicts a prominent global climate model that predicts the Amazon forest would begin to "brown down" after just a month of drought. The model also predicts an eventual forest collapse, shifting the ecosystem permanently from a thick, evergreen, broad-leaved forest to a grassy savanna. "No one had looked at this issue with observations that are available from satellites," said co-author Kamel Didan, an associate research scientist in the University of Arizona's department of soil, water and environmental science. "We took the opportunity of the most recent drought, the 2005 drought, to do so." "A big chunk of the Amazon forest -- the southwest region where the drought was severest -- reacted positively," said Didan. "The forest showed signs of being more productive. That's the big news." The new study, which was supported by NASA research funding, was published on Sept. 20 in Science Express, the online version of the journal Science. The researchers and their colleagues already knew the Amazon forest took advantage of the annual dry season's relatively cloudless skies to soak up the sun and grow. From a previous study that used NASA satellite data combined with additional field measurements, the researchers found that intact Amazon forest increases photosynthesis, actually "greening up," during the dry season. The severe 2005 drought and the detailed, long-term observations from two NASA satellites -- one that maps the greenness of vegetation, one that measures rainfall in the tropics -- gave the researchers what they needed to see how the Amazon forest responds to a major drought. One of the instruments on NASA's Terra satellite, launched in 1999 -- the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer, or MODIS, – provides month-to-month maps of changes in vegetation status across the Amazon (and the world). The one-of-a-kind Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission spacecraft, launched in 1997, collects observations of rainfall. The scientists used the seven-to-nine years of observations from these satellites to map "normal" rainfall and greenness conditions in non-drought years. When they compared those conditions to the same months of the 2005 drought, the researchers found that areas of Amazon's intact forests that had received below-normal rainfall in 2005 also had above-average greenness. Global climate models predict the Amazon forest will cut back photosynthesis quickly when a drought starts. That slowdown in plant growth would create a positive feedback loop: as the forest shuts down more and more, it removes less and less carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The carbon dioxide ordinarily sequestered by growing trees would remain in the atmosphere, increasing global warming and further accelerating the forest's decline and additional carbon-dioxide-fueled warming. By contrast, the research team's findings suggest the opposite happens, at least in the short-term. The drought-induced flush of forest growth would dampen global warming, not accelerate it. During the 2005 drought, Amazon forest trees flourished in the sunnier-than-average weather, most likely by tapping water sources deep in the forest soil. To grow, trees must take up more carbon dioxide, thus drawing down the levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide.

**Amazon resilient**

**New York Times 07** WORLD BRIEFING | AMERICAS; Brazil: Amazon Forests Resilient To Drought By ANDREW C. REVKIN Published: September 21, 2007 http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B05EFD6133AF932A1575AC0A9619C8B63

Most forests in the Amazon River basin grew greener in 2005 even as a potent drought caused the waterways in the region to shrivel to a 100-year low, scientists said in a paper published in the online journal ScienceExpress. The scientists, from the University of Arizona and the University of São Paulo, analyzed readings from satellites that can measure the chlorophyll used by plants in photosynthesis. The greening in the face of intense drought implies that Amazonian trees are resilient, at least in the short term, to big rainfall changes. Some earlier research had concluded that even brief severe droughts might tip the Amazon toward becoming savanna.

**AT: Balkans – Crime Decreasing/Stability Increasing**

**Crime decreasing and stability increasing – we cite data and their spin is wrong**

**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 08** Greater stability in the Balkans is lowering crime, reports UNODC <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/greater-stability-in-the-balkans-is-lowering-crime.html>

29 May 2008 - The Balkan area is, surprisingly, one of the safest in Europe. The report Crime and its Impact on the Balkans by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) belies enduring stereotypes of the region as a hotbed of organized crime and violence. People are as safe, or safer, on the streets and in their homes as they are in most parts of the world. Released today, the study concludes that the Balkans have become a low-crime region after the decade-long turmoil that followed the break-up of Yugoslavia. But it also warns that links between business, politics and organized crime continue to hamper the region's path to stability. "**The vicious circle of political instability leading to crime, and vice versa, that plagued the Balkans in the 1990s has been broken**", said the Executive Director of UNODC Antonio Maria Costa at the launch of the report. Yet, he warned, "the region remains vulnerable to instability caused by enduring links between business, politics and organized crime". The report makes three main points. A safer region The UNODC report shows that, in general, levels of crime against people and property (like homicide, robbery, rape, burglary, and assault) are lower than in Western Europe, and the number of murders is falling throughout the region. In fact, regional murder rates fell by almost a half from 2185 in 1998 to 1130 in 2006. Or consider these trends in violent crime: Albania's 2002 murder rate of six per 100,000 was about the same as the United States while Croatia had a lower murder rate than the United Kingdom. Romania was safer than Finland or Switzerland. If we look at property crime, Western Europe has twice the rate of burglary and fifteen times as much robbery as South-East Europe This positive trend has been particularly noticeable in the past few years. Even the number of Balkan nationals being held in Western European prisons has gone down. Low vulnerability to crime This progress is likely to continue since the region lacks the usual vulnerabilities that lead to crime elsewhere in the world: mass poverty, income inequality, run-away urbanisation and large-scale youth unemployment. Other factors also come into play. Greater regional stability and democracy have put an end to war profiteering. Assistance from the international community, particularly the European Union, has helped place the region on the path to a fast recovery. Closer integration with the rest of Europe has opened borders and reduced the lure of illicit trans-frontier trade. Organized crime is also receding as a major threat. The smuggling of drugs, guns and human beings through the region is in decline, although the Balkans remain the premier transit zone for heroin destined for Western Europe (about 100 tons each year).

