

Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Issues in Latin America:

Evolution and Recent Developments

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Introduction

In the second part of the 20th century, the world's attention focused twice on Latin America, first during the Cuban crisis in 1962 and then during the conflicts in Central America in the Eighties and Nineties. The situation there had a direct impact on the general balance of the planet. It was a hot spot. Today this region is not on the agenda anymore: it no longer represents a global threat in terms of security.

It should nevertheless not be neglected for the following two reasons. First, the evolution of Latin America in the security field, from the period of independence to nowadays, compared with Europe and the rest of the world, is original. Second, huge efforts are presently being done at the hemispheric and regional levels in order to consolidate peace and promote solutions to the so-called 'transnational' threats.

1. Latin America is very often presented from a historical point of view as an exception compared to Europe and as an example for the rest of the world when one deals with traditional security issues.

First, contrary to Europe, it has been a relatively peaceful part of the world during the 19th century, after the wars of Independence and during the 20th century until the 60's. Moreover, a good quantity of wars which broke out in Latin America were to a great extent 'imported', due to external causes, for example the Cold War, contrary once again to Europe where the rivalries

between the Great Powers have always been at the origin of the conflicts.

Second, the Latin Americans, who progressively established from 1967 the first regional nuclear free zone in the world, took two initiatives in favor of peace at the end of the 80's, beginning of the 90's, which are unique and an example for the world. The first initiative was that Brazil and Argentina put an end to their nuclear rivalry. The second initiative was that the Central and South American countries decided to join their efforts in order to find a solution to the conflicts in Central America due to the Cold War and help to restore peace in that region. Here the Latin American example is also invaluable: usually one sees external powers intervene in a region in order to establish order or to prevent a conflict. In this case, we have the reverse: regional powers join together in order to stop a conflict which is caused by an external intervention.

Today, this part of the world is relatively peaceful after going through a long period of tensions and conflicts which broke out in the Sixties and lasted until the end of the Eighties - mainly in the Caribbean and in Central America but also in the Southern Cone. In the Caribbean and Central America, these tensions and conflicts were a consequence of the Cold War. In the Southern Cone, they were the result of the foreign territorial ambitions and rivalries of the military regimes which appeared during that same period.

Although the danger of new interstate wars is discarded for the moment, Latin America is more than ever confronted with 'transnational' threats and human security challenges. These problems are not at all new to this continent, contrary to Europe where they developed strongly only after the Cold War. But they are more and more serious. The best case is illustrated by Colombia where an intrastate conflict has been simmering for years and has now become the major security issue in the Western Hemisphere.

2. Tremendous work was done in the Nineties after the end of the Cold War in order to consolidate democracy which is a condition of stability on the sub-continent, and to try to avoid the repetition in the future of the difficult times of the past. The Organization of American States (OAS), which in particular set up an impressive number of CSBM's (confidence and security building measures), was very instrumental to that

effect but other regional organizations were also very active.

Parallel to that, the necessity of dealing with 'non-traditional' issues, mainly drug trafficking and terrorism¹, the latter especially after 9/11, became more and more of a priority.

Moreover, the United States modified its strategy in the region and adapted its military posture to the new challenges.

These achievements are the result of both the democratic wave which extended to the whole of Latin America (except Cuba) in the 80's and of the revival of the old 'Pan American' tradition of respect for international law and regional cooperation which had been seriously put in danger during the Cold War.

Nevertheless, three elements make this process more complicated. The first one is the strong asymmetry which exists between the United States and the Latin American countries in general, and in the field of security in particular, and the misperceptions this creates. The second element is the tendency of some countries and in particular Brazil to strengthen as much as possible the specificity of South America in opposition to the United States. Third, the approaches of Latin America and the United States are diverging on a series of security issues, like drugs or terrorism.

The OAS ministerial meeting which will be held in May 2003 in Mexico should shed some light on the possibility of further progress towards common positions.

As to human security, which is an even more difficult question to deal with, it has probably not been tackled yet with enough strength as a top priority although governments are more and more conscious of its importance for the stability of the whole region.

The Evolution

The "Myth of a Peaceful Past" and the reality

¹ The notion of 'transnational threats' or 'non-traditional issues' includes many things: drug trafficking, money laundering, counterfeiting, organized crime in general, environmental issues, etc.. This paper will deal only with the two main threats: drug trafficking and terrorism.

