

Panorama of Fissures and Endeavors in Latin American Security

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1. Some Analytic Points

The thinking on security revolves around different paradigms without a model that may encompass all the explanations of the current state-of-affairs. For several years, analysts of this field have expressed some puzzlement in the face of conflicts that cannot fall under the logic of war or peace. The post-cold war period is burdened by conflicts of various intensities around the globe but, at the same time, a growing number of cooperation systems are creating the incentives for peace.

We have gone from the certainty of the east-west confrontation to a time of fairly undefined changes; and even the US National Security Strategy now focuses on formulating answers for an Uncertain Future.¹ In lieu of yesterday's monolithic threat, today's risks are unpredictable, multidirectional, and multidimensional. The realistic tradition approach to the defense sector competes with liberal perspectives that focus on the

¹ See "A National Security Strategy for a New Century", The White House, December 1999, page 20 also, Jervis, Robert, "U.S. Grand Strategy: Mission Impossible," Naval War College Review, Vol. LI, No. 3, Summer 1998.

peaceful settlement of disputes whose agenda is aimed at the security of people. In this manner, a social perspective is introduced to the new security agenda. Military missions now have a strong civil component, in the logistics, communications, and medical support aspects,² as well as in the kind of actions the military prepare themselves for.

Realistic studies place a strong emphasis on the visions of conflict, competition and military responses.³ The increase in weapon transfers and the strategic defense plans support this logic, which, though taking into account the end of the bipolar confrontation, anticipates a world driven by competition.⁴ Structural neo-realism translates this uncertain scenario as one more instance of the international system's anarchy, the absence of a global power and the risks of arms proliferation in the world.

At the same time, the growing legitimacy of multilateral organizations for the settlement of security conflicts, the expansion of mechanisms for controlling mass destruction and conventional weapons, and regional agreements promote a cooperation scenario where security is attained through reciprocal commitments.⁵ The progress of such factors coincides with the end of the cold war and the relative decline of military

2 "Strategic Concept of the Alliance", Washington Summit, 23-25 April 1999. To defend human rights abuses involves the development of a composite response strategy and doctrine, involving many different military and civilian agencies, as Save the Children, International Committee of the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, Amnesty International etc.

3 The International Institute for Strategic Studies; *The Military Balance 1999-2000*; Oxford University Press, Robert Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994, and Waltz, Kenneth N., *Globalization and American Power*, *The National Interest*, Spring 2000.

4 Mearsheimer, John J.; "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War"; in *Theories of War and Peace*; Edited by Michael Brown and others; 1998. Luttwak, Edward N.; "From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics"; in *The National Interest*; Number 20; Summer 1990.

5 This thinking comes from the theory of conflict studies. It addresses human conflict as natural, but mitigates the military concept of power through common rules, standards and values. This concept serves as support to validate the ideas of cooperative security, confidence-building measures and the mediation of institutions to prevent conflicts.

protagonist role,⁶ and is based on the belief that a peaceful settlement of conflicts is possible.⁷

Such tendency also includes the concern for the future of the world citizenry, giving way to the emergence of issues such as the respect for human rights, environmental protection or the consequences of migrations.⁸ Such analyses affect the state-centered view of the discipline, introducing new players to the agenda⁹ and paving the way for the emergence of visions centered on the individual, the citizen. Although tensions and disputes between states have not disappeared, the international community increasingly started to give responses to threats to the safety and security of the people who are the victims of conflicts within their own countries or who are put at risk by transnational actors.

This focus on people's welfare was already a concern in the report of the Brandt Commission¹⁰ and in the approach taken by the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, chaired by Olof Palme in 1982. However, the former is aimed at global governance (Global

6 Luttwak, Edward; "From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics"; in *The National Interest*; Number 20; Summer 1990. Buzan, Barry and; Waever, Ole, *Liberalism and Security: The contradictions of the liberal Leviathan*, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, April 1998.

7 Chambers, Malcolm; "Security Sector Reform in Developing Countries: an EU Perspective"; *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik /Conflict Prevention Network Yearbook*; January 2000 and Ruggie, John Gerard, *Wining the Peace. America and World Order in the New Era*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996.

8 Mathews, Jessica T.; "Power Shift"; in *Foreign Affairs*; Vol.76, Nr. 1; January/February 1997, Pag.50-66.

9 Keck, Margaret and Sikkink, Kathryn; "Transnational Advocacy Networks in the Movement Society" in Meyer, David and Tarrow, Sydney (Eds.) *The Social Movement Society. Contentious Politics for a New Century*; Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998.

