Overcoming the Power Gap: Reorienting the Inter-American System for Hemispheric Security

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Introduction

Since the collapse of the bipolar world power paradigm in 1991, the concept of security in the Americas has come under intense review. Some have seized upon the end of the Cold War as an opportunity for the progressive disarmament of the southern portion of the hemisphere; adopting a "Costa Rican model" with respect to defense establishments would redirect scarce resources to the critical social needs of developing countries and curb the tendency of the region's militaries to intervene in political activity. Interstate security, for these analysts, would be guaranteed by international organizations and moral suasion, as well as the inherent limiting effect of consigning marginally effective military establishments to the scrap heap. Internal security would be assured by social and economic progress and the limited activities of civilian police forces.

Others see such a move as at best, naive, and at worst, an attempt by the United States to abolish military forces in Latin America in order to consolidate its hegemony, and coopt the armed forces as paramilitary police in order to combat narcotics production.[1] For them, some degree of interstate rivalry and enduring military institutions are facts of life which are not going to disappear. Generally, they would prefer to modernize and professionalize the militaries of the region commensurate with current threats to the stability of democratic regimes and the resource limitations which characterize less-developed nations. Their views must address the sticky questions of threat identification, civil-military cooperation, and contemporary conceptual views of national sovereignty versus multilateralism if they are to avoid a perpetuation of Cold War strategies and structures for action in the security sphere.

Existing collective security structures for the Western Hemisphere, created during and after World War II, became progressively ineffective and, therefore, discredited during the Cold War -- casualties of mistrust between the governments of the United States and Latin American countries, diverse perspectives on the nature of threats, and of frequent manipulation by those governments for unilateral ends.[2] Indeed, several countries have worked actively to prevent the Organization of

American States from reforming, or expanding its role in hemispheric affairs in general. These same nations are the most resistant to exploiting the post-Cold War opportunity to redefine and improve hemispheric security relations.[3]

Long identified with the presumed existence of an extra-hemispheric aggressor as a unifying and justifying threat, these institutions are considered by many to be especially anachronistic and irrelevant following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, as the concept of security is broadened to include aspects of social reform, economic progress, judicial effectiveness, and official accountability,[4] an international framework for cooperation between national civilian and military agencies empowered to apply force on behalf of the state seems more appropriate than ever.

This paper will examine the historic tension between U.S. and Latin American/Caribbean security interests as addressed within the Inter-American System, and how these institutions have evolved as a result. After identifiying new challenges to hemispheric security in the post-Cold War era, it will attempt to answer some fundamental questions: Is there now a convergence of security interests in the hemisphere which justifies consistent multilateral attention? Can multilateral organs act effectively while maintaining adequate assurances of respect for national sovereignty? Finally, can the existing institutions within the Inter-American System be reinvigorated and empowered to serve this purpose?

U.S. Foreign Policy and the Inter-American System

U.S. foreign policy in Latin America and the Caribbean historically has been dominated by security interests. From the Monroe Doctrine, oriented against European colonial penetration of the western hemisphere in the 19th century, through the anti-communist focus of the Cold War, U.S. policy has tended to react to external threats to U.S. primacy in the region, and has oscillated in intensity according to the perceived intensity of those threats.[5] Even U.S.-sponsored counterinsurgency assistance in the 1960s and 1980s was predicated upon the factor of external support for revolutionary movements, and in the context of the East-West struggle. Other policy objectives were generally pursued within the security context , on the assumption that economic progress and profits for U.S.

transnational business interests could not be achieved in an unstable political environment. The overwhelming asymmetries in both military and economic power which have always characterized the North-South relationship have defined both means and ends at the heart of the policies adopted by all countries in the hemisphere during the past century.

Ironically, the Inter-American System which grew to be criticized as a product of excessive U.S. security concerns was actually born of shared security interests between newly independent nations of the northern and southern Hemispheres. Preoccupied with designs by Great Britain and and other European colonial powers to turn back the tide of independence movements in the Americas and to limit U.S. territorial expansion, President James Monroe promulgated the doctrine that would bear his name and characterize U.S. policy for over a century. In an address before Congress in 1823 he stated that the Americas were closed to colonization by the European powers. "It is impossible that the Allied Powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness...It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition, in any form, in indifference".[6]

The Latin American republics, meanwhile, sought collective security via a series of Hispanic-American Congresses which were held during the 19th century (Panama 1826, Lima 1847-48, Santiago de Chile 1856, and Lima 1865.) While sharing U.S. concern about recolonization, these conferences often excluded the United States, reflecting the well-founded preoccupation of the Latin American republics with the growing might and reach of their neighbor to the north; in fact, Simón Bolivar's vision for collective security articulated in the 1826 Congress of Panama envisioned a union of Latin American nations operating under the protection of Great Britain, a direct contravention of the anti-European thrust of the Monroe Doctrine.[7] Uneven support for these congresses among Latin American nations, and the insistence of the U.S. on maintaining freedom of action ensured that their primary positive outcome was limited to the establishment of the precedent of consultation for mutual security assurances.

By the 1880s, however, U.S. policy became proactive due to an enormous expansion of economic productivity following the Civil War, increased European economic penetration of the

hemisphere, and the destructive legacy of South American conflicts such as the War of the Triple Alliance (1864) and the War of the Pacific (1876). Secretary of State James G. Blaine issued invitations in 1881 to all nations of the hemisphere to attend a congress in Washington with the object of "discussing the prevention of war between the nations of America". However, Garfield's assassination brought Chester A. Arthur to the presidency, who replaced Blaine with Frederick T. Freylinghausen who rescinded the invitations. It would fall to supporters of Pan Americanism in the Congress to push legislation through which ultimately could be implemented upon Blaine's return to office following the Cleveland Administration. The First International Conference of American States convened in Washington in 1889, attended by all Latin American countries save the Dominican Republic.

By this time, the War of the Pacific between Chile, Peru and Bolivia had ended, and commercial issues assumed precedence. The United States viewed the conference as a means to advance her commercial opportunities in the hemisphere, but also suggested the establishment of an arbitration mechanism for the settlement of interstate disputes. While no concrete commercial or arbitration agreements resulted from the deliberations, an institutional framework emerged for further meetings -- the genesis of the Inter-American System. The "International Union of American Republics" was formed to facilitate commercial cooperation, with a subordinate body entitled "The Commercial Bureau of the American Republics" headquartered in Washington.

Faced with an unprecedented imperial role following her victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the United States again proposed a hemispheric conference to address commercial and arbitration matters, as well as the reorganization of existing institutions. The Second International Conference of American States met in Mexico City from October of 1901 through January of 1902. At this conference, the undisputed importance of the U.S. as a global power, especially in forcing Great Britain's effective retreat from the Venezuelan crisis of 1895, caused concern among Latin American delegations over domination of the hemisphere by their northern neighbor. They pursued agreements committing most of the attendees to the recently adopted Hague Conventions with respect to the peaceful settlement of disputes, and attempted to strengthen arbitration procedures beyond those contained in the conventions. Significantly, the United States refused to sign much the treaty of

compulsory arbitration which ensued. Nonetheless, agreements were made on commercial issues, the establishment of a Governing Board for the Bureau, the establishment of an International Sanitary Bureau in Washington (the first of the "Specialized Organizations" of the Inter-American System) and a commitment to a third conference to be held within five years. This conference, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1906, was conducted against the backdrop of aggressive U.S. actions in the Caribbean and Central America -- notably, promulgation of the Platte Amendment, arrogating the right to intervene unilaterally in a supposedly independent Cuba, adoption of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, which claimed the right for the U.S. to exercise international police power in countries incapable of governing themselves effectively, and the "taking" of Panama for the purposes of constructing a transoceanic canal.