From a historical perspective one can say that there are two main differences between Latin America and Europe regarding the origins and nature of wars. On one hand, Latin America definitely has a more peaceful record than Europe, and on the other, foreign intervention unlike in Europe was at the origin of numerous conflicts.

1. Since the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648 and later on during the 19th and 20th centuries, the realities which dominated Europe have almost always been power politics and rivalries between the Great Powers. Each time these wars led to the creation of a new European order and new borders. This is why, after the Napoleonic Wars, a new order was set up and new frontiers decided upon in Vienna in 1815, and, after the first World War, there was the Versailles Treaty and new frontiers.

Latin America has also had difficult times. The movement of Independence which started at the beginning of the nineties was not an easy one and led to various wars. The process of state formation together with the legal ambiguities of boundaries and competences inherited from Spain was painful. Moreover, three wars which could be very legitimately called 'imperialistic wars'², were really terrible: the War of the Triple Alliance which lasted from 1864 to 1870 between Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay on one side and Paraguay on the other, in which the latter lost a good part of its territory and population; the War of the Pacific in 1879-83 when Chile deprived Bolivia of sea access and seized Peruvian territory; and the Chaco War in 1932 between Paraguay and Bolivia which was won by Paraguay but after terrible fights and tremendous human losses on both sides.

² As Andrew Hurrell states in "Security in Latin America", *International Affairs*, 74, 3 (1998) p. 535: "Neo-Marxists and Neo-Dependency theorists see the international relations of the region as reflecting developments in global capitalism, with first Britain and then the United States intervening in and manipulating local relationships in pursuit of their economic interests". This theory could very well apply to the War of the Triple Alliance where Britain probably played an important role in pushing the countries of the Coalition (Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay) against Paraguay which was at that time a 'closed and autarchic' country reluctant for foreign investment. One explanation of the Chaco War was that it was triggered by a fight for natural resources between colonial powers.

In spite of these facts, some scholars have developed the Myth of a Peaceful Past³ which gained strength because it corresponded to reality to a certain extent. Latin America did become relatively peaceful after 1880⁴, and with the exception of the Chaco War, remained so up to the 1960's. A statistic illustrates this point very well: only 27% of borders⁵ resulted from wars in Latin America, a modest figure if we compare it with the huge and permanent changes which took place in Europe over the centuries. Moreover, most of the conflicts which broke out in this region during this period and which were the consequence of uncertain borders inherited from the colonial period, were limited in time, involved diplomatic action as much as force and did not cause too much human loss, if compared with conflicts elsewhere⁶ (see annex 1).

2. Latin America though became more prone to conflict in the 1960's⁷. The reasons for this situation can be found in the geopolitical ambitions of the military regimes in the Southern Cone; the struggle for natural resources which drastically increased the stakes of many border disputes; and also, although this opinion is not

unanimously shared, a lesser control of the United States on Latin America during and after the Vietnam war because of its difficulties there.

But these wars have always been limited in time and in human losses, as the case had generally been before the 60's. Other territorial disputes which arose during this period were settled by negotiations and mediation or never led to wars.

Consequently and clearly, the interstate tensions and conflicts which took place after the 60's, mainly as a result of the territorial ambitions of the military regimes, do not modify the general picture of Latin America as a relatively peaceful zone of the world.

In fact, the real security problem of the Sixties was not so much the consequence of interstate rivalries but rather of the East-West confrontation in the Caribbean and Central America. More generally, and contrary to Europe where wars have always been triggered by the Europeans themselves, foreign intervention has always been a major cause of wars in all of Latin America since it won its independence at the beginning of the 19th century. It had to face 'colonial' or 'imperialistic' conflicts such as the failed attempt of France's Napoleon III to create a Latin Empire in Mexico and the war between the United States and Mexico in which this country lost enormous tracks of territory. Finally, the United States 'freed' the Cubans from Spain after their victory in 1898 upon the latter, but took its place. Latin America became progressively an exclusively American zone of influence in the 19th and 20th centuries and the United States made numerous military interventions mainly in Central America and the Caribbean, their 'backyard', in order to promote or protect their economic interests. The East-West confrontation and the subsequent American military direct or indirect actions which took place in the last decades (in Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador), this time for 'ideological' reasons, are, at least to a certain extent, the ultimate form of this long interventionist tradition in Latin America .

An Important Contribution to Peace

Two specific processes took place in this region in the second part of the 20th century. Both brought original responses to contemporary worldwide issues and highly contributed to peace.

³ Walter Little, "International conflict in Latin America", *International Affairs*, 1987/4, p 589-601.