10 "An important task of constructive international policy will have to consist in providing a new, more comprehensive understanding of 'security' which would be less restricted to the purely military aspects[...] Much of the security in the world is connected with the divisions between rich and poor countries, grave injustice and mass starvation causing additional instability." Report on the Brandt Commission (1980) "North-South: A programme for Survival", London; Pan; p.124.

security must be broadened from its traditional focus on the security of states to include the security of people and the planet),¹¹ while the latter focuses on limiting confrontation between the east and the west, proposing a model of shared security, through communication channels, confidence and cooperation, based on the principles of equity, justice, and reciprocity. The people-centered approach was also explained in the UN *Human Development Report 1994*, whereby human security includes safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression. The government of Canada has actively promoted the idea of public security, including the concept in the agenda of hemispheric organizations.¹²

In sum, the human security agenda seeks to address a range of threats to the safety and security of people, to protect human rights, and to ensure essential peace and stability -a key pre-requisite for sustainable human development.

In this context, the terrorist threat, that is a form of atomized

11 The Millennium Year and the Reform. A contribution from the Commission on Global Governance; "Our Neighbors", Chapter 3; 1999.

12 There has been a mutation in the way security is conceived of. In the '90s, priorities in terms of security essentially involved the strategic competition among superpowers to maintain deterrence and balance of power and nuclear war threat. The concept of security that governments and experts would make reference to was based on three postulates: 1 – security problems result from activities of other countries, mainly at a military level, 2 – The state's security interests are essentially the same as the civil society's interests, 3 – the ways to face threats are mainly military means and must therefore be handled on a national basis which involves unilateral measures or inter-government cooperation agreements. These premises give testimony of a state-centered vision of the world, with a key emphasis on the respect for sovereignty. Myriam Gervais and Stéphane Roussel, "De la Sécurité de l' Etat a celle de l' individu: l' évolution du concept de sécurité au Canada (1990-1996), *Revue Études Internationales*, mars 1998 y Llyod Axworthy, "Canada and human security: the need for leadership," *International Journal*, Spring 1997. The vision of the UN exceeds the actual capabilities of Third World countries and for this reason it is virtually impossible to make it practicable: Human security, in its broadest sense, embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Secretary General Kofi Annan, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 8-10 May, 2000.

political violence but not a discrepancy between states, put under revision the notion of sovereignty because it weakening the state force monopoly. A nation could be endangered by a disproportional action, in human and material resources acting inside the own sovereign territory. By contrast, this lack of sovereignty, reinforce the notion of “region” in the sense perceived after September eleven: legitimacy of antiterrorist reactions became from the multilateral level.¹³ The expansion of terrorist networks and other activities carried out by organized crime, compel to resist with mechanisms of high legitimacy. This legitimacy is assembled with the rule of law and the proficiency of democratic institutions.

How do these coexisting approaches on the security agenda impact our region? In Latin America, security was always subjected to defense, restricted to the military and lacking a formulation by civilian leadership or the academic sector.

Thus, the tension between the realistic and the liberal visions of security has a different character. And, if we think of modern formulations of public security, in Latin America it first implies the development of democratic governments. In democracy, citizens are not threatened by their own military, and civilian governments are devoted to demilitarizing the state, thus avoiding the return to authoritarian governments. International cooperation, in turn, tends to demilitarize security, allowing civilian leaders to take action.

Changes in security policies find the favorable framework offered by the new democratic regimes, but the strengthening of republican institutions shall be achieved within deep economic reforms and dramatic

13 Richard N. Haass, “Defining U.S. Foreign Policy in a Post-Post-Cold War World,” The 2002 Arthur Ross Lecture, Remarks to Foreign Policy Association, New York, April 22, 2002. Veáse los comentarios de Lawrence J. Korb y Alex Tiersky, “The End of Unilateralism? Arms Control

changes in State. Governments were much less efficient in organizing the conduct of defense based on the parameters set forth by multilateral organizations. The requirement to stabilize democracy was firm and clear for the entire region, but at the same time, Latin American governments had to undertake a government reform mainly involving the downsizing of their various agencies, carry out a tax reform to improve their economies, open up their markets and face competitive conditions far too stringent for the structures of the local business sector accustomed to an isolated market, and in many cases, pacify and rehabilitate combatants. These actions, which attained different degrees of success, caused a double game: they acted as a driving force for democratization when they stopped military resistance to government decisions and created tensions in such cases where the government was incapable of meeting the demands of the different sectors of society.

Cooperation among Latin American countries has improved substantially: economic integration organizations were renewed, relationships among member countries and their armed forces increased, and effectiveness of international entities prospered. However, though Latin America is considered one of the regions in the world with the lowest conflicts degree, old geopolitics concepts persist as well as domestic sectors looking to their neighbors as if they were potential enemies.

