



Considering the Region

A Silent Security “System” for a Discordant Hemisphere

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Introduction

The marking feature of the Americas in 2008 is surely its discordance as a region. Gone are the days of high-flying speeches announcing projects of hemispheric economic integration. Gone are the days of proposals for wide-ranging political coordination in any number of fields between the states of the hemisphere. And within this context gone are the days of major progress, or at least talk of such, in the defence and security field.

Instead we find ourselves with broad and deep divisions among the members of the inter-American family which seem to say *“aquí de familia no hay nada.”* The United States opposes viscerally and automatically any proposal for reform domestically or initiatives internationally on the part of the Venezuela of Hugo Chávez and that president returns the favour with ferocious, if largely vocal, attacks on the regional hegemon. If much less dramatically, Washington equally expresses its displeasure with most of the programme of reform and international action of President Evo Morales’ Bolivia. This displeasure is also, if in a more muted fashion, rejected by the Bolivian government in its determination to, as it says, end the colonial relationships at the base of its economy. And while much more subtly, the US is clearly unhappy with the leftist or populist trend that has brought Correa to power in Ecuador and Ortega to power in Nicaragua. If the northern giant was already troubled by trends in relative moderates like Argentina and Brazil, it has not been silent on the arrival of what it considers radicals elsewhere.

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Meanwhile the Dominican Republic is suspicious of events and leaders in neighbouring Haiti, civil war continues in Colombia complicating that country's relations with all its neighbours, especially Ecuador and Venezuela, Mexico rangles under US border restrictions and other tensions despite a close relationship overall, the Cuba-US conflict shows no real signs of abatement, and even in Central America, united as never before since the early 19th century, occasional *brotes* remind us of lingering distrust among regional states. All of this occurs against the backdrop of the massive but utterly stalled initiative to bring free trade to the whole hemisphere and the drawing up of three proposals, essentially antagonistic in much of their breadth, for where the hemisphere should go and how it should get there where economic integration is concerned.

NAFTA is in most senses a success for its original three partners of the United States, Canada and Mexico and has drawn the interest of the northern tier of hemispheric states. But it has been countered not only by the well-known Mercosur initiative in the south but also by the deeply reformist ALBA project proposed by Venezuela, backed by Cuba and well seen by Ecuador. Yet Mercosur, other than bringing in Caracas of late, has not been able to tempt either Chile or Bolivia to fully join (although they have associate status) nor has it been successful enough to induce Colombia or any of the other northern tier countries, including Central America and the Caribbean, to risk their NAFTA possibilities in order to throw in their lot with the southern option.

It should hardly surprise us then, that this context is reflected in a security system at the hemispheric level which is irrelevant to most defence and security issues of weight in the region and thus silent on the majority of them. Despite the real dangers of military force being used in the Cuba-US conundrum, highly volatile at this time of potential change in Cuba, the system never discusses the question. Despite the international dimensions of the Colombian internal conflict, the same applies. The situation between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, much to the former's annoyance, never gets a real hearing in hemispheric circles, especially where its defence and security elements are concerned. Mexican-US matters remain entirely bilateral in this sense and never pass through hemispheric bodies. And if Central American issues do occasionally get a nod where at least some hemispheric interest in them is shown, this is most certainly not the case for the Falklands/Malvinas, whose vexing 25th anniversary was in April-June 2007, nor for Venezuelan-US, nor Bolivian-US, nor Bolivian-Chilean, nor many other issues worthy of attention.

The Positive Side- Nuanced

Not all, of course, is doom and gloom. It is easy to forget in the current context how much progress has been made in the last decades where inter-American security is concerned. The settling of the long-standing, central and highly troubling rivalry between the regional giants of Argentina and Brazil is a crowning achievement in the history of the hemisphere but it must be said that the inter-

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American security system had precious little to do with obtaining this happy result. The ending of the consistently problematic border issues between Ecuador and Peru, so often the cause of armed conflict, even as recently as 1995, did have the essential support of members of the system even if it must again be admitted that the system as such was only there very much on the sidelines.

