

## Trans-American Security: What's Missing?

by Luigi R. Einaudi

### Key Points

The countries of the Western Hemisphere are more integrated than ever, with both each other and countries elsewhere, but critical aspects of their relationships remain hampered by outdated patterns and stereotypes. As the United States has focused on terrorism in the Middle East and Asia, its neighbors are developing more assertive roles on the world stage.

While traditional national security concerns have diminished, new issues are coming to the fore. Criminal gangs operating in urban areas throughout the hemisphere threaten security and engage in transnational criminal activities across borders. This situation seriously affects the quality of life of millions. Worse, it challenges basic aspects of sovereignty by eroding governmental control.

The need to seriously rethink hemispheric cooperation is becoming increasingly obvious. Instances of successful security cooperation—the Brazilian-led United Nations mission in Haiti, Caribbean cooperation on providing security for the 2007 Cricket World Cup, U.S. support for Colombia's Democratic Security policy—are numerous but piecemeal.

Intensified security dialogues within Central and South America are taking place bilaterally and subregionally. The Organization of American States has facilitated new security frameworks to supplement traditional dispute settlement and confidence-building measures. Region-wide treaties have been negotiated to fight illegal narcotics trafficking, contraband in small arms and munitions, and terrorism. Unfortunately, implementation has lagged considerably.

The United States can contribute to the renewal of trans-American security cooperation

by supporting more robust implementation of inter-American laws that U.S. representatives have already signed; by facilitating initiatives to help build civilian institutions that are critical to stability; by helping to develop professional civilian and military skills and key institutional relationships, including intelligence-sharing; and by improving policy dialogues and continuing interministerial consultations needed to bridge different interests and perspectives.

### Strategic Foundations

World politics are at once globalizing and fragmenting.<sup>1</sup> The world's only superpower, the United States, is focused so intensely on Iraq that its attention elsewhere sometimes wanders. The other major powers—China, the European Union, India, Japan, and Russia—are deeply immersed in domestic concerns, international economic competition, and their immediate neighborhoods. Latin America and the Caribbean continue to seek their place on the world stage but are torn internally over how to overcome the injustices and social exclusion that hamper their progress.

In the face of these enormous problems, it is not insignificant that the Western Hemisphere is a strikingly peaceful part of the world. This fact alone should give trans-American cooperation great potential.<sup>2</sup> The Americas share many common experiences. Their colonial legacies include unjust treatment of indigenous people and the practice of slavery, but they also include the frontier senses of freedom

and future. And if many contemporary failings are painful, it is also true that some of the pain comes from the region's steady democratization and modernization.

Regional cooperation has had continuous organizational form since 1889, with the Organization of American States (OAS) at its center today. The oldest international defense and security organization in the world is the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), founded in 1942. The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, also known as the Rio Treaty, signed in 1947, provided that an armed attack by any state against any other state would be considered an attack against all the states, thus creating the model for collective action against aggression later adopted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

More recently, Latin America and the Caribbean have become a nuclear-free zone and, along with Canada, are well on their way to becoming totally free of antipersonnel land mines. Argentina, Brazil, and Chile have renounced chemical and biological weapons.

As on the world stage, power remains concentrated asymmetrically in the United States, yet the hemisphere's other countries are narrowing the gaps in some critical areas. The United States depends on its neighbors for more than half of its energy imports and nearly 40 percent of its iron and steel imports, as well as many other resources and commodities. Mass movements of people in the form of both legal and illegal migration have become controversial and need to be brought under

control (although they generally take place peacefully, driven by the search for opportunity rather than by the despair of war, disease, or famine). Migration to the United States and Canada has been widely publicized, but significant subregional migration is taking place in South and Central America and has long been a distinctive reality of the Caribbean. The Americas are still extraordinarily diverse, yet they are also closer to being a New World than ever before in history.

These cultural, political, and economic assets suggest that the countries of the hemisphere could be a secure strategic anchor and a mutually supportive foundation for each other in this uncertain world. Just as energy and steel were the foundations of the European Coal and Steel Community in the 1950s that evolved into today's European Union, the growing economic interdependence of the Americas could become a major strategic asset for all concerned. The latest World Trade Organization (WTO) statistics indicate that, in 2005, the hemispheric neighbors of the United States—Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico, as well as the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) group and Caribbean Community (CARICOM)—bought 45 percent of all U.S. merchandise exports. In the same period, China bought 4.6 percent.<sup>3</sup> A hemisphere-wide free trade agreement would strengthen the competitive position of all its countries—including the United States.

