

GHOST OPS

A MODERN COVERT OPERATIONS RPG



**Central & South
America**

by

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A Shot in the Dark

“All empires are created of blood and fire”
Pablo Escobar



Simon Lee peered through his EOTech NVGs, getting a solid visual on the compound at the bottom of the hill. In the sickly green light of the night vision, he could see the heavy hitters from Carlos Esposito's good squad arriving in their souped-up Jeeps. The roar of their overtaxed engines reached him in his hide high up on the mountainside, and he thought that at least one of those transmissions was on its last legs. If he was lucky, it would die when the bad guys tried to bug out.

Lee was a former US Navy SEAL who had earned the enmity of one of the joint chiefs by not playing the political game with any sort of finesse. He had been transferred to the ICO from the Navy as a sort of banishment, but he had thrived since his addition to the multinational force. He missed his old team, but his new team was nothing to sneeze at.

To his left, concealed in his ghillie suit, was Sebastian Carr, the pride of MI-6. He couldn't see his teammate at all, and he didn't expect to. If he had seen him, Lee would have shot Carr himself... just in the leg, mind you, as a reminder to stop being sloppy. On his right, the other two members of the team crouched behind cover, not as concealed as the two snipers, but they didn't have to be. They just had to be still and quiet and let him do his work.

He had been one of the best snipers in his unit, and he took pride in his efficiency and kill rate. It was a form of art, he figured, to kill a man from a mile away and to drop him before he even knew that he was dead. He was an artist.

The compound was a cluster of ramshackle wooden buildings, their roofs much the worse for wear after too long in the jungle rain. He could see the shingles rotting

from where he lay prone. These buildings were too far gone to even be called fixer-uppers. Around them, cadres of armed men sulked and slouched, tired and cranky from being on their feet for too many hours. Esposito was a security freak, and he kept his guards busy so that he always had someone to hide behind. It was a strategy that had served him well in the past, but today was the day that service ended.

The door to the main building opened, and Mohammad al-Bairi stepped into view. It was a damned shame that al-Bairi wasn't his target, because Lee had a beautiful bead on the side of his headscarf. The Saudi aristocrat was the deep pocket behind some of the worst of the worst in the Islamic terrorist community, and it would have been a service to mankind to end him. Lee's finger itched, but he stayed motionless. The bullet wasn't meant for him.

Al-Bairi stopped to say something, looking back into the building. Just inside the door jamb, Esposito showed his ugly, pock-marked face, the scar on his forehead like a neon light through the NVG's. He whispered into his mouthpiece.

"I have a visual. Target is confirmed."

His CO's voice came back, cool and composed. "Take the shot."

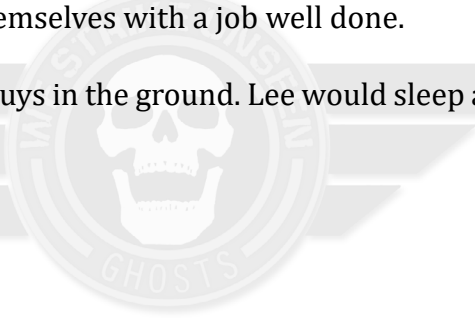
He watched. Al-Bairi was walking toward the jeeps, his briefcase in his hand. He was laughing. Esposito spoke, and all eyes turned to him, enjoying what was probably a lame joke but which had earned a round of belly laughs. Warlords' jokes were always funny, if you knew what was good for you.

Nobody was looking at the mountain. There would be no witnesses for the muzzle flash. He squeezed his trigger. Esposito dropped to the ground, stone dead, a bullet through his left eye. Carr's L96 spat simultaneously, and Al-Bairi's laughing days were through.

"It's a twofer," Carr whispered. "I didn't want to go home empty-handed."

Pepper and Lamont left their hide, abandoning their bushes and joining up with the snipers, who were rapidly packing up. Pepper called for their bird, and then they headed back through the jungle to their extraction point, pleased with themselves with a job well done.

Two more bad guys in the ground. Lee would sleep a little better tonight.







Lay of the Land

Two cats will not live together in one sack.

South American saying



Central America

Central America is an isthmus (land bridge) that connects the continent of North America to the continent of South America. Its borders are made up of Mexico to the north, Colombia to the south, the Caribbean Sea to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. There are seven nations in the region (alphabetically: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama). The United Nations geoscheme for the Americas defines the region as all states of mainland North America south of the United States and specifically includes all of Mexico, giving Central America its eighth country. For purposes of this guide, we are aligning with the United Nations geoscheme.

The region has massive biodiversity. More than 7% of all of the world's species of plants and animals are found in Central America. Mexico, for example, is considered the fourth most biodiverse country in the world. The land area is just under 508,000 square kilometers/ 197,000 square miles, and the human population is roughly 47 million.

Geographically, the isthmus is made up of a rocky highland through the centre, flanked by coastal lowlands to the west/southwest and the north/northeast. and the famous (or infamous, depending upon your view) Panama Canal allows ships to move from one ocean to the other. This canal is of primary tactical importance and must remain open to shipping, both civilian and military. It is currently controlled by the government of Panama under an international agreement of permanent neutrality.

The region is also home to the Central American Volcanic Arc (CAVA), a chain of active volcanoes that run from Guatemala in the north all the way to the southern end of

Panama. Seismic activity is constant and frequently deadly. The tallest volcanoes in the chain are in Guatemala, the Tajulmulco and Volcán Tacaná, both over 4000 meters. The Tajulmulco, at 4,220 meters, is the tallest peak in Central America. The biggest volcanic eruption was in 1902, when the Santa Maria Volcano in Guatemala, part of the Sierra Madre range, blew for two days, ejecting 5.5 cubic kilometres of magma. The eruption had a VEI (Volcanic Explosivity Index) of 6, or “colossal”. The mountain has been in a constant state of activity since the explosion, and scientists believe that another massive event may be on the horizon.

The three largest mountain ranges in Central America are the Sierra Madre de Chiapas (Mexico-Guatemala-Honduras-Nicaragua), the Cordillera Isabelia (Nicaragua-Honduras) and the Cordillera de Talamanca (Costa Rica-Panama). Tucked into the spaces between the mountains are verdant valleys with rich soil, where crops like tobacco, potatoes, beans and coffee are grown for export. These valleys host the majority of the human population.