The winding down of the historic border conflicts between Chile and Argentina must also be considered a deeply important series of events in the history of the hemisphere although here again the action was almost exclusively at the bilateral level and most assuredly not at the hemispheric. The same goes for Chile-Peru although there is little doubt that as in the other cases mentioned, hemispheric political and military trends provided a context propitious for progress. Even in Central America, where conflict and distrust have in most senses given way to an atmosphere of cooperation and even unity, the OAS and inter-American security system role was infinitely smaller in the creation of this positive context than was that of the United Nations.

Thus we have made tremendous progress in the settling of many matters of immense interest to the security of the hemisphere and the inter-American system was part of the creation of a context for such progress. But it would be less than honest to say that it had much of a role in most of the unfolding of the actual events themselves on the road to these favourable results. Instead, the system has been there to support but rarely called upon to do so. And this is surely, in large part at least, as a result of the fact that most security and defence problems in the Americas are sub-regional or even bilateral rather than more wide in their scope.

A word should also be said about the positive elements of changes in the hemispheric architecture for dealing with conflict. After many years in limbo, since 1991 and the end of the cold war, it has at least become possible again to discuss defence and security topics at the hemispheric level and specifically at the OAS. In that year a first step to bringing back these essential elements in any region keen on development was taken when an Ad Hoc Hemispheric Security Committee was set up. Within four years it was made permanent, an impossible goal a decade before. At the same time, on the initiative of the United States but a generally well received one, a Defence Ministerial of the American series of conferences was created and is still with us, with meetings held every two years in a member country of the OAS. This brings together ministers who might otherwise never meet and provides a context for cooperation. And their successive meetings soon called on the OAS to organise a more relevant conference on security in the Americas at foreign minister level which could start to handle the myriad non-traditional challenges the region faces in the defence and security field, challenges which were in most cases not within the purview of defence ministers at all but rather of the states' other agencies.

This was often particularly true of 'new' problem areas such as the international illegal drug trade, illegal immigration, terrorism, international crime, epidemics, natural disasters, defence of democracy and civil-military relations, and several others not automatically by any means falling into the rubric of defence ministers in democratic states. The meeting was finally held in 2003 in Mexico City

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and did issue guidelines about coordination of efforts and called for better coordination among states in these more non-traditional security issues, but showed once again that while the hemisphere's states could decide on a common list of concerns, when it came to how to approach them and what priority each should have, debate, sometimes acrimonious, was the result.

Equally encouraging but fraught with difficulties, the curriculum of the Inter-American Defence College (IADC) was brought up to date and purged of its excessive cold war emphasis, and regional initiatives such as the Regional Security System in the eastern Commonwealth Caribbean, and the Central American Democratic Security Treaty flourished. This last trend was reinforced by the series of bilateral successes in conflict resolution referred to above. And more recently the vexing issue of where does the Inter-American Defence Board (IADB) fit in regional architectures was at least addressed and the Board brought into a 'juridical link' arrangement as an agency of the Organization of American States. One will return to this but it is important even at this stage to underscore that while this was achieved, the actual mandate of the body is far from clear to most observers.

■ The entrance of new members to the OAS had emphasized the need for reform of the inter-American security system.

Stymied Attempts at Real Reform

The entrance of Canada and other Commonwealth nations as members, first of the OAS, and then of the IADB, had emphasized the need for reform of the inter-American security system if one were to make it work. At the OAS various ambassadors, headed early on by Argentina's Hernán Patiño-Mayer, spearheaded demands for reform of a system which had proven itself entirely irrelevant in the 1970s and eighties and was in danger of doing the same in an uncertain future. Their efforts stimulated most of the results, where a hemispheric architecture was concerned, that were achieved.

The Commonwealth states came, however, from an entirely different defence tradition than did those accustomed to the hemispheric order known so far. In the British Commonwealth tradition, it was absolutely standard procedure for Canadian formations to have British, Australian, New Zealand and other units in them and under their command. The same applied to other countries and especially of course to the mother country. While the United Kingdom was certainly the most powerful member of the 'family' there was no tradition of dominance by London in recent decades to the extent of absolute control of logistics, courses, doctrine, or any of the many elements of military affairs. This was underscored for the Canadians by their NATO experience where less than half of general and flag-rank officer commands were held by US officers, and most headquarters and schools were located in member countries other than the United States.

