

# ECUADOR'S BORDER SECURITY FAILURES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COORDINATING BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE

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**Abstract-** This article sets out the institutional redesign elements that ended up shaping a poor border security between Ecuador and Colombia. It suggests that because of an institutional design addressed by a strong executive figure, the structure that the state intelligence institution took was functional to the elected President. This fact caused severe shortfalls in the Ecuadorian-Colombian frontier.

**Keywords-** Institutionalism, State Intelligence, Border Security.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to explain Ecuador's security border failures and the institutional design of State that coordinates with the Intelligence Agency of Ecuador. Ecuador is located in South America, neighboring with Colombia in the north, and Peru in the south. Ecuador became a Republic since 1830.

A bomb exploded in the back of the Police Command on January 27, 2018, in San Lorenzo, an Ecuadorian town located in the border with Colombia. The explosion took place very early in the morning (Velasco B, 2018). This fact did not only unveil obvious issues, such as deficiencies in certain routine security procedures within the affected police facilities, but it was also the tip of the iceberg that made serious shortcomings regarding the implementation of public security policy on the Ecuadorian-Colombian border.

Since 2008 up to present time, a series of adjustments have been taking place in the Ecuadorian State about security. The ultimate goal of security in Ecuador was purportedly modified with the changes of law. But this actually did not happen. Within the function of intelligence, there is a clear division between the legal and the real factors. As a result of that, state institutions favoured the President of the Republic at the time. This phenomenon explained by Basabe (2017) as an "imperial presidential system". In the Ecuadorian security sector, as well as in other State sectors, planning and execution of public policies was closely related to the president. As reported by the interviewees of this study, the minister who were closest to the former president imposed his agenda and priorities; regardless of the coordinating body of the Security Sector (MICS) (Source Anonymous source. (Cobo, 2017).

The Secretariat of Intelligence is the institution responsible for the development of strategic intelligence, namely, the anticipated knowledge that meets its national development objectives, the protection of its citizens and "the structure and institutionality" (MICS, 2014, p. 24 ). The law provided the Secretary of Intelligence the following responsibilities:

- I. to prepare the National Intelligence Plan; to coordinate and execute activities for the production of intelligence, to articulate the work of all the intelligence agencies existent in the State;
- II. to provide timely strategic intelligence to the President of the Republic; and to contribute to the

maintenance of the integrity and independence of the State (Public and State Security Law, 2009).

However, The National Secretariat of Intelligence, was not a free of imperial presidential influence. The centralized function of the intelligence agency in Ecuador, remained unchanged since 1979, and it was disappeared upon direct order of Rafael Correa Delgado. The President of the Republic at the time built the institutional characteristics that would redefine the new coordinating body as from two critical junctures. According to the political science perspective critical juncture is understood as the "periods of significant change" (Cappocia and Kelemen 2007, p.347); whereupon certain factors are established, and changes or new phases of institutional stability could arise. The operations of the coordinating bureau of intelligence's in Ecuador went through a period of apparent calm and without major alterations for thirty years. In 2005, its functional organic regulation was approved (Rivera, 2011). It was only after two events considered which was attempted to modify the Directorate of National Intelligence. This was led to a real change. The first one was "Operation Fénix" carried out on March 1, 2008 (El País, 2008), which bombarded against the demobilized Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia who were located at bi-national border between Colombia and Ecuador. The second is the event that took place on September 30, 2010, that was attempted coup d'état or assassination (Jiménez, 2015, Piedra y Pinto, 2016, Carrión, 2018).

However, the category of critical junctures may not be sufficient to explain the elements of the institutional redesign of the activity of the State's that coordinates with intelligence body in Ecuador. It has led to make security flaws in the border area. For this purpose, it is necessary to incorporate the important" ideas and discourses in politics" (Schmidt 2008, 303). This theoretical entry has been selected because it interlinks with all contexts. From this point of view, the context can be defined as the place where "ideas, arguments and discourses make sense" (Schmidt 2011, 9).