Successive conferences saw the U.S. delegation attempting to deflect criticism of interventionism in favor of measures promoting the consolidation of the Pan American Union, with a permanent governing board and a host of evolving technical agencies, organizations and practices. While lacking a formal charter and intentionally precluded from addressing political issues, the Union did provide a mechanism for dialogue and coordination in trade, investment, health, communications, international law and other areas. Political issues -- notably dealing with security concerns -- were left to the periodic International Conferences of American States. High on the agendas of these conferences were issues of Inter-American law, and consequently a strong divergence between North and South on the principle of non-intervention and measures for arbitration of disputes.

The frequent interventions by U.S. military forces in the early 20th century in the Caribbean and in Central America generally followed local crises which threatened American citizens associated with private commercial interests. During this period of "protective imperialism", they resulted in nation-building exercises in Nicaragua, Panama, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic due to commercial concerns and that messianic strain of liberalism which characterized the U.S. cultural optimism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[8] The universal indignation of Latin American countries in response to the reintroduction of U.S. Marines into Nicaragua in 1926 to reverse the course of local elections caused President Calvin Coolidge to assert that "... our own Government has certain rights over and certain

duties toward our own citizens and property, wherever they may be located. The person and property of a citizen are a part of the general domain of the nation, even when abroad."[9] This same universality was denied, of course, to European nations by U.S. continued adherence to the Monroe Doctrine and efforts to keep the growing movement towards a League of Nations and its associated arbitration machinery out of the western hemisphere. As a result, the 1929 Conference on Conciliation and Arbitration produced two treaties which were ratified by eighteen of the participants, building on the 1923 Gondra Treaty with respect to special conciliatory commissions and arbitration procedures in the event of Inter-American conflicts.

Due to domestic priorities of the Depression and the universal opprobrium interventionist adventures had excited in the rest of Latin America, the U.S. disengaged from these experiments during the years of the "Good Neighbor Policy" of the Roosevelt administration. As early as the 1928 New York gubernatorial campaign Franklin Roosevelt had stressed that in case of a future crisis in the Caribbean ".. it is not the right or duty of the United States to intervene alone. It is rather the duty of the United States to associate with itself other American Republics...to offer the helping hand or hands in the name of the Americas. Single-handed intervention by us in internal affairs of other nations must end; with the cooperation of others we shall have more order in this hemisphere, and less dislike."[10] This attitude on the part of the Roosevelt administration and the acceptance for the first time by the United States of a resolution at the seventh Pan-American Conference in Montevideo (1933) to the effect that "No state shall have the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another state" was greeted with optimism throughout Latin America. However, the bitter aftertaste left by the previous policies of intervention ensured that only a crisis on the scale of the second World War could unite the nations of the hemisphere in military policy.

The Growth of the Inter-American Military System

Professor Jack Child has identified four distinct phases in the evolution of the Inter-American Military System: creation and growth in World War II, divergence and decline in the early Cold War

years (1945-61), expansion and rebirth during the heyday of counterinsurgency in the 60s, and fragmentation and dysfunction in the 70s and 80s.[11] This last phase has continued into the 90s, despite efforts by the U.S. to improve military cooperation in the hemisphere on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

In the wake of Axis successes in Europe and Africa and the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. was especially desirous of securing its southern flank against German and Japanese penetration. Most Latin American and Caribbean countries saw disastrous consequences for their economies from a Japanese attack on the Panama Canal and from German submarine warfare. Additionally, a general fear of a German attempt to occupy the American possessions of the defeated French and Dutch gave rise to a special Meeting of Consultation in Havana in July of 1940. While the declaration which emerged avoided technical military matters, for the first time it articulated a collective defense based upon the principle that "...an attack on one American state is considered an attack on all American states."[12]

This declaration paved the way for a series of staff conferences held on a bilateral basis in 1940 between the War Department and the principle Latin American nations. The Latins saw an opportunity to fill the emerging vacuum in military assistance they had traditionally received from the major European powers with weapons from the United States. In return for granting U.S. access to bases and strategic materials along with declarations of war on the Axis powers, key countries entered security assistance relationships and admitted U.S. military advisors. Faced with overwhelming requirements for materiel in the European and Pacific Theaters, however, the U.S. was slow to deliver, as serious shipments of war materiel did not begin arriving in Latin America until 1943. Of the $475 million in Lend Lease aid which ultimately went to the region during the war, over 70 percent was directed to Brazil, which provided strategic air bases and an expeditionary force which fought with distinction in the Italian campaign.

At the Third Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers held in Rio de Janeiro in January of 1942 the United States pursued unanimity among the nations of the hemisphere for breaking off relations with the Axis powers. This did not occur, as both Argentina and Chile refused to go along with the rest of the countries present, ten of which had in fact declared war on Germany. The best that could be done was to create an Inter-American Defense Board (**IADB**) to provide a means of systematic

communication and coordination between the militaries of the hemisphere, and to serve as a powerful symbol of hemispheric unity. Its charter specified that it was to serve as an advisory organ, and that its resolutions would be non-binding. No forces were assigned, no formal alliance structure was promulgated, and no command and control organisms were instituted. However, the Board's delegates met regularly, adopted resolutions which were selectively implemented, and complemented the framework for emerging bilateral military cooperation between countries of special military significance. -- notably, the U.S., Brazil, and Mexico. The Board's purpose was primarily political, rather than purely military; it provided the Latin American and Caribbean nations a sense of participation in hemispheric defense planning, but the lion's share of actual defense activity was absorbed by the United States. This was a reflection of the War Department's strong preference for the practical advantages derived from emphasis on bilateral defense arrangements with countries of special interest (Brazil, Mexico) over the inevitably murky ideal of hemisphere-wide military cooperation. A key factor in this view was the continuous tension between the United States and the pro-Axis Perón government of Argentina, which effectively barred hemisphere-wide military action, and the War Department's preference for the "quarter-hemisphere" strategy which concentrated active defense activities north of a line drawn from the Galapagos Islands through the Atlantic "bulge" of Brazil. The Board's limited charter represented an "elegant and emasculating compromise"[13] which would carry over into the formal Inter-American Military System of the Cold War.

As the Second World War progressed, the Board coordinated a hemispheric defense against a steadily receding threat of Axis power projection. Additionally, through expanding wartime cooperation in military, economic and counterespionage matters, the "good neighbor" of the 30s became progressively more heavy-handed in Latin America. Tensions arose as Latins suspected the U.S. of attempting to retain wartime air bases in Brazil, Ecuador, and outside of the Canal Zone in Panama, and of practically excluding Latin Americans from consultations over the formation of the United Nations. Additionally, many Latin American countries felt that the United States had failed to deliver Lend-Lease military articles to the degree they had anticipated, and which they felt were just compensation for the low prices afforded the Allies for the region's strategic materials during the war.

A special Conference on Problems of War and Peace was convened in Mexico City in February of 1945 to address many of the residual problems from wartime cooperation, and to anticipate needs for the coming peace. Technically, the conference was considered to be outside of the Inter-American System as it did not include Argentina, which still had not declared war on the Axis powers. Nonetheless, many of its resolutions prepared the way for later meetings in Rio de Janeiro and Bogotá at which the formal instruments of the Inter-American System would be signed. Held against the backdrop of ongoing negotiations to establish the United Nations, the conference's agenda included consideration of "problems of international organization for the maintenance of peace and security" as well as "the economic and social problems of the Americas." The United States approached the conference cautiously, avoiding any commitments which might complicate the upcoming San Francisco UN conference. Several Latin American countries, on the the other hand, were eager to consolidate a common defense commitment in order to prevent extra-hemispheric penetration and to assure U.S. military aid for their armed forces. Ironically, Mexico and Uruguay -- two countries which would later obstruct multilateral defense cooperation -- each proposed resolutions for the creation of a permanent military organ for the defense of the hemisphere. The U.S. saw such an organ as a distraction from the war effort at that time, and pressed for an extension of the Defense Board's mandate instead.

