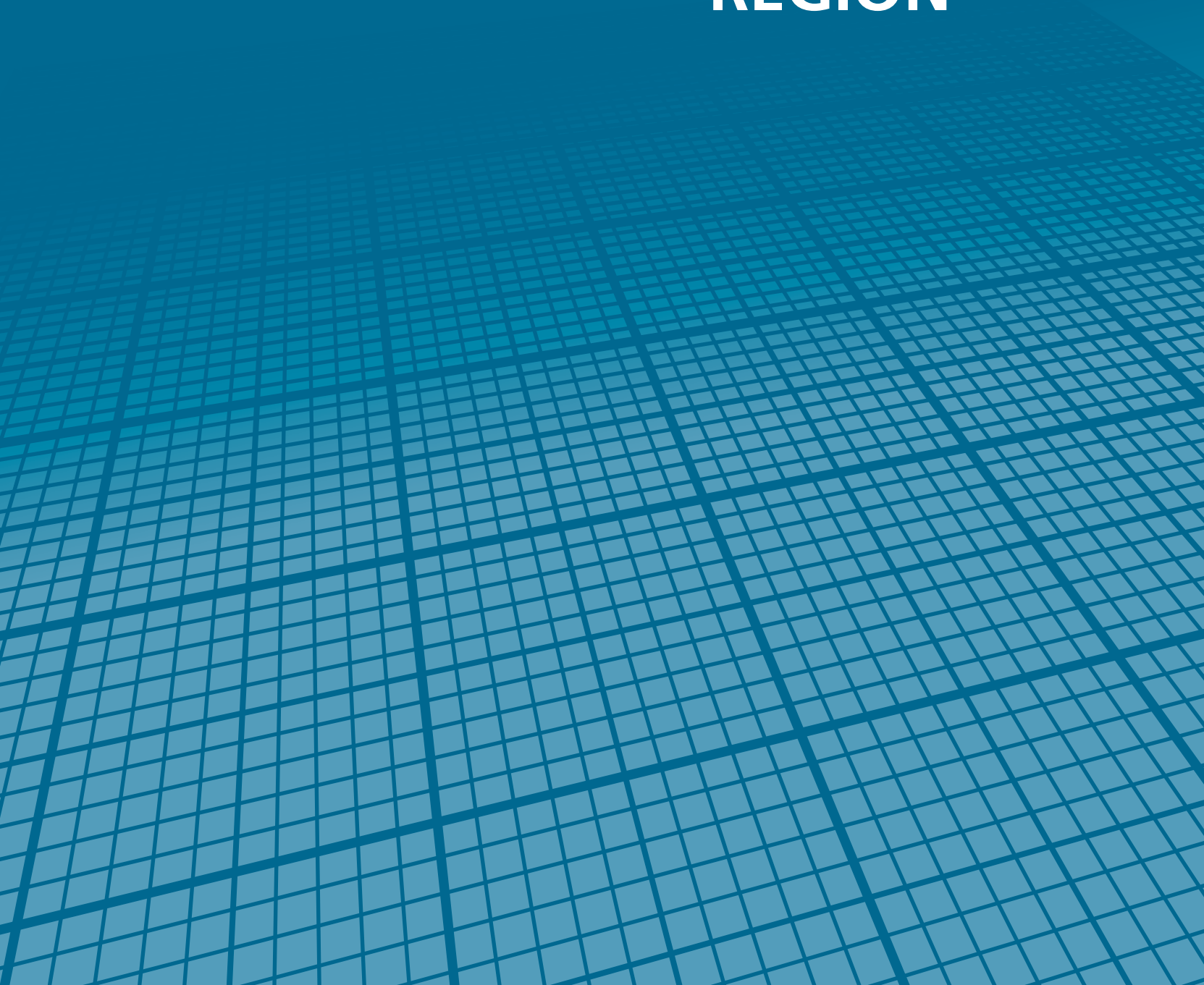


THE LATIN AMERICAN REGION





The Latin American Region

This section presents information on seventeen Latin American countries (apart from the thirteen included in the Caribbean section). The countries have been divided into large groups. We have included Cuba, being an atypical country in the region that maintains its single-party system and a defence organization that has always been subordinated to the political power, though openly considered as a partisan organization. Mexico, a country with strong economic interests in the North, but culturally and politically closer to Latin America, is also included in this section. In Central America, two countries –Costa Rica and Panama— do not have armed forces of their own, relying on international diplomatic arrangements for their defence and entrusting their internal security to police forces.