In order formulate the implications of the institutional mission of SENAIN (National Secretariat of Intelligence, known later as Secretariat of Intelligence, SEIN –Spanish Acronyms) it is necessary to analyse the implications of the concept of strategic intelligence. Cucovaz (2016) refers to strategic intelligence activity that indicates "the detection of risks, threats and opportunities based on national, regional and/or international interests in order to improve the decision-making process (p.23). The author considers that strategic intelligence is "vital for the public sector" (p.24)

## II. METODOLOGY AND EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Similar studies in the field of security and defence show that the highest percentage of sources of information, which is provides a base for this study. Most of the data come from oral sources. The assertions made in the text are based on the testimony of anonymous sources (Díaz, 2005). This does not mean that the information has not been proven; certain data provided in the text are repeated in the testimonies of two sources within the (executive and operational) state institutions, and testimonies of stakeholders outside the state institutions. The interviews used for this study were carried out within the framework of an extensive work on the institutional intelligence in Ecuador. The text refers to interviews performed to: a former president of the Republic of Ecuador (2003-2005); Undersecretaries of the Coordinating Ministry of Security (2012-2014) and of the Secretariat of Intelligence (2014); senior officials of the National Intelligence System, Assemblymen and former Assemblymen. In addition information was obtained from interviews and official documents without classification and other existing studies on the intuitional Intelligence in Ecuador.

## III. RESULTS

### A. Current construction of the coordinating bureau of intelligence : past and effect of the critical junctures in their institutional composition.

In 2008, the activities and results of the National Directorate of Intelligence (DNI –*Spanysh Acronyms*) belonging to COSENA (Consejo de Seguridad Nacional – *National Security Council*), are no longer exists. The existing intelligence units, that is a part of the structure of the Armed Forces and the National Police, fulfilled their institutional objectives. In the case of the Armed Forces, they provided timely and relevant products "in terms of capabilities, intentions and motivations of threats to the sovereignty of the State [...]" (Ordoñez and Cruz, 2017, p.62); whereas in the case of the National Police, its activities were focused on the "planning, search, processing and dissemination of information related to the risks and threats posed to the maintenance of public order, public [...] and citizen security" (Aguirre, 2018, para. 2).

The intelligence units of the Armed Forces and the National Police were equipped, including the coordination with international structures to exchange information in order to fight transnational organized crime (Gutiérrez, 2018, Source Anonymous Police 1). This fact did not affect the work of the National Security Council. Upon reference of former COSENA officials, the DNI and former presidents of the Republic; it was known that the President of the Republic was advised on guidelines set forth in their meetings about the security sector (Gutiérrez, 2018, Anonymous source 10, 2018). However, the main purpose of this advice was to safeguard the state security, rather than implementing a personal agenda of the head of state (Gutiérrez, 2018, Anonymous Source 10, 2018).

The institutional change of the coordinating bureau of intelligence in Ecuador, namely the former DNI, was reconfigured from two critical junctures that are considered two main keys, Firstly, Operation Fénix in 2008, and the events of September 30, 2010. These events were determined as such, because they comply with the causal structure established by David Soifer for critical junctures. According to Soifer, these require two components, "permissive [...] and] productive conditions" (2009, 2).

### B. Operation Fénix: reconfiguration and institutional redesign.

In Operation Fénix, can be considered at a critical juncture. The permissive and productive conditions are fulfilled as a matter in the eyes of the media that put the intelligence system at the center of the national debate (Piedra, 2012). Prior to these events, the intelligence issue hadn't agenda in the media. In reference to the productive conditions, this was a consequence of Correa Delgado's reading. When he was aware of the bombing of a camp of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, he directly attacked the military and police intelligence agencies. The accusation began with Colonel Mario Pazmiño, Director of Intelligence of the Army (Pazmiño, 2017), who would have privileged to deliver information to the Embassy of the United States and to Colombia (El Universo, 2009). Police Major, Manuel Silva, made the same accusation. It was assumed that the intelligence agencies of the Armed Forces and the National Police were co-opted by the United States (Huerta, 2009).

As a result of these events, the President of the Republic at the time, created a Commission on March 25, 2009, that was responsible to clarify the events occurred in Angostura on March 1, 2008" (Nieto, 2014). Social movements, the Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference, the Media and a single General in passive service of the Army (Huerta, 2009), represented them. The appointment was made by decree.

In line with Correa, the Transparency and Veracity Report of the "Angostura Case" repeats the speech that asserts there was a delayed reaction of the security sector of Ecuador. In addition, it reports that the links with the government of the United States affected the state's sovereignty; thus determining the responsibility for the events upon the UIES ( Unidad de Investigaciones Especiales de la Policía Nacional) and the National Police (Transparency and Truth Commission, 2009). On this report, it is striking that his assertions are far from being fully argued. The text lacks internal coherence and a unified wording in its composition. This can be construed as evidence, that the members of the commission repeated a prefabricated speech.