## What's Missing?

However, the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) lies stalled, paralyzed by fears of globalization, genuine trade differences, and frustration created by unfulfilled expectations for the long-term development from the "Washington Consensus" reforms. Moreover, most of our neighbors, long sensitive to threats to their sovereignty, have experienced genuine malaise over the implications of U.S. unilateralism in Iraq.<sup>4</sup>

In short, the promise of the New World is saddled with the weight of unmet expectations, diverging interests, and mutual distrust, and it

remains largely unfulfilled by all concerned.<sup>5</sup> Opposition to outside intervention in internal affairs, and particularly resistance to the possibility of U.S. military intervention, led the writers of the OAS Charter in 1948 to ignore the existence of the IADB, reflecting a schizophrenia that to some extent persists today. The OAS has not legitimized military intervention since the Dominican Republic in 1965, twice punting to the United Nations (UN) on Haiti and opposing all other uses of military force, whether in the Malvinas/Falklands War or the U.S. actions in Grenada and Panama.

Several other developments from the 1960s through the 1980s raised questions about both the desirability and reliability of military cooperation. Guerrilla warfare, fratricidal conflicts, disappearances, and human rights violations stigmatized security institutions and relations. At times, there appeared to be two separate universes, one military and one civilian, and communication between them sometimes seemed lost. The whole region became tarred with negative stereotypes. The United States and Anglophone Caribbean tended to view Latin America as a home for dictators and human rights violators, while the United States was seen by its neighbors as fluctuating between indifference and interventionism.

In 1982, the United States, which had accepted the Rio Treaty's obligations against communist threats, denied military assistance to Argentina in its conflict with the United Kingdom over the Malvinas/Falkland Islands. This dealt a fatal blow to the mandatory collective security system. By the time Mexico withdrew from the Rio Treaty 20 years later, its denunciation seemed almost a formal afterthought.

Responding to terrorism has also been a problem. Terrorism has been experienced in the Americas in many different guises, not just as the unadulterated exercise of sheer terror against the United States as occurred on September 11, 2001. Political violence, state repression, criminal gang warfare linked to the narcotics

trade, and the rise of private armies and personal security companies in the absence of an effective state monopoly of force are hard to put into the same policy basket. (The critical issues raised for public security and national defense are explored further below.)

Suffice it to say for now that differences in history, interests, concepts, and capacities are so great that, despite interlinked cultural and political traditions, the countries of the Americas sometimes seem to inhabit different universes and to be incapable of understanding and adjusting to each other well enough to realize the benefits of increased cooperation.

## Colonial Legacies Overcome

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, three positive underlying trends were combining to improve the regional environment.

The first was the end of colonialism. All of the English-speaking Caribbean countries had become independent by 1981, and by 1990, all had been accepted into the OAS (despite, in the cases of Guyana and Belize, the continued existence of territorial differences with Latin American neighbors). Except

**the countries of the hemisphere could be a secure strategic anchor and a mutually supportive foundation for each other in this uncertain world**

for Grenada in 1982, these countries have all resisted the totalitarian temptation; indeed, Barbados has one of the oldest parliamentary traditions in the world, dating to 1639.

The second big change was the end of traditional dictatorships, de facto regimes, and military governments. A democratizing spurt after World War II ran afoul of the Cold War, but by 1991, all 33 governments represented at the OAS General Assembly in Chile had some claim to democratic legitimacy. In a dramatic shift, they pledged to meet immediately "in the event of any occurrences giving rise to the

---

Luigi R. Einaudi is a Distinguished Visiting Fellow in the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University. Comments may be addressed to Mr. Einaudi at [einauidil@ndu.edu](mailto:einauidil@ndu.edu).

sudden or irregular interruption of the democratic political institutional process or of the legitimate exercise of power by the democratically elected government in any of the Organization's member states."<sup>6</sup> The 16 years since have witnessed many growing pains for the new democracies, including constitutional conflicts and authoritarian experiments, but the commitment to greater accountability and popular participation should be seen as irreversible at the regional level.

A third positive trend has been the gradual dampening of territorial disputes rooted in pre-independence colonial conflicts. Although the 1982 Malvinas/Falklands War between Argentina and the United Kingdom ended with no settlement and the restoration of the status quo ante, major differences between Argentina and Chile were resolved with the help of Papal mediation. In 1995, the Upper Cenepa war pitted Ecuador against Peru in sudden violence with explosive regional danger, only to end nearly 4 years later with a settlement that promoted integration and development. Four countries—Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States—acting as guarantors of the 1942 Rio Protocol created the Military Observer Mission, Ecuador-Peru (MOMEPE).<sup>7</sup> MOMEPE's forces were coordinated by a Brazilian general and succeeded first in separating 5,000 intertwined combatant forces without fresh casualties in extraordinarily difficult terrain. MOMEPE then added Ecuadorian and Peruvian forces into its peacekeeping operations to enable guarantor diplomats to help the two governments negotiate a lasting peace in the interests of both countries. The 1998 peace between Ecuador and Peru definitively tilted the strategic balance in South America away from interstate conflict. Before the settlement of their dispute, Ecuador and Peru had regularly purchased military jet aircraft, often stimulating concerns among neighbors who felt pressured to keep up in what some called an arms race.

