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Nota di contenuto	The regional context : organized crime and irregular warfare in Latin America -- The crisis in Guatemala : origins, characteristics, and effects -- International drug traffickers -- Hidden powers -- Pandillas and Maras -- Violence, corruption, and the erosion of the state -- Policy implications.
Sommario/riassunto	Guatemala is currently experiencing a full-blown crisis of the democratic state. An unholy trinity of criminal elements: international drug traffickers, domestically based organized crime syndicates, and youth gangs, is effectively waging a form of irregular warfare against government institutions, with devastating consequences. The police, the judiciary, and entire local and departmental governments are rife with criminal infiltrators; murder statistics have surpassed civil-war levels in recent years; criminal operatives brazenly assassinate government officials and troublesome members of the political class;

and broad swaths of territory are now effectively under the control of criminal groups. Guatemala's weak institutions have been unable to contain this violence, leading to growing civic disillusion and causing a marked erosion in the authority and legitimacy of the government.--