**AT: Balkans – Econ Alt Cause**

**Alt cause to Balkan stability – econ**

**USIP 99** (US institute of peace) September 1999 | Special Report by Andrew J. Pierre De-Balkanizing the Balkans: Security and Stability in Southeastern Europe Special Report No. 54 http://www.usip.org/publications/de-balkanizing-balkans-security-and-stability-southeastern-europe

Political stability in the Balkans cannot be achieved without an adequate level of economic security and growth. As discussed, the Kosovo crisis created economic havoc in much of Southeastern Europe. An effective program of reconstruction is badly needed. More than reconstruction to past levels, however, is necessary to achieve a stable region. During this post-conflict time, a foundation must be laid for an economically viable and prosperous region, without which democracy cannot fully take hold.

**AT: Balkans – Ethnicity Alt Cause**

**Alt cause to Balkan stability – ethnicity**

**Global Security Studies 10** Global Security Studies, Fall 2010, Volume l, Issue 3 Instability and Desperation: The Balkan Link to Terrorism Sheila Rom Peace, War and Defense Program University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Chapel Hill, NC 27514 http://globalsecuritystudies.com/Rom%20Balkans.pdf

The peace in the Balkans is a highly tenuous one at the moment. In 1995, Bosnia was partitioned into several regions by the Dayton peace agreement (de Blij 2006). Although not codified for specific ethnic groups (Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats), those divisions essentially became separate ethnic enclaves (Deliso 2007). Peace and prosperity hinges on the ability of those ethno-centric regions to collaborate. Thus far it has not been entirely successful. US intelligence suggests that these differences will further solidify along ethnic lines as the fall election draws near and increasing tensions within the already strained Bosnian political scene (Blair 2010). Kosovo has also attained a temporary peace. The NATO peacekeeping delegation is largely responsible for ensuring that the terms of peace agreements are enforced and the region does not relapse into a state of war (Blair 2010). Though the overt fighting has been temporarily abandoned in most provinces in this region, the competition for jobs, resources, land and otherwise has remained.

**AT: Central American Basing – Basing High Now**

**US basing in Central America is increasing in the status quo and they can’t kick us out**

**New America Media 11** Pentagon Using Drug Wars as Excuse to Build Bases in Latin America New America Media, News Analysis, John Lindsay-Poland , Posted: Jun 03, 2011 http://newamericamedia.org/2011/06/drug-wars-helping-us-military-rebuild-its-presence-in-latin-america.php

U.S. military construction in Central and South America has more than doubled in the last two years, while a U.S. buildup on military bases in Colombia continues, despite a Colombian court ruling last summer that struck down an agreement for U.S. use of the bases. Construction of military facilities is slated for this summer in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Belize, funded from an account for “counter-narco-terrorism” operated by the U.S. Southern Command (SouthCom), the Pentagon’s operations arm for Latin America, according to the Army Corps on Engineers plans. But the biggest Pentagon investments are in Panama and at the U.S. air base in Soto Cano, Honduras. [see interactive map for details] The surge in U.S. military investment in the region parallels statements by SouthCom commander Douglas Fraser that the triangle formed by Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala “is possibly the most violent place on Earth today.”

**AT: Central American Stability – Economic/Political Stability Now**

**Central America is stable now – economics and politics**

**Aliaxis 07** The Aliaxis Group is an international consisting of businesses primarily engag in the manufacture and commercialisation of plastic products for ﬂ uid transport relating to four key market segments; building, sanitary, industrial and utilities. <http://www.aliaxis.com/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Annual_Report/Aliaxis_Annual_Report_2007.pdf>

Central America is relatively stable in political and macroeconomic terms, and growth rates of between 3.7% and 8% are projected for 2008. Costa Rica beneﬁ ts from a high level of investment following approval of the Free Trade Agreement with the US, and Panama will similarly beneﬁ t from increased housing investment and enlargement of the Canal. In Honduras and El Salvador the construction sector in 2008 is expected to improve ahead of elections due in 2009, although growth in Guatemala will be lower following the recent elections. Nicaragua’s geopolitical policies are expected to hold back growth in the absence of foreign investment in the country.