The most significant decisions taken by delegates dealt with "Reciprocal Assistance and Solidarity" (Resolution VIII), known as the "Act of Chapultepec", and "Reorganization, Consolidation and Strengthening of the Inter-American System" (Resolution IX). These resolutions ultimately were the basis for the negotiation of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance of Rio de Janeiro **(IATRA)**, which was signed in 1947 by 19 nations, and the subsequent transformation of the Pan American Union and System of Inter-American Conferences into the Organization of American States at the 1948 Conference of Bogotá. Thus, it can be said that the formal structure of the current Inter-American Military System was born at Chapultepec, at a time when a U.S. wartime victory was imminent and thus her influence and Latin desire to sign on with a "winner" were at their peak. However, by the time of the Rio Conference in 1947 and the Bogotá Conference of 1948, large scale shifts in the attitudes of the U.S. and Latin Americans had taken hold. The U.S., foreseeing a do-or-die

struggle over Europe and Asia with the Soviets, wished to secure its southern flank by means of a formal and binding collective defense treaty. Many Latins, on the other hand, were becoming concerned over the increasing militarization of the Inter-American System and the North-South relationship. While favoring a defense pact, they hoped to link it to an economic commitment from the U.S. which would address the gross social inequities in the region, in effect duplicating the Marshall Plan's effect on European recovery. Additionally, the rapid intensification of the Cold War awakened criticism from many Latins that the Rio Treaty would commit the Americas to go to war to defend U.S. interests abroad, robbing Latin American nations of their sovereignty.[14]

During negotiations on the formation of the Organization of American States at Bogotá, an attempt was made to follow through on resolutions taken in Mexico City by replacing the IADB with a permanent military planning organ within the OAS Secretariat. This effort failed, largely due to the complete about-face of Mexico between 1945 and 1948 with respect to a standing hemispheric defense organ. As another "elegant but emasculating" compromise, it was instead decided to provide in the OAS Charter (Articles 64 and 67) for an Advisory Defense Committee which would only be convened at the call of the Rio Treaty's Organ of Consultation (i.e., the Permanent Council of the OAS General Assembly.) The IADB would serve as the Secretariat of the committee in the event it were to be called into session, but otherwise had no link to the newly created hemispheric organization. This effectively isolated continuous military cooperation from routine OAS coordination, and limited any such activities outside of the IADB to crisis periods in the context of an act of aggression. Since the inception of the OAS, the Advisory Defense Committee has never been convened. Additionally, repeated attempts by the IADB to formalize its relationship with the OAS Special Committee on Hemispheric Security have been studied and debated, but have consistently failed to garner the required two-thirds majority in the Permanent Council and in the General Assembly in order to be established.

Nonetheless, a number of ongoing coordination mechanisms became active over the years via the Rio Treaty framework and the actions of the Inter-american Defense Board. Between 1947 and 1969 the Rio Treaty was invoked on fifteen occasions, all but one of which dealt with tensions between signatory countries rather than extra-hemispheric challenges. The Board, consisting of a Council of

Delegates, General Staff, Secretariat, and the Inter-American Defense College, provided observers to several OAS-sponsored peace missions and of late has responded to specific requests for assistance in coordinating humanitarian demining and constructing an inventory of hemispheric confidence and security building measures. The Inter-American Defense College, instituted in 1962 in Washington, serves as a senior service college-level training institution for officers of the region, and has regularly included civilian officials from several countries. While the Board has found little active support in the OAS over the years, the College has been extolled as worthy of continued support and expansion.

Historically, there has been a continuing tension between internal and external security requirements of the Latin American members of the Organization of American States. Equipped with relatively modern U.S. surplus weapons and equipment under wartime Lend-Lease and the Mutual Security Pact(s) of the early 50s, most of the militaries of the region underwent significant modernization and professionalization during the following decade, consolidating their dominant position of organizational discipline and effectiveness in their respective societies. For historical as well as economic reasons, it was natural for many governments to rely upon their militaries for the maintenance of internal order in the face of burgeoning insurgencies and urban revolutionary movements. This tendency was encouraged by the U.S. Departments of State and Defense as the doctrine of Internal Defense and Development (**IDAD**) evolved during the early 60s, and police and paramilitary organs were trained alongside traditional military formations.

The United States pressed for a greater role of the region's militaries in supporting not only the suppression of revolutionary *focos*, but in assisting governments in civic action programs designed to foster national development. By linking the IDAD concept to the Inter-American Military System and the Alliance for Progress, the U.S. promoted an institutional shift towards multilateralism during the 60s. However, since the Military Assistance Program, along with its training component, continued to be administered on a bilateral basis with each country, the U.S. retained enormous leverage over the system. It used this leverage to influence military governments to support U.S. diplomacy and military initiatives in each country on a bilateral basis while touting solidarity with a multilateral agenda which was not always apparent to our Latin American allies.

The U.S. promoted training of Latin American officers in U.S. military schools; the formation of subregional coordination centers such as CONDECA (Defense Council of Central America), the establishment of the Inter-American Defense College, the formation of regional joint operations centers, ongoing conferences of the heads of the respective armed services of each country, and a standby Inter-American Peace Force. However, the balloon burst on many of these initiatives as the Alliance for Progress withered away due to lack of congressional support, and military regimes became progressively less acceptable as partners in the Inter-American System. Many of these regimes were prone to employ both police and the Armed Forces to counter subversion in ways which involved significant abuses of due process and basic human rights. In the worst cases, these abuses extended to widespread murders, torture, and disappearances, often perpetuating petty political and economic rivalries. The program of assistance which was the quid pro quo for Latin American acceptance of a hemispheric defense pact -- and U.S. access to bases and strategic materials -- was continually attacked in the U.S. Congress as "support for dictators".

During the counterinsurgency campaigns of the 60s and 70s, those militaries which were most successful in defeating revolutionaries were generally those which adopted the most ruthless and extralegal methods. Cases that stand out are those of Argentina, Guatemala, Uruguay, and Chile in the wake of the military coup which overthrew the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende. Coupled with the preponderance of military regimes, often sustained by violent means, throughout the hemisphere in the 70s and 80s, as well as the economic failures of the majority of those regimes, these abuses discredited the military institutions of many countries along with the program of U.S. military aid which had sustained them.[15] This tendency, in concert with the bitter legacy of OAS rubber-stamping of the 1965 U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic and the Carter Administration's decision to cut aid to authoritarian regimes in the region contributed to the progressive decline of the Inter-American Military System.

The Dominican Intervention might seem to represent a triumph for the Inter-American Military System in that a multinational force under OAS auspices was approved by the 10th Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers in May of 1965. However, the fact that U.S. combat forces had

already occupied the country unilaterally and ultimately outnumbered the Latin American contingents by a factor of almost ten to one showed that with the exception of Brazil, Latin participation was token at best. Also, the vitriol that had been expended in the OAS debate cycled between three factions: the U.S. and staunch supporter Brazil, the furious opposition, led by Mexico, and a third faction which viewed the U.S. intervention as a fait accompli, and multilateralization as the lesser evil than letting the U.S. unilateral intervention stand. Even Brazil, stinging from the criticism of Chile, Mexico and Uruguay for its role as the U.S. "faithful ally", later perceived and resented a lack of U.S. appreciation for its support.