In the South, we find medium-sized countries with large military forces amid other smaller nations. Brazil stands out for its strong economy, which is present in the world through its commodities and industrialized products exports, and shows its aspiration to get a seat in the UN Security Council and have greater prominence in the international arena. Colombia has once again started a peace process to reduce its presently marginal conflict against forces that act in concert with drug-traffickers. Other Andean countries have undertaken deep institutional changes with a greater or lesser impact on the military and their role in the political and economic direction of the country.











Overall, the region does not spend large sums on military equipment. Countries currently have no disputes among them, and the presence of new regional organizations present multiple forums that help promote confidence-building. It is a inter-state zone of peace, where the violence is domestic in nature and relates to a significant public and citizen security issue requiring the use of the majority of the region's armed forces, which perform operations in a supporting and subsidiary manner or, in other cases, as the main operational force.

Argentina	Bolivia
Population: 41,523,000	Population: 10,364,000
Geographic area: 2,780,400 km ²	Geographic area: 1,098,580 km ²
GDP (in US dollars): 472,815,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 27,012,000,000
GDP per capita (in US dollars): 11,387	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 2,606
Armed Forces Personnel : 74,624	Armed Forces Personnel : 40,330
Defence budget (in US dollars): 4,351,981,686	Defence budget (in US dollars): 400,819,204
% of GDP: 0.92	% of GDP: 1.48

Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Cuba	Dominican Republic
Population: 198,683,000	Population: 17,454,000	Population: 47,555,000	Population: 11,208,000	Population: 10,151,000
Geographic area: 8,514,880 km ²	Geographic area: 756,100 km ²	Geographic area: 1,141,750 km ²	Geographic area: 109,890 km ²	Geographic area: 48,670 km ²
GDP (in US dollars): 2,449,760,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 272,119,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 378,713,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 2,939,743,858	GDP (in US dollars): 59,429,000,000
GDP per capita (in US dollars): 12,330	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 15,591	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 7,964	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 262	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 5,854
Armed Forces Personnel : 339,365	Armed Forces Personnel : 50,925	Armed Forces Personnel : 274,543	Armed Forces Personnel : n/a	Armed Forces Personnel : 46,547
Defence budget (in US dollars): 35,512,467,812	Defence budget (in US dollars): 5,878,940,198	Defence budget (in US dollars): 7,907,923,506	Defence budget (in US dollars): 99,441,667	Defence budget (in US dollars): 353,297,867
% of GDP: 1.45	% of GDP: 2.16	% of GDP: 2.09	% of GDP: 3.38	% of GDP: 0.59

Note: n/a not available.

Source: See section "The Countries" of this edition (dates as to 2012 except for the cases listed here). Population (projected 2012) and territory: Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean 2011, ECLAC. There are unresolved territorial disputes and claims, many of which are being studied in international organizations and courts.

Ecuador	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Mexico
				
Population: 14,078,000	Population: 6,262,000	Population: 15,090,000	Population: 7,927,000	Population: 112,777,000
Geographic area: 256,370 km ²	Geographic area: 21,040 km ²	Geographic area: 108,890 km ²	Geographic area: 112,490 km ²	Geographic area: 1,964,380 km ²
GDP (in US dollars): 72,466,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 24,421,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 50,303,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 18,320,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 1,207,820,000,000
GDP per capita (in US dollars): 5,147	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 3,900	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 3,334	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 2,311	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 10,710
Armed Forces Personnel : 38,264	Armed Forces Personnel : 15,770	Armed Forces Personnel : 15,580	Armed Forces Personnel : 10,550	Armed Forces Personnel : 261,930
Defence budget (in US dollars): 2,396,048,031	Defence budget (in US dollars): 144,067,030	Defence budget (in US dollars): 210,816,824	Defence budget (in US dollars): 188,926,130	Defence budget (in US dollars): 6,287,762,898
% of GDP: 3.31	% of GDP: 0.59	% of GDP: 0.42	% of GDP: 1.03	% of GDP: 0.52
Nicaragua	Paraguay	Peru	Uruguay	Venezuela
				