Coming as it did on the heels of the end of the global Cold War and Central American hot wars, the Peru-Ecuador peace confirmed a new strategic reality in which military expenditures could safely be reduced to promote development.

## Pains of Transition

If many traditional relationships and problems have broken down, eroded, or simply changed, the transition to a more modern and democratic order has not been easy. As often happens, change breeds change and the results are not always immediately understandable or positive.

Popular demands and rising expectations were stimulated by democratic values and accommodated by desires to avoid repression. The pressures on governments to show results were immediate. Calls for public services—health, sanitation, education, transportation—overwhelmed government institutions. The stress of years of high population growth accompanied by the communications and democratic revolutions virtually invited social rupture. Poverty and inequality that might have been tolerable when there seemed to be no alternative suddenly became unbearable in the presence of wealth, arrogance, and the absence of the rule of law. And when misery occurs in oil-rich Venezuela or once tin-rich and now gas-rich Bolivia, the man in the potholed street concludes that he is a “beggar sitting on a throne of gold” stolen from him by corrupt oligarchs, traitorous governments, and scheming foreigners. Much of the time, the daily reality is more likely to be weak institutions, a public bureaucracy without support from either the rich or the poor, and a justice system unaccustomed to seeking justice for all. But change requires time, and patience is not a characteristic of the television age.

And then there is the drug trade. One estimate is that drug trafficking generates more than \$300 billion annually—more than the gross domestic product of all but a handful of countries.<sup>8</sup> Drug money, weapons, and social dislocation in the midst of poverty and weak institutions are similar to sparks in a coal mine filled with gases.

Lawlessness is also spurred by the impact of deportations. Between 1998 and 2005, the United States “removed” more than 610,000 persons with either a criminal conviction or a criminal charge—an average of more than 76,000 a year.<sup>9</sup> Ninety-six percent of all these deportations were to Latin America, the overwhelming majority to Mexico and the Caribbean Basin.

When street-wise law-breakers are deported, they become potential recruits for criminal groups and add to the pressures on undermanned local security forces in receiving countries.<sup>10</sup>

The explosions resulting from this mix of pressures affect all aspects of life, private and public. Anyone exposed to the havoc wreaked

**drug money, weapons, and social dislocation in the midst of poverty and weak institutions are similar to sparks in a coal mine filled with gases**

by the *maras* in Central America, criminal gangs in Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, and several other major urban centers and sometimes ungoverned rural areas knows governmental authorities are not only stretched thin in services, but also frequently overmatched in force. Private armies and security forces have in some cases become a survival necessity for the few who can afford them and a return to the law of the jungle for those who cannot. Incantations of the miracles of democracy and free markets become obscene insults to those caught up in the turbulence.

The continuing expansion of organized crime, notes the Director of the OAS Department of Public Security, “is having a multiplier effect on all other forms of violence, on the economy of the affected countries, on the quality of life of citizens, on the privatization of security, on the militarization of law enforcement, and on the corruption it generates.”<sup>11</sup>

The consequences for security are abundant and sometimes disturbing. Military institutions were in many cases the most developed institutions of government and in some remote areas the only representatives of the state. In the 1960s, military leaders intervened in national politics, often with disastrous consequences for themselves, their institutions, and their countries. By the 1990s, under the twin impact of peace and democracy (to which a new generation of military leaders had often given critical support), military institutions lost both political status and resources. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, how

the balance is struck between public security and national defense on the one hand, and equitable development on the other, could determine the course of stability in more than one country.

## The New Regional Pattern

The end of the Cold War and the acceleration of globalization underscored the need for everyone to look at the neighborhood with different eyes. The once hallowed nostrums of the Monroe Doctrine, Fortress America, and their more recent cousin, a new U.S. Maginot line against drugs, terrorists, or migrants, still occasionally produce screams of frustration, but are simply unworkable when it comes to implementation. Ideas of closed regionalism are dead everywhere. Openings to Europe, South Africa, India, or China are eagerly sought everywhere. If regionalism is to prosper in the years to come, it must be open to the world, not a retreat from competition. National interests differ, and interdependence is often uncomfortable. But cooperation that is neither mandatory nor imposed, but is voluntary and negotiated is also increasingly necessary for all concerned.

Several points characterize the new regional environment.

