




# Conference Brief

Strategic Studies Institute

U.S. Army War College, and the  
 **LACC** Latin American and Caribbean Center,  
Florida International University

## HEMISPHERIC STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

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### Key Points and Recommendations:

- Various actors and instruments are exerting power on the global community from many directions, with lethal political, economic, social and security effects. This changing and integrating world has led to new directions toward a viable security concept for the Western Hemisphere.
- Hemisphere and world leaders are considering an aggregate security concept through the Organization of American States (OAS). The debate includes how military power can address “non-military” issues, and how “nonmilitary” economic or other types of power can be applied in a security context.
- The aggregate solution embraces legitimate and strong nation-states. Any effort that does not strengthen the state can deteriorate existing democracy, free market economies, and prosperity. These have been achieved over several years and profoundly affect the health of the U.S. economy and its ability act in the global security arena.
  - In this context, as one example, the U.S. military responsibility goes well beyond the narrow purview on unilateral training and equipping of tactical units to broader multilateral professional military education and leader development.

### The OAS should:

- Seek binding international agreements that generate a management structure for multilateral harmony, accountability, transparency, and a means to impose effective sanctions.
- Establish a multilateral, comprehensive, and phased policy and strategy to implement its vision.
- Provide good offices to help states move toward aggregate national security strategies.
- Provide good offices to generate national level management structures to strengthen the state; to guarantee unified civil-military efforts; and to oversee, professionalize, and modernize the military-police component.
- Establish programs to exchange expertise, intelligence, and other resources, and to develop further confidence-building and cooperation measures against threats to security and stability.

## Report Documentation Page

*Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE <b>MAR 2004</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED -			
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>HEMISPHERIC STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT DECADE</b>		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER			
		5b. GRANT NUMBER			
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER			
6. AUTHOR(S)		5d. PROJECT NUMBER			
		5e. TASK NUMBER			
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 122 Forbes Ave, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5244</b>		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER			
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)			
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)			
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES <b>The original document contains color images.</b>					
14. ABSTRACT <b>see report</b>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>4</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

The Latin American and Caribbean Center of Florida International University, the U.S. Southern Command, and the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College held the seventh in a series of major annual conferences dealing with security matters in the Western Hemisphere, in Miami, Florida, on March 17-19, 2004. The conference focused on "Hemispheric Strategic Objectives for the Next Decade." This event brought together over 190 leading representatives of government, the military, academia, and the private sector from the United States, Canada, Latin America, and the European Union (EU). Attendees participated in a program of "on-the-record" panels and discussions to exchange perspectives with fellow experts on the region. The principal objectives were to evaluate the evolving definitions of hemispheric security, review the debate surrounding the institutional structures that will support it, and examine the concepts required to strengthen security cooperation in the Western Hemisphere. The dialogue centered on a complex geopolitical situation that might be called "Wizard's Chess." After the horrific events of 9/11 and before the sobering terrorist bombings on Madrid's commuter railway system on March 11, 2004, it acted as a catalyst that moved leaders toward the idea of a "New Security" in the international security arena.

### **The Deadly Game of "Wizard's Chess."**

The global security arena may be characterized as a game of chess. In it, pieces move silently and subtly wherever they are directed. Each piece on the game board represents a different type of devastating power, and may simultaneously conduct its lethal attacks from differing directions. Each piece shows no mercy against its foe, and is prepared to sacrifice itself in order to allow another piece the opportunity to destroy a more important adversary—or checkmate the king.

Similarly, every player in the international community from pawns to bishops to the queen must cope simultaneously with three separate and potentially grave types of contemporary

threat. These threats include, first, traditional and lingering boundary and territorial disputes and balance of power concerns. Second, each player must deal with the very real nontraditional possibilities of cheap and available nuclear arms, other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), biological agents, and electronic (or cyber) warfare—any one of which could render a country or part of it unable to function. Third, additional destabilizing nontraditional public security threats can be seen all over the world in "lawless" territories, urban criminal gangs involved in "coups d' streets," and more conventional, transnational terrorism.

Accordingly, all the above threats can be seen as methods of choice of globally connected commercial and ideological movements—dedicated to self-enrichment at the expense of others, to the destruction of the contemporary international system of cooperation and progress, or both. Thus, hemispheric and transatlantic cohesion is beginning to regain its geopolitical premium. In these terms, it is absolutely essential that the entire global community organize itself to combat this extraordinary set of threats by conceptualizing a long-term game plan, setting appropriate priorities, and determining what sacrifices must be made. Over the long term, this ongoing game is not a question of national security or sovereignty. Ultimately, it is a question of survival. Failure in "Wizard's Chess" is not an option.