These countries had great difficulty adjusting to a system utterly dominated by one member whose officers held *all* command positions of the system's institutions, whose institutions were *all* on US soil, whose logistics was *all* part and parcel of the logistics system of the US forces, and where bilateral defence relations, under the famous MAPs (Mutual Assistance Pacts) of the 1950s produced a parallel, and arguably more important, real inter-American security system dominated by a



'hub and spokes' approach by the US, utterly at odds with Commonwealth and especially NATO practice. This was a recipe for discomfort if not disaster.

Not surprisingly then, it was these countries which most clamoured for reform. Canada in particular called for not only a revised curriculum for the IADC, which it got in short order, but a rotating presidency of the IADB, at least the possibility of a rotating *sede* for the Board allowing other countries to at least in theory host it at some stage, for elected positions in the case of some key positions in the Board, and other smaller reforms. But while there was some success on elections and rotating presidencies, in fact on major reform there was little. Proposals to the Board to modernize and reduce US dominance were overwhelmingly rejected by the Latin Americans themselves, for reasons which historians will have to delve into. Further reforms were quickly shelved. Only the OAS initiative to finally have a juridical link between that body and the IADB could be counted a major achievement and even there the unwillingness to give the Board a real role diminished massively the utility of this reform, as shown at the Defence Ministerial in Managua in 2006 when member states were not even willing to study the possibility that the Board might be able to help smaller states hosting that major event with its complicated and expensive administration.

Silence Because the Other Option is Discordance

The reality is that the inability of the hemispheric system to be present in a major way in the vital area of defence and security is merely a reflection of the wider divisions which plague the region at this time. The United States wishes to see a much more efficient system able to respond quickly and seamlessly to US needs for support in the region and more widely in the world. But most Latin American countries do not currently trust Washington and its goals regionally or on the world stage sufficiently to wish to become involved in US military initiatives in general or locally. Thus we may have an unbridgeable gap here that reflects historic as well as current contexts.

From the beginnings in the 1880s the objectives of the US and those of the other American nations clashed where a regional system was concerned. In the beginning Washington wished most particularly to exclude European influence in the Americas and wanted Pan-Americanism as an ideology, and a Pan-American Union as an institution, to work towards this goal. Needless to say, most Latin American countries, wary of excessive US control, wanted just the opposite, especially where European influence was concerned.

The key events that changed this temporarily were the Good Neighbour Policy (1934-54), that showed a US tolerant of democratic reform in the region and willing to work with regional states on the basis of mutual respect and non-intervention, and the Second World War, where the Latin Americans paid the US back in full for such positive policies with a support for that country in time of war unimaginable before 1934. Such was this the case that it was the

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Latin Americans who pressed at Chapultepec in 1945 for a permanent, peacetime, defence arrangement for the hemisphere when the war ended, a staggering victory for US policy perhaps unequalled in the long and chequered relationship between the US and its southern neighbours.

The end of that policy, and the dreadful cold war years, meant also the end of that level of trust. And the heavy weight of history, especially of the role of the system in the cold war, when added to the rejection of recent key policies of the US government by almost all of the states of the Americas, have simply made it impossible to imagine the approval of a system which would make it easier for Washington to mobilize support for military activities with which most regional countries would be in disagreement, often virulent disagreement, most of the time.

Conclusions

In this context it is not surprising that little progress can be made with building a more effective defence partnership in the hemisphere at this time. Economically the hemisphere is split dramatically into states favouring one or other of the three grand options out there for them and their future- NAFTA, Mercosur, ALBA. Politically, the rifts in the region on what sort of future should be being built are simply massive. And therefore, in the defence and security field, a central one on the political front, the idea of a more active and responsive security system is anathema at the present time.