Both, the positioning of the presidential discourse, and the majority of the governing party in the National Assembly removed the regulation, legitimacy and reserve, which were bases of the state intelligence in Ecuador (Piedra, 2012). Subsequently, the regulations changed with the issuance of Executive Decree No. 1768 dated June 8, 2009, thus replacing the DNI with the National Secretariat of Intelligence (SENAIN –Spanish Acronyms). Subsequently, the legal existence of SENAIN would be regularized, through the Law on Public Security and by the State.

In this first critical juncture, the legitimacy of the intelligence activity was affected as a consequence of two elements. The discursive management of the executive branch and the coverage of the event by the Government's media gave rise to an unequal access of the rest of the media, thus positioning their version as an act of betrayal by the military and police intelligence agencies. Finally, the restraint was removed by means of the declassification of the information submitted only to the commission created by the President of the Republic.

The figure adopted by the newly created National Secretariat of Intelligence was characterized by the following elements: the strong break-up with any kind of

cooperation, terms or academic training provided by the United States of America and other European countries (Source Subsystem Military Intelligence, 2018). This was the breeding ground of the second characteristic which broke all personnel of the intelligence sector that had training in the United States of America.

On the other hand, the experience of those who were identified as managers of the Angostura events was undermined; the officials of the National Directorate of Intelligence, and members of the Armed Forces and National Police gained a specialized knowledge gained in the United States. These people were "facilitated" by arranged retirement processes, leading almost to a full elimination of the institution's historical memory (anonymous source 8). Instead, personnel recruitment processes were established, which recruited young academics. Most of them possessed theoretical knowledge about the activity (Source: Military Intelligence Subsystem, 2018).

The main problem in relegating subsidiary tasks to few experienced personnel remained in the National Directorate of Intelligence. The fact is that they started from scratch, "they uprooted the tree" (Source: Military Intelligence Subsystem, 2018). The new officials devoted a considerable period of time, to discuss the distinction of security, defence and intelligence (Piedra, 2014). The authorities had a long way to go in order to give a professional status their staff; not an easy task due to the lack of universities that taught intelligence activities in the country.

Lastly, the undermining lack of confidence transmitted by former President Correa to military and police intelligence in Ecuador that created a distrust between the civil servants of the SENAIN, and the military and police officers (Anonymous sources 3 and 4). The lack of trust worsened a problem that was already identified in the DNI. Francisco Jijón, National Secretary of Intelligence, could hardly coordinate the intelligence sector. In the absence of a law that it may establish operating parameters, the joint and coordinated work depended on the confidence enjoyed by the official on the part of those who headed the military and police intelligence subsystems. The two elements would constitute in the future, as one of the biggest obstacles that affect the performance of the Secretariat of Intelligence.

From its creation until the second event considered as a critical juncture on September 30, 2010, SENAIN was going through a period of basic institutional definitions. Under the direction of Jijón, the construction of the Intelligence Law and the National Intelligence Plan was initiated. The professionally of its personnel was also supported. Experts from Argentina, Chile and Spain (Pinto, 2018) delivered the first training workshops. In addition, merit and opposition competitions were launched to fill vacancies in the positions of intelligence and strategic analysts (Pinto, 2018, Official 4 SENAIN / SIN, 2018). In this stage of increasing personnel in the institution recruitments took place based on the current expenditure, to fill in the vacancies.

In summary, the institutional features of the Intelligence Secretariat after the Angostura independence of the intelligence function considered the ultimate good that needs to be safeguarded; distrust among military, police and civilian officials; absence of a law that regulates the activity and a lack of the experience and learning about the intelligence activities.

It is known publicly that while members of the National Police of Ecuador decided to remain in their barracks as a protest action against the approval of the Organic Law of Public Service (Jiménez, 2015); the officials of SENAIN and the intelligence subsystems were in a seminar (Ecuador Immediate, 2010). At 9:15 pm Ecuador was going through one of its darkest moments. As a result of Rafael Correa's argument that he was kidnapped at the National Police Hospital in Quito. Then the encroachment of a joint group of the "Armed Forces and Special Groups of the National Police of the GIR and GAO" (Garzón, 2010, paragraph 19) took place. In addition, a former police officer went into a coma (Carrión, 2018).