Thus, although there are no evident risks of confrontation in the continent and progress has been made at weapons control, there was no evident progress in implementing political control of armed forces that still remains an unresolved residue of the political history of these

After September 11," en Arms Control Today, octobre, 2001.

countries. New threats¹⁴ (drugtraffickers, organized crime, terrorism, migrations) and above all, poverty as the basis for social conflict, are alarming issues not to be overlooked when evaluating Latin America's future.

Coupled with the need for political control, it is also required to include the armed forces in the government reform processes, in consonance with new public expending criteria. Therefore, the civil-military issue is part of a deeper insight of the security sector's reform, as related to economic development and the public sector's efficiency.

We, therefore, continue to wonder whether democracy is actually stable in Latin America or whether the military can put at stake political systems tainted by various features of institutional fragility. Some subjects remained for past as the social divisions over unsettled abuses by the military against human rights, others appear in the last years opening a concern about a return of praetorianism, as it happen in Venezuela or Bolivia.¹⁵ In this presentation we will review some issues related to the security agenda: the civic-military relations, the overlap between defense and police, the regional multilateral institutions and sub regional cooperation.

2. Society and the Military

14 One of the most confusing issues as regards present-day definition of Latin American defense policies is based on government's responses to the pressure exerted by USA on them to involve military in drugtraffickers control. In the case of some countries-Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, some Caribbean countries- this is a matter of State. Therefore, the answer must include the armed forces. In the case of other countries-Brazil, Chile, Uruguay- military shall be involved in external defense. A third group of countries is now accepting USA's discourse-Argentina, Paraguay, Ecuador-. Civil sector's fear that domestic control tasks development may involve the risk of re-militarizing society and weaken democracy. Now, anti terrorism is a new factor in the involvement of the armed forces for all the region.

The organizations in defense of human rights undertook a fantastic task of denouncing dictatorial governments. In democracy, a growing number of NGO's inherited its principles and disseminated the concept of accountability in order to strengthen the civilian society that was little accustomed to defending its achievements and rights. The citizens found new channels for exercising control over the acts of government, creating public opinion or public outcry regarding matters hindering their rights as citizens.¹⁶ Their active search for the truth and for overseeing the acts of government is a way of recovering the memory, preventing the reemergence of authoritarian trends.

From a government-centered concept, whereby sovereignty and defense of the nation were more important than the regular citizen, the focus shifted to the value of the individual. As a result, we do no longer hear about state security but human security, sustainable security. Moreover, the new security agenda has a strong social component: the displacement of people, ethnic conflicts, violations of human rights, degradation of the environment and endemic poverty, all part of the security concerns of developed countries, are essentially social matters. By the same token, the addition of these social matters as political stability problems and governance issues enlarges the security agenda, turning social matters into state security matters.¹⁷

Hence, the armed forces, which, for many years, considered their own co-citizens as their enemy, had to adapt to the idea of protecting the people, even becoming promoters of peace in operations outside their

15 Moisés Naim, "Democracy dictates Latin America's future", *Financial Times*, April 25 2002.

16 In Catalina Smulovitz and Enrique Peruzzotti, "Societal Accountability: The Other Side of Control," *Journal of Democracy*. 2000.

17 Ole Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritization," in Ronnie D. Lipschutz, *On Security*,

country. Peace-keeping operations have a strong civilian component.¹⁸ When a peace-keeping mission is carried out, the military finds itself operating in the same terrain as NGO's, health caretakers, observers from multilateral organizations and soldiers. The involvement of the military in the settlement of ethnic or religious crises forces them to assume the role of managers/assistants of government inefficiency. Humanitarian assistance, health care or combatants' demobilization tasks require them to undertake roles contrary to their war faring nature. Also, governments are forced to propose another political logic, projecting national strategic visions to the global scenario.

This philanthropic profile does not perfectly respond to the history of the military in Latin America, where civil-military clashes are still remembered due to the truncated ending of all proceedings for human rights abuses. This is the key difference when comparing with democratic transitions in Eastern Europe. There, they had to democratize armed forces that had been loyal to single-party regimes but were used to respond to political leaders. Instead, in Latin America there are still deficiencies in terms of the commitment of many armed forces to their governments: they maintain loyalty to their own institution rather than to the society that gives them the mandate to exercise a monopoly of force.

3. New Threats and Old Deficits

In the face of this reality, the new global security agenda issues

Columbia University Press, New York, 1995.

18 As way of example, we can remember that NATO, the largest military organization today has recently acknowledged that in the new missions set for the next millennium "civilian support to military operations is important for logistics, communications, medical support and public affairs" in "Strategic Concept of the Alliance", Washington Summit, 23-25 April 1999.

such as drug-trafficking, migrations, or terrorism, have in fact created an overlapping of defense matters and domestic security –and public order— matters.¹⁹ What appears in the global agenda as a progress towards public security, in the case of many Latin American countries may give rise to a reversal justifying military intervention in domestic affairs. This process is clearly understood when analyzing the drug trafficking issue.