The growth of "military reformism" and the Doctrine of National Security and Development in several Latin American countries during the 1960s was the product of U.S. promotion of IDAD and a growing social conscience among military officers. This social awareness is attributed to their middle class, rather than oligarchic self-image, and their impatience with status quo social and economic policies in the face of Marxist influence.[16] The Brazilian and Peruvian military governments of the 60s and early 70s led a wave of military coups with ambitious socioeconomic agendas which could not be implemented in an environment of instability provoked by subversion. The receptivity to dependency theory among adherents of the military reform movement engendered a strong anti-U.S. tendency within IAMS institutions. Further attempts to reform the OAS Charter and formalize the IADB's relationship to the OAS died an inglorious death on repeated occasions after 1965; the permanent aspects of the IAMS such as the Defense Board and the Rio Treaty came under continuous attack by the more leftist Latin American governments during the 70s as instruments of U.S. domination of Latin America.[17] This tendency was aggravated by the Carter Administration's policies with respect to human rights and authoritarianism by cutting military aid in the late 70s.

However, the final nails in the coffin for the credibility among most Latin Americans of the Inter-American Military System and especially the Rio Treaty were driven as a result of U.S. unilateral actions: support of Great Britain in the 1982 South Atlantic conflict over the Falkland Islands, military support to anti-communist Central American forces in the 80s, and armed interventions in Grenada in 1983 and in Panama in 1989. Of course, the fact that Argentina committed the original aggression

which set off the Falklands conflict -- as confirmed by UN Security Council Resolution -- is conveniently ignored by those who argue that the British response should have triggered a hemispheric stand alongside the Galtieri government. The United States invaded Grenada at the request of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States; it attempted for two years to mobilize OAS support for action against the Noriega regime during the Panama crisis without much success, and ultimately acted militarily when the killing of an off-duty naval officer by the Panama Defense Force indicated that an intolerable threshold of risk to the 40,000 U.S. citizens living in Panama had been exceeded. The Latin American reaction however, asked if the U.S. would support a European power in an attack on a Latin American ally, and invaded sovereign countries in the Caribbean and Central America at whim, of what use is the Inter-American System in deterring aggression by the strong against the weak?

New Challenges for Hemispheric Security

Clearly, a unified perception of threats to stability and the means by which to address them have marked the only occasions of successful implementation of the Inter-American Military System in the past.[18] Key examples are cooperation during World War II, the response to the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the initial phase of counterinsurgency responses in the early 60s. Hence, any recourse to a formal multilateral framework for the future must build on hemispheric consensus on threats to stability and appropriate roles for state forces in addressing those threats.

Herein lies a significant obstacle to the reinvigoration of the Inter-American Military System. While many noted Latin American analysts have noted the broadening of the region's security interests to non-traditional areas and to encompass multiple state institutions,[19] there still exists a strong bias against both multilateralism in general and the encroachment of military influence into areas of primarily civilian concern.[20] Some countries continue to view the Inter-American Military System in all its manifestations as a tool of U.S. hegemony. They also view multilateralism as essentially contradictory to the principle of non-intervention, despite assurances contained in the OAS Charter.[21] Mexico, in

particular, has consistently opposed or watered down OAS resolutions intended to improve collective action in the spheres of security, sustainment of democracy, judicial standards, and human rights.

Nonetheless, economic and social progress, the stability of democratic regimes, and national reconciliation following years of ideological and class-inspired violence now dominate the concerns of the regions' governments.[22] Most Latin American and Caribbean countries perceive serious threats to their integrity and stability as originating in the wide discrepancies in wealth and income which hold their populations in an endless cycle of poverty and social need. Despite free market reforms and democratization, the region suffers the highest degrees of inequality with respect to income distribution, literacy, and health in the world. Over 60 percent of income is destined to the wealthiest 20 percent of the population; the poorest 40 percent receive only 10 per cent of the region's annual income.[23] These inequalities provide the fuel for potential civil disturbances, with attendant demands on security forces to react in ways that can be overly repressive, especially in countries with ill-prepared police, judicial and penal institutions.

Those conditions are exacerbated in some countries by the effects of continuing insurgency (frequently dependent on international criminal financing), transnational criminal activity such as narcotrafficking, terrorism, illegal migration, trading in stolen vehicles, weapons and other contraband, and by environmental degradation or natural disasters. In each of these areas, civil organs throughout Latin America and the Caribbean are generally inadequate to the enforcement and remediation tasks at hand. The militaries, in many cases, with their logistical support capabilities, their highly centralized organizational structures, and their unique information processing capacity, are positioned to respond more effectively.

With respect to interstate conflict, one would hope that the current environment would obviate the potential for future armed confrontations between the nations of the hemisphere. Nonetheless, scholars such as Wolf Grabendorff and David Mares have shown that contrary to commonly held perceptions, Latin America has been the scene of numerous militarized disputes in the past (over 200 since 1900),[24] and that continuing tensions between many of the region's countries indicate the potential at least for military posturing as a tool of negotiation in the future.[25] Ten or more unresolved

territorial disputes lurk beneath the surface in the hemisphere, constituting the most likely spark for some interstate conflict in the future.[26] The bloody dispute between Ecuador and Peru of January 1995 -- as well as the lack of substantive diplomatic progress which characterized immediate post-conflict negotiations on the underlying border issue -- is a sharp reminder to advocates of the "democratic peace theory" that enduring conflicts still exist in the hemisphere and that fledgling democracies are not immune to resorting to the use of armed force to improve their respective negotiating positions.

It is therefore likely that most of the nations of the hemisphere will continue to view the maintenance of military forces as a necessary component of the state and expression of sovereignty, with a primary focus on the protection of territorial integrity.[27] Logically, the structure of these forces should be determined by the nature of their respective relations with immediate neighbors, the calculus of deterrence, and the degree to which those forces should participate in other missions of importance to the stability of the state. In relatively advanced countries such as Chile, civilian institutions are adequate to meeting those needs beyond the traditional role of the military in guaranteeing territorial integrity. In the most underdeveloped countries such as Nicaragua and Honduras, severely constrained government budgets and lack of civilian infrastructure and expertise argue for incorporation of the armed forces in maintaining internal order and contributing to development efforts. The challenge for these states is to structure such support in ways that respect civilian primacy and which do not prevent the evolution of appropriate nonmilitary organs as the state develops.

U.S. Interests, Multilateralism, and Institutional Reform

The United States has articulated its overriding interests in the Americas as the consolidation of democratic governance and free markets, within a framework of respect for law and human rights.[28] Capitalizing on the opportunity presented by the overwhelming transition to democratic rule which has characterized the region, the U.S. has structured a strategy of engagement with the nations of Latin

America to meet these challenges through broad cooperation in both civilian and military sectors. The respective militaries are treated as positive institutions within society, with the potential for contributing to both external and internal security requirements as well as to nation-building missions in coordination with civilian ministries. In pursuing this strategy, the U.S. continues to emphasize the use of bilateral programs while promoting the ideal of multilateralism via the OAS and the Presidential Summit /Defense Ministerial processes. This strategy becomes problematic both internationally and domestically with respect to those countries in which the militaries have amassed records of serious human rights abuses or continue to exert a disproportionate influence in political affairs and economic activity. This can contribute to the impression that the U.S. is propping up some Latin American militaries which do not appear to have turned their backs on past unsavory roles in the dynamics of civil society in order to advance her traditional security interests.

The United States Southern Command is responsible for implementing the military portion of this strategy for all Latin American and Caribbean nations save Mexico, and has developed programs for military-to-military contacts and combined exercises which have grown from bilateral initiatives to recurring multilateral programs. For instance, command post exercises dealing with peacekeeping, disaster relief, and counternarcotics scenarios are conducted each year with clusters of Central American, Caribbean, and South American nations. Additionally, hemispheric conferences and orientation visits, incorporating both military and civilian officials, have addressed topics as varied as international peacekeeping, civil-military relations, integrated security strategies, and human rights. However, this multilateral agenda is executed largely due to U.S. initiative, and is not related to any formal oversight or particular contributions by the Organization of American States or the Inter-American Defense Board. Paradoxically, this implies that the U.S. military is more interested in multilateralism in security issues than are those very multilateral institutions which comprise the Inter-American System --a complete reversal of the pattern at the birth of that system.