First, with a few marked exceptions in the Andes, cooperation is most dynamic among immediate neighbors. CARICOM, the Central American Integration System (*Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana* [SICA]), and the common market in the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) are the most obvious examples. But the trend is also evident on a South America-wide basis and to some extent in North America. An unfortunate exception has been the willingness of Colombia's immediate neighbors to stand apart from the conflict there and do little to control their adjoining border areas. Even so, it seems increasingly clear that subregional cooperation and integration are becoming building blocks for regional and ultimately global progress.

Second, most discussions of security issues in the hemisphere reflect a new focus on social development. In 2003, Mexico convened a region-wide Special Conference on Security. Ministers from all corners

of the hemisphere agreed that threats had become "multidimensional." The priorities of the largest countries, such as the United States, were included (cyber security, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, drugs, and related matters), but so were the concerns of the subregions: in the Caribbean and Central America, nuclear waste and natural disasters; in Central and South America, extreme poverty and social exclusion.

Third, a direct link between democracy and security has become an accepted principle, and this in turn requires that security cooperation meet standards of democratic legitimacy. The 2003 Special Conference on Security declared that "representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace, and development of the states of the Hemisphere" and explicitly reaffirmed the Inter-American Democratic Charter.<sup>12</sup>

The dormant Rio Treaty has not been replaced, but a new security system is gradually emerging on a case-by-case, issue-by-issue basis. It is less unified and binding than the Rio Treaty's collective security system, but perhaps better tailored to today's realities. If the security architecture of the past was developed top-down through foreign ministries acting in the immediate post-World War II period of U.S. predominance, the security architecture of the future seems likely to

**a direct link between democracy and security has become an accepted principle, and this in turn requires that security cooperation meet standards of democratic legitimacy**

evolve bottom-up, on a subregional basis, and with broader interministerial participation.

The emerging system is made up of traditional confidence-building measures such as the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions plus several new legal instruments that

address specific transnational security concerns. Buoyed by Canada's entry and a new openness to the Caribbean Basin, the IADB has been decoupled from the Rio Treaty, developed new roles in disaster relief, facilitated impressive progress in demining, and received a cautious political blessing from the OAS.

In 1992, the OAS Permanent Council created a Committee on Hemispheric Security that has met regularly ever since. The 2000 OAS General Assembly, spurred by Honduras and other Central American governments inspired by the settlement of the conflict between Ecuador and Peru, created a Fund for Peace. This enabled the General Secretariat, with the support of the United States, to provide the services of a technical expert from the then National Imagery and Mapping Agency working under the auspices of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History to resolve technical demarcation problems encountered by El Salvador and Honduras. The final marker was erected in 2006. An OAS team, which included Argentine and Brazilian military officers, verified the absence of troop movements near the border between Honduras and Nicaragua. The fund is making possible confidence-building measures in the territorial differendum between Belize and Guatemala.

Following the attacks of September 11, the countries of the Americas negotiated, signed, and brought into force an Inter-American Convention against Terrorism that provides a legal framework for counterterrorism cooperation and capacity-building. The convention recognizes that no one country has all of the answers for improving security against the threats posed by terrorists, who seek to exploit the rules of civilized society. Its answer, however, is not to abandon the law, or to wink at abuses of the rights of suspects. The Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (*Comité Interamericano Contra el Terrorismo* [CICTE]) provides a legal framework enabling counterterrorism cooperation and capacity-building.

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (*Comisión Interamericana para el Control del Abuso de Drogas* [CICAD]), established in 1989, has

helped strengthen professional ties and developed a Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism to facilitate antidrug cooperation on the basis of expert plans drawn up by national authorities, thus making it easier to identify areas for cooperation and to avoid interruptions and tensions resulting from unilateral conditionality.

The Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (*Convención Interamericana Contra la Fabricación y el Tráfico Ilícitos de Armas de Fuego, Municiones, Explosivos y Otros Materiales Relacionados* [CIFTA]), proposed initially by Mexico in the Rio Group, achieved regional consensus through the OAS, was signed in 1997, and entered into force the next year.

In 2004, overcoming the traditional reluctance of its political bodies to become involved in security matters, the OAS General Secretariat moved for the first time to assign professional staffing to coordinate among these new security understandings. Today, the OAS Secretariat for Multidimensional Security brings together CICTE, CICAD, and CIFTA, as well as multilateral efforts against transnational crime.<sup>13</sup>

## Lagging Implementation

It is an open secret that even critically important principles agreed to in formal treaties often fail to become operational realities. In Central America, small firearms and light weapons have proliferated since the end of the armed conflicts in the early 1990s and facilitated the spread of violent youth gangs. According to the National Police of Colombia, 85 percent of murders in that country are committed with small arms, many of which have been smuggled into Colombia by drug traffickers, insurgents, and members of paramilitary groups and criminal gangs.