The United States, have promoted military involvement in drug control, which in some cases is combined with guerrilla-related activities. Every time the United States has conducted bilateral or multilateral discussions on security matters, this issue has been included in the negotiations agenda.

At first, when this subject was introduced to the hemispheric agenda, the debates would focus on the inconvenience of using the armed forces in domestic affairs, in view of the fact that Latin American governments were making efforts to demilitarize the politics of the country. A second argument stated that security forces were capable of developing control activities against criminal phenomena. A third objection came from the Armed Forces themselves, as they feared an increase in corrupt practices by their people as had happened in police institutions. Finally, there was the challenge to the fact that the US was externalizing an internal problem –drug consumption and its consequences on US economy-- and engaging countries in a crusade where there were no dividends nor winners.

However, in recent years, drug-trafficking dimensions have grown - -unevenly in various regions but with more possibilities of challenging the

19 See Rut Diamint, Rut Diamint, editor, *Control civil y fuerzas armadas en las nuevas democracias latinoamericanas*, Editorial GEL, Buenos Aires, 1999, Chapter 1.

monopoly of state power and creating conflicts beyond country borders.²⁰ The risk we highlight is that in order to take part in the fight against drug-trafficking, local armed forces demand carrying out internal intelligence. In this manner, they acquire powers to make decisions affecting the people. For example, in the so-called “Plan Colombia”, one single method of combat has been defined: the farmers, carriers and the population at large –who do not use weapons—are confronted with military means. In other words, a complex conflict is simplified into an armed confrontation, overlapping of defense and security functions, which tends to confuse institutional controls even more and does not contribute to providing better solutions to the public’s lack of security.

Instead of redefining what is actually military within the new institutional game, the public space is militarized through the process of using the military organization, models and doctrine for police activities. In the face of the government’s deficiency to provide security, the citizens started to address the issue individually, as they do not trust that institutions are capable of maintaining public order. Police forces are not considered very reliable due to episodes of corruption and their relation with illegal practices such as drug trafficking, contraband and extortion.²¹

Thus, despite the effort to segregate, through their constitutions, domestic security and defense, several governments had to resort to the military to address drug trafficking, organized crime issues or to stop demonstrators who are discontent with the new social alienation they are

²⁰ Sabine Kurtenbach, “Tendencias de las políticas de seguridad en América Latina al principio del siglo XXI”, *Fuerzas Armadas y Sociedad*, Santiago, Chile, Año 16, No2 abril-junio, 2001.

²¹ For example, the Auditing Office of Rio de Janeiro state police was reported 1586 events in nine months of activity (60% involved military police and 40% civil police). In spite of these reports, none of these police people was arrested or dismissed from the service. News published on 22 December 2001, Folha de São Paulo. Out of the total reported events, 19.8% were related to extortion practices and 13.2% to violence against citizens.

undergoing. Deficiencies in the definition and civil management of defense policies, coupled with government requirements for the military to perform actions on the civil population recreate the old tradition of military control of the people, a practice that should be eradicated from democracies.

Therefore, the mandate through which civil missions are assigned to the military in Latin America is contradictory: in their actions aimed at preserving global or regional peace, the military must include civil missions, but when these are performed in the national arena, they pose a new challenge to the consolidation of democracy. The military end up performing domestic intelligence tasks, pursuing citizens and managing information under no parliamentary oversight.

4. Security and National Interest

The national strategic thinking is evidently encapsulated. Defense, as the framework for any strategic thinking, was elaborated by the armed forces and their civilian allies.²² There are no independent think tanks, academic studies, research centers, or political parties' teams devoted to ponder over national and regional insertion in a globalized environment. Maybe Brazil represents the exception, with the broad strategic programming emerging from the Presidency itself,²³ while in the rest of

22 "The problem for most Third World states has been compounded by two further factors. The first is the weakness of civil society and of political institutions, which precludes the emergence of strong checks on the security apparatuses' proclivity to usurp state power and resources. Second, the telescoping of the phases of state building into one phase, and the curtailment of the time available to complete the process, enhance the political importance of the coercive functions and of the agencies that perform these functions. Ayoob, Mohammed; *The Third World Security Predicament. State Making, Regional Conflicts, and the International System*; Lynne Rienner Publishers; 1995; page 193.

23 Meetings are being held to state the strategic program for Brazil for 2005, 2010 and 2020.

the countries players maintain the old ideas of traditional security agendas.²⁴

Southern Cone countries projection abroad, the modernization of their concept of the state and its role and the work of any formal or informal diplomatic actions simply lack a base in agreement with a global change agenda. All the actors involved in the field of defense continue to focus their perspective on the preservation of the national interest. In Argentina, this concept was used by the armed forces to justify their involvement in politics and to deem themselves as guarantors of the values of the “nation” threatened by the dark forces of international socialism. Now, with the end of the Cold War, the mix of factors affecting national interest is changing. Issues dealing with norms, identities, and culture are becoming more salient, and the extraterritorial dimension largely affects the notion of sovereignty and the past actions of the military.