Surely what is needed is rethinking where we want to go and what is acceptable to us. The rapid, sustained, dramatic Latin American involvement in resolving the current Haitian crisis is an example of what could and can be done if there is mutual respect and a real desire for cooperation. But all observers agree that there was little enough coordination at the hemispheric level on this deployment. Indeed, its very success has trumpeted the need for more efficient hemispheric mechanisms and procedures for rapid response.

When nations do not feel they want to respond, however, then little can be done. And at the moment this is the case. Thus we are likely to see less, not more real defence cooperation in the coming years and the progress made so far on a hemispheric security architecture may be all that can be expected until times change in important ways. Like-minded countries may still operate together in these troubled times. The US may, as with Iraq, be able to cajole some individual countries at the bilateral level into making contributions to US-led coalitions on the world stage. But if this merely reinforces Latin American views that cooperation in these fields with the US is *the* sign of their subservience to that power, then such support may well represent a very pyrrhic victory indeed as a real desire to provide such friendly aid may well become less, not more, pervasive in the Americas.

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Confidence and Security Building Measures: an Instrument for Peace and Stability

Francisco Rojas Aravena*

The development of Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) has enabled the generation of a new atmosphere in Latin American relations. As from 1995, when the First Regional Conference on CSBMs was held, there have been important advances, particularly in the Southern Cone.

CSBMs have proved to be one of the most efficient instruments for the endorsement of stability and development, through actions tending to limit situations of tension. As an instrument, it requires a continual and steady effort. Likewise, actions and their results should be assessed and suited to the new circumstances, on a regular basis. That entails an efficient, timely and transparent information system.

In 2009 CSBMs will take a new drive within the global and regional system. Both the United Nations and the OAS will be holding specific meetings and activities, tending to reinforce and improve the important role of CSBMs. In effect, the UN General Assembly (in its resolution A/62/391 of the 61st session) agreed to “ask the Secretary General to submit a report, in the sixty-third session, containing the opinions of the State Members about the CSBMs at the regional and sub-regional levels.” On the other hand, the General Assembly at OAS, held in Medellin on June 3rd, 2008, resolved to entrust the Permanent Council to convoke the fourth meeting of the Forum on CSBMs in the last quarter of 2009, in order to examine the use of CSBMs all through the region, and consider the next steps to be taken (AG/RES. 2398 - XXXVIII-0/08). Similarly, the VIII Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas, that will be held in Canada, this year will have CSBMs as one of the core issues in its agenda. In the same way, the initiative for the creation of the South American Defence Council has planned to boost CSBMs.

The building of confidence in matters of international defence and security is an essential factor for stability, governance and peace. Without confidence, the whole relations within the sector become tense. Thus, the building of confidence in defence matters is one of the most important instruments in the generation of wider spheres of cooperation, and in the coordination of policies. The progress made in this sector will convey a greater convergence in foreign policies, defence and other areas.

■ The development of confidence building measures has made possible the generation of a new atmosphere in Latin America relations.

* FLACSO Secretary General.

Characteristics of the Confidence and Security Building Measures

Confidence building measures are bilateral and multilateral actions aimed to prevent crises and conflict situations. They seek to enhance international peace and security, and to foster communication among actors. They create the appropriate atmosphere for establishing a framework of understanding that mitigates the perceptions of immediate threat, and avoids potential unanticipated factors. They presuppose the existence of conflicting interests or even of situations of tension, in a context of low confidence in the reciprocal relations. Its use and application, is thus fundamental when the differences are conveyed through the use of military instruments of force - or through the threat to use them -; in this situation, a misinterpretation could trigger an unwanted conflict, and set off immeasurable consequences.

It should also be highlighted, in the first place, that CSBMs are “acts” that establish a mutual relation; they are then, reciprocal. That makes them different from all signals of good will that a State issues for another; as unilateral actions, they do not have a binding effect. The obligatory character of the CSBMs does not refer to the fact that both States develop the same action – what can occur in some cases – but to the fact that they are equivalent and concomitant. The withdrawal of the military forces from a conflict area by one of the actors can – for example – bring a compensatory partial reduction of the other actor’s military stock list.