In Haiti, small arms threaten governance, democracy, and the population as a whole. They are easy to come by. Everyone is armed: politicians and criminals, businessmen and paupers, legal and illegal militias, not to mention drug traffickers and former members of the armed forces. Everyone is armed, that is, except for the state, which has no army and only 3,000 policemen. The

United Nations Stabilization Mission for Haiti (*Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en Haïti* [MINUSTAH]) has 8,000 military and police personnel to assist Haiti's 8 million inhabitants. New York City, with its 8 million inhabitants, has 60,000 police officers. That MINUSTAH has helped move Haiti toward a more stable future is a real tribute to the troops from Brazil and other South American countries at its core.<sup>14</sup>

MINUSTAH's success is closely linked to the political progress achieved through Haiti's first elections in which voters were issued permanent identity cards. This critical step gave many ordinary Haitians their first legal proof of existence and ability to claim their individual rights as citizens. Even so, MINUSTAH's leaders are the first to say that this relative success will evaporate without better social and economic progress.

## What Is to Be Done?

In addition to the Latin American role in MINUSTAH, specific examples for the road ahead include the cooperation among nine CARICOM states to provide security for the 2007 Cricket World Cup, ongoing security consultations among neighboring countries of Central and South America, and the important and successful bilateral cooperation between the United States and Colombia. OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza has stressed the need to build mechanisms of mutual trust and not to assume that one model fits all.<sup>15</sup> U.S. security expert John Cope put it well when he observed that the way ahead is to work together to address specific shared concerns in a low-key manner, starting on a subregional basis.<sup>16</sup>

Some of what has been missing is simply modesty. For much of our history—whether the United States was being the Good Neighbor, opposing communism, running the Alliance for Progress, or more recently fighting terrorism—U.S. opinion leaders assumed that they knew what needed to be done and how to do it better than anyone else. That approach no longer works. More than ever before, we must understand and respect the space and dignity of those with whom we must cooperate. But the reflex in

Washington and in public opinion at large is still often to be patronizing.

These attitudes will handicap the United States and its friends until everyone understands the fundamental reality that this New World requires an honest give-and-

## the way ahead is to work together to address specific shared concerns in a low-key manner, starting on a subregional basis

take. U.S. State and Defense officials often know less than we *think* we know. We know this is a very diverse and domestically turbulent hemisphere. We know there is a history of conflicts between some countries. But we are less appreciative of different national histories, of recent progress in resolving conflicts, and of the unease and even tensions that still persist. It is understandable that we should talk little about differences in national interests and concerns, but it is a mistake to assume that everyone has the same interests. It is also understandable that we should talk little about institutional weaknesses and incapacities. However, thinking that the consensus emerging at a regional level on the new security challenges is matched by a corresponding increase in capacity would be an error.<sup>17</sup>

Dialogue and cooperation require, in addition to political will, the existence of effective state institutions, with the capacity to do what is needed in ways that work. Instead of simply asserting a litany of shared values and common interests, we should insist on listening first and planning second—and then acting only on jointly developed and agreed-upon plans for humanitarian as well as security projects. Competence must be learned, trust must be earned, both sides must be reliable, and all must benefit in order to work together effectively. Long-term cooperation can be based only on activities that serve the interests of others as well as ours.

Aside from learning to listen to each other better, there are four points on which the United States in particular can improve the environment for trans-American dialogue and cooperation.<sup>18</sup>

*First, legal frameworks are essential and must be strengthened and supported.* A legal order must be backed by force, but the use of force without a basis in law starts with a strike against it. We do not need a new Rio Treaty. But the war against terror and the invasion of Iraq have reawakened in Latin America memories of past U.S. military interventions. The United States should make clear its commitment that laws, not might, must frame what can be done and how.

An excellent beginning would be to ratify two treaties already signed by the United States. Both have also been ratified by a great majority in the hemisphere. They are the American Convention on Human Rights, and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.<sup>19</sup> The fundamental significance of having a multilateral legal framework is that it makes possible cooperation, including bilateral cooperation, undertaken according to its provisions.

Legitimacy, while essential, is not enough. The United States should also support the operational implementation of these and all other Inter-American juridical instruments that have developed in recent years to address specific security concerns. This will require regional capacity-building. The U.S. Government already deserves much credit for the financial and technical support that it gives to demining activities by the OAS and IADB. The United States (and all other member states) could do much more to help the OAS facilitate training and information exchanges. This support could range from such simple matters as ensuring that the United States fills both of its slots in the month-long Course in International Law for mid-career lawyers, run since 1973 by the Inter-American Juridical Committee, to helping the OAS establish similar courses for both junior and senior experts in drug control, terrorism, transnational crime, human rights, and the mitigation of natural disasters. The objective would be to create

mutually respectful and informed cadres of professionals knowledgeable of the precedents and potential for cooperation on all the many problems that affect the multidimensional security of the hemisphere's countries.<sup>20</sup>