Specifically, given the impact of globalization, the protection of national interest is merely a form of resistance to multilateral norms and to human right defense criteria. Giving primacy to individuals not only undermines the legal claim of the state to sovereignty, but also provides strong foundations for challenging the right to nonintervention in domestic affairs, which has been a leit motiv in Inter-American relations. The national interest, in many instances, is identical to the development of economic well being through the protection of domestic markets. For

24 A similar vision is presented by Cawthra for South Africa: However, with the exception of the process relating to the establishment of the Secretariat for Defence and the integration process, much of this policy making remained at the macro-level, and was very normative in nature: a declaration of intent rather than a framework for implementation. ‘Harder’ policy issues remained largely the preserve of the old bureaucracy and were more difficult for outsiders to penetrate: this pattern persisted in the next phases, as we will see. Furthermore, as noted above, democratisation of the process was limited as it remained the preserve of experts and elites. In Gavin Cawthra; "From ‘Total Strategy’ to ‘Human Security’: The Making of South Africa’s Defence Policy 1990-98," Copenhagen Peace Research Institute; March 1999.

many players, the notion of open markets has become a subject of considerable political controversy, amid the process of globalization and reduction of states' powers. For others, the national interest is linked to a broad concept of economic and social development within a peaceful environment made up by countries sharing the same rules and values.²⁵

Terrorism rebirth the fears of national dissolution although there is not a convincing enemy who could creates a friction over the state decision-making process, willing to take state power. As Paul Bremer pointed: "Terrorists take advantage of two important asymmetries. First, in the fight against terrorism, defenders have to protect all their points of vulnerability around the world; the terrorist has only to attack the weakest point... Secondly, the costs of launching a terrorist attack are a fraction of the costs required to defend against it."²⁶ This can be interpreted as well as the nation-state is still quite powerful to be menaced by terrorism, even if the damage is very violent.

5. International Institutions and Security

When in 1991, the member countries of the Organization Of American States(OAS) approved Santiago's commitment with Democracy and the Renewal of the Inter American System ²⁷ , they bet on a future based of expectations brought about by globalization, changes in the former Soviet Union, triumph of values in Western Capitalism and by the

25 This does not mean uniformity, nor does it mean eliminating the domestic market or the use of the armed forces, or dismissing state institutions. See Waltz, Kenneth N., "Globalization and American Power," *The National Interest*, Spring 2000.

26 L. Paul Bremer, III *A New Strategy for the New Face of Terrorism*, *The National Interest*, No. 65-S, 2002.

27 OAS, Resolution AG/7doc. 2734/91.

strong international community reaction to solve the Gulf crisis. The return to democracy fostered the creation of a discussion framework for security issues, through Hemispheric Security Commission (HSC). The objective was to build hemisphere political framework in order to discuss national defense policies.

At this conference in Santiago, some countries introduced the idea of forming a security system, as it was stated by Canada whose representatives further added, at that same meeting, that the objectives in the OAS Charter were achieved with the creation of a security cooperative system.²⁸

Rebirth of democracy also renewed the trust in diplomacy, both at the OAS and in other organisms of either formal or informal diplomacy. But this flood of initiatives and meetings did not produce a formalized system of agreements. Could there be a satisfactory security system for the whole region?

The building-up of a security system in common shall be necessarily based on the commitment by the democratic governments to abide by international regimes rules. But, it also needs them to agree on their definition of threats they have in common. The point where frailty is more evident when trying to build a system in common is a lack in clear rules.

Mexico's government, was more interested in carrying out a survey so as to move towards limitation and control of conventional weapons,

28 "Besides, for the hemispheric community future is basic for peace and security issues. Thus, the OAS Charter stresses this task. Security is multidimensional, it is focused on topics such as: weapons control, promotion of democracy, economic and social development promotion and respect for human rights. In order to be effective, it shall be built on the basis of a cooperative framework on our part." Minister Mrs. Mc. Dougall pronounced these words during the Plenary session of the OAS twenty-first ordinary general Meeting, in Chile, June

domestically called Tlatelolco II, which they considered more useful than establishing a confidence system. Other countries expressed the uselessness of the measures, pointing that OAS should concern itself with issues such as human rights or corruption, of a more urgent nature.

Together with tasks carried out by OAS initiatives were made on non-formal diplomacy, namely the Rio Group, which included among its declarations references to security issues. Rio Group emerged from experiences in political reconciliation which started in order to support peace negotiations in Central America, at the Contadora Group and the Support Group for the Contadora.²⁹ Esquipulas II, is seen as the sovereign expression of political willingness of Central American countries, to solve all conflicts beyond the East-West confrontation.