Even as the U.S. enjoys unquestioned status as the only true global superpower, however, some Latin American scholars have recognized that her influence is not limitless, and that globalization of third world interests forces the United States "...to think in terms of an international order in which the

agenda cannot be imposed unilaterally but which must be operationalized in a shared manner."[29] Growing recognition of this fact can serve to emphasize the advantages of an engagement strategy and reduce domestic and international aversion to a constructive relationship between the region's militaries. Linking engagement initiatives to international institutions would serve to advance U.S. policy goals, reduce Latin American distrust, and would enhance the image of cooperative defense relationships by placing them within the context of the OAS's overall approach to supporting member states' programs to meet current challenges.

Reorienting the Hemispheric Security System

The traditional elements of the Inter-American Military System have been the OAS Charter and the American Treaty of Pacific Settlement of Disputes (Pact of Bogotá,1948), the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance of Rio de Janeiro (1947), the Inter-American Defense Board (1942) and College (1961), bilateral agreements to implement the Military Assistance Program of the United States with most of the nations of the hemisphere, and the totality of resolutions and declarations dealing with hemispheric security issues adopted by the OAS General Assembly, Permanent Council, and Meetings of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. In the aggregate, they constitute an impressive array of cooperative measures to promote peace and stability in the hemisphere.

As stated previously, the OAS has resisted a formalization of the existing structure of the the Inter-American Military System. This is largely the product of long-held fears of U.S. manipulation of the system for its own security purposes, and the consensus-based voting procedures in the Permanent Council , the newly-formed Council on Integral Development (**CIDI**)[30] and the General Assembly which ensure that collective action on any matter will be a watered-down compromise acceptable to two-thirds of the membership. It is also a product of the tension in civil-military relations which is shared by delegates from all of the member countries to one degree or another. In interviews with U.S. and Latin American diplomats associated with OAS programs, one is struck by the consistent fear of "militarization" of OAS institutions which they feel would inevitably ensue from regular military

representation on committees, panels, commissions or boards. Accordingly, the primary means by which the OAS as a body deals with security is by way of resolutions of the General Assembly. Since 1990, some forty-four resolutions have been taken with respect to security issues, the overwhelming majority of which have dealt with confidence and security building measures and humanitarian demining. 31

A 1995 working paper of the General Secretariat of the Permanent Council lays out an agenda for reform of the OAS, and contains a section dealing with security issues and narcotrafficking.[32] It emphasizes steps to be taken to promote transparency, confidence and security building measures, and the integration of military and police efforts with respect to narcotics trafficking. A new civilian organ in the Permanent Council -- the Permanent Committee on Hemispheric Security -- serves as the main organism for coordinating security issues at the political level.

The Permanent Committee on Hemispheric Security

In 1991, the OAS constituted a working group (later denominated the Special Committee) for Hemispheric Security under the chairmanship of Hernán Patiño Mayer, Ambassador and Permanent representative of Argentina to the OAS. By General Assembly resolution in 1995, the committee was given permanent status in the Secretariat of the Permanent Council. The committee chairman's initial report identified a "crisis and obsolescence of the Hemispheric Security System" in the wake of the Cold War, and recommended the rejection of the unilateral (i.e., U.S-based) and military definition of security concepts which had ruled previously in favor of a broader, consensual, and development-based context.[33] After identifying shared hemispheric interests in promoting peace, human rights, democratic governance, economic and social development, and mechanisms for hemispheric integration, the committee underscored specific threats to those interests: extreme poverty, runaway population growth, inequitable distribution of wealth, barriers to free trade, environmental damage, narcotics trafficking,

terrorism, accumulation of weapons, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In meeting these threats, the committee suggests a system of cooperative rather than collective security; the purpose of the system would be to prevent rather than to respond to aggression. The tactic would be to inhibit a member state's capability and potential for aggression. Thus, the committee recommended establishing regimes for denuclearization and elimination of weapons of mass destruction, reducing the size of armed forces, preparing for organized international response to aggression (as a deterrent), agreements on safeguards and verification of military technology developments, transparency in arms transfers, and the generation of mutual confidence measures. In this last light, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was proposed as a likely model.

The Confidence and Security-Building Measures regime shows great promise for increasing OAS capacity to reduce the potential for interstate conflict. Drawing on the Declaration of Santiago and General Assembly Resolution 1179 (May 23, 1992), each member state is urged to support general conventions on arms limitation and to share information through United Nations and OAS channels on defense expenditures, arms transfers, and military movements. By April 15th of each year, member states are to provide a report to the Permanent Council on their progress in applying specic measures. The response to date has been uneven, but a growing data base on these items , accessible to all member states, provides an unprecedented degree of transparency on the military policies of the countries of the region.

The committee also devoted attention to civil-military relations by emphasizing the need to orient the region's smaller militaries on traditional military missions -- territorial sovereignty and international peacekeeping -- and their consequent isolation from political activism and maintenance of internal order. However, they did not completely rule out use of the armed forces for internal missions as they recognize the possible need for constitutional authorities to use employ them "...in extreme and therefore exceptional circumstances...to neutralize non-traditional aggressions."[34] With respect to the Inter-American Defense Board, the committee recognized a need to formalize the Board's relationship to the OAS and drafted a resolution to that effect for the consideration of the General Assembly. For reasons stated previously, that draft resolution remains to be acted upon.

An incident which occurred at the Inter-American Defense College in 1992 provides an anecdotal illustration of the difficult road to be traveled in the civil-military and national contexts if consensus is to be achieved on multilateral approaches to security. During a seminar presented by several members of the OAS Working Group in which many of the points outlined in the committee report were briefed, a senior officer from a country which had undergone a particularly brutal civil war accused the committee of producing a blueprint not for security, but for the reduction of Latin American militaries in order to render them impotent, thus eliminating their voices as institutions in national societies. A spokesman for the Working Group responded hotly by accusing the militaries throughout the region of manufacturing conflict and imaginary threats in order to maintain bloated structures which were only capable of oppressing the poor and intimidating weak civilian governments in order guarantee their privileged position in society, at the expense of needed social and economic reforms.

Clearly, mistrust is a multidimensional obstacle to effective security cooperation and institutional reform. However, the Hemispheric Security Committee within the Permanent Council represents an opportunity to settle several problems with respect to the relationship between the Inter-American Defense Board and the OAS. Granting the Chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board a non-voting seat on the committee and acceptance of GA Resolution 1240's language defining the advisory tasks of the Board in areas beyond collective defense against aggression would settle not only the roles and relationships issue, but the civilian oversight issue as well.

Modern applicability of Rio Treaty

While lacking in credibility for historical reasons, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance continues to be of potential use in the post-Cold War institutional and political environment. The Treaty has long been considered primarily as a bulwark against aggression from outside the Western Hemisphere -- hence the common perception of inapplicability following the demise of the Soviet Union. In actuality, however, the bulk of the treaty's language was carefully crafted in order to provide a mechanism for responding to conflicts between American states. In 1947, the U.S. saw this

language as a means to stabilize its southern flank, permitting it to concentrate attention and resources on the East-West confrontation. Many Latins saw this language as a means of protecting the smallest states from their larger neighbors, and especially as a hedge against U.S. interventionism. The OAS Charter adopted subsequently in Bogota codified the consultation process in the event of aggression, no matter what the source, cementing the treaty to the peaceful resolution of disputes as well as to the requirements for linkage between regional organizations and the United Nations in case of threats to stability and peace.