*Second, social and economic progress is critical to stability.* If democracy is the Americas' pride and glory, social injustice, poverty, and exclusion are its Achilles' heel. In the years ahead, in addition to the maintenance of public order, the biggest challenges to accelerate Latin America's development and improve its lagging international competitiveness have to do with building regional infrastructure and investing in public education and science at home. Such initiatives do not require more weapons; if anything, they may require some diversion of capital resources from defense to civilian purposes. But the maintenance of public order is too important for military and other security institutions to remain victims of an unwillingness to get beyond the past. For example, a recent case study of criminal deportations to Jamaica from the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada concludes that "assisting in reintegration efforts for deported offenders could be a cost-effective way for deportee-sending countries to

### **the biggest challenges to accelerate Latin America's development and improve its lagging international competitiveness have to do with building regional infrastructure and investing in public education and science**

promote development and weaken international crime networks."<sup>21</sup> Carefully designed and managed programs of military support for civilian institutions could be an important part of strengthening the state to provide the security and services needed for democratic development.

The Declaration on Security in the Americas and the Inter-American Democratic Charter both call for "the constitutional subordination of all state institutions to the legally constituted civilian authority and respect for the rule of law on the part of all institutions and sectors of society."<sup>22</sup> In defending the law and equal opportunity rather than social privilege, military and other security forces must take care neither to undermine political leaders nor to abandon their own professionalism. How this should best be done will differ from country to country, as determined by appropriate constitutional authorities and interministerial or inter-agency consultation of that country, but a failure to find the right balance could endanger both stability and development.<sup>23</sup>

*Third, professionalism must be developed, not assumed.* Operational interoperability and coordination among public security forces and between them and legitimate civilian authorities depend on mutual trust and professional skills that cannot be developed overnight. A culture of civil-military cooperation is indispensable. And that in turn depends on shared professional training and experiences that cannot be improvised. All countries should reserve some billets in military academies and advanced civilian and military schools for cadets, officers, and public officials from neighboring countries. The United States should increase openings for exchanges of officers and encourage the posting of liaison officers.<sup>24</sup> So, too, should other countries to the full extent of their abilities.

The United States should assign resources to the OAS to develop an Inter-American Academy of Public Administration. This academy might function along the lines of the Inter-American Defense College, with students nominated by the member states. Additional junior and senior exchange and training opportunities could also be channeled subregionally as well as regionally. CARICOM, SICA, the Andean Pact, and MERCOSUR, for example, could put to excellent use training activities in whose design they participate. Professional training and education should be seen less as assistance than as the steps necessary to build the capacity needed to create sustainable cooperation regionally and internationally. Such institutional ties can provide both

early warning and containment of issues that might otherwise escalate into problems—in effect, a valuable insurance policy for peace in the neighborhood.

*Fourth, there is a clear need for a “Permanent Consultation.”* Even if we succeed in being legal, careful, and professional, neighbors still need the ability to understand one another across and beyond their borders. Even if we organize our respective inter-agency systems, we still need to find ways to link them more effectively. There are at least three specific attributes that should help define our continuing conversation.

One concerns the geographical scope of the topics. We all operate globally. Thus, consultations should be global as well as regional. Brazil played a key role in East Timor, is a leader in world trade negotiations, and has an exceptional scientific capacity that includes space satellite technology that it has shared with other countries. We share NATO ties with Canada but are perhaps less aware of Canada’s role in both the Francophonie and British Commonwealth, which also includes states from CARICOM. Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay, like Brazil, have long participated in out-of-area peace-keeping operations.

Beyond geographic scope, consultations should be as multidimensional as the problems. Some years ago, the Department of State held consultations between its policy planning staff and its counterparts in several South American countries. Regular consultations on a joint basis, with the United States represented by its Ambassador to the country in question supported by an integrated State-Defense team from Washington and U.S. Southern Command, could develop better communication and understanding that would help tailor cooperation to particular problems and situations. Existing talks should grow beyond Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico to include subregional groups of states and the OAS Secretariat. Thus, bilateral consultations should be paralleled multilaterally by a strengthened U.S. Mission to the OAS working closely with the U.S. Delegation to the IADB. And it is important that the Defense Ministerials be brought into the Summit of the Americas process. Trinidad and

Tobago, which is to host the next summit, is a member of the IADB as well as the OAS.

U.S. policymakers and government agencies need to do a better job identifying their foreign counterparts and working with them. This is less a problem for the Departments of State and Defense than it is for development agencies. The U.S. Agency for International Development, for example, relies instinctively on U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and consultants to implement programs abroad—only to be surprised to find that our programs are seen as more in the U.S. interest than as of mutual benefit.<sup>25</sup> Sometimes, funding U.S. NGOs as opposed to local organizations can weaken or even undermine the very state institutions the country we wish to help needs for its development and stability. Leaders of the U.S. executive branch should work closely with the U.S. Congress to find ways to strengthen implementation of overseas cooperation activities and foreign aid while guarding against corruption.