A complementary objective was to limit armed forces capabilities in new democracies, through a decrease in weapons expenses, trying to allot the amounts to economic development.

The Rio Group was the first regional organization to established as a condition that its member countries should evidence their democratic systems are stable so as to remain in the group, a criteria which would be included later on at the Santiago Treaty, also it was the first one to collectively declare the to repudiate the September eleven terrorist attacks.

At present, politics multilateral nature is not questioned, nor is the organization a central plan for resolution of conflicts and it is recognized

4th.,1991.

29 In 1983 Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela, the Contadora Group, meet to promote peace in Central America. In 1985 Brazil, Argentina, Peru and Uruguay form the Support Group to the Contadora. In 1986 they unite into only one group to continue giving support to efforts made to solve the crisis in Central America and give collective responses to Latin American affairs. In 1990, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay and a representation for Central America and

that these resources are one of the permanent shapes in the ever-changing international order. With the existence of different political styles with different processes of democratic consolidation and with the participation in global world of an uneven sphere, there is a common hemispheric interest to negotiate amongst American countries. But these are not national capacities to sustain the agreements for a long period of time.

5. Borders and Conflicts

Boundaries conflicts still create tension and originate claims on the part of armed forces. Historically in Latin American countries, security was designed by military governments whose concept was quite cohesive, supported on one hand by the National Security Doctrine, whereby the core threat was communist invasion, as part of society, and therefore the enemy was within our own borders. Secondly, threats were posed by neighboring countries, a thesis which stemmed from geopolitical speculations and the history of the creation of national states. Then, territorial affairs are closely related to the idea of the creation of a nation-state.

Pending borders conflicts are many: Bolivia-Chile for the former's claim of an exit to the sea; Venezuela-Guyana for neighboring lands; Colombia-Nicaragua for ownership of San Andres' Island. Though the resolution of these conflicts through an armed confrontation is out of the question, Peru-Ecuador's case arouse certain fears which made it impaired the trend of cooperative actions. What is more, their traditional missions continue to exist. As pointed out by Jorge Domínguez, "The use of military force to face bilateral disputes in the region continues. Since

the Caribbean Islands join the group.

1991, there has been, in Latin America and the Caribbean, at least one interstate conflict per year. The frequency of de facto military conflicts increased in the second half of the 90's. Although the worst event was the large scale war between Peru and Ecuador in 1995, interstate conflicts are also common in Central America and between Venezuela and Colombia.”³⁰ The military consider their main duty to be the defense of sovereignty and the territory, a concept also upheld by Argentina and Chile's Books on Defense, based on the idea that their basic function is to protect national interests.³¹

Despite reactions to the contrary, cooperative security concepts started playing an important role in speeches delivered by foreign affairs ministers and defense ministers in the hemisphere. Parallel to this, armed forces intensified their exchanges, through a series of activities making clear their organization structure and doctrine. In view of the possibility that political levels could carry out negotiations on security, where they would be excluded, they voted for updating their discourse, at least.

6. Summit of Ministries of Defense

The worst difficulty to organize defense as a state policy stems from the absence of state investments in public officials. Several countries in the region have defense schools, mostly managed by the armed forces. These schools do not train Ministry of Defense officials in order to achieve a permanent body of trained agents, but rather, a club whose members share the same ideas and interests. Some countries

30 Jorge Domínguez, *The Future of Inter-American Relations*. Working Paper, Inter-American Dialogue, Washington, 1999.

31 Chilean White Book on Defense, Chilean National Ministry of Defense, 1998, and White

created government schools to develop public administration personnel, and most of them have diplomat training schools. Moreover, universities do not teach any defense or strategy oriented programs. Therefore, a clear political decision, are required to revert the state's shortcomings in defense policy development.

The first Summit of Latin America Ministries of Defense, was held on the basis of a cooperative approach as regards security, but could not make the OAS the summoning organism. Due to all this and in view of several countries' resistance, USA issued the invitations. Despite the fact that the summons was open and negotiated, acting as host USA's opinion in the definition of the agenda for the meeting had greater weight, as Latin America was at dire straits to agree on a common position. The meeting at Williamsburg was the first summit of secretaries of State concerning security issues, with the goal of making national defense policies more transparent and cooperative. During said meeting, Ministries of Defense agreed on the subordination of armed forces in order to defend sovereign democratic states' interests.³²

In October, 1996, the Second Summit of Ministries of Defense was held in Bariloche, Argentina. Several Latin American Ministers of Foreign Affairs were opposed to a parallel diplomacy and criticized this new diplomacy of Summits which lacks in institutional character and makes it difficult to follow-up treaties and agreements. Though some delegations were reluctant to vote for the Summit to become a standing mechanism, a new conclave will be held at El Salvador, oriented to the evaluation and follow-up of proposals by all four working teams. The next

Book on National Defense, Ministry of Defense, Buenos Aires, 1999.