⁴ Walter Little, "International Conflict in Latin America", *International Affairs*, 1987/4, p. 594.

⁵ Michel Foucher, *Fronts et frontières. Un tour du monde géopolitique*. Fayard, 1994, p.142.

⁶ As Andrew Hurrell noted in "Security in Latin America", *International Affairs*, 74, 3 (1998) p.532: "Geographical constraints and limited resources and state capacities are significant factors in that pattern. But so too is the Latin American predilection for international law, not because it obviates conflict, but because it helps provide a framework of rules for its management and limitation."

⁷ From the 60's onwards, the disputes and conflicts which have broken out in Latin America have been the following: war between El Salvador and Honduras in July 1969; dispute between Chile and Argentina over the possession of the Beagle canal in 1977; fight between the U.K. and Guatemala for the control of Belize; dispute between Colombia and Venezuela over sovereignty of the Gulf of Venezuela; dispute between Guyana and Venezuela on the Essequibo; military clashes between Peru and Ecuador in 1981 and later over possession of the Condor range of mountains; dating back to the time of the Pacific War, a claim by Bolivia involving Chile on an exit to the sea; a dispute between Nicaragua and Colombia over possession of the San Andrés and Providence Islands and the Roncador Banks; sharp border conflicts between Mexico and Guatemala between 1980 and 1983; border conflicts arising from aggression against Nicaragua, mainly with Honduras and Costa Rica during the Civil War; conflict between Argentina and the U.K. for possession of the Falklands.

1. The first process, which was related to nuclear disarmament, developed in two stages: the conclusion of the Tlatelolco Treaty in 1967 which established the first nuclear-weapon free zone in the world; and the *rapprochement* between Argentina and Brazil in the Eighties and the Nineties, which put an end to their nuclear rivalry.

a) In October 1962 the Cuban missile crisis broke out. Latin America realized that “without being a direct actor in the conflict between the two blocks, it could have nonetheless been affected by the destructive consequences of a nuclear confrontation”⁸. The Presidents of five Latin American countries – Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Mexico – announced in April 1963 their intention to work together in order to conclude a multilateral agreement prohibiting the production, the stockpiling or the testing of nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles. In 1964 a preparatory commission was convened and chaired by Mexico. It produced the Tlatelolco Treaty which was signed by 21 countries in February 1967 and entered into force in 1969. Two additional Protocols were open to the signature of the five nuclear powers.⁹ The latter signed it between 1968 and 1973 and ratified it also between 1968 and 1973 depending on the country.

b) But it took a few more years for important countries like Argentina and Brazil to become full contracting parties to the Treaty. Both countries had signed it in 1967. Brazil ratified it in 1968 and Argentina in 1994, like Chile. They waived the reservations they were entitled to make under article 28 of the Treaty only that same year, like Chile.

The reasons why this process was so long is that both countries had built-up, especially during the military regimes, a civil and military nuclear capacity which could have given them the possibility, like for example India, Pakistan or Israel, to develop nuclear weapons in a near future. They also considered the Non Proliferation Treaty signed in 1968 as discriminatory.

⁸ See: “Tlatelolco turns thirty”.

<http://www.iaea.org.at/wordatom/periodicals/Bulletin/Bull394/tlatelolco.html>

⁹ See: <http://www.opanal.org/opanal/Tlatelolco/Firmas.htm>

The coming of democratic regimes in both countries almost at the same time, in 1979 in Brazil and in 1983 in Argentina, produced a positive effect.¹⁰ They both understood the interest they had in a *rapprochement* in all fields, including security. They were also willing to reduce the influence of the military and control them better in order to enhance democracy in their respective countries: the nuclear programs were partially managed by them in both Brazil and Argentina in great secrecy. Finally, they wanted to project a new and open image to the world.

That process was eased by the setting-up in 1991 of a common agency in charge of accounting and control of nuclear materials and installations which signed an agreement with the IAEA in 1994. Parallel to that, both countries also acceded to the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states. They also signed together with Chile an agreement prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons in 1991.

The nuclear competition in South America never reached, anywhere near, the same intensity as that between other countries, such as India and Pakistan. It appears also that Argentina and Brazil developed their nuclear programs as a way to raise their international profile and keep the nuclear option open in case of need, rather than as a means to introduce nuclear weapons into their defence strategies.

