

**A Comparative Atlas
of Defence
in Latin America
and Caribbean**

2014 Edition



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Presentation

■ Ten years after starting this project we present the sixth edition of the Comparative Atlas with two basic additions: the inclusion of Costa Rica, Panama and Haiti to complete the regional stage, and a special chapter on the convergence of agendas in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Throughout its various editions, the Comparative Atlas has responded to the need for a tool to compile and compare basic information on defence issues in the countries of the region: the different legal frameworks, structures of defence systems, political concepts, budget figures, military missions, and the size of the forces, being among the principal areas.

The information and knowledge serve through their value to research and decision-making, and for this reason the Atlas reaches different countries, regions and persons who subscribe to a piece of work that assists them in their work and to learn lessons that can be applied in their own locations. It is also why RESDAL has always proposed that the

Comparative Atlas must be a dynamic piece of work that is appropriate to the times.

In 2005, efforts were taken to promote greater transparency. Advances in the following years paved the way for the incorporation of new issues on to the regional agenda, such as gender. The publication positioned itself to the point of being seen almost as a kind of “Regional White Paper”. Unique in its kind worldwide, its edition in other languages has allowed it to approach other regions of the world and spark interest in learning about the experiences of the countries found in the publication. Its reach not only includes all the countries in the Americas but also countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Today, the overabundance of information provides new challenges in the construction of a publication such as the Comparative Atlas. Advances in communication have provided the ability to access a large amount of data (which is not always consistent), in a context in which institutions need to display them-

selves, thus justifying their existence and their need for resources.

Beyond the amount of data that can or cannot be found, the themes themselves have evolved: while the same institutional, educational, and budgetary structures remain, dramatic changes are observed in everyday practice, especially with regard to the tasks of the Armed Forces. The Caribbean and Latin America have displayed an increasingly converging agenda; the issues that two years ago separated the concerns of the Small Island States of the Caribbean, for example, with those of South America, are not so clear today. On the contrary, preparations for military responses to natural disasters seem to be on the agenda of the day in all countries in the region. This and other convergences are also reflected in the chapter we present on hemispheric relations, identifying the issues discussed in the different spaces of dialogue and cooperation, whether they are hemispheric, subregional or bilateral, or of military or political character.

This changing trend is reflected in the pages of the 2014 Edition. Information about the actions carried out by the Armed Forces is expanded, which in their daily tasks are much more related to the provision of support and assistance than in the past, such as through the protection of the environment and natural resources, risk management and disaster

response, and operations in support of public security.

We would like to take this opportunity to provide a particular thanks to the Open Society Foundation, which has financially supported this project over the past ten years. Upon analyzing the process, the results are clear: a move towards transparency and the production of actionable tools through joint efforts between the State and civil society, which collaborate in the institutionalization of the defence sector, efforts that should of course be continued. We look forwards to the commitment that countries can provide, reaffirming the support they have given during these years in the construction of the Atlas. Within this context, we thank each Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces that has collaborated in providing information.

We also thank the Defence Engagement Program of the Department of Defence of Canada for their support, which has allowed for the translation of this edition into English. And principally we thank the communication and design team and the tireless researchers and assistants from various countries who helped to make this work a reality.

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