Confidence building measures are actions that have a necessary reciprocity and are parallel in terms of time, though they are not necessarily equivalent. Through a quick sequence of actions, an effective progress will be reached: one step will be followed by another similar step, as long as the counterpart fulfils the reciprocal commitment. In this sense, the CSBMs are not only “declarations” or “commitments” – in spite of the fact that these are certainly important – but effective “actions”, liable to assessment and verification. The transformation of commitments into actions enables the structuring of specific international regimes.

This is a key factor. When considering declarations, we are only left to believe or not in their content, trust – or not – the stated promises. A declaration does not constitute a CSBM in itself. However, it can contribute to strengthen the actions and reaffirm the context of the political will. A declaration can not change reality for itself. Implemented actions, therefore, will generate a different world. Relinquishing the use of force, for instance, does not make the military force disappear. Reporting about the military exercises in the frontiers, instead, avoids the sense of imminent threat; modifying the deployment in the frontiers is an action that transforms the perception of the threat and its material feasibility.

The CSBMs have ten characteristics: transparency and openness; predictability; reciprocity and equivalence, appropriate communication, relation-building, feasibility; coherence, verification, social support and variability, according to the number of actors.

In this context, it is essential that the States comply with the obligation to inform about the performed activities every year. Currently, only a few States in the region submit information on a regular and precise basis. Additionally, it is

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crucial to improve the systematization labour that the Inter-American Defence Board carries out. Without these elements, it will not be possible to check and revise implemented actions, nor to advance in favour of the objectives pursued through the CSBMs.

Building strong foundations of reciprocal confidence

In order to generate cooperation and policy-coordination spheres, it is essential to solve the issue of basic confidence. Building confidence within the region requires focusing on two crucial aspects: sovereignty (as regards territorial integrity) and autonomy (as to non-interventionism and non-interference of external actors in political, economic, social and cultural issues).

The aspect of sovereignty is related to the continuity of the State; whereas autonomy is related to the capacities to determine the appropriate political regime. The development of political dialogue spheres and specific confidence and security measures makes further progress possible with regard to the first dimension. Developing a practice according to the Inter American Democratic Charter will lead to the solution of interference related matters.

The depicted situation shows how, in the thirty five countries of America, governance, defence and development agendas interweave, mix up in a wide range of actors, and within a context of strong blend of international and domestic variables. All of that occurs within a background of dispersal and the lack of “an only voice” regarding regional and global issues; which can be surmounted when peace is at stake.

Cooperation and coordination of policies are essential when facing new challenges and vulnerabilities of defence and security fields in the western hemisphere. Though these challenges and vulnerabilities essentially bear a non-military character, the use of force is present. On the other hand, it will be necessary to look for parallel solutions with the development agenda; which is linked to, and affects, security matters. Hence, the importance of establishing action areas within institutions in charge of the defence, and within those institutions responsible for the public security, since the lack of transparency in the missions results in the de-professionalism of both areas.

Security is multi-dimensional, multi-level and multi-institutional, and involves different actors. Consequently, it demands complex responses. Defence maintains a significant space, though this sector has been increasingly demanded to fulfil new tasks and missions. The actors of the defence – the Ministries – have developed forms of cooperation that are still weak. However, the joint actions (as in the case of the MINUSTAH) are opening up broad courses of cooperation in the region. The development of the Argentine-Chilean joint brigade *Cruz del Sur* (Southern Cross) has even led to speak - at the bilateral level - of cooperation and integration measures. These two examples make evident that a constant, verified, assessed and highly transparent labour can produce results that not only reach the basic objectives and practices but also go beyond: advance toward cooperation and complementation, and contribute to integration.

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Latin American Civil-Military Relations in the 21st Century

Louis W. Goodman*

A cold war of distrust marked relations between Latin American civilian and military leaders in the twentieth century.¹ Military leaders often saw civilian politicians as incompetent and self-indulgent. Some were even branded as unpatriotic and allied with foreign interests. The frequent military ascension to power was often motivated by a perceived need to save their nations from weak, corrupt, and undisciplined civilian leadership. Civilian leaders, on the other hand, commonly viewed their experiences as attempts to make government responsive to the wider population which had been thwarted by a self-important military in league with self-interested local oligarchs.