**AT: Cocaine – Europe Alt Cause**

**Alt cause to cocaine – Europe**

**New York Times 11** Drug Bust Shows Argentina-Europe Trafficking Ties By ALEXEI BARRIONUEVO Published: January 29, 2011 http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/30/world/americas/30argentina.htm

BUENOS AIRES — A major cocaine bust in Spain is highlighting the growing drug-trafficking ties between Argentina and Europe and causing headaches for the government of Argentina’s president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. The Spanish authorities in Barcelona seized an executive jet from Argentina this month that was carrying about 2,000 pounds of cocaine. An Argentine company specializing in private medical transfers, Medical Jet, was operating the plane, which was being flown by pilots whose fathers were generals during Argentina’s bloody dictatorship. Investigators in Spain and Argentina have remained tight-lipped about the inquiry, but questions have swirled around the possible involvement of Argentine military officials and politicians who flew on Medical Jet, and deeper connections to Colombian and Mexican drug cartels. Last week, the Argentine Air Force dismissed Commodore Jorge Ayerdi, the head of the Morón air base, where the Challenger 604 plane took off on Jan. 1, Argentina’s state news agency reported. Arturo Puricelli, Argentina’s defense minister, has expressed concern about the possible involvement of the air force, saying Wednesday in a radio interview that he would push for an investigation. “There is great indignation about the case within the air force,” Mr. Puricelli said. The Argentine judge Alejandro Catania is investigating 18 air force officials for possible involvement in the drug shipment, the Argentine news media reported. He declined to comment on the case. The seized drug cargo was only the most recent of dozens of cocaine shipments to Spain originating in Argentina since 2006, experts on organized crime in Argentina and Spain said. “Argentina has become a producer and exporter of cocaine over the past five years, and Europe is looking to Argentina for cocaine,” said Claudio Izaguirre, president of the Argentine Anti-Drugs Association, a nongovernmental group in Buenos Aires.

**AT: Honduras Relations**

**Relations inevitable – many reasons**

**Department of the State 6/19/12** U.S. Relations With Honduras BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS Fact Sheet June 19, 2012 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1922.htm

Honduras has traditionally been an ally of the United States. Following Honduras' June 2009 coup and U.S. recognition of the November 2009 presidential election, U.S. policy has sought to consolidate democracy, protect human rights, and promote the rule of law. U.S. Government programs are aimed at promoting a healthy and more open economy capable of sustainable growth, improving the climate for business and investment and protecting U.S. citizen and corporate rights, and promoting the well-being of the Honduran people. The United States also works with Honduras to meet transnational challenges--including the fight against terrorism, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, illegal migration, and trafficking in persons--and encourages and supports Honduran efforts to protect the environment. The goals of strengthening democracy and promoting viable economic growth are especially important given the geographical proximity of Honduras to the United States. An estimated 1 million Hondurans reside in the United States, 600,000 of whom are believed to be undocumented; consequently, immigration issues are an important item on the bilateral agenda. An average of 80,000 to 110,000 U.S. citizens visit Honduras annually, and about 15,000 Americans reside there. U.S. Assistance to Honduras Honduras, one of Latin America's poorest nations, strives to improve its economic and democratic development with U.S. assistance. The United States has historically been the largest bilateral donor to Honduras. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) programs include education, health, economic policy, microenterprise, environmental conservation, food security, municipal development, and justice sector reform. The United States maintains a small presence at a Honduran military base. U.S. forces conduct and provide logistics support for a variety of bilateral and multilateral exercises--medical, engineering, peacekeeping, counternarcotics, and disaster relief--for the benefit of the Honduran people and their Central American neighbors. Through the Central America Regional Security Initiative, the United States supports the Government of Honduras by assisting law enforcement entities in disrupting criminal networks; building investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial capacity; and implementing violence prevention programs for vulnerable communities. In June 2005, Honduras became the first country in the hemisphere to sign a Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) Compact with the U.S. Government. Under the Compact, the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation invested $205 million over 5 years to help Honduras improve its road infrastructure, diversify its agriculture, and transport its products to market. Bilateral Economic Relations The U.S. is the chief trading partner for Honduras, supplying 34% of Honduran imports and purchasing 41% of Honduran exports in 2010. Bilateral trade between the two nations totaled $8.3 billion in 2010. U.S. exports to Honduras in 2010 totaled $4.6 billion. More than 200 U.S. companies operate in Honduras. The U.S.-Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) entered into force in 2006. It eliminates most tariffs and other barriers for U.S. goods destined for the Central American market, provides protection for U.S. investments and intellectual property, and creates more transparent rules and procedures for conducting business. CAFTA also aims to eliminate intra-Central American tariffs and facilitate increased regional trade, benefiting U.S. companies manufacturing in Honduras. With CAFTA implemented, about 80% of U.S. goods now enter the region duty-free, with tariffs on the remaining 20% to be phased out by 2016. Leading U.S. exports in 2009 included: textile yarn and fabric, petroleum and petroleum products, cereals and cereal preparations, low-value shipments, and apparel. Nearly all textile and apparel goods that meet CAFTA’s rules of origin became duty-free and quota-free immediately, thus promoting new opportunities for U.S. fiber, yarn, fabric, and apparel manufacturers. Honduras is the seventh-largest exporter of apparel and textile products by volume to the U.S. market behind countries such as Mexico and China; Honduras is first among Central American and Caribbean countries. The stock of U.S. foreign direct investment in Honduras rose 7.2% between 2008 and 2009, from $787 million to $844 million. This was concentrated largely in the manufacturing, finance, insurance, and banking sectors of the country. Honduras' Membership in International Organizations Honduras generally supports U.S. initiatives in international fora. Honduras and the United States belong to a number of the same international organizations, including the United Nations, Organization of American States, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund.