But this development did not happen easily. Some members of the armed forces and the bureaucracy were opposed to conciliatory measures, particularly the idea of a bilateral monitoring system. Moreover, it was difficult to convince some sectors of the nuclear community to accept the control of the IAEA. These reasons

¹⁰ See: 1) Paulo S. Wrobel, “From Rivals to Friends: the Role of Public Declarations in Argentina–Brazil Rapprochement” in Report 27, May 1999 in *Declaratory Diplomacy: Rhetorical Initiatives and Confidence Building*, The Henry L. Stimson Center: www.STIMSON-ORG/PUBS/CBM/CBMGEN pp. 135-151; 2) “Nuclear Confidence-building between Argentina and Brazil. Confidence-building measures project”, The Henry L. Stimson Center, 12.07.01. <http://www.STIMSON-ORG/CBM/LA/LACHRON.HTM>; 3) “Nuclear Rapprochement: Argentina, Brazil and the Non-Proliferation Regime”, John R. Redick, Julio C. Carasales and Paulo S. Wrobel, 1994, Center for Strategic International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, *The Washington Quarterly* 18: 1.

explain why the whole process took so many years.

They also stress the importance of the result reached which is often given as an example of how countries of the third world on the 'nuclear threshold' could proceed in order to put an end to their nuclear race.

2. The second positive development which took place in Latin America also in the eighties¹¹ was when some Central American countries (Mexico, Colombia, Costa Rica, etc...), which were joined by some important South American ones (Argentina, Brazil, etc...) at a later stage, decided to act together in order to prevent a further deterioration in the Central American conflicts and to propose their own solutions in order to restore peace in the region.

This initiative was decided in reaction to Ronald Reagan's policy in Central America where he took a tough stance against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and the Salvadorian movement of national liberation and 'internationalised' the conflict by launching a low intensity warfare. In doing so, Ronald Reagan was opposing Jimmy Carter's softer policy in the same region.

It was the first time in history that Latin American countries joined forces and acted independently from, and to a certain extent against, the United States in a foreign policy matter.

This approach was based on a different analysis of the situation in these countries. For the United States, and more precisely for R. Reagan, the origin of the conflicts in that region was directly related to the Cold War and to the Cuban and Soviet strategy and support. The Latin Americans thought that the revolutionary situation in Central America was due to social injustice and that the Sandinista regime and the Salvadorian Revolutionary Movement were basically nationalist and pluralist movements. For them, the only solution to the conflict was not, like Ronald Reagan, more war, but free elections, the establishment of democracy and the setting up of the conditions for development and social justice. The same analysis was made by some European social-democratic or socialist governments in Europe which supported them.

¹¹ L'Amérique centrale 1979-1990: de l'internationalisation à la régionalisation des crises locales. Georges Couffignal <http://www.conflicts.org/Numeros/08COUFIG.html>.

The Latin American countries proposed various peace plans and their proposition would finally prevail. It must be added that the general conditions had changed in the region because of the US military help to the Contras and to the Salvadorian Government and that the two revolutionary movements were no longer supported by the Soviet Union which had its own problems. Free elections controlled by international observers were held in Nicaragua and El Salvador and led to the defeat of the Sandinistas, the victory of Mrs Chamorro, and the transformation of the FMLN, the opposition guerrilla movement in El Salvador, into a political party which would progressively be integrated into the political life of its country.

But the most important consequence of this process was that the Latin American countries got used to dealing with their own political problems far more independently from the United States and created to that effect the so-called Rio Group which became very quickly their largest and most important political forum.

Latin America: a peaceful haven in today's world?

1. With the end of the Cold War and the conflicts in Central America, Latin America became progressively one of the most peaceful regions in the world. An interstate conflict broke out in 1995 between Peru and Ecuador over a disputed section of the Amazon river basin. But it was a brief one and it was solved through mediation (see annex 2). Some ongoing border disputes continue to simmer but at relatively low levels,¹²

¹² It is difficult to know the exact number of territorial disputes and potential conflicts which exist today in Latin America. It seems that there is no agreement on the figures. According the US State Department, 8 land boundaries or boundaries segments were in dispute as of March 1999. (See USIP Peaceworks 27. Territorial disputes and their resolution.):

http://www.usip.org/pubs/pworks/pwks27/chap1_27.html. A document of the Socialist International: "perspectives on conflict and securing peace" of June 2001, enumerates only 3 ongoing border disputes (between Guatemala and Belize; Venezuela and Guyana; Nicaragua and Honduras). In his statement of November 6, 2001 before the Preparatory Meeting for the Summit-Mandated Conference on Security, the US Permanent Representative to the OAS, Amb. Noriega, stated that: "over 15 territorial and border disputes continue to exist in our region, with some potentially deteriorating into dangerous confrontations."