Population: 5,970,000	Population: 6,680,000	Population: 30,174,000	Population: 3,394,000	Population: 29,954,000
Geographic area: 130,370 km ²	Geographic area: 406,750 km ²	Geographic area: 1,285,220 km ²	Geographic area: 176,220 km ²	Geographic area: 912,050 km ²
GDP (in US dollars): 7,695,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 22,363,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 184,962,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 52,349,000,000	GDP (in US dollars): 337,433,000,000
GDP per capita (in US dollars): 1,289	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 3,348	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 6,130	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 15,424	GDP per capita (in US dollars): 11,265
Armed Forces Personnel : 10,404	Armed Forces Personnel : 12,221	Armed Forces Personnel : 106,034	Armed Forces Personnel : 22,372	Armed Forces Personnel : 113,558
Defence budget (in US dollars): 65,756,103	Defence budget (in US dollars): 430,850,307	Defence budget (in US dollars): 2,190,684,087	Defence budget (in US dollars): 705,969,493	Defence budget (in US dollars): 3,900,098,861
% of GDP: 0.85	% of GDP: 1.93	% of GDP: 1.18	% of GDP: 1.35	% of GDP: 1.16



Analysis

New Scenarios for the Armed Forces in Latin America

Juan Rial

PEITHO

Latin American countries have suffered significant changes in their social structures, their economy and in their relations with today's globalized world since the beginning of the (re)democratization process, generically speaking. This process was conveniently started in the late 1970s with the changes observed in Ecuador and the Dominican Republic. It should be taken into account that some countries did not suffer an interruption of the democratic process (as in Costa Rica or Colombia), or special cases like Mexico.

Latin America in 2012 shows that the military are no longer a political actor, with a corporate autonomy, and that most countries have started (or resumed) the road of professional action as a specialized part of the State. However, each country has had a very different interpretation of the scope of their professional role. In some cases, they are

just a purely military deterrence force. In others, they also participate in subsidiary functions of internal order control with various scopes, assuming law enforcement functions. In several countries they are engaged in social and even economic assistance projects. Many armed forces assume a role abroad as members of peace forces. Their concerns and missions have changed significantly, and this is sometimes reflected in new legal provisions, supplemented by new practices, and in other cases, just by the change in these aspects, which have influenced the myth of the military ethos.

Except for Mexico and Nicaragua, in all the countries in the region the military corporations are controlled by a chain of command headed by the President (head of the Executive branch) and a Ministry of Defence. Although in some countries the Ministry of Defence is headed by members of

the armed forces (as in Guatemala or El Salvador), these ministers follow the guidelines of the legal authority. The same applies to Nicaragua, where the armed forces, though autonomous, are subordinate to the President of the Republic, without any minister in the chain. Even in the only country without a representative democratic regime, i.e. Cuba, the armed forces are subordinate to political control, although part of the leadership holds both military and political functions. In Venezuela, where a militia force was created, directly subordinate to the President, it coexists with a traditional structure where the Minister of Defence is part of the chain of command.

In some countries, the changes implied some legal or constitutional reforms. Thus, Brazil and Peru created ministries of defence as single organizations; other countries modified the laws to establish the clear predominance of the Minister over the Military chiefs (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay), or implemented practices to turn the minister into an effective player in the chain of command (the case of Colombia is the most relevant; to a lesser extent in Bolivia and Honduras, where a strong alterations was registered in 2009, and the control process was resumed in 2010).