While providing a framework for collective response within the general guidelines of the United Nations Charter, the treaty also avoided specifying structures for enforcement, command and control, or even systematic planning for military operations. As such, it provided a basis for collective response without obligating the signatories to dedicated standing forces or command structures which would later characterize formal alliances such as NATO. Article 20 of the Treaty stipulates that sanctions approved by the Organ of Consultation (originally, the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs but now the OAS Permanent Council) are binding upon the signatories, but that no nation can be required to provide forces for military action without its consent. [35]

Since the disappearance of the Axis threat to the Americas in World War II, the rationale for collective defense of the hemisphere against external threats has been consistently questioned. On several occasions, Latin American nations have succeeded in amending the treaty[36] to limit U.S. ability to invoke it for attacks on a nation outside the area of immediate geographical importance to the Latin states, and to modify voting requirements in ways more congenial to the majority of small states. By the San José conference of 1975, a new Article 11 calling for the guarantee of economic security via a special treaty was adopted over U.S. opposition. The strong support elicited by the amendment's promoters (Mexico, Peru and Panama) served notice to the United States that the consensus on security threats which gave rise to the treaty had evaporated, and that its future role as the keystone of the Inter-American alliance had been significantly weakened.

The primary case in which the treaty could have been invoked following the Cold War is that of the Peru-Ecuador conflict of January, 1995. However, the OAS preferred to leave resolution of that

conflict within the terms of an existing agreement between the two parties and four Guarantor Nations (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States) which dated back to 1942. As a result, the Guarantors brokered a new peace agreement which employed a Military Observer Mission (MOMEP) to disengage and demobilize the forces of each party, providing an environment in which negotiations could address the underlying border dispute. The OAS did not even take up the issue of the conflict in order to avoid complicating the efforts of the Guarantor Nations. Neither side invoked the Rio Treaty, recognizing the inherent pitfalls of requesting a hemispheric response to purported aggression in an area in dispute; Ecuador had already activated the Guarantors' involvement during the buildup to crisis, and Peru had always based its claims on the bilateral 1942 agreement. For the Peruvians, OAS involvement would undermine the coherence of their legal position with respect to the Rio Protocol of 1942. Hence, they rejected any mediation or arbitration outside of the protocol framework.

Nonetheless, the much-maligned Rio Treaty in fact remains an excellent framework for structuring multilateral defense cooperation. Despite conventional wisdom to the contrary, the treaty is not only oriented against extra-hemispheric (and therefore, non-existent) threats. The language adopted by the drafters -- and ratified by the governments of the signatories -- was carefully crafted to avoid a specific definition of the source of aggression threatening a member of the alliance. It states simply that an "armed attack against one or more of them...will be considered an armed attack against them all." It also provides that "...in the case of a conflict between two or more American states" the first objective of collective action will be the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum*.", and prescribes certain sanctions which fall far short of military intervention.[37] Hence, it serves not only as a framework for common defense of the hemisphere but also as a guarantee in the case of aggression by any member against another. [38] From the Latin perspective, this can serve as a deterrent to what they consider to be the most frequent form of aggression in the region -- U.S. interventionism.

Additionally, the wording of respective responsibilities of the members is carefully crafted to permit flexibility in response. These "safeguards" were so attractive in both the unilateral and multilateral contexts that they were appropriated as the basis for the language of the Treaty of Washington which established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949.[39]

Declaration of Santiago/Resolution 1080

In June of 1991 the OAS General Assembly issued the "Santiago Commitment to Democracy and the Renewal of the Inter-American System" , a statement which, in conjunction with OAS Resolution 1080, recommits member states to the principles of the Inter-American System and to specific procedures to be taken in the event of the interruption of democratically-elected governance in any member state.[40] The resolution has been invoked on four occasions since 1991: in response to the military coup in Haiti, an attempted coup by Paraguay's armed forces in 1992, the *autogolpe* of Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori that same year, and the attempt by Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano to duplicate Fujimori's actions in his own country in 1993. In each case, diplomatic pressure and the threat of further sanctions were instrumental in signaling hemispheric condemnation of anti-democratic actions. In the Peruvian and Haitian cases, this was less than conclusive. However, the moral force of multilateral action was not diluted in bipolar ideological terms, as frequently had been the case during the Cold War. In Haiti, the OAS sanctions regime during the period of military rule assisted in setting the stage for later intervention. For historical reasons discussed earlier, the OAS as a body did not support the U.S.-led multinational intervention in 1995, preferring to continue the sanctions regime.

IADB relationship to the OAS

The original mission statement of the Inter-American Defense Board is derived from Resolution XXXIV of the Ninth International Conference of American Republics held in 1948 in Bogotá. That resolution, as amended in 1949 and 1957, was transcribed literally into the original regulation governing the Board, and stated that its mission was to "...act as the organ of preparation and recommendation for

the collective defense of the American Continent against aggression, and to carry out , in addition to the advisory functions within its competence, any similar functions ascribed to it by the Advisory Defense Committee, (if ever convened) established in Article 64 of the Charter of the Organization of American States."[41] As the referenced committee has never been constituted, the Board for many years continued to limit its work to collective defense planning, except when requested to perform special tasks by the General Assembly. Despite numerous attempts by the Board to solidify its relationship to the larger organ, it has been kept at arm's length. One problem is legal in nature, in that the Board's 25 members do not include a number of the 35 member states of the OAS. Canada, for example, obtained full OAS membership in 1990 but has declined to join the Board citing its lack of permanent civilian political oversight, lack of a well-defined mandate, and lack of resources and mechanisms for accountability.[42] Another problem lies in the continuous opposition of Mexico to fortifying multilateral military cooperation out of nationalistic concerns for the sanctity of the non-intervention principle.

The creation of the Permanent Committee on Hemispheric Security would seem to provide the logical avenue to formalize the Board's function and relationship. The Chairman of the Board has been invited by the Committee Chairman to sit as an observer at Committee meetings, and the Board has reported to the committee with respect to ongoing humanitarian demining and an inventory of Confidence and Security-Building Measures in the hemisphere. Resolution 1240 of the XXIII General Assembly (Managua, June 1993) provided for an expanded role for the Board on a provisional basis, pending a decision on formalizing the relationship. That resolution permits the Board to respond to calls from the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and the Permanent Council for "...technical-military advisory services and consultancy work that cannot be operational."[43] This resolution eliminates the need to convoke the Advisory Defense Council in order to mobilize the Board's resources for work outside of the realm of continental defense planning, but strictly limits the Board to non-operational tasks.

While this provisional mission provides a basis for exploiting the Board's technical expertise for contingencies outside of its traditional hemispheric defense planning role, it is neither permanent nor specific. A 1995 attempt by the Board to interpret specific tasks within this broadened mission was

immediately attacked by Mexico as an arrogation of functions which were beyond the Board's juridical competency. As a result, the status quo reigns supreme with respect to its relationship with the OAS.

International Peacekeeping/Humanitarian Assistance

Many countries of Latin America have contributed forces on a reimbursable basis to United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world. Argentina has sent observers to Cyprus, Croatia, Mozambique, and the Middle East; Brazil to various African countries and the former Yugoslav republics; Chile to Cambodia, Kashmir, and Kuwait; and Uruguay to the Middle East, Cambodia and Mozambique. Within the Americas, contingents from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Venezuela and Colombia have participated in peacekeeping, disaster relief, and demining projects from Haiti to Suriname, though seldom under the auspices of the OAS. While this is a positive trend in a violent and unstable world, those who exalt peacekeeping as a new mission with which to justify the continued existence of Latin American military establishments fail to recognize the many pitfalls of reorganizing around a role which is not the preeminent rationale for a sovereign country to maintain armed forces.[44]

Given the lack of any provision in the OAS Charter for the use of force absent the invocation of the Rio Treaty, hemispheric peacekeeping contributions generally must take ad hoc form, or be coordinated through the United Nations. Futile attempts to form a standing peacekeeping force in the OAS were undertaken during the early 1960s when the United States promoted the idea during the apogee days of the IAMS. Seen by the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department as a potential deterrent to intra-hemispheric conflict and as a rationale for a military assistance program which would be more palatable to Congress than "aid to dictators", the concept was to serve as the lynch pin of the system by putting teeth into the Rio Treaty while minimizing the Latins' fears of unilateral intervention by the U.S. The concept called for the force to be tied via the Inter-American Defense Board to the Permanent Council, thus strengthening the Board's role and solving the relationship issue with the OAS. The Defense Department gave lukewarm support to the concept, fearing multilateral control of

significant military resources and rejecting the idea of using the Board to distribute Military Assistance Program funds. However, the idea ultimately foundered on the objections of many Latin American countries who felt the force would be an instrument of U.S. policy, and that by giving it legal status the OAS would become "militarized" on the NATO pattern.