The climate of Central America varies depending upon elevation and the Trade Winds, dryer to the north near the Mexico-USA border and wetter to the south where Panama connects with Colombia. Generally speaking, the highest temperatures are in April, just before the start of the rainy season, and the lowest are before the tropical dry season begins in December. The temperature ranges from 38 C /100 F to a low of 10 C/ 50 F at the higher elevations. Humidity is always very high, especially at higher elevations, and the rainy season can feature floods and massive rainstorms. The region is frequently in the path of Atlantic hurricanes, and several storms have done great damage and caused high casualties over the years.

Central America has suffered massive deforestation, especially on the slopes on the Caribbean side of Nicaragua. One end of the continuum, Belize has retained 61% of its forests, while El Salvador has lost all but 21%. This deforestation bring attendant habitat loss and negative impact on flora and fauna, as well as ecological challenges to the human population. Once cleared, rainforest land is only fertile for one to three growing seasons before its topsoil is depleted. Farmers clear cut more land, and more forest is lost in an endless cycle. Tactical cover in the forests is challenged by the process of deforestation, as well.

The type of forest found in Central America depends entirely upon latitude and elevation. From the Yucatan Peninsula through Panama, at 600 to 1800 meters, the land is covered by pine-oak forest, with the standard sort of North American deciduous trees (pine, oak, fir and cypress). This elevation is also home to the cloud forest, which is largely composed of laurel trees and evergreen oaks. The largest cloud forest is in Guatemala, but cloud forest and pine-oak forest can be found throughout the region. At elevations higher than 1,500 meters, Central American Montane forest takes over, with tropical to subtropical moist broadleaf trees.



The astute reader will notice that the climate of Mexico north of the Yucatan has not yet been addressed. Northern and central Mexico is an entirely different animal to the rest of the region, with different elements. Mexico is bisected by the Tropic of Cancer into temperate zones north of the line and tropical zones south of it. The northern area is dry, with intermittent rainfall at best. The southern regions are much wetter, with the tropical wet seasons and dry seasons as already noted. The combination of the two gives Mexico the most diverse climate in the region, and any operations in Mexico need to take this variation into careful account.

The country features two mountain ranges, continuations of the North American Rocky Mountains, which cross the terrain from north to south. These are the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental. In the center of the country, the east-west range of the Sierra Nevada, known in some circles as the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt. There is also a smaller range running from Michoacán to Oaxaca called the Sierra Madre del Sur. The majority of Mexico is at high elevation, with heavily populated valleys between the summits. There is large-scale agriculture in these valleys, where edible and other cash crops are grown to great effect.

South America

South America is a massive continent located in the southern half of the Western Hemisphere. It is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea to the north and northwest, by the Atlantic to the east, and by the Pacific to the West. The southern tip of South America is called Cape Horn and extends almost to Antarctica. There are twelve nations in South America (alphabetically: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela); there

are two European territories (French Guiana and the ABC Islands, which belong to the Netherlands), a failed would-be state (San Marino) and a non-sovereign area still being disputed by Argentina and the United Kingdom, the Falkland Islands. The island country of Trinidad and Tobago can also be considered a part of South America. It boasts 17,800,000 square km / 6,890,000 square miles and supports a human population of over 420 million. The majority of the population lives along the eastern and western coasts, with few people occupying the interior or the south.

South America has a host of superlatives in its geographical portfolio. It has the world's highest uninterrupted waterfall in Angel Falls, Venezuela; the highest single-drop waterfall in Kaieteur Falls in Guyana; the longest river in the Amazon; the longest mountain range in the Andes; and the driest non-polar area in the Atacama Desert. The climate of South America ranges from arctic to tropical, with everything in between. The highest points of the Andes have winter temperatures colder than those found in Norway. The pampas of Argentina are arid and similar to the American West. It is impossible to generalize about the weather or climate of the continent, and any mission planning must take into account the variations of wind, altitude and latitude with almost more care than in any other region.

The continent's geography is made up of three very different regions. There are the mountains and highlands, the river systems, and the coastal plains.

The mountains and highlands are found on both the eastern and western sides of South America. On the west are the Andes, the world's longest mountain system, which covers over 8,800 km / 5,500 miles. They extend

from the Tierra del Fuego, the tip of the continent, to the northern coast. The tallest mountain in the range is Aconcagua, which stands at the border of Argentina and Chile, reaching 6,692 meters / 22,841 feet. In the east stand the Brazilian Highlands and the Guiana Highlands. The Brazilian Highlands are 1,000 meters / 3,300 feet on average and are made up of low mountains and plateaus. The Guiana Highlands are covered with dense forest and are located in the space between the Amazon River and the Orinoco River. Guiana Highlands extend from Venezuela through French Guiana, Guyana, Brazil and a portion of Colombia.

There are three major rivers: The Amazon, the Orinoco, and the Paraguay (also called the Paraná). The Amazon is the longest river in the world, arising at its source in the Rio Mantaro in Peru and continuing over 6,992 km / 4,345 miles until it empties into the Atlantic Ocean. It displaces 209,000 cubic meters of water per second and forms the navigable heart of the Amazon Forest. The Amazon river basin is the largest in the world, covering over 7,050,000 square km / 2,720,000 square miles. The river itself has no dams and flows freely, offering an artery for travel and a good method of insertion and exit for special teams.

The Amazon Forest is the most diverse biome in the world, with over 2 million species of insects and 100 distinct species of tree. There are also hundreds of different birds, sloths, monkeys, snakes and lizards. Wildlife must be considered a constant rogue element in any plan involving insertion into the Amazon Forest, especially in the interior, farther away from the developed areas of Brazil.



Politicians and other Thieves

“See, if you look at the drug war from a purely economic point of view, the role of the government is to protect the drug cartel. That’s literally true.”