During the political change process in the 90s, the conflicts derived from the “Cold War” were over, particularly in Central America; there was a “radical” insurrection attempt in Peru –that was defeated-, and the nature of the Colombian conflict was transformed. An international conflict was produced between Argentina and the United Kingdom that hurried the end of the political regime. The United States conducted a military intervention in Panama that put an end to the military regime and led to the dissolution of the Defence Forces, the military existing at the time. The constant instability in Haiti led to interventions of the military community, under resolutions issued by the UN Security Council, and to the virtual dismantling of the

local armed forces, although this was not formally established in the legislation.

New conflicts appeared, or existing conflicts increased or changed their nature, and this implied new challenges for both the political and the military leadership. Namely, facing past responsibilities for abuses against human rights by the military or the police, as well as their civilian leaders, and in some cases, insurgent groups (as in Colombia and Peru).

Besides, some countries established a clear separation between military and law enforcement functions (the only country that followed this process very strictly was Argentina).

Several countries have (re)formulated the institutions responsible for collecting, analyzing and disseminating information as well as their operational scope, through new regulations on intelligence, many with a global and state scope, beyond the military and police area.

Several countries expanded or reformulated the field of military action in the social environment, acting as facilitators of social and economic development processes. In other countries, on the contrary, that activity was abandoned or restricted.

Given the growing public insecurity, sometimes increased by the citizens’ perception of living in an environment without an effective law enforcement action, both preventive and repressive, the military have been called to conduct support missions, and in some cases to act directly in public security. This is particularly the case in countries with criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking, or the action of gangs, that are not controlled by the family structure or the community.

A substantial change was observed in the recruitment process of the armed forces. Many countries abolished mandatory military service, which in practice only reached the lowest levels of society,



and replaced it with a system of voluntary professionals, with a pay as specialized “workers”, with a special legal framework.

Most countries in the region have participated or are participating with military contingents or military experts in the UN peace missions (with the only exception of Cuba, Mexico and Venezuela; Colombia participates in the Sinai) or are or have been part of multinational intervention forces in other countries in pacification processes (like Iraq or Afghanistan).

Transformations also occurred within the military. Women have been admitted as officers and NCOs, with their possible functions changing from country to country; in some countries they have been admitted in all the forces and every combat specialty.

Furthermore, the legal discriminatory provisions about sexual orientation, religion or race are gradually being eliminated, although the process is slow in practice.

A change has also occurred in the training of the military personnel, insisting on the need to be trained to effectively enforce the provisions on humanitarian law, as well as the protection of human rights, both internally and with the population they serve. For the forces that operate abroad, the training and implementation of rules to protect civilians and apply Resolution 1325 and others on gender or to minors in conflict areas are of paramount importance.

Internally in the forces, changes have been introduced in military justice, which was reduced in scope or totally eliminated as a special venue, and in internal disciplinary rules.

The training of the officers is moving to the convergence with civil university courses, and NCOs and soldiers must have a high school degree or a professional degree similar to their civilian counterparts.

With reference to budgets, the trend is to remove the “secrecy” of the past and to provide explanations to Congress about the needs to be met. In general, the ways to relate to the political class, society and the media have gained much importance; this importance is in the process of being understood through the use of civilian specialists to meet these new demands.

International relations in the forces are going through a notorious process of change. Although the most relevant relations for most armed forces are still those with their counterparts in the United States, other actors are acting in the various fields, as equipment suppliers, training suppliers and even suppliers of doctrine frameworks. Now they form part of new forums or coordination efforts.

All the countries have made an effort to increase confidence building measures, the information on budgets, troops, equipment has become transparent and is published in the White Papers or similar documents. Joint exercises with forces of various countries have increased and the possibility of major armed confrontations between countries for border conflicts has disappeared. New institutions have been created, such as the South American Defence Council.

In the early years of the second decade of the 21st century, there have been permanent changes that will increase further as time passes, with the constant variation of available technologies and the changes in the international scenario that will force new and constant changes.