Such is the opacity of the events that took place in the facilities of the Quito Regiment No. 1 of the National Police, and its hospital, that up to this date there is no unbiased version of the events (Piedra y Pinto, 2016). What counts is an official version very well positioned through the speech of the former President, documentaries, books and statements of the members of his cabinet. The version of the "assassination attempt" (Presidency of the Republic, 2013, paragraph 7) spread very well, in contrast to voices having a different discourse and who were silenced (Jiménez, 2018, Official 2 SENAIN / SIN, 2018), and the absence of liability of the actual responsible ones who allowed the alteration of evidence at the crime scene.

Ambiguity is evident at this point, regardless of the actual events that took place, Correa expressed the following about the intelligence system: "We are blind, at ground zero, in terms of intelligence for internal security" (*La Jornada*, 2010). For the former president, the flaw in intelligence was clear. This consisted of not warning about the police rebellion, and "the conspiratorial work prior to the attempted coup d'état" (*Prensa Latina*, 2010). These ideas were constantly repeated at every opportunity that the former head of state had when dealing with September 30, 2010 (Drafting Policy, 2010).

The permissive conditions in this critical juncture are placed in the delegitimization of the state's intelligence activity. This action was accomplished through the state-owned mass media.

Three years later, through Executive Decree number 22, a Commission was created to investigate the events that took place on September 30, 2010. The main argument that Correa used was that the "different entities to which he has ordered the review of the investigation, [diluted] his work" (A. Alvarez, 2013). This committee was made up of people close to the former president.

Just like the Angostura Commission; the delegation investigated the events of September 30, the outcome produced a document and evidence that reinforced the former president's version. The commission determined that in the 30S events there was a "plan for a coup d'état, taking [the President] hostage [...] and] an attempt to assassinate him" (*Editorial Office*, 2014). In addition to members of the National Police, the members of the commission pointed out to the private media as responsible for these events (Redacción justicia, 2014).

September 30, 2010 became a critical juncture that determined the institutional redesign of the coordinating bureau of intelligence in Ecuador. The permissive conditions stemmed from the events that were assumed to be true on that date. These events positioned at a national level the need for an institution capable of alerting the incumbent government of possible destabilizing events. The seriousness of the version of events disseminated by official sources led to the discussion of the end purpose of SENAIN once again. Even assemblymen outside the government party requested the Secretary of Intelligence at the time, to provide explanations.

In reference to the productive conditions, beyond the change of Secretary of Intelligence, the idea of the end purpose of SENAIN's intelligence activity was modified with this event. The former president's idea of safeguarding the established order was tantamount to preserving his position in power, and it was established as true for some officials to preserve the status quo, and keep the president of the Republic in power (SIN Official, 2018). The productive conditions were carried out by direct action of Rafael Correa Delgado, once again through a special investigation committee of the event that was considered a critical juncture

Firstly, SENAIN's priorities consisted of strengthening the centralizing structure of the intelligence agency, under the command of a civil authority; and subject the military and police intelligence subsystems for control purposes.

The existence of the critical situation allowed modifying the work priorities of the institution. Instead of seeing, the threat in foreign countries that sought to co-opt intelligence agencies or in forces that would constitute a threat to national security, the threat became anything at personal or institutional level that could potentially jeopardize Rafael Correa's tenure in office. In this way, the different areas of comprehensive security in which SENAIN divided its work: Justice and citizen security; governance and democracy; Science and Technology; environment and risk management; economy and human development; as well as international relations and defence (National Intelligence Secretariat, 2012), they lost sight of the equal importance they all had.

Henceforth, the priority of SENAIN's work would rest in the sphere of governance and democracy (SIN Official, 2018). Although traces of the encroachment of organized crime structures in border areas were made visible, and early warnings were made concerning the first signs of encroachment of organized crime structures in government agencies, it was difficult to monitor them.

Notwithstanding other important issues were being worked on, and training was provided for SENAIN officials and the intelligence subsystems on criminal intelligence; priority was set on the political aspect (Official SENAIN / SIN, 2018, Official 2 SENAIN / SIN, 2018, Official 3 SENAIN / SIN, 2018).

The incorporation of politics being addressed as a priority also brought about changes in other aspects of SENAIN.