32 See "United States Security Strategy for the Americas ", Department of Defense, Office of International Security Affairs, September 1995, Pp. 4.

one was in Brazil and next one will be in Chile.

One of the criticisms to the mechanism is that it creates a parallel diplomacy to Foreign affairs Ministries. As in many cases, Ministers of Defense are more often than not military officials or retired officials, with a non-specialized bureaucracy, so the policies they outline often clash against the ones defined by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

7. Bilateral and Sub Regional Cooperation

Integration amongst public and private sectors in each of the countries in the region, and the states themselves is increasing. More frequent contacts could bring about some misunderstandings. The possibility that these misunderstandings may escalate to an armed confrontation is very remote. But to trust governments to keep to their good will could imply running a risk, which could be prevented creating a system of solutions to disputes avoiding other hostilities. Prevention in security conditions, regarded as one of the most constructive and sophisticated influence forms,³³ is based primarily on the mutual acceptance of the right to defend one's own territory as an exclusive military target and secondly, of the subordination of the national power to restrictions imposed by international and constitutional consensus.

The only way to reach an agreement accepted by all nations involved is that its spirit is really multilateral and that it is not perceived as a unilateral demand by the most powerful. A more fluent communication and transparency in political decisions set the appropriate framework for the development of cooperation.

33 Said references are taken from Jane E. Nolan's, *Global Engagement, Cooperation and*

Another way to achieve cooperation and trust has been that of signing bilateral security agreements. Argentina encouraged the signing up of an MOU with different states as it was difficult to move at a hemispheric level.³⁴ The "MOU between the Argentine Republic government and USA government on the transfer and protection of strategic technology" was signed on February 12, 1993, and it was the first of a series of further covenant.

MOU between Argentinean Republic and Chilean Republic for strengthen cooperation in security matters was signed on November 1995, after the OEA's Meeting on CSBMs, as evidence of the willingness³⁵ by both countries to develop cooperative relationships within the western framework of international security. Therefore, the representatives of the Chilean Republic and Argentinean Republic agree to sign these presents on the eighth day of November of the year 1995. These presents establish the creation of permanent Security Committee with the purpose of defining a work agenda to strengthen cooperation between Argentina and Chile on Security issues.³⁶

The MOU between Argentina and Brazil was signed after a long series of meetings and negotiations which started in 1991 and which were not acknowledged by Brazil, as its global policy determined it shall not

Security in the 21st. Century, The Brookings Institutions , Washington, D.C., 1994.

34 Argentina and Canada, Argentina and Great Britain have a consults mechanism on security issues where Foreign Affairs Ministry, Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces participate under very well defined rules.

35 Information supplied by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, document dated November 8th., 1995.

36 Committee's objectives are : Strengthening communication channels on the defense fields. A quick and appropriate report on military activities where the parties agree on giving prior notice, encouraging observers' participation. Promotion of academic activities to strengthen cooperation between the countries on security issues. Furthermore, approval was given to an Inter-consults Mechanism for both Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the higher command government authorities in Argentina and Chile.

bind itself to legal agreements limiting its own external influence capabilities. The first step taken was to coordinate security meetings amongst high level ranking officers of both countries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministries, Argentina's Ministry of Defense and Brazil's Bureau for Strategic Affairs, the Armed Forces. In April 1997, they executed the agreement and gave their mutual defense issues an official framework.³⁷

But MERCOSUR members have not built. Providing explanations about different timing or internal governability, the advantages that could strengthen the agreement, developing institutional bridges, were diluted. In 2001, intra block trade diminished 10% (between 16% of Uruguay and 5 % of Chile) and prospects for the agreement are under question.³⁸ Regional political systems are strongly presidential in nature and the Executive Power's decisions have been extremely discrete and have resulted in a low credibility by citizens.

8. Some Closing Notes

At any event, the shortcomings in controlling the armed forces do not imply a return to coups d'état. What we perceive today are different forms of military influence over political life. The situation has certainly improved. But there is no doubt that we are failing to establish a rational way to deal with defense issues, compared with any other state policy. For example, the human rights issue, far from disappearing, is very much alive in spite of the legal strategies by which the governments hoped to put an

37 MOUs of cooperation were signed as regards international defense and security between Argentina and Bolivia, on November 19th., 1996, it has been already agreed that Paraguay and Argentina shall sign in the future, but Uruguay is not interested in formalizing said agreement.