Milton Friedman



Central America

Belize

Official Language: English

Recognized Languages: Spanish, Belizean Creole, Garifuna, Mayan languages

Capital: Belmopan

Population demographics: 52.9% Mestizo, 23.9% Creole, 11.3% Mayan, 6.1% Garifuna, 3.9% South Asian, 4.6% European, 1.2% other white, 1.0% East Asian, 1.5% unknown

Form of Government: Parliamentary constitutional monarchy.

Political Culture: The government of Belize is dominated by two main political parties, the center-left People's United Party and the center-right United Democratic Party.

Armed Forces: Belize Defense Force (BDF)

Population: 387,879 (2016 census)

Currency: Belizean dollar (BZD)

Economy: Most of the economy of Belize is based upon the production and export of petroleum and crude oil. Agriculture is largely based upon the cultivation of bananas and sugar. Tourism makes up a sizeable portion of the country's income, with the Belize Barrier Reef drawing thousands of international visitors each year.

Important Notes: For such a small country, Belize has a comparatively high rate of violent crime, specifically murder, assault and rape. The majority of the crimes are committed by gangs involved in drug and human trafficking, as well as the transport and sale of narcotics. The national government has brokered peace treaties between some of the major criminal gangs in the country, leading to a decrease in open killings.

Costa Rica

Official Language: Spanish

Recognized Languages: Mekatelyu, Bribri, Patios

Capital: San José

Population Demographics: 83.6% White/Castizo or Mestizo, 6.7% Mixed Race, 2.4% Indigenous, 1.1% African, 6.2% Other

Form of Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic

Political Culture: There are nine active political parties represented in the Legislative Assembly and twenty-one parties present in the country as a whole. The two largest parties are the Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN)/National Liberation Party, a centrist social democracy, and the Partido Acción Ciudadana (PAC)/Citizens Action Party, a progressive social democracy.

Armed Forces: NONE. The army was abolished in 1948 following its civil war. Costa Rica does maintain a Ministry of Public Safety, which sees to the country's law enforcement needs.

Population: 4,857,274 (2016 census)

Currency: Costa Rican colón (CRC)

Economy: Costa Rica's main exports are medical instruments, coffee, bananas, tropical fruits, integrated circuits and orthopedic appliances. The country has free trade agreements with several countries, and several Free Trade Zones within its borders.

Important Notes: Costa Rica and Nicaragua contest the navigation rights of the San Juan River, which forms the border between the two countries. Costa Rica was the first Central American nation to break off diplomatic relations with Taiwan, switching its recognition to the People's Republic of China. Costa Rica hosts approximately 600,000 refugees from Nicaragua and Colombia.

El Salvador

Official Language: Spanish

Recognized Languages: None

Capital: San Salvador

Population Demographics: 86.5% Mestizo, 12.7% White, 0.23% Indigenous, 0.13% African, 0.64% Other

Form of Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic.

Political Culture: The El Salvadoran political scene has been largely dominated by two parties: the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). ARENA is firmly right-wing, while FMLN is Marxist-Leninist in philosophy.

Armed Forces: Manpower: approx. 17,000

Annual Defense Spending: \$165 million

Population: 6,156,670

Currency: United States dollar

Economy: The economy of El Salvador is mono-export, based almost entirely on coffee. There is also a significant tourism element to the economy, with more than 1.6 million foreign tourists coming to enjoy the beaches and the vibrant, drug-fueled nightlife. Most trade is now with the Peoples Republic of China rather than Taiwan.

Important Notes: The US Embassy in San Salvador has openly accused the Salvadoran government of extreme corruption. Foreign investment into El Salvador is always accompanied by significant bribes and kickbacks to the Ministry of Public Works. Amnesty International has cited El Salvador for extrajudicial killings by the police for several years running. Government death squads have been responsible for as many as 35,000 murders a year

Guatemala

Official Language: Spanish, K'iche

Capital: Guatemala City

Form of Government: Unitary presidential republic

Political Culture: There are fourteen separate and wildly differing political parties in Guatemala. No party has ever won the presidency more than once, and parties dissolve and reform constantly. Politics in Guatemala is a churning affair, and in 2015, the President of Guatemala was forced to step down due to a corruption scandal.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 106,775

Annual Defense Spending: \$120 million

Population: 17,263,239

Currency: Quetzal (GTQ)

Economy: The Guatemalan economy is based on agricultural exports: coffee, sugar, flowers, meat, cardamon. There are also petroleum and crude oil exports. Guatemala is one of the world's largest producers of cannabis and opium poppies.

Important Notes: Guatemala claims the entirety of Belize as one of its territories. This dispute is still under negotiation in the international courts. The government operated numerous death squads throughout the 1980s and 1990s, who have been accused of more than 700 separate massacres of the Mayan people in addition to political and narcotics-related extrajudicial killings. It is an open question whether there are government death squads in action in Guatemala today.

Honduras

Official Language: Spanish

Recognized Languages: None

Capital: Tegucigalpa

Population Demographics: 90% Mestizo, 7% Indigenous, 2% African, 1% White

Form of Government: Presidential republic

Political Culture: There are currently five officially registered political parties in Honduras. There was a constitutional crisis in 2009 that featured many human rights violations, including forced disappearances and extrajudicial political killings.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 76,000

Annual Defense Spending: \$205 million

Population: 9,1128,67

Currency: Lempira

Economy: Honduras is the least-developed of all Central American countries. The majority of its economy is based on small-scale farming. It exports apparel manufactured in sweatshop conditions, as well as coffee, shellfish, bananas, coffee, palm oil, gold and lumber.

Important Notes: There are rumors that during the 2009 presidential crisis, the 1980's-era government death squads were reactivated to eliminate the sitting president's political rivals. There may or may not be ongoing armed conflicts between the various leftist political parties in the country. The streets are controlled almost with impunity by the various maras, or street gangs, that funnel cocaine, sex slaves, and crack into markets in the United States and beyond. Checkpoints operated by gang members wearing police uniforms are commonplace, leading to highway assaults, carjackings, and kidnapping. K & R is a thriving business in Honduras. Murder is the chief cause of death for people under the age of 25

Mexico

Official Language: There is no official language, but Spanish is the de facto tongue

Recognized Languages: 68 native language groups

Capital: Mexico City

Population Demographics: N/A

Form of Government: Federal presidential constitutional republic.