In the wake of the Cold War, with the United States in an even more preponderant position militarily, many of the same objections reign. Though the U.S. offered over $50 million in 1994 Foreign Military Financing Program (FMFP) credits to nations which would agree to participate in the Haiti Multinational Force -- at a time when FMFP for Latin America had largely dried up -- few countries outside of the Caribbean were willing to make the commitment. A 1996 initiative from U.S. Southern Command to encourage the designation of units for international peacekeeping and special consideration for training and military grants also met with a lukewarm response despite the critical needs of several of the region's militaries for logistical support. Nonetheless, a number of the countries which declined the bilateral U.S. offer did in fact participate in the UN mission which succeeded the Multinational Force (MNF) in Haiti. This underscores the clear preference among Latins for using a recognized international organization as the keystone of such an effort rather than any bilateral U.S. initiative involving military intervention.

There is also the matter of a clear preference for civilian rather than military reaction forces in such cases. During the sixth plenary session of the XXVII OAS General Assembly in 1997, a resolution was adopted in response to Argentine President Carlos Menem's 1993 call for an international corps of volunteers to respond to humanitarian emergencies. The OAS resolved to study the "White Helmets" concept, and created a Special Committee in the Permanent Council for that purpose. The "White Helmets" would consist of national cohorts of medical personnel, engineers, or other technical specialists to be dispatched under the control of the United Nations or the OAS to the site of a humanitarian disaster when requested by the affected state. In reviewing the conceptual documents regarding the initiative, the absence of any linkage to military considerations is striking, despite the fact that a humanitarian crisis requiring international intervention would inevitably involve questions of security. It makes little sense to concentrate humanitarian response capabilities which

would be essential in conflict scenarios akin to Haiti, Rwanda, Bosnia, or Somalia in organizations that would be isolated from coordination with military agencies, where many of the same capabilities are maintained in organic readiness. Therefore, an opportunity exists within the OAS as it develops the concept to keep in mind a mechanism to link, if only in a coordinating sense, the "White Helmets" initiative to IADB programs to plan for humanitarian assistance.

Multilateral Mechanisms for Consultation

A series of meetings of the heads of the armies of the hemisphere (the Conference of American Armies) has been held without interruption since the early 1960s. They began at U.S. initiative within the Rio Treaty framework, and originally were tightly controlled by the United States. In the mid 1960s, however, several Latin American service chiefs demanded that the conference host be rotated, and that the agendas reflect broader interests. As a result, the conference has become an important multilateral event, with a standing international secretariat. These meetings provide a forum for discussion of topics of professional interest and as such serve an important confidence-building function. They promote transparency and contribute to personal relationships between senior officers of various countries which can be exploited to reduce tensions in time of crisis and routinize information sharing on both multilateral and bilateral bases. In the past, the Conference frequently covered significant political-military issues, to include attempts by Mexico, Chile and Peru to introduce significant reforms into the Inter-American Military System and the OAS Charter via CAA resolutions.

Similar meetings for the heads of the region's air forces (CONJEFAMER) and navies (Inter-American Naval Conference) serve the same purpose for the sister services. Additionally, The Inter-american System for Air Force Cooperation (SICOFFAA) and the Inter-American Naval Transmission Network (IANTN) are important means of coordinating military air and maritime traffic, as well as Search and Rescue operations. These meetings, unlike the Army conferences, have concentrated on technical and professional issues, avoiding political subjects.

However, some multilateral forums by their very success are deemed to have diminished even further the viability of the OAS and the Inter-American System.[45] The Miami Summit Process, Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations, and the Williamsburg Defense Ministerial process have all been conducted as U.S. multilateral initiatives outside of the OAS framework. Their agendas have been prepared in the State Department, the initial meetings were held in U.S. cities, and there is every indication that the U.S. favors institutionalizing the Summit and Defense Ministerials, even if Free Trade negotiations have stalled due to the failure of the administration to secure Fast Track authority from Congress. For an ongoing process, some standing secretariat will be necessary, and it must be multilateral in nature if it is to avoid duplicating the animosity generated by U.S. preponderance during the early years of the Inter-American System. Yet, a multilateral bureaucracy already exists in the OAS which is capable of absorbing this function, across the spectrum of functional issues which might be addressed. It makes great sense for the Summit and Defense Ministerial processes to be incorporated into or linked to OAS programs; this could be done by moving the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) into the OAS Secretariat, or by an informal process by which summit declarations are forwarded to the Secretary General for information and implementation as appropriate. A similar move could be made with respect to the Defense Ministerials by using the Standing Committee on Hemispheric Defense as the secretariat.

Subregional Military Cooperation

As a reaction against U.S. military dominance and the general lack of practical utility of traditional mechanisms in the Inter-American System, a rising tendency for subregional military cooperation has been observed in recent years. Traditional balance-of-power competitors such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru have undertaken bilateral staff talks and have increased the number of officers attending senior professional courses in other countries. Argentina and Brazil have conducted

combined naval and air exercises; Brazil has taken the lead to establish a system of cooperation between the armed forces of the MERCOSUR countries, a logical extension of the progressive economic integration of the member countries. Central American military chiefs have established an annual conference process, and for the first time since the early 70s have conducted a joint/combined exercise without U.S. support and participation. In the Caribbean, the Regional Security System (RSS) of the OECS states provides a means of cooperating on security issues and minimizing individual states' defense expenditures. These trends are positive, but could be more beneficial if formally attached to the Inter-American System even in some loose fashion. Again, the Committee for Hemispheric Security could serve as a clearing house for agreements or programs undertaken by these subregional organisms.

Counternarcotics Coordination

A counternarcotics strategy for the hemisphere is a contentious issue, aggravated by Latin perceptions of the U.S. interdiction effort as interventionist and and even hypocritical, given the constancy of demand for drugs in the United States.[46] As the cycle of supply and demand feeds steadily increased production, the U.S. has mobilized military agencies in contravention of a long-held aversion to their use in criminal enforcement roles. In promoting similar policies in the drug-producing countries of the hemisphere, the U.S. has encountered strong resistance from civilian and military sectors, both of which are eager to prevent a reinsertion of the militaries into civil enforcement as well as their exposure to the inevitable corruption associated with combating drugs.

Nonetheless, required tasks on land, sea and air clearly exceed the capabilities and functions of civilian police forces. Conducting surveillance of air trafficking routes and interdicting an aircraft suspected of transporting drugs are clearly military tasks. The same can be said for high seas interdiction and for conducting helicopter-borne assaults on cocaine laboratories guarded by narcotraffickers armed with automatic weapons and sophisticated explosives. Military intelligence systems can be employed against the advanced communications and data-processing systems available to the drug cartels. Military transport can be provided to traditional police organizations to get them to

the scene of criminal activity. However, the military is not equipped to deal with the processing of evidence and detainees to modern juridical standards. Therefore, it is imperative that the military role be one of supporting law enforcement rather than running the drug war unilaterally.