This icy relationship began to thaw with the return of civilian rule in the 1980s and has been further warmed by restraints on military return to power, many imposed by military institutions themselves. The lacklustre economic and political results of twentieth century Latin American military rule, combined with the divisions which these experiences created in many national forces, has dampened both military and civilian enthusiasm for *de facto* governments headed by military leaders.

With the return to civilian rule and end of the Cold War, the size and budgets of national forces fell substantially; defence ministers, many civilians, have been named by popularly-elected civilian presidents; civilians staff many professional administrative posts in defence ministries; civilians and military have been permitted to attend each others' institutions of advanced studies; compulsory conscription has been ended in many countries; women have joined the Armed Forces in increasing numbers; "White Books" have made military budgets and force structure more transparent; and debates on national defence matters are now frequently initiated by congressional committees.

While this thaw is far from complete, civil-military relations in Latin America have taken on a different character in the 21st century. Progressive national political forces are no longer openly labelled as supporters of perfidious foreign influences. The Armed Forces no longer see military governments as solutions to national political problems. Civilian leaders no longer fear military coups as barriers to democratic progress. Still the inefficiencies and inequalities continue which, in part, prompted military leaders, such as Argentina's Juan Carlos Onganía and Peru's Juan Velasco Alvarado, to topple elected civilian governments. While

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¹ GOODMAN, Louis W, MENDELSON, Johanna S.R. y RIAL, Juan, *The Military and Democracy: The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America*. Lexington Books, Lexington, Massachusetts, 1990.



Latin American economic growth has been high since 2004², the record of previous decades has left 250 million of Latin America's 600 million inhabitants mired in poverty, with 100 million not being able to provide for basic nutrition and shelter.³ While ratios comparing nations' top and bottom wealth quintiles is at 4 to 1 in countries such as Sweden and Taiwan, such ratios in Latin America are the highest for any world area, averaging 15 to 1, with levels in Brazil, Guatemala, Panama and Mexico exceeding 30 to 1.⁴ Specific social conditions have markedly deteriorated with drug-related and petty crime increasingly controlled by complex organizations with transnational ties, and fragile eco-systems endangered by economic forces or by climatic meltdown.

While these conditions do not cause 21st century Latin American Armed Forces to topple civilian governments, they do result in military action, now initiated not by generals but by civilian political leaders. Unable to provide basic health and education for impoverished rural populations with civilian institutions, politicians "call in the troops" and soldiers are asked to provide these services. Unable to control the activities of "drug mafias" and many forms of petty crime, politicians "call in the troops" and soldiers are asked to carry out police functions. Unable to collect garbage, vaccinate dogs and livestock, or distribute fertilizer to farmers, politicians "call in the troops" to provide services usually provided by sanitation and agriculture agencies. Latin American civilians greatly appreciate this useful service by their uniformed countrymen. But this covering for civilian failings, without a "sunset plan" for military being expensively re-trained to assume these roles, only delays the day when Latin American citizens are served by governments with solid institutions sustained by highly qualified professionals institutions which provide the foundation for citizens creatively building lives in a context of prosperity and peace.

While Latin American militaries may be asked to assume many roles fully taken on by civilians in other national contexts, at the same time Latin American nations continue to depend on their Armed Forces to carry out the roles associated with their basic missions: providing for national defence, responding to emergencies caused by natural disasters, and cooperating with other nations to confront common enemies. While the relative dearth of regional wars makes the first function seem less important, the regions' militaries are called upon to respond to disasters caused by hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods on a regular basis and nations' ties with their allies have been reinforced significantly by participation in joint military operations and multi-lateral peace-keeping missions. Sometimes the ability to carry out these roles is diluted by political demands that the military take on non-defence roles, often over objections of military leaders.

Latin American military budgets, low compared with those of nations in other regions, cover mostly personnel costs associated with the salaries of soldiers and civilian support staff. Military pay levels, like those of most of the region's public

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2 CEPAL, *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2004-2005*. Naciones Unidas, Santiago de Chile, 2005.

3 USAID, *Latin America and the Caribbean 2004: Selected Economic and Social Data*. United States Agency for International Development, Washington D.C., 2005.