Political Culture: All political parties in Mexico must register with the National Electoral Institute, and in order to be accepted, they must operate civics and voter education outreach programs. Currently there are seven registered parties, but only three of any consequence. Corruption is rampant and bribes are de rigueur at all levels of local and federal government.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 383,575

Annual Defense Spending: \$7 billion

Population: 123,675,325

Currency: Peso (MXN)

Economy: Mexico's economy is predominantly export-based, but they also have a strong manufacturing sector. They are the fourth largest producer of computers in the world, and multiple foreign countries operate factories there. Primary exports are computers, electronics, machinery and transport equipment, mineral fuels and lubricants, coffee, cocoa, fruit, meat and live animals. The Mexican government has signed many free trade agreements, including NAFTA and EFTA.

Important Notes: Drug cartels are a nightmare for the Mexican authorities. It is estimated that drug-related violence has killed over 60,000 people and left 20,000 missing. The drug cartels have a membership north of 100,000, and their violence and cruelty are legendary. Mexico and the United States cooperate on crackdowns, but thus far it has been a losing battle

Nicaragua

Official Language: Spanish

Recognized Languages: English, Miskito, Rama, Sumo, Miskito Coastal Creole, Garifuna, Rama Cay Creole

Capital: Managua

Population Demographics: 69% Mestizo, 17% White, 9% African, 5% Indigenous

Form of Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic

Political Culture: There are multiple political parties, but the two most powerful are the Sandinista National Liberation Front/Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), collectively the Sandinistas, who are a Democratic socialist outfit. The second party is the Independent Liberal Party/Partido Liberal Independiente, which is right-wing.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 13,000

Annual Defense Spending: \$44.2 million

Population: 6,167,237

Currency: Córdoba (NIO)

Economy: Nicaragua is the poorest country in Central America, and the second poorest in the Western Hemisphere. Its economy is built primarily on small-scale agriculture, but tourism has become the second-largest money maker in land. Nicaragua exports coffee, beef, gold, sugar, tobacco, textiles, cotton and shellfish.

Important Notes: Nicaragua and Colombia are currently hotly contesting ownership of an island chain (the Archipelago de San Andres y Providencia) and a coral reef (the Quita Suená Bank). It also disputes Costa Rica's right to travel or fish in the San Juan River. Despite its history as a military dictatorship, Nicaragua has a strong tradition of freedom of speech and human rights. It has a large paramilitary police force, the National Police, which operates as an adjunct to the armed forces. Nicaragua is considered the safest country in Central America.

Panama

Official Language: Spanish

Recognized Languages: None

Capital: Panama City

Population Demographics: 65% Mestizo, 12.3% Indigenous, 9.2% African, 6.8% Mixed Race, 6.7% white

Form of Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic.

Political Culture: There are two major political parties, and both are known to be riddled with corruption. The first, PRD (Democratic Revolutionary Party/Partido Revolucionario Democrático), is center-left in ideology. The other, the Panameñistas, is firmly right wing.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 34,000

Annual Defense Spending: \$145 million

Population: 4,034,119

Currency: Balbao (PAB), United States dollar (USD)

Economy: The economy of Panama is the best managed and fastest growing in Central America. It features a great many financial services and is an international tax haven, as the recently released Panama Papers describe, and foreign investors have begun to mine gold and copper. It has some agricultural output and exports bananas, shrimp, watermelon, sugar and pineapples.

Important Notes: There is wide income disparity in Panama. The rich are very rich and very few in number, while the majority of the population hovers in low-income brackets. In terms of crime, Panama is mostly safe, with a low murder rate when compared to other Central American countries. It is the site of a great deal of narcotic trafficking, mostly cannabis, opium and cocaine. The majority of Panama's drug trade is operated the Colombian rebel group called the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia/People's Army of Colombia). Refugees from the FARC, former or runaway soldiers, have found a landing place in Panama, along with many other Colombian refugees.

South America

Argentina

Official Language: None, although all Argentines speak Spanish

Recognized Languages: None, although 43% of Argentines speak English. There are also 1.5M Italian speakers, 1M who speak Arabic, 400,000 German speakers and over 400,000 Argentines who speak Yiddish. There is also a sizeable Welsh-speaking population.

Capital: Buenos Aires

Population Demographics: 79% European, 18% Indigenous, 4.3% African

Form of Government: Federal presidential constitutional republic, representative democracy.

Political Culture: Corruption is rampant and related charges brought down the government of President Cristina Kirchner in 2015. The two main political parties are the Partido Justicialista/Justicialist Party (PJ), which is best categorized as Peronist. The party has a left-wing faction and a center-right faction. The only thing that all of the PJ can agree upon is that they are ardently anti-communist. The second largest political party is the Radical Civil Union/Unión Cívica Radical (UCR).

Annual Defense Spending: \$4.33 billion

Population: 43,847,430

Currency: Peso (ARS)

Economy: Argentina's economy is the third largest in Latin America, but it has recently been crippled by staggering inflation. The government defaulted on its international debts, leading to a downgrading of the country's credit rating with the World Bank.

Important Notes: Argentina's general approach to international relations is one of non-intervention, although the government in Buenos Aires does take an interest in human rights around the world.

Bolivia

Official Language: Spanish and 36 indigenous languages

Recognized Languages: none additional

Capital: constitutionally recognized capital is Sucre; the seat of government is La Paz

Population Demographics: 70% Mestizo, 20% Indigenous, 6% White, 1% African

Form of Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic.

Political Culture: Bolivia has been a democracy since 1982. Prior to that time, it was under the control of a string of brutal military dictators. The current government is socialist, with the president and vice president both members of the Movement for Socialism/Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). The right wing opposition has had difficulty uniting, so the opposition to the MAS is fractured and fragmentary.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 81,900

Annual Defense Spending: \$315 million

Population: 11,217,864

Currency: Boliviano (BAB)

Economy: Bolivia's primary exports are tin and natural gas. They have the largest deposits of lithium in the world. Other exports are zinc ore, antimony, gold, silver and lead. They have an increasing tourism industry, as well.