**AT: Human Trafficking**

**Aff focuses on the wrong aspects of trafficking – can’t solve the unintended consequences of legal policy**

**Christoffersen 09** Unintended Consequences: Understanding Human Trafficking in the United States Lyndsey Christoffersen University of California, Irvine http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=humtraffconf

The United States also acknowledges that immigration policy impacts trafficking throughout the world. “Despite these countries’ reliance on foreign labor, stringent immigration provisions combined with a bias against foreign workers often create a structure conducive to trafficking in persons” (TIP, 2008, 31). While this argument is beginning made about countries in the Middle East, it should also be applied to the United States. The U.S. is not acknowledging that its strict borders are aiding human traffickers. This denial is the political part of human trafficking. Governments focus on the evil individuals involved in the crime so that they do not have to acknowledge the unintended consequences of their policies. “References to the abuses conducted by individual actors – brutal traffickers and exploitative employers – obscures the importance of formal citizenship/legal status, and the role of the state in constructing vulnerability through denial of legal status” (Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008, 144). Second, U.S. immigration policy has few protections for migrants. “Immigration controls produce groups of people that are ‘deportable’ and hence particularly vulnerable to abuse”(Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008, 144). The focus on trafficking has allowed both the government and citizens to ignore abuse of migrants. While migrants have some legal recourse for abuse, most do not attempt it for fear of deportation (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Additionally, trafficking victims must prove that they were subjected to a severe form of trafficking (TVPA, 2000). Basically, until and unless a migrant is trafficked, they are not going to receive any significant help. Not only is this abuse bad by itself, it creates vulnerability to trafficking. There is little legal recourse for exploited migrants, so they are forced into situations where they are more likely to be trafficked.

**AT: Latin Stability – Stable/Democratic Now**

**Latin America is more stable and democratic now**

**The Guardian 09** Why Latin America's left keeps winning Washington's foreign policy establishment has been proven wrong. Latin America is more stable and democratic than ever Share 64 Mark Weisbrot guardian.co.uk, Friday 1 May 2009 14.00 EDT http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2009/apr/30/ecuador-election-economy

The Times (and Washington's foreign policy establishment) have proven to be wrong, as Ecuador and Bolivia are now more politically stable than they have been for decades. (Ecuador has had nine presidents over the last 15 years). They are also more democratic than they have ever been. In fact, most of Latin America is going through a democratic transition that is likely to prove every bit as important as the one that brought an end to the dictatorships that plagued many countries through the first four decades of the post-second world war era. Ironically, the region's economic performance was vastly better in the era of the dictatorships, because the governments of that era generally had more effective economic policies than the formally democratic but neoliberal governments that replaced them. A few years ago there were fears, backed by polling data, that people would become nostalgic for the days of real (not imagined) authoritarian governments because of the much greater improvements in living standards during that era. Instead, they chose to vote for left governments who extended democracy from politics to economic and social policy. The left governments have mostly succeeded where their neoliberal predecessors failed. Partly they have benefited from an acceleration in world economic growth during most of the last five years. But they have also changed their economic policies in ways that increased economic growth. Argentina's economy grew more than 60% in six years and Venezuela's by 95%. These are enormous growth rates even taking into account these countries' prior recessions, and allowed for large reductions in poverty. Left governments have also taken greater control over their natural resources (Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela) and delivered on their promises to share the income wfrom these resources with the poor. This is the way democracy is supposed to work: people voted for change and got quite a bit of what they voted for, with reasonable expectations of more to come. We should not be surprised if most Latin American voters stick with the left through hard times. Who else is going to defend their interests?