United States Southern Command is the responsible agency for providing U.S. military support to Law Enforcement agencies conducting operations in Latin American (save Mexico) and Caribbean countries, and coordinating that support with host nation police and military agencies. Much of that support involves detection and monitoring of air and sea transit routes coordinated from an operations center located at Howard Air Force Base in the Republic of Panama. In an attempt to improve coordination with the armed forces of key drug-producing countries, Latin American liaison officers have been invited to man the operations center alongside U.S. military and civilian (DEA, Customs, USCG etc.) counterparts. As the 1977 Panama Canal Treaty implementation process draws to a close, the U.S. military presence in Panama is scheduled to disappear. Over the past two years, the governments of Panama and the United States have engaged in a complicated courtship over the institutionalization of a multinational counternarcotics coordination center to continue and expand upon the function of the current center.

This initiative has been extremely delicate due to Panamanian sensitivity to any course that could be portrayed as a residual U.S. military presence, as well as by traditional reluctance by many of the affected nations to compromise their sovereignty to the degree inherent in the concept. The resultant impasse therefore lends itself to solution -- or at least improvement -- by linkage to the Inter-American Commission for Drug Abuse Control (CICAD) if that body could extend its jurisdiction to coordination of enforcement as well as demand reduction strategies. This would truly multilateralize the center, as well as ensure civilian oversight and an inter-agency focus for the counternarcotics effort.

The OAS has recognized the seriousness of the narcotics threat to the authority of democratic governments throughout the region, but has resisted giving CICAD jurisdiction over coordinated interdiction and enforcement efforts. There is some sentiment in the Secretariat, however, for broadening the course content at the Inter-American Defense College to make the curriculum more relevant to police officials, with a view to their inclusion in the student body and a resultant cross-

fertilization with respect to civil enforcement tasks.[47] The decision by heads of state at the April 1998 Santiago Hemispheric Summit meeting to improve counternarcotics cooperation complements the OAS Secretary General's vision for the development of a hemispheric strategy against drugs; again, use of CICAD as the clearinghouse for implementation of summit initiatives in this area would do much to enhance the legitimacy of hemispheric approaches to this problem.

United States Security Assistance

The *quid pro quo* for hemispheric defense cooperation in the past has been a steady flow of U.S. arms and equipment to the Latin American nations since the dawn of the Inter-American Military System. The quality of the North-South cooperative military relationship follows a direct correlation to the amounts of grant and cash Foreign Military Sales which flowed to Latin America. The U.S. has been roundly criticized for supplying Latin American militaries, and thereby, so the argument goes, facilitating their abuses during the Cold War.

This argument ignores the fact that the region's militaries depended on European suppliers before the Second World War, and were in no way reluctant to reestablish that relationship when U.S. aid began its sharp decline in the 1970s. Israel, France, Italy, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, South Africa, and even Taiwan stepped in to fill the vacuum, with little conditionality of the type that characterized U.S. aid under the Foreign Assistance and Arms Export Control Acts. As demonstrated by the Chilean effort to acquire modern fighters, those militaries with the means will seek modern equipment on the world market if the U.S. is reluctant to engage them in security assistance relationships.

Therefore, a necessary ingredient of a reinvigorated system of hemispheric cooperation remains a mature policy with respect to arms transfers. While scarce grant aid should be focused on those countries of greatest strategic importance to U.S. interests, selective barriers to cash sales should be avoided. Fears of a regional arms race should be assuaged by two fundamental realities -- the resource limitations of the potential buyers, and the growing strength of civilian democratic governments

to resist excessive defense outlays. The growth of OAS-sponsored transparency and Confidence and Security-Building measures will also be a restraining influence.

The International Military Education and Training Program (IMET) should continue to be emphasized in contributing to professionalization of Latin American militaries, promoting cooperation and solidarity among military professionals, and disseminating appropriate standards of military accountability and respect for human rights. This effort can be complemented by the highly effective military-to-military contact initiatives recently resourced by the Department of Defense within the regional commands' budgets. A primary goal of those programs has been the improvement of civil-military relations by familiarizing civilian officials with defense and security issues. U.S. Southern Command has conducted conferences and orientation visits for groups of high-ranking civilian and military officials on such diverse issues as strategy and doctrine development, human rights, military roles in environmental protection, international peacekeeping, and interagency cooperation in counternarcotics operations.

Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies

As a result of the 1994 Williamsburg Defense Ministerial, the United States created a Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies located in Washington D.C. The purpose of the center is to develop civilian specialists in defense and military matters by providing graduate-level programs in defense planning and management, executive leadership, civil-military relations, and interagency cooperation. Each country in the hemisphere is offered up to five seats spread over four month-long seminars presented each year. A special senior seminar is presented once per year in the hopes of attracting attendees at the policy level.

The Center was established under the U.S. Department of Defense and is affiliated with the National Defense University. While the initial response has been favorable (ten countries sent a total of 34 fellows to the March 1998 seminar), many Latins question why this initiative could not have been carried out within the Inter-American Defense College. From the U.S. perspective, a pressing need to

enhance the wave of democratization in the hemisphere by creating a cadre of qualified civilian defense bureaucrats dictated a unilateral approach. Attempting to marshall the required consensus in the OAS or the Council of Delegates in the IADB for the required change to the IADB mission and curriculum was seen to lead inevitably to unacceptable delays and a distortion of the concept once implemented. Additionally, funding for foreign student attendance could be secured from the Extended International Military Education and Training (E-IMET) allocation for a U.S. school; attendance at the Inter-American Defense College would have to be funded by each participating country. The Latins, while appreciative of the effort and the financial advantage, see this as yet another U.S. attempt to unilaterally achieve multilateral ends through unilateral means. It remains to be seen whether the course will continue to attract fellows in significant numbers.

Conclusion

The international environment in the Americas has changed markedly since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Military regimes have been replaced by democratically-elected civilian governments from Patagonia to the Caribbean. Statist economic models have given way to privatization, open markets, and a resurgence in foreign direct investment. Regional integration in economic and political matters has replaced the zero-sum, balance of power politics of the past. The region's militaries, while still influential, are much reduced both in size and in their impact on daily political affairs. Despite these favorable trends, security challenges still exist which could threaten democratic governance and economic development in many of these countries. International criminal activity, narcotics production, terrorism, natural disasters, and environmental devastation in developing countries all demand multilateral cooperation in response, rather than the unilateral actions which have characterized U.S. policies in the region in the past.

Reinvigoration of the Inter-American System with respect to security, as well as in other areas, requires a recommitment to and strengthening of institutions such as the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Defense Board, and relevant treaties on security and peaceful resolution of

disputes. The Presidential Summit process, rather than proceeding independently and undermining the viability of the institutions of the system, should be the center of gravity for initiating reform. The region's chiefs of state, by their collective authority, prestige, and capability for consensual decision making should achieve what their diplomatic representatives have not been able to accomplish -- the strengthening of the Inter-American System via streamlining and reform based on a commitment to respect the role of the Organization of American States and its associated organs as a deliberative forum and as a central clearing house or secretariat for information and coordination of multilateral programs. Military issues should be incorporated into addressed within the institutional framework of the organization rather than ignored until a crisis erupts.

For that reason, formalizing the role of the Inter-American Defense Board as a military advisory staff under the OAS Permanent Committee on Hemispheric Security will reinforce both civilian control of multilateral security issues and the institutional prestige of the region's militaries within democratic societies. A reaffirmation of the applicability of the Rio Treaty to current security relationships will provide a degree of security against aggression and intervention to weaker states, as well as assuring the United States of the military cooperation of the countries of the hemisphere, which will in turn permit destination of resources to execute its strategy of shaping the international environment in higher-risk regions.

The alternative is a proliferation of defense relationships -- commercial and otherwise -- between Latin American states and extra-hemispheric actors, a situation which would mark an inevitable return to balance-of-power strategies detrimental to all nations in the region.

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