38 Strategic Survey, 2001/2002, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Londres, Mayo de 2002.

end to past responsibilities.³⁹ Amnesties or demobilization plans are not enough to wipe out memory or create confidence. Security forces are not considered impartial, responsible under the law, respectful of human rights or committed to democratic procedures.

Traditionally, the inability to channel society's demands through government institutions and political parties caused, in Latin America, a power vacuum that is filled by the institution best prepared to mediate in crises. The armed forces, due to their power supported by arms and their centralized organization, was the institution best fitted to fill that vacuum. If the present models lead to a higher degree of social fragmentation that leaves more demands unsatisfied, and to a state that transfers social welfare functions to the private sector, to civil associations and to armed force institutions, new power vacuums will arise and, in turn, new forms of military interference will appear. Consequently, the countries' institutional weakness tends to perpetuate military power. There has even been a revival of these authoritarian mechanisms in the reelection attempts made by presidents Menem, Cardoso, Fujimori, Chávez and Pérez Balladares. Authority is recovered as an inherited asset.

Military-to-military contacts have been a constant in relations between the United States and Latin America. In the past, these preferential entails were caused by the serious distrust in Latin-American governmental institutions, and to the recognizable disorder in the political

39 In Argentina, the subject revives due to the trials of military men responsible for the systematic and programmed disappearance of the children of "desaparecidos" (disappeared, missing persons). In this case, the reduction of the universe of the "desaparecidos" allowed to find a legal resource to override the amnesty decreed by the Menem administration. In Chile, the trial of General Pinochet challenges the government's actual chances to succeed in suppressing Pinochet's immunity and trying him in ordinary courts. In Uruguay, the investigation to determine the situation of Argentine poet Juan Gelman's son and daughter-in-law led to investigating six Army officers to have them tried by civilian justice. In Bolivian, the Banzer administration is paying no heed to the subject. Guatemala is only now starting to

history of these nations. More recently, predominance of military-to-military connections was ascribed to State Department's **disinterestedness** on hemispheric relations: the consolidation of democracies in Latin America and the decrease of internal and neighboring conflicts eliminated a concern in United States external policy.

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) contain a series of proposals about general politic: incentives for education fight against poverty, improvement of institutional performance. But with the Summits of the Americas the only advances recognized are those referred to market opening. As counterpart of this new approach to the hemisphere, what is left is a lack of general policies for the region. Then, the most consistent proposals to the continent have departed from the Pentagon and not from the Department of State.

Meanwhile, Latin America has not been able to establish a regional security policy, convinced that previous mechanisms do not respond to present challenges, but still confused about the objectives and the criteria for new hemispheric institutions.

The conflicts perceived in the region today are related to the stability of democratic regimes, which may be threatened by a weak supremacy of political institutions. This weakness can be seen in the absence of a definition and conduct of security and defense policies; or in the threats that guerrilla or terrorist groups can make to the political order; the ability of non-state players to threaten governments; or in the cooptation and infiltration of corrupt officials. In the meantime, in Latin America, what prevails in the autonomous national state, with a low commitment to cooperation in defense and this is coupled with military

disclose the atrocities committed.

prerogatives that continue and have not yet been eliminated by democracies.

MERCOSUR implies a new security agenda among the countries that share goods and promote a common agenda.⁴⁰ Its aim is to promote regional leadership and consensus on economic matters, to consolidate democracy in the countries involved. This is a slow process. Although there is the perception that there is a political public sphere that interacts at a regional level, internal disputes for the control of the state still prevail as well as sectors where the economy has not given room for confidence (the ascendancy of the military in many countries has contributed to an ethos adverse to human rights, integration and democratic values).

Among those who show a positive expectation towards integration, security matters are excluded from the agenda of commitments. The business community, NGO's, academic conferences and, to a certain extent, congress members have built regional ties, without including security matters. Any issue discussed ends up with the desire to place the military outside the political arena, but there is no strategic look on the roles that, legally or de facto, are played by the military.

The creation of a regional community is a voluntary decision of the participating countries, with the purpose of enhancing the economic welfare of their people. There is no cooperation and development without common rules and values. There is no integrated regional market with mutual security threats. For that reason, there is a close relationship between the defense policy which is a dimension of the security policy, and of this national security policy with regional security.

40 Rut Diamint, "Debates sobre políticas de seguridad en Argentina," en Rut Diamint, editora, La OTAN y los Desafíos en el MERCOSUR. Comunidades de seguridad y estabilidad democrática, Nuevohacer, GEL, Buenos Aires, 2001.

Also, in the region it is necessary to give a response to the contradiction stated above. On the one hand, between a wide security agenda, including social order matters and which tends to be a democratization conception and, on the other hand, the fact that this enlargement may lead to the re-militarization of Latin American countries which have deficiencies in managing their defense policies and settling the civil-military question.