Important Notes: Indigenous farmers are legally allowed to grow a certain quota of coca for sale in local markets. The cultivation of coca is considered a part of their cultural heritage. In terms of law enforcement, the most frequently committed violent crime is domestic violence. Wife beating was not outlawed until 1973, and marital rape was not considered a crime until 2013. Maternal and infant mortality is very high, with some estimates stating that 230 babies die each day.

Brazil

Official Language: Portuguese

Capital: Brasília

Population Demographics: 47.7% White, 43.13% Mixed Race, 7.61% African, 1.09% Asian, 0.43% Indigenous

Form of Government: Federal presidential constitutional republic.

Political Culture: There are four main political parties in Brazil. These are the Workers' Party (PT), Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), and the Democrats (DEM). More than fifteen parties are represented in Congress, and politicians switch allegiances almost constantly.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 1,987,000

Annual Defense Spending: \$24.5 billion

Population: 208,568,000

Currency: Real (R\$)(BRL)

Economy: Brazil has the largest national economy in Latin America, and the 9th largest in the world. It is the 4th largest market for automobile sales globally.

Important Notes: Corruption is rampant. The World Trade Organization estimated that corruption costs Brazil more than \$41 billion annually. The local populations expect a certain level of corruption in their public officials, and as long as the crime isn't too flagrant, they turn a blind eye. The favelas have concentrations of desperate poverty and violent crime, with each favela being "owned" by a particular drug lord. Gang wars are frequent. In an effort to eliminate the constant crime, the Brazilian "Pacifying Police Units" responded by razing the favelas and forcing the residents into homelessness, or into other favelas. Predictably, this "solution" exacerbated the problem. Rio de Janeiro is a jumping off point for the illegal drug and small arms trade to Europe. Many gun runners operate their businesses in and around the city and favelas of Rio.

Chile

Official Language: Spanish

Capital: Santiago

Population Demographics: 88.9% Mestizo/White, 9.1% Mapuche, 0.74% Aymara

Form of Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic.

Political Culture: Chile is still dealing with the scars of a brutal military dictatorship. In 1973, a military coup brought General Augusto Pinochet to power, where he remained until 1998. Under his rule, almost unbelievable levels of human rights abuses took place. More than 27,000 people were horrifically tortured, including children under the age of 12. It is estimated that 2,279 of Pinochet's enemies (real or imagined) were executed. The true number is difficult to confirm, as most victims were buried in unmarked mass graves, and not all of the bodies have been discovered yet. The largest mass grave was Patio 29, and many victims likely have no grave at all - one of the preferred methods of execution was the so-called Death Flight, or "free helicopter rides", when prisoners would be taken up in a helicopter and thrown out the side. Several detention sites were built exclusively and specifically for the purpose of mass rape of male and female prisoners. The country returned to democracy in 1998, and since then elections have been free and fair. Currently the most powerful political parties are the centrist Christian Democrats and the conservative Independent Democratic Union.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 137,850

Annual Defense Spending: \$5.48 billion

Population: 17,574,003

Currency: Peso (CLP)

Economy: Since the end of the dictatorship, the Chilean economy has been very stable and well-managed. The government has signed free trade agreements with many

different countries, including the United States, Ecuador, Thailand, South Korea and China. Chile has the largest copper mine in the world and supplies more than a quarter of the world's copper. Tourism is a huge money-maker. Chile exports grapes, apples, pears, onions, wheat, corn, oats, garlic, peaches, beans, beef, poultry, wool, fish and timber.

Important Notes: In October 2017, a drug kingpin named El Tio was arrested in Chile, and his cocaine network was cut off. As a result, the Kinahan Cartel in Ireland ran low on cocaine and therefore low on funds when the Russian mafia, to whom the Kinahans were in debt, showed up to collect. The Kinahan cartel's money laundering officer was the subject of an unsuccessful assassination attempt by the Russian mafia while he was on holiday in Portugal. The arrest of El Tio and the seizure of his cocaine empire has had ramifications to the narcotics trade across Europe.



Colombia

Official Language: Spanish

Recognized Languages: 68 ethnic languages and dialects; English in the Archipelago de San Andres y Providencia

Capital: Bogotá

Population Demographics: 86% Mestizo and White, 10.6% African, 3.4% Indigenous

Form of Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic.

Political Culture: There are a host of political parties in Colombia, but since 1958, there has been a tacit agreement place that power would be alternated between the Liberals and Conservatives. Each election brings the illusion of choice, but an illusion is all it is. This agreement was called the “National Front, (Frente Nacional)”. Ostensibly this agreement was overturned long ago, but many believe that the parties involved are simply more delicate about their virtual stranglehold on the country.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 511,550

Annual Defense Spending: \$12.14 billion

Population: 49,587,941

Currency: Peso (COP)

Economy: Colombia has a very diversified economy, with tourism, agriculture, mining, and manufacturing leading the way. Despite the massive wealth that these industries bring into the country, the majority of the population live in extreme poverty.

Important Notes: There were many human rights abuses during the 53-year civil war. Government forces, right wing paramilitary groups and the FARC all indulged in wanton slaughter of civilians (usually indigenous people) and the forceful creation of child soldiers.

Ecuador

Official Language: Spanish

Recognized Languages: Quichua, Shuar and “other indigenous languages”

Capital: Quito

Population Demographics: 71.9% Mestizo, 7.4% Montubio, 7.2% African, 7% Indigenous, 6.1% White

Form of Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic.

Political Culture: One party holds all of the power in Ecuador. This is the Alianza PAIS, a left-wing democratic socialist group.

Armed Forces: 158,500

Annual Defense Spending: \$2.4B

Population: 16,385,068

Currency: US Dollar

Economy: The Ecuadorian economy is based on remittances from expatriate Ecuadorians, most of them working in the United States, and on the export of oil (one-third of the country's total economy), bananas, shrimp, gold and flowers.

Important Notes: Since 2006, President Rafael Correa has become hostile to the United States, disputing his country's debt to the larger nation and calling the debt holders “monsters”. Ecuador is growing closer and forging stronger ties with Russia and Iran. In 2009, Correa chose not to renew the lease on the US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)'s lease on Eloy Alfaro Air Base. There is no longer an American military presence in Ecuador.

