

Preface

The Comparative Atlas has changed its name and is proud to present this new edition that comprises regional data. The following pages you are about to read are the result of a two-year research which led to the elaboration of the *Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean*, including topics, indicators and information presented for the first time in a paper of this nature.

This fourth edition reflects both the permanence and evolution of the hemisphere. At the time of the first edition (2005), a significant effort was placed on transparency of data such as the number of military troops and defence organizational structures. By 2007, the publication sought to establish a link with official institutions that could reinforce the bridge and cooperation ties between the State, the academia and civil society, towards an enhanced democratic development. The third edition revealed the regional progress attained in this respect, and was presented as material for the VIII Defence Ministerial of the Americas held in Canada in 2008. If we take a look at this trajectory, it seems only logical that RESDAL should now identify what new challenges may emerge and what response should be conceived to address regional dynamics.

One first challenge was reflecting the hemispheric consistency, by including the Caribbean region with which a large security space is shared.

The second one was presenting data on Cuba as part of the information on the Latin American Region itself.

The third was reflecting the dynamic nature of defence matters and such issues and events that are gaining more impetus, transcending regions or national characteristics.

The introduction of data from the English-speaking Caribbean countries has been both relevant and timely. With this edition, we are accomplishing an objective whose need was expressed from the beginning by Caribbean countries in 2007 when they requested information on Latin America in English language. The bridges laid down among regions and the interaction across the greater space, i.e. the hemisphere as a whole, are many and address a security scenario



that goes beyond geographic frontiers. Mutual knowledge between Latin America and the Caribbean is still scarce and needs to be reinforced. The intention to encourage this approach through the dissemination of experiences and data was enthusiastically welcomed by the security and defence institutions of the Caribbean countries involved, which wilfully furnished information and generously gave their time to cooperate in shaping what we present herein. The richness of this region is evidenced both in the mechanisms and security organizations as well as in the celebration of the World Cricket Cup, a paramount multilateral practice for regions which (like Central America or South America) also seek to advance in that sense.

These expressions of multilateral agreement and actions are also part of the most outstanding characteristics of how information is presented here. The chapter on hemispheric relations attempts to show the profuse and dynamic network of relations between countries, and the fact of assigning chapter to this area, shows the relevance the matter has gained from the abundance of information that springs every day. From the variety of bilateral agreements to hemispheric initiatives, including sub-regional mechanisms such as the South American, Caribbean and Central American initiatives, there emerges both the richness and complexity of defence in the region.

The edition is also innovative in the chapter devoted to Cuba, which holds relations with all countries but one, and several countries have relations of the so-called “military diplomacy” nature with the Caribbean island. Without regional sources for the matter, the data has been focussed on disseminating concepts and organizations as well as information on the civil defence system considered as a model in several parts of the world; and the relations with the United States, a matter that has also been included --beyond the Cuban case-- as part of the hemispheric relations scenario. In all such cases, as usual, the Comparative Atlas is presented as a work in process, or as a collection of various data that can nurture new developments into the future.

Thus, the matters presented in the various chapters are based on the indicators shown by the political defence practice across the region and, fundamentally, the evolution experienced. All countries operate in a complex regional context where different dynamics are played: agreements coexist with historical claims, and budget increases with diverse interpretations; proposals of own capabilities with practices that seek cooperation; laws amended with ministries facing difficulties to generate and consolidate civilian leadership and others.

Other data presented --such as policy guidelines-- seek to advance on the more classical discussions on conceptual meanings resulting in other data that may seem minor but actually direct the everyday life of institutions. This has been the criterion that has prevailed in the choice of data presented across the entire publication: making visible what may not seem that visible, and leaving the reader the

freedom to evaluate the meaning. Along the same lines, a unique chapter –defence and community—is included to reflect the matters and activities that may seem of a secondary priority but which, in practice, receive high attention in the various countries, including development, internal order, social work of the armed forces. It was not easy to give it a title; finally the one chosen is actually a challenge for the reader, so that a more precise title will come out when more clarity is given to the defence sector projections in this area.

Multiple actors have contributed with their input in each country with great patience upon the requests of information, including ministries of defence and the armed forces who we thank again for their contribution. The enhanced wealth of information enabled to work on different topics. So much so, that we almost naturally resorted to the guide of recognized regional experts to cooperate in the evaluation and to think about how to manage all such information. Roberto Cajina, Hal Klepak and Juan Rial are more than highly prestigious consultants we relied on; they designed tables, evaluated data, edited mistakes, and were mainly responsible for the aim to raise the bar of this publication. They joined with their enthusiasm a magnificent multinational team of young professionals who worked from Buenos Aires and other cities, tirelessly in their everyday work, and with the contribution of a rich perspective of diversity; the work highly profited from these special features. Thanks to all of them, to the members of the network who answered so many questions and gave hints and pointed to mistakes, who form the foundation of all this effort, as well as to the support of the Latin American program of the Open Society Institute, once again, we have come to produce this Atlas. And more than ever now with this new bridge between regions, we need to thank the possibility of having this publication in English thanks to the financial support of the Center for Civil Military Relations from Monterrey and the National Endowment for Democracy, as well as the support of Spell CITI for an impeccable, quick and patient translation.

At the end of all this process of information recollection and presentation, we feel that hints can be found in the information by analysts and decision-makers, in things still not asked and in process of development. Openness is not a question in most of the countries that have furnished data. Questions seem to refer to the current structures, to the challenges facing countries or to defence links with society in terms of more general projects.

These dynamics are political, but also institutional and administrative. If the way is better paved now than five years ago, the reason is that the various actors have been more open to introduce new ideas rather than rejecting them, advancing in the development of a democratic culture. In that specific sense, and considering the diversity of information presented by institutions, there is a clearer idea of the meaning of defence as a public policy. As it may be seen, it is difficult for example to view the civil-military matter in traditional terms



now. The democratization has more complex elements than that. The institution-building is also related, into the future, to the development of roles and who will assume such roles, whether civilian or military.

For RESDAL, to undertake a work such as this Atlas presents challenges, but also the chance to be the direct witnesses of institutional strengths and weaknesses, progress and stagnation present in structures and the mindsets. And, above all, it enables to feel part of an effort in which many have given their contribution reflected in this publication whose main sense and strength is precisely its embedded collaborative work.

Marcela Donadio
RESDAL Executive Secretary
October 2010