



## **The Northern Triangle of Central America: Violence, Security, and Migration**

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Woodrow Wilson Center

*6th Floor Auditorium*

### ***Keynote Speaker***

**Mari Carmen Aponte** is Acting Assistant Secretary in the Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Previously, Aponte was the Ambassador of the United States to El Salvador from 2012 until 2016. She is the first Puerto Rican woman to hold the title of ambassador. Born in Puerto Rico, Aponte moved to the United States to pursue a better education, earning a BA in political science from Rosemont College and a JD from Temple University Beasley School of Law. She was one of few Puerto Rican women enrolled in a U.S. accredited law program at that time and, subsequently, the first Latina lawyer in Pennsylvania. Aponte moved to Washington, D.C. in 1979 when President Jimmy Carter appointed her as a White House Fellow.

She continued practicing law in D.C. and cofounded one of the first minority-owned law firms. In 1984, Aponte was elected the first woman president of the Hispanic National Bar Association. She continued to hold leadership positions for the next 25 years, advocating for women and the Latino community. From 2001–2004, she was Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Federal Affairs Administration. She also served on the board of directors for the National Council of La Raza and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund and later provided strategic counsel for the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network. Aponte received the 2015 Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award from the American Bar Association in recognition of her community service.

### ***Panelists***

**Alexandra Arriaga** is Managing Partner at Strategy for Humanity, a specialized consulting firm supporting mission-driven organizations, where she also serves as a Senior Advisor to Futures Without Violence and spearheads their work to eliminate violence against women internationally. Alex began her career in the U.S. Congress as director of the bipartisan Congressional Human Rights Caucus, increasing participation to involve a congressional majority and focus on over 100 countries. She was appointed Senior Adviser in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the U.S. Department of State, serving as U.S. Delegate to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, member of the Department's Bosnia Task

Force, and Executive Director of the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad. At the White House, she was Special Assistant to President Clinton and Chief of Staff to the President's Special Envoy for the Americas. Amnesty International later recruited Arriaga to lead government relations, policy, and advocacy and The Hill recognized her role in managing the top human rights lobby in Washington. Arriaga serves on the Boards of organizations focused on human rights, justice, education, and persons with disabilities.

**Claudia Paz y Paz Bailey** was Guatemala's first female Attorney General and is currently a Senior Fellow at the Washington Office on Latin America. She is a criminal law specialist, scholar, judge, and litigator who has worked for over 18 years to strengthen the justice system in Guatemala. She earned her doctorate in human rights and criminal law at the University of Salamanca, served as a judge, and was the national consultant to the UN Mission in Guatemala. In 1994, she founded the Institute for Comparative Criminal Studies of Guatemala, a human rights organization that promotes restorative justice and protects the rights of marginalized and discriminated groups during criminal proceedings. Paz y Paz Bailey assumed leadership of Guatemala's *Ministerio Público* (Public Prosecutor's Office) from December 2010 until May 2014, and pursued cases against both the organized criminals of today and the perpetrators of massive human rights abuse in the past.

**Joan Timoney** is Senior Director of Advocacy and External Relations for the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), a nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives and protect the rights of women, children, and youth displaced by conflict and crises. Prior to joining the WRC, Timoney was Vice President for Programs at the Partnership for Public Service, and also worked for a number of years on Capitol Hill. She volunteered with the Peace Corps in Senegal, and later served as the Peace Corps' Director of Congressional Relations, Director of the Crisis Corps program, and as the agency's Chief of Staff. Timoney is a graduate of The George Washington University and Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

**Karelia Villa** is a Senior Citizen Security Specialist at the Inter-American Development Bank. Villa is the focal point for the Bank's Citizen Security and Justice work in Central America, and she has more than 15 years of experience supporting state modernization processes in Latin American and the Caribbean. She has a Master's in Public Policy from The George Washington University, and she obtained her Bachelor's in Economics at the Monterrey Institute for Technology and Higher Education.

### ***Introductory Remarks***

**Gwen K. Young** is Director of the Global Women's Leadership Initiative and Women in Public Service Project at the Wilson Center. Young brings to her position over 20 years of experience in international public service. As a public policy professional, Young has advocated for and published on the role girls and women play in political, social, and economic development. She

has trained women in advocacy, networking, and management. Young has also worked “on the ground” with private sector and public service actors on issues of women’s entrepreneurship including tools to ensure access to finance. Young has worked as a professional advocate for women and human rights in corporate law settings, with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego. She also provided humanitarian law and advocacy training and developed guidelines to deal with sexual and gender based violence and exploitation in conflict ridden zones. Her career has encompassed a comprehensive array of international organizations including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Medecins Sans Frontieres, International Rescue Committee, and the Harvard Institute for International Development. An alumna of Smith College, Harvard University, and the University of California Davis, Martin Luther King Jr School of Law, Young has pursued a career in humanitarian relief, international development, and human rights.

### ***Moderator***

**Eric L. Olson** is Associate Director of the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. His research and writing has focused on security issues and the impacts of crime, organized crime, and violence on democracies. He has also written about reform of police and judicial institutions as a vehicle for addressing the problem of expanding crime in the Americas. Among his most recent publications are, “*Crime and Violence in Central America’s Northern Triangle: How U.S. Policy is Helping, Hurting, and can be Improved.*” Prior to joining the Wilson Center he was a Senior Specialist in the Department for Promotion of Good Governance at the Organization of American States from 2006–2007. He served as Advocacy Director for the Americas at Amnesty International USA from 2002–2006. Prior to Amnesty, he was the Senior Associate for Mexico, and Economic Policy at the Washington Office on Latin America for eight years. He worked at Augsburg College’s Center for Global Education in Cuernavaca, Mexico from 1989–1993 where he was the program director. From 1986 to 1988, he worked in Honduras as a development specialist for several local non-governmental organizations. He has an M.A. in International Affairs from the School of International Service at American University, Washington, D.C.