Guyana

Official Language: English; national idiom: Guyanese Creole

Recognized Languages: 9 indigenous tongues

Capital: Georgetown

Population Demographics: 43.45% Indian, 30.2% African, 16.73% Mixed Race, 9.16% Indigenous, 0.2% Portuguese, 0.19% Chinese, 0.06% non-Portuguese European

Form of Government: Unitary presidential republic

Political Culture: There are two parties in Ecuador, the People's National Congress (socialist) and the People's Progressive Party (communist). The two parties are split mostly on the basis of ethnicity. The PNC is favored by the country's Afro-Guyanese population, while the PPP is supported by the Indo-Guyanese.

Armed Forces: 2,000

Annual Defense Spending: \$30M

Population: 773,303

Currency: Guyanese dollar (GYD)

Economy: The Guyanese economy is mostly based on tourism and export. The country's products are bauxite, aluminum, sugar, gold, rice, shrimp, molasses, rum and timber.

Important notes: Since the 19th century, Venezuela has claimed all of Guyana west of the Essequito River, which is 62% of Guyana's territory. This dispute is under negotiation with the United Nations. Suriname claims all of Guyana's territory east of the New River, and they also dispute Guyana's maritime boundaries. There are no negotiations on this dispute at this time, but hostilities are kept to a minimum. Guyana is protected by the United States Armed Forces.

Paraguay

Official Language: Spanish, Guaraní

Capital: Asunción

Population Demographics: 95% Mestizo, 5% other

Form of Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic

Political Culture: The current president, Horatio Cartes, is the first leftist legally and freely elected to political office in Paraguay's history. His predecessor, Fernando Lugo, was a former Roman Catholic bishop who was removed from office in 2013 by impeachment proceedings that began as an armed coup d'état. There are two main parties in Paraguay, both leftist in philosophy: the Patriotic Alliance for Change (Alianza Patriótica per el Cambio) and the Colorado Party (Asociación Nacional Republicana - Partido Colorado).

Armed Forces: Manpower: 183,200

Annual Defense Spending: \$145M

Population: 6,897,384

Currency: Guaraní (PYG)

Economy: The economy is based mostly on mining and manufacturing. The chief exports of the country are pharmaceuticals, cement, iron ore, steel, organic sugar, edible oils, garments, meat, wood, paper, furs and hides.

Important Notes: There is great income disparity, frequently along ethnic lines. Almost 50% of the Paraguayan population lives is considered poor, with 19% living in extreme poverty. The richest 10% of the population owns 60% of the land, and the rural poor, who are usually indigenous people, are not permitted to own land, even in the unlikely event that their meager agricultural wages allow them to afford it. Only 2.5% of the indigenous population has access to clean drinking water, and only 9.5% have electricity.

Peru

Official Language: Spanish

Recognized Languages: Quechua, Aymara

Capital: Lima

Population Demographics: 45% Indigenous, 37% Mestizo, 15% white, 3% other

Form of Government: Unitary semi-presidential republic

Political Culture: Peru lacks any sort of stable political party system. Currently the two parties in power are Peru Wins (Gana Perú), a democratic socialist group, and Popular Force (Fuerza Popular), which is a right-wing populist Fujimorist group, dedicated primarily to the cult of personality around former president Alberto Fujimori.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 369,330

Annual Defense Spending: \$2.56B

Population: 32,553,697

Currency: Sol (PEN)

Economy: Peru's officially listed exports are copper, gold, zinc, coffee, cocoa, textiles, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. In actual practice, its largest export is coca, despite putated government efforts to stem the flow of the narcotic. Peru has signed free trade agreements with China, Japan and the United States.

Important Notes: Cocaine runners have well-established and efficient shipping routes over land, river, and air. The United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Peruvian Air Force work together to destroy coca fields, refinement labs and clandestine airstrips, but the damage done to the runners and their organizations is minimal at best. The bulk of the damage caused by these raids falls on the indigenous farmers who grow the coca to the exclusion of foodstuffs. When the coca fields are destroyed, the farmers starve. Peru is noted to have very high levels of child labor, especially in agriculture.

San Marino

Official Language: Spanish

Capital: None

Population Demographics: 95% Mesitzo, 4.1% African, 2.1% Indigenous

Form of Government: Unitary presidential republic

Political Culture: San Marino is a small breakaway republic that is attempting to carve itself out of Brazil and Guyana. Independence was declared in 2015 by self-proclaimed President Vicente Calderón, who was assassinated less than a month later by a military junta led by Colonel Diego Rivera Banderas. San Marino has been in a state of civil war ever since the assassination. The Calderonistas are behind the Loyal Blue Revolutionaries (Revolucionarios Azules Leales), or the RAL. The RAL is trying to woo the United Nations to its side, hoping for military, financial and other assistance in establishing a new country. They have thus far been unsuccessful. The forces of the junta, the Cuerpo Rivera (CR), make no pretense about their ambitions for a military dictatorship with the colonel at the head.

Armed Forces: none organized, but it is estimated that the CR has 560 men and the RAL has 540. The arms and armaments are fluid as each side steals from the other and from the Brazilian military.

Annual Defense Spending: N/A

Population: 3,541

Currency: United States dollar

Economy: Agriculture, primarily of coca, is the only industry active in San Marino.

Important Notes: Brazil and Guyana may combine forces to put a stop to the fighting and force the San Marinans back under Brazil's control, but at this point, there's no incentive for anyone to get involved. There are few charities attempting to bring food, medicine and potable water to the civilians, but these missions are small and intermittent at best.

Suriname

Official Language: Dutch

Recognized Languages: Sarnami Hindustani, English, Sranan Tongo Creolo, Javanese, Saramaccan

Capital: Paramaribo

Population Demographics: 27% Indian, 21.7% Maroon, 15.7% Creole, 13.7% Javanese, 13.4% mixed race, 3.8% Indigenous, 1.5% Chinese, 1% European

Form of Government: Unitary parliamentary republic

Political Culture: One political party has almost every political office in Suriname: the National Democratic Party (Nationale Democratische Partij).