4 *World Development Report 2006, Equity and Development*. The World Bank. Washington D.C., 2005.

servants, are not sufficient to cover middle-class living standards. Thus military men, even high-ranking officers, often search for second jobs ranging from taxi driver to security guard or are vulnerable to non-governmental groups topping-off their salaries in exchange for “considerations.” This budgetary weakness further impedes the ability of many Latin American militaries to be able to count on fully professionalized forces adequately attentive to basic defence missions.

Twenty-first century civil-military relations in Latin America bear scant resemblance to the stereotype of eager coup-makers responding to self-interested oligarchs knocking on barracks doors. Today the challenge is to provide the regions’ Armed Forces with the resources they need to carry out the very essential national defence functions of the twenty-first century and to strengthen civilian capacities such that proper guidance is given to national Armed Forces by civilian-designed national defence plans and civilian administration of national defence institutions. Similarly civilians must develop capacities to provide citizens with basic services in a wide range of areas such that politicians no longer feel the need to “call in the troops.” This is how to further warm civil-military relations in Latin America and to contribute positively to the building of democratic political systems.

■ Today the challenge is to provide the regions’ Armed Forces with the resources they need to carry out the very essential national defence functions and to strengthen civilian capacities.

The Modernization Processes: Institutions and Defence Missions

■ **Gustavo Suárez Pertierra***

■ Given the current strategic scenario, the defence is forcibly shared and, many times exercised, far away from our own borders. In order to address this new and dynamic reality, two important issues - at least - should be solved beforehand:

- What could be named as the defence institutionalization, which affects one of the great State organizations. In other words, it is about defining how the Armed Forces are going to interweave in the institutional State fabric.

- What missions should these corporations have (which, besides, hold the monopoly of violence), in order to cater for the great defence objectives that generally stem from the Constitution.

Though, of course, experience cannot be passed on, I will try to make an outline – through the Spanish case – pointing out some key elements required to solve the matters occurring in those societies facing transitional processes and a noticeably verified institutional weakness.

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In the context of the Spanish transition, we find a unstructured society, faced with internal problems only artificially solved (like, for instance, the problem of the State's territorial organization); with oversized and internationally isolated, equipment-constrained Armed Forces, exercising inappropriate functions and jealous of their autonomy. If adding the phenomenon of terrorism (which during the first transitional years, chose the military as a target of their attacks with the intention of destabilizing the system) the result is an overview of that situation.

In 1978, we the Spanish gave ourselves a democratic Constitution after long decades of dictatorship. The Constitution, on the one hand, stipulates the army missions in observance to the classical criteria of national sovereignty, and positions the Armed Forces under the authority of the Government, who manages the State defence and military policies. On the other hand, it establishes a clear distinction between the Armed Forces and the State security forces, to the extent that not even the military security corps (the Civil Guard) is summoned to be a part of the Armed Forces, as ruled by the Constitution.

From here on, the process that I have called institutionalization begins. What do we mean when we express the idea of interweaving the Armed Forces in the State institutions? As I see it, there are two fundamental aspects: the first one is the integration of authority, that is to say, the issue of who is attributed the management of that great organization. The second one concerns the distinction between management functions and executive functions. That is valid both for the great corporations in general, and for the armed forces and State security corps; it specially refers to the Executive Branch.

By the time of the Spanish transition, the hierarchical position of the fundamental State authorities had to be clearly outlined. While developing the Constitution, a law with the basic criteria of the national defence was ruled in 1980, - reformed in 1984 -, defined the role of the President of the Government as the Defence superior authority, which until then correspond to a military joint body. Likewise, the Minister of Defence set up as the right authority in military policy matters and as delegate of the President concerning other issues. As for the military decision-making bodies, they became advisory bodies and ceased bearing any executive relevance.