This change is more prominent in 2011 where massive personnel hirings began within the institution without the support of official appointments. A regional office is established in Guayaquil, where members of Alianza País (a political party to which Correa Delgado was a member and president) are massively hired (Official 4 SENAIN / SIN, 2018, Official SENAIN / SIN, 2018). The hiring of officials without a backup official appointment created the context for them to breach the law provided by high-level officers.

In addition to turning the current Secretariat of Intelligence into an instrument of Rafael Correa and Alianza País, the background of the institution's personnel brought about a new problem: the escape of trained personnel; and decline in relevant institutional processes. As of 2010, when Francisco Jijón was removed from office, the Secretary of Intelligence had four secretaries.

The ongoing changes of authorities led to more and more intense personnel exchanges, because as time went by, the load of personnel that had contracts was greater. Subsequently, a time of relative institutional stability came with Rommy Vallejo who held the position for four years and two months. Just when this period of relative stability was arising, there was a phenomenon of mass resignation; many officials who had a stable contract resigned their positions, based on evidence of an extreme partitioning of the service that took place with Vallejo (Official 2 SENAIN / SIN, 2018, Official 6 SENAIN / SIN, 2018). Aside from the fact that experienced officials were relocated to insignificant tasks, most officials who were hired, left the institution. Among other things, this occurred because an internal system of merits was not in place to ensure access to training (Official 6 SENAIN / SIN, 2018).

The tendency to locate, in practice, the provisions established by Rafael Correa above the work priorities established in the National Intelligence Agenda. This fact took place regardless of whether these provisions were illegal or unconstitutional.

The institutional characteristics that were determined as a result of the speech of the former president around the events of September 30, 2010, are detailed here: Firstly, it is imperative to change the institutional priority towards preserving the sovereignty concerning the work of intelligence aimed at the comprehensive security of the state and, to keep Rafael Correa Delgado and his political movement Alianza País in power. With a new institutional

priority, other characteristics were consolidated in its institutionalized as discretion in decision-making, reinforced by the absence of a well-detailed law that regulates the activity. Likewise, as a consequence of the factual change of priority, there was a high turnover of personnel, and an imbalance in the proportion of personnel without appointment in the institution.

These characteristics would end up consolidating a functional structure for the one who held the position of President of the Republic, with authorities and public servants who did not comply with the law while exercising their work.

**C. Effects of the institutional design upon the security of the northern border area between Ecuador and Colombia: the intelligence failure that evidenced the bomb in San Lorenzo.**

The existing problems in the different border areas of Ecuador are no surprise for the Ecuadorian State and its institutions. The reports submitted by members of the National Police assigned to the border give an account of these problems since 1986 (Egas, 2018). At that time, alerts were already raised to the Ministry of Government and Police explaining the situation of a poorly state presence in the area. Measures that produce development possibilities for the populations were already suggested to be specifically applied that year in the northern border area, (Egas, 2018).

In the same year, the Anti-narcotics Intelligence and Interpol Services of the National Police reported the encroachment of "Colombian drug dealers on the North-Eastern border" (Gallegos, 1999, p.26). The activities carried out in Ecuadorian territory and linked to this crime were coca cultivation and the installation of drug processing laboratories (Gallegos, 1999). The eradication of coca crops located in Ecuadorian territory was achieved in 1993. Notwithstanding the border areas of Sucumbíos, Napo and San Lorenzo, they became supply territories for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC – Spanish Acronyms) (Gallegos, 1999; Egas, 2018).

The relationship and coexistence of the Ecuadorian population with members of FARC meant a source of constant income and turned them into victims of pressure and intimidation (Gallegos, 1999). Therefore, the eradication of activities linked to drug trafficking

on the border, did not count on the collaboration of its inhabitants (Gallegos, 1999). In this context, there is a direct attack against members of the National Police and the Ecuadorian Armed Forces in the area of Piñuña Negra, located in San Miguel Sucumbíos River. On December 16, 1993, during the operation "Amanecer"; members of FARC ambushed the river patrol that watched the San Miguel River. At 2:30 p.m. a rain of grenades and a two-hour mortar fire caused the death of nine people, another thirteen were wounded and two were missing; they all pertained to the Ecuadorian Armed Forces and the National Police of Ecuador (Gallegos, 1999).