### **Turbulence in Hemispheric Politics: Continuity and Change.**

Hemispheric and world leaders have been struggling with security and sovereignty problems for a long time, and the nature of the contemporary dilemma is still not completely understood. Unilateral and singular "hard" military security efforts and "soft" developmental efforts have been generally ineffective. As a result, national security expanded to broader concepts of "well-being" and "effective sovereignty." These notions, however, threatened to make the ideas of security and sovereignty so elastic and

all-inclusive as to make them all but useless as analytical and practical political tools.

Leaders were left with the uncomfortable reality that there is a circular linkage between and among four major dimensions—military/law enforcement, political, socio-economic/developmental, and environmental. Moreover, given the interdependence of the global system, discussions of one nation's security and effective sovereignty cannot be isolated from the security and sovereignty of neighboring states. In this perspective, as difficult as it may be, individual nation-states and the international community are beginning to approach security and effective sovereignty as an aggregate synergistic whole.

In that regard, it is interesting and important to note that the keynote speaker, General James T. Hill, and several other conference participants, prioritized poverty and corruption as the most basic security/sovereignty problem facing most of the nations of the Western Hemisphere today. Issues such as these do not easily respond to military solutions. Thus, the debate on aggregate power has begun to address how military power can be brought to bear on "nonmilitary" issues. That debate must, then, turn the problem around and address how "nonmilitary" economic or other types of power may be used in a military or law enforcement context. Extending the debate to its logical conclusion, the aggregate solution takes us to the need to legitimize and strengthen the nation-state.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations: Moving Toward a Viable New Security.**

A viable new security reality begins with the provision of personal security for the individual members of a polity. It extends to protection of the citizenry from violent internal nonstate actors (including organized criminals, self-appointed vigilante groups, and private armies), and external enemies—and, perhaps in some cases, from repressive internal (local and regional) governments. The security problem ends with the establishment of firm but fair control of the entire national territory and the people in it. That takes

us back to the concept of effective sovereignty. Without complete control of the national territory, a government cannot provide the elements that define meaningful national security—an effective judicial system under the rule of law; long-term socioeconomic development; responsible democratic processes; and durable peace. In turn, all that requires a relatively strong and legitimate state that can exert a synergistic effort involving all the instruments of national power. It also requires a state that can cooperate effectively with other states and regional and international organizations against transnational threats.

Most of the conference participants agreed that the most viable approach to the transnational threat to security and stability in the Western Hemisphere is to devolve responsibility to the Organization of American States (OAS). Once the OAS has created an aggregate strategic vision regarding exactly where it is going and how it is going to get there, it can initiate several ancillary efforts. They would include:

- Binding international agreements that provide for a reconceptualization of security and sovereignty, and generate a management structure for multilateral harmony, accountability, transparency, and means to impose effective sanctions.
- A multilateral, comprehensive, and phased policy and strategy to implement the OAS vision.
- Providing good offices to help states move from individual *Defense White Papers* to aggregate national security strategies.
- Providing good offices to generate management structures at the national level designed to strengthen and legitimize the state, and to guarantee unified civil-military efforts.
- Providing mechanisms for oversight, canalization, professionalization, and modernization of the military-police component of an aggregate civil-military effort.
- Plans and programs to enhance the exchange of expertise, intelligence, and other resources,

and to continue the development of confidence-building measures and multilateral models for cooperation against traditional and non-traditional threats to security and stability.

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#### **Afterword.**

Contemporary security and stability remain fragile in the Western Hemisphere. Long-existing paradigms are no longer completely reliable bases for dealing with contemporary threats to national security and effective sovereignty. It is now becoming clear that there is an organic connection between national, regional, and global security and stability. New directions are becoming apparent in an integrating world in which differing forms of power are being exerted simultaneously on the global community by differing actors, by differing instruments, from differing directions, and with lethal political, economic, social, and security effects.

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This situation is extremely volatile and dangerous, and requires careful attention. In these terms, the international community, the United States, the OAS, and the individual states of the hemisphere must understand and cope with the threats imposed by those actors engaged in destabilizing and devastating violence that is often labeled "terrorism." If the United States and its transatlantic and hemispheric friends and allies ignore what is happening in Latin America and do not implement strategic state-strengthening reforms, the expansion of terrorism, the expansion of "lawless areas," and the expansion of general instability could easily destroy the democracy, free market economies, and prosperity that have been achieved in the hemisphere since the ending of the Cold War.