## Afterword

The burden of adjustment should not fall solely upon the United States. It must also be said that our Latin American and Caribbean neighbors sometimes give up too easily on Washington. Common understandings require dialogue and constant communication initiated by each side. Mechanisms are needed to encourage and reward cooperation and information-sharing at every level. Shared knowledge multiplies, and when it is shared among partners, it increases trust and the common good.

Our friends from Latin America and the Caribbean should remember that the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review made very clear that the senior leadership of the U.S. Department of Defense wants improved alliance and coalition partnerships and is prepared to consider “building partner capabilities.” In 2006, the Assistant Director of the Defense Department Office of Force Transformation argued that “the capabilities gap [with] many allied and coalition partners is widening” and referred among other things to the costs of keeping pace with technological change. He continued, “Some level of intelligence-sharing, operational and tactical planning, and

perhaps command post or field exercises will be essential to ensure adequate preparation.”<sup>26</sup> These concerns should be taken seriously by everyone interested in improving the practice of security cooperation.

On the U.S. side, we should not allow our distaste for bureaucracy and distrust of

## shared knowledge multiplies, and when it is shared among partners, it increases trust and the common good

foreigners to prevent the increased cooperation with foreign governments and institutions needed to advance U.S. interests. Multilateral institutions have the great advantage of blunting concerns over unilateralism that often is manifested in our tendency to impose “good ideas” without consultation.

There are many things we can do together as partners that are mutually respectful (if sometimes unequal) to deal with security and social problems that we cannot deal with alone. This time of global difficulties may be just the time to quietly strengthen regional capacity and cooperation.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This paper is adapted from remarks at the 2007 Western Hemisphere Security Colloquium in Miami, FL, May 3–4, 2007, sponsored by the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College, Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) at the National Defense University, U.S. Southern Command, and Applied Research Center at Florida International University. It also reflects remarks made at the INSS Workshop of Mexico’s National Security, May 31, 2007, at the National Defense University. I want to thank particularly Dr. James A. Schear, Director of Research, and COL John A. Cope, USA (Ret.), Senior Research Fellow for Western Hemisphere Affairs, both of INSS, for their support.

<sup>2</sup> The term *trans-American* is intended to convey the sense of dialogue among equals, much like the meaning implicit in *trans-Atlantic*.

<sup>3</sup> World Trade Organization, *International Trade Statistics 2006*, table III.16, “Merchandise trade of the United States by region and economy, 2005,” available at <[www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/statis\\_e/its2006\\_e/its2006\\_e.pdf](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/its2006_e/its2006_e.pdf)>.

<sup>4</sup> The Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua are the only Western Hemisphere countries that sent troops to Iraq. Only El Salvador is there to this day after 9 battalion deployments (roughly 380 soldiers each). The other countries stayed about 6 months.

<sup>5</sup> The hemisphere’s promise was recently evoked in a Posture Statement by Admiral James G. Stavridis, USN, Commander,

U.S. Southern Command, before the House Armed Services Committee, March 21, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Resolutive Paragraph 1, AG/RES. 1080 (XXI–0/91), adopted by the Twenty-First General Assembly of the OAS, Santiago, Chile, June 5, 1991, available at <<http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/agres1080.htm>>.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command, *Operation Safe Border Multinational Observer Mission, Ecuador-Peru*, History and Research Office, September 1995; Glenn R. Weidner, "Operation Safe Border: The Ecuador-Peru Crisis," *Joint Force Quarterly* 11 (Spring 1996), 52–58; Luigi R. Einaudi, "The Ecuador-Peru Peace Process," in *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, ed. Chester A. Crocker et al. (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), 405–429.

<sup>8</sup> Arlene B. Tickner, "Latin America and the Caribbean: Domestic and Transnational Insecurity," International Peace Academy Working Paper Series, February 2007, 4 (cited by Christopher Hernandez-Roy, Director of the OAS Department of Public Security).

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, *2005 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, November 2006, table 41, "Aliens Formally Removed by Criminal Status and Region and Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 1998 to 2005," available at <[www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2005/OIS\\_2005\\_Yearbook.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2005/OIS_2005_Yearbook.pdf)>.