From another perspective, the institutional position of the Legislative Power is usually a good feature of the maturity of the democratic systems. The Parliament has the fundamental functions of legislating (for instance, the annual budgetary law), monitoring the government or setting itself up as the venue of the great national debates. In this sense, the existence of commissions specifically focused on the security and defence issues is very important. Its great debates should be carried out in the Chamber; for example, the recruitment, decisions on the equipment deals, the definitions - in strategic terms - of the size of the Armed Forces over the next decades, or of when there should be a change of model from a conscript army to a professional one. The European Parliaments are showing, for instance, an increasing relevance when it comes about authorizing armed interventions abroad. Given that the defence is occasionally exercised from beyond the frontiers, when it comes about sending armed contingents to carry out missions

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abroad, there is usually an intervention that sets the limits and conditions and eventually authorizes the government to proceed with the delivery of troops.

As to the Judiciary - in order to give a more complete picture - the Armed Forces usually have a full jurisdictional system - extraordinarily extensive at times - that should be integrated in a sole democratic State power for the prosecution of crimes. This convergence, which in the Spanish case was reached through the establishment of a Military Chamber in the Supreme Court of the Nation, should be guaranteed notwithstanding the possible existence of professional systems of military jurisdiction for specifically military crimes.

It has been said before that, besides the institutionalization problems, the questions of the Armed Forces missions are of critical importance. The armies fulfill some functions that traditionally and naturally belong to their realm: the defence of sovereignty and the territorial integrity, or the defence of the system, which formally focuses on the constitutional order. For that purpose they train, and to that respond their specific doctrines and the resources they are equipped with: a distinctive organization, based on hierarchy, discipline and cohesion, a logistics system and an international connections system.

However, and due to different reasons, the military organization sometimes carries out his tasks amidst other important State organizations institutional weakness, so that they become the only organization able to assure the performance of certain social functions that have nothing to do with defence. In this scenario, they tend to occupy empty spaces, so they end up incorporating a group of inappropriate missions for which they are not trained. These missions are only justified if necessary and if assumed in a temporary manner; they may bring about certain change of nature in the armies, and carry the danger of turning them away from their specific missions and, of inevitably engendering certain functional autonomy.

The most outstanding problem in this field is the grey line that separates the relation between the Armed Forces and the security corps. In Spain, along with the estrangement of the armies from public order preservation functions – as one would expect from a system with no liberties –, modernization processes had to be set in motion in the Forces and the security corps, so as to let them be perceived as citizen security keeping forces, instead of repressive forces. But the great reform took place in the demilitarization process of the security forces organization. Until 1986 the commanders were of military origin, they were trained in military academies and the organization of the executive functions was military, too. This reform was posed bearing in mind that they could not face citizen security through the use of doctrines that are laden towards the defence and global security spheres. This is so, because these global problems should be addressed from their complex condition, what in turn requires the use of a set of resources of diplomatic, economic, financial, social and of course military character, if it so happens.

There is an additional reference to the coordination of the federal or national security forces and those that do not belong to the State sphere, but to minor territorial spheres. While the defence can not be transferred to the region or municipality, the citizen security protection function, however, can be transferred to other territorial organizations. This does not certainly imply that the Armed Forces

■ The most important issues are the institutionalization and the mission the Armed Forces should have.



■ The modernization processes are quite lengthy, subject to the swings of the political majorities; in order to deal with that, strong ministries are required, with powerful organizations that allow to put policies into practice.

should be dismissed, when facing a real problem that needs to be addressed through the use of all the national resources. These functions can be exercised in accordance with the legal framework, when the government instructs so – exceptionally -, provided that they bear a complementary, assisting and temporary character.

A final reference: all of this may work if there are solid, powerful and stable administrations. The modernization processes are quite lengthy, subject to the swings of the political majorities; in order to deal with that, strong ministries with powerful organizations that allow to put into practice the necessary measures at the right pace, are required.

But the bottom line is that the most serious problem lies in the absence of societies being involved in the defence public function. Therefore, it is necessary to transparently put into practice this public policy; to listen to the citizens, to inform them about the problems that the global security entail nowadays, to share these problems with the citizens, and also to launch intensive training programs for officials in this matter: political parties, military, police, opinion-makers, scholars, and so on. Being aware of our lack of experts in this field is the first step towards the resolution of the challenges posed by the security and the defence issues, in this ever-changing world.