Armed Forces: Manpower: 2,270

Annual Defense Spending: \$67.4M

Population: 558,368

Currency: Surinamese dollar (SRD)

Economy: The economy of Suriname is mostly based on the export of bauxite, oil, gold, rice, bananas, citrus fruits, peanuts, coconuts, and timber. There is also a thriving ecotourism sector.

Important Notes: President Dési Bouterse led a military coup that overthrew the government of Prime Minister Henck Arron in 1980. In 1982, he was behind the “December murders”, when 13 political adversaries who opposed the military government were rounded up and executed in Paramaribo. These adversaries were backed by the Dutch, Suriname’s former colonial masters. In retaliation as well as for cause, the Dutch tried Bouterse for drug trafficking. He was tried and convicted in absentia in the Netherlands and sentenced to 11 years in prison. Unimpressed, Bouterse continues to serve as Suriname’s president. The Netherlands no longer sends any aid, humanitarian or otherwise, to Suriname.

Uruguay

Official Language: Spanish

Capital: Montevideo

Population Demographics: 88% White, 8% Mestizo, 4% African

Form of Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic

Political Culture: For most of Uruguay's history, there has been a struggle between the Colorado and National parties. In 2014, the Broad Front rode a wave of public dissatisfaction with the current system and took control of the General Assembly. Uruguay is noted for its low levels of corruption and strongly protected freedom of speech.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 25,900

Annual Defense Spending: \$490M

Population: 3,444,006

Currency: Uruguayan peso (UYU)

Economy: Most of the economy is based on tourism and agriculture. The country's main exports are soybeans, wool, horse meat, beeswax and quinces.

Important Notes: In 2013, Uruguay completely legalized the growth, use and sale of cannabis. Nearly 95% of the country's energy comes from renewable sources (hydroelectric and wind).



Venezuela

Official Language: Spanish

Recognized Languages: various indigenous languages

Capital: Caracas

Population Demographics: 51.6% Mestizo, 43.6% White, 2.9% African, 1.2% Other

Form of Government: Federal presidential constitutional republic

Political Culture: There are two major political factions in Venezuela. The first is the incumbent leftist United Socialist Party of Venezuela and its allies, Fatherland for All and the Venezuelan Communist Party. The second is the Mesa de la Unidad Democrática and its allies, who are too numerous and transitory to be listed here. In 2013, President Hugo Chávez died while in office. He was replaced by Nicolás Maduro, who in 2014 suspended the constitution in response to anti-poverty demonstrations that he blamed on non-existent fascists. Maduro has since gathered all political power in the country into his own hands.

Armed Forces: Manpower: 123,000

Annual Defense Spending: \$4 billion

Population: 31,568,178

Currency: Bolívar Fuerte (VEF)

Economy: The Venezuelan economy is almost entirely based on oil and drugs. The Venezuelan government is fourth in the world in cocaine seizures from various cartels, but unlike other governments, Maduro's people simply convert ownership of the cocaine and sell it themselves. In 2013, the Venezuelan National Guard openly loaded 1.3 tonnes of cocaine onto a plane bound for Paris, believing that there would be no consequences. They were correct. Government-backed drug trafficking continues.

Important Notes: The United States President Barack Obama named Venezuela a "national security threat" in

2015. Since then, Venezuela's ties to Russia, Iran, Cuba and other countries not allied to the United States have strengthened. The Palestinian foreign minister, Riyad al-Maliki, has declared Venezuela to be his administration's "most important ally". As of this writing, Maduro was planning to leave the Organization of American States, which was in turn preparing to levy sanctions against his government.

Venezuela continues to claim most of the territory of Guyana.

In 2015, Venezuela won the title of "Most Murderous Place on Earth." One person was murdered every 21 minutes. Foreign travelers and investors were particularly at risk, and the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom have all advised their citizens that travelling to Venezuela would put them at elevated risk for kidnap and ransom, murder, robbery and assault. Europeans from France, Germany and the Netherlands have also been killed, along with Miss Venezuela 2014, her husband and 5-year-old child.







Factions & Forces

“There are two hundred million idiots, manipulated by a million intelligent men”.

Pablo Escobar



Rebellions and Guerrilla Movements

Throughout most of the history of Central and South America, military coups and the revolutions that power them have been a constant part of the scenery. Every nation has a history of armed insurrection, and this has spawned a legion of rebel groups and other gun-toting factions that no overview of the region could neglect to mention.

Some rebellions and guerrilla movements won their battles and became political parties. Others lost their fights and melted back into the jungles and mountains from whence they came. Those who are still in action are the point of interest in this section of this dossier.

There are many political guerrillas and crime syndicates at work in this region. Many of them are paramilitary in organization, while some are ragtag and chaotic. The groups that Ghost Ops teams are most likely to encounter are detailed below.

The Shining Path - Peru

The Shining Path, also known as the Communist Party of Peru, is dedicated to the overthrow of the current government and instituting what it calls the “dictatorship of the proletariat”. The group suffered a serious setback in 1992 when the government captured its leader, Abimael Guzmán, but under the leadership of its ultra-militant wing called the Proseguir (“Onward”), it has reactivated. The Shining Path specializes in assassination, drug trafficking, kidnap and ransom, and money laundering. They have been classified as a terrorist organization.

Paraguayan People's Army (Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo) - Paraguay

The EPP is very organized and has been carrying out strategic attacks in the northern part of Paraguay. They are communist in philosophy. The EPP favors bombings, arson attacks, kidnap and ransom, and shootings. They have been known to ambush Paraguayan army convoys and make off with the army's munitions, leaving many dead soldiers in their wake. They have deep connections with the FARC and with the Primero Comando da Capital and Comando Vermelho, two of the strongest insurrectionist groups in Brazil.

Resistencia Ancestral Mapuche (RAM) - Argentina

The RAM is a separatist guerrilla group that is active in Patagonia. Their stated aim is to create a Mapuche nation by seceding territories in both Argentina and Chile. The Mapuche are a native tribe from the Andes region, and the RAM seeks to free the Mapuche people from the domination of "invaders". They burn crops and villages, vandalize industrial machinery, destroy oil pipelines, and bomb government troops and the police. Their leader, Facundo Jones Huala, has been apprehended by the Argentine authorities, but the group is continuing to operate without him, most recently blowing up a gas-filled tanker truck on National Route 40.