From the Secretariat of Intelligence, as well as from other state agencies, the problem and the potential risk involved in the situation of the border with Colombia were finally addressed. Plan Ecuador, established in 2007, sought through a "multidimensional and multisectorial preventive approach [...] to solve the problems of poverty, exclusion and violence" (Plan Ecuador, 2007, p.1) ". In spite of being the alternative to face the "impacts of the Colombian internal conflict" (Plan Ecuador, 2007, p.1), this initiative was diluted. The lack of support at international level (Jarrín O, 2018), and above all, the focus of the security sector on other relevant events urged the strategic actions to improve security in the border area and showed the expected results (Pinto, 2018).

According to former INS officials who were interviewed, the northern border of Ecuador and its security situation were constantly tackled (Jarrín, 2018, Official 2 SENAIN / SIN, 2018, Anonymous police source 2, 2018); however, these issues were not a priority. Although permanently appointed analysts were present to monitor the security issue on the border, the situation marked another real pace of work (anonymous police source 2). For example, in 2012, when they were conducting protest for water, life and dignity took place, the Secretariat allocated 90% of its operational capacity to cover this event (Police anonymous source 3). It included intelligence analysts and operational agents, including subsystems; so as to cover the mobilization for 24 hours (Police anonymous source 3, Official SENAIN / SIN, 2018).

The facts mentioned in the previous paragraph give an account of SENAIN's work priorities. Although there may have been a formal allocation of personnel and resources to key issues; they were annulled when other events arose and were considered by the Secretary of Intelligence as

top priorities. In general, these were related to the field of governance. As already mentioned in the previous section, they would have as direct beneficiary the former president Rafael Correa and his political movement Alianza País.

Upon reflecting on these facts it is relevant because it makes possible to prove the threat that drug trafficking has meant for more than twenty years, and continues to mean on the border area with Colombia. The problems that currently characterize the area of San Lorenzo such as poverty, the lack of employment sources, the presence of organized crime structures, common delinquency, hitmen, human trafficking, smuggling; etc; they are not new (*El Universo*, 2010, *El Telégrafo*, 2018, Ministry of Interior, 2017). Timely preventive actions were completely possible. This does not mean that there was an absence of intelligence analysts, who against the current, fulfilled their monitoring task for the border's security. In fact, ever since the negotiation process of the armed demobilization of FARC in Colombia began; a series of alerts on the risks in the migratory and citizen security areas would have been raised as a result. (Official 7 SENAIN / SIN, 2018). SENAIN proposed the creation of an inter-institutional network to deal with migratory issues of organized crime (Official 7 SENAIN / SIN, 2018, Official SENAIN / SIN, 2018), but because of the lack of support from the authorities this proposal did not thrive.

An institutional design that did not prioritize the preparation of strategic state intelligence did not allow these preventive actions to take place. From its early stages, the absence of a law regulating the activity, the excess of personnel without appointment, placing first the operations to maintain in power Rafael Correa Delgado and his political movement Alianza País, all of this consolidated a logic that left aside an imperative issue such as the possible encroachment of transnational organized crime on Ecuadorian territory.

Within the implicit assumptions of SENAIN, the first work priority came from the Presidency of the Republic. This precedent occurred in innumerable occasions whereby the great intelligence operations and the great victories counted only in the sphere of governability. Acknowledgments, professional promotions, congratulations; they were handed over to trusted officials who carried out the orders without questioning their legality.

## IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The institutional characteristics of the coordinating Bureau of intelligence developed by direct action of the executive branch administration in Ecuador between 2007-2017 are summarized in five elements: Mistrust among the police, the military and civil servants; zeal for the independence of the intelligence function of the influence of the United States of America; absence of a law that regulates the activity; a team of young officials in the process of specialization in the field; the excess of personnel without appointment; finally, discretion in decision-making and directing work.

The combination of all these elements prompted the Secretariat of Intelligence (formerly SENAIN), to put aside its main goal, which is to safeguard a Comprehensive Security.

Evidence of the diversion of its main institutional mission, among others, are the events that took place on January 27, 2018 in San Lorenzo canton. In this case, the explosion of a bomb inside the facilities of the National Police headquarters was not timely prevented by the intelligence system.

The explosion accounts for a series of shortcomings present in general in the State security sector. In addition, the public policy proposals established for the northern border area of Ecuador were not executed; a vital element for the State as its coordinating bureau of intelligence It was completely focused on tasks that kept it from safeguarding the comprehensive security.

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