<sup>10</sup> Specialists note that refugees from the civil war in El Salvador in the 1980s met resistance in south central Los Angeles from the previously established Mexican-American "18<sup>th</sup> Street" gangs. Veterans of the resulting gang wars were deported to El Salvador and Guatemala in the early 1990s and founded the *salvatruchas* and related gangs in those countries (interview with Caesar Sereses of the University of California and Guatemalan urban planner Alfonso Yurrita). Ironically, a recent study reported the arrest of some 1,374 members just of the MS–13 *mara salvatrucha* gang "in cities across the United States." Clare M. Ribando, *Gangs in Central America* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, updated August 2, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Christopher Hernandez-Roy, remarks in Quebec City, May 25, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> The consensus that security must be democratic may even be stronger than the definition of what constitutes democracy.

<sup>13</sup> This long-needed step was originally the result of reforms introduced by Miguel Angel Rodriguez during his brief tenure as Secretary General. I continued them as Acting Secretary General, and the advance was consolidated by Jose Miguel Insulza after his election as Secretary General in 2005.

<sup>14</sup> General Augusto Heleno Ribeiro Pereira, "O Componente Militar da Missao das Nacoes Unidas para a Estabilizacao do Haiti," *Military Review* (January-February 2007), 2–13.

<sup>15</sup> Speech at the Seventh Conference of Ministers of Defense of the Americas, October 2, 2006, in Managua, Nicaragua.

<sup>16</sup> John A. Cope, "A Prescription for Protecting the Southern Approach," *Joint Force Quarterly* 42 (3<sup>d</sup> Quarter, 2006), 17–21.

<sup>17</sup> This formulation comes from a personal communication from Gabriel Marcella, May 17, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> A remarkably similar set of points is made by the former commander of the Chilean army, General Juan Emilio Cheyre, in "Seguridad hemisferica: 'un desafio de integraci3n pendiente,'" *Foreign Affairs en Espa3ol*, October-December 2005.

<sup>19</sup> See the March 2004 study by the Federation of American Scientists, *Small Arms, Terrorism and the OAS Firearms Convention*, in which Matthew Schroeder argues that U.S. ratification and full implementation of CIFTA would help to stem the flow of weapons to the Colombian illegal groups and prevent the diversion of arms to international terrorists.

<sup>20</sup> This apparently straightforward prescription faces some major obstacles. For example, the American Servicemembers' Protection Act of 2002 provides that "no United States military assistance may be provided to the government of a country that is a party to the International Criminal Court." Although this ban is subject to certain exceptions, including NATO membership, over half of the countries in the world under sanctions are in this hemisphere and have been denied such items as counterterrorism equipment and training. Clare M. Ribando, *Article 98 Agreements and Sanctions on U.S. Foreign Aid to Latin America* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, updated March 22,

2007), notes that Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Mexico are among the affected.

<sup>21</sup> *Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean*, Report 37820, Joint Report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Latin America and Caribbean Region of the World Bank, March 2007, 81, available at <[www.unodc.org/pdf/research/Cr\\_and\\_Vio\\_Car\\_E.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/Cr_and_Vio_Car_E.pdf)>.

<sup>22</sup> Article 4 of both the Charter and the Declaration. Both documents are available at <[www.oas.org](http://www.oas.org)>.

<sup>23</sup> Jose Miguel Insulza points out that two common mistakes in this regard are to militarize threats unnecessarily and to confuse public security with national defense—and vice versa. For the sake of stability, he argues, the balance in each case must be struck domestically by civilian democratic authorities.

<sup>24</sup> At the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, there have been over the years a handful of students and instructors from Latin America. This is less typical at the war college level of professional education. But at planning and doctrinal development levels, such as the Training and Doctrine Command and similar U.S. commands, liaison officers are more common from Europe and Asia than from this hemisphere.

<sup>25</sup> One study has suggested 77 percent of all U.S. foreign aid is actually spent in the United States. See Stewart Patrick, Nancy Birdsall, and Milan Vaishnav, "Freedom from Want: American Exceptionalism and Global Development," Center for Global Development, 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Walter P. Fairbanks, "Implementing the Transformation Vision," *Joint Force Quarterly* 42 (3<sup>d</sup> Quarter, 2006), 42.

The Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) is a policy research and strategic gaming organization within the National Defense University (NDU) serving the Department of Defense, its components, and interagency partners. The institute provides senior decisionmakers with timely, objective analysis and gaming events and supports NDU educational programs in the areas of international security affairs and defense studies. Through an active outreach program, including conferences and publications, INSS seeks to promote understanding of emerging strategic challenges and policy options.



The Strategic Forum series presents original research by members of NDU as well as other scholars and specialists in national security affairs from this country and abroad. The opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any other agency of the Federal Government. For information on NDU Press visit the Web site at <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/nduhp>. INSS also produces *Joint Force Quarterly* for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the journal can be accessed at [www.ndupress.edu](http://www.ndupress.edu).

#### INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL STRATEGIC STUDIES

**James A. Schear**  
Director of Research

**David H. Gurney**  
Director, NDU Press