United Self-Defenders of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) - Colombia

The AUC was created when drug lords in Colombia needed militias to protect their interests and to carry out organized extortion and to counter the kidnappings and extortion carried out by other rebel groups. Their membership was near 20,000, and they enjoy the support of local authorities, wealthy landowners, cattle ranchers and mining and petroleum corporations. Their leader,

Carlos Castaño, was killed in 2004, and thereafter a great many of their officers were apprehended and extradited to the USA to face trial for drug running and human rights abuses. It was thought that the group had disbanded, but they are beginning to operate again. They have forged connections with other paramilitary groups around the world, and it is believed that they are attempting to align themselves with terrorist groups in the Middle East.

Bloque Meta - Colombia

The Bloque Meta was formed by deserters from the AUC, and they have continued their former organization's armed resistance to the Colombian government. They are currently engaged in a turf war with another drug-running guerrilla group, the Libertadores del Vichada, turning the eastern Meta department (state) of Colombia into their own personal battlefield. They have a reputation for brutality. They are armed with AK-47s, heavy machine guns and mortars.



Cartels

Drug running, human trafficking, kidnap and ransom, murder... just another day on the job for member of the cartels. These are the most violent, blood-soaked criminals in the Western Hemisphere. Many of them have connections far beyond their home regions, and that will bring them to the attention of Central Command with annoying frequency.

The following are the best-known and best-connected cartels in Central and South America. Their external connections are highlighted where they are known.

The Black Eagles (Águilas Negras) - Colombia

The Black Eagles are a catch-all name for a loosely confederated group of drug traffickers, guerrilla units and paramilitary insurgents who cooperate in crime and revolution. They run sophisticated drug running, human trafficking, kidnap and ransom and extortion operations. Their leader, Vicente Castaño, is currently missing.

Primeiro Comando da Capital

The PCC, as they are known, are the largest criminal organization in Brazil, with over 13,000 active members. They are based primarily in São Paulo, but they have begun to take over areas of Rio de Janeiro. They operate in every Brazilian state and have a statue for their group that is enforced by their own internal watchdogs. Their current short-term goals are to assassinate the governor of state of São Paulo and to take over the Congress at the next election. Their power is on the rise, and they are one of the primary movers of crack cocaine in the Western Hemisphere.

Sinaloa Cartel

Based primarily in the city of Culiacán in the Mexican state of Sinaloa, the cartel has become an international crime syndicate specializing in drug trafficking, money laundering and organized crime. They are allied with two Chinese Triads, Sun Yee On and the 14K Triad, from whom they obtain basic chemicals with which to manufacture synthetic designer drugs. The Sinaloa Cartel has been working in tandem with the Mexican federal police and military to move product over the border through tunnels and air shipments. Their influence within the Mexican government is such that federal forces have been turned against their rivals, the Juarez Cartel, which has helped the Sinaloa group to expand its control of the Juarez Valley. They recently forced alliance from the Tijuana Cartel, giving them access to the market in San Diego, California, and they have begun absorbing smaller cartels as they expand their theater of operations toward the Gulf. It is believed that there are elements within the United States Border Patrol who assist them in bringing their product over the border to Laredo, Texas. This has not yet been proven, but the allegation is the subject of an ongoing investigation. Their primary rivals are Los Zetas, with whom they are fighting an all-out war.

Cholo Babys

The Cholo Babys began as a street gang in Mexico City and have orchestrated a series of bank heists and major robberies to fund their growing drug and human trafficking endeavors. They take their name from their leader's penchant for wearing a Halloween mask of a baby's face during their first bank robberies. Their membership is growing, and they have strong connections with MS-13 and with various gangs in the Los Angeles area in the United States, primarily the 18th Street Gang and the Mexican Mafia. Comparatively little is known

about their leadership, and efforts to infiltrate the gang have met with failure. It is believed that they have at least one guardian angel in the Mexican government.

Santa Cruz Cartel

The Santa Cruz Cartel is the largest organized crime outfit in Bolivia. They are heavily involved in narco-terrorism, including assassinating DEA agents and bombing government officials. They are connected to drug cartels in Mexico, Brazil and Colombia. They are actively involved in turf wars to eliminate smaller gangs.

Cartel of the Suns

The Cartel of the Suns is a drug and arms trafficking organization that is headed and run by senior members of the Venezuelan armed forces. They are one of the chief suppliers of weapons to terrorist organizations around the world, and they supply Europe with most of its cocaine, with assistance from the Venezuelan National Guard. One of their officers was formerly part of the Venezuelan army's intelligence unit.

La Oficina de Envigado

Formed as the enforcement arm of the now-defunct Medellín cartel in Colombia, La Oficina de Envigado is the primary debt collector in drug trafficking disputes between rival gangs. They also have their own drug running, money laundering, gambling, prostitution and extortion business. They own and operate a number of underground casinos, which they use for money laundering. Some of its members are police officials, who have been known to act as assassins for the Oficina while on duty. It has an alliance with Los Zetas in Mexico.

Los Zetas

Considered the most technologically sophisticated cartel in Mexico, the Zetas have extensive drug trafficking, gun running and prostitution networks. They are closely allied with gangs in the United States (MS-13, the Sureños, the Mexican Mafia and the Latin Kings). They specialize in massacres of civilians and rival cartels and were responsible for a deadly nightclub shooting at the BPM Festival in January 2017. They also organize prison riots and jailbreaks throughout Mexico, possibly with the collusion of corrections officials. Los Zetas own virtually the entire state of Tamaulipas through a complex system of corruption and fixed elections, and the state has become a haven for cartels and drug traffickers from around the region. They made the mistake of kidnapping a member of the internet group Anonymous, and they have now become a target of Anonymous' "Operation Cartel." Los Zetas have advanced hacking capabilities as well, so the operation appears to be at a stalemate.

Both MS13 and MS18 (Barrio 18) have a strong presence in Central America, especially El Salvador.

Sourcebook for Central and South America.
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