military spending went down.¹³ At the end of 1997 the US ban on the sale to that region of sophisticated weaponry did not have a negative impact on the military parity which existed between the major powers in that region¹⁴ (see annex 3). The strengthening of democracies and the creation of trade blocs in the 80's - 90's in Latin America contributed to an atmosphere of growing trust and cooperation. Moreover, the importance of the military diminished dramatically in the Latin American countries and societies. Notoriously they had played an important role in the political life of this part of the world during the 20th century. Depending on the periods, they were either 'Reformists' and 'Nationalists' or supporting the interests of the local oligarchies and the United States. Today the threat of dictatorships and military interference has not disappeared completely, as it has become clear in some countries, but this model of society and government became definitely old-fashioned and ill adapted to the new times.

2. Does this positive evolution mean that Latin America can be considered today as a Security Community? Not really according to Andrew Hurrell¹⁵ who distinguishes very rightly the situation in the Southern Cone from that of the Northern part of Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean. For him it is possible to speak

of "an emerging Security Community around the Mercosur countries" due particularly to the *rapprochement* described earlier between Brazil and Argentina. In effect, the author states that the progress registered in this region in the field of Cooperative Security, such as reducing tensions or threat perception via confidence-building measures, have been only of a negative kind up to now, which is not enough. Advances towards more activist components, such as agreeing on developing plans for joint action or constructing a collective security system, have been only modest. And a real 'security community' cannot be based solely on instrumental interest – driven cooperative strategies: it should go beyond this stage "in order to be rooted in the reality". No plans "for joint action have been developed, no collective system has yet been constructed".¹⁶ Also, regional economic governance is weak: Brazil opposes supranational structures. In addition, the foreign policies of Argentina and Brazil diverge on security issues: Argentina was granted by the United States the status of special non-NATO ally which is reserved to its very close friends, like Israel, while Brazil is acting as a great power trying to consolidate around itself a South American sphere of influence.

A. Hurrell seems hesitant to include Chile in this 'emerging security community'.¹⁷ He recalls that this country has a long history of territorial conflicts with Argentina which goes back to the

¹³ Latin American arms imports declined from around 8% of the world total in 1981 to 6.5% in 1987 and to 3.8% in 1991. Latin American arms exports declined from 1.5% in 1987 to 0.37% in 1991. See: A. Hurrell in "An emerging security community in Latin America?" p. 259 in *Security Communities* edited by Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, Cambridge University Press, first published in 1998, reprinted in 2000.

¹⁴ See the following documents: 1) "Pulling the strings: The US military in Latin America after the Cold War" p.12, prepared by Matthew Yarrow for the Latin America/Caribbean program of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Peacebuilding unit: <http://afsc.org/lac/strings/default.htm>. 2) "Report on the security needs of Latin America and the impact of lifting the existing US ban on high technology sales in the region": <http://ciponline.org/facts/hightechrp.pdf>. 3) "International Policy Report – Just the facts 2001-2002. A quick tour of US defense and security relations with Latin America and the Caribbean", A. Isacson and J. Olson. It is also stated in this last document that it will not be before 2001 that "10 F-16 C/D fighter planes and two KC-135 tanker aircraft were sold to Chile", that roughly "700 million dollars sale was the first since the beginning of the 22 years old policy banning" decided by J. Carter in 1977 and that "one exception had been made in the early 1980's when F16 were sold to Venezuela".

¹⁵ See: Andrew Hurrell in Op. cit. pp. 228- 261.

¹⁶ The US Secretary of Defence, William Cohen, stated during the IVth Defence Ministerial in October 2000 in Manaus that "in some regions, such as the Southern Cone, countries have moved beyond confidence and security building measures and are now implementing normal defence cooperation measures ranging from joint exercises to the possibility of cooperative defence acquisitions".

¹⁷ The positive developments highlighted by Andrew Hurrell in Op. cit. are the following: the Treaty of friendship and cooperation with Argentina in 1984 which settled the Beagle dispute; most of the other territorial disputes have been settled; Chile participated in a number of CSBM's; there were growing contacts with other military establishments; the democratic developments which took place in the country in the 1880's and the *Rapprochement* of Chile with Mercosur and NAFTA which are important in this context. The following documents should be added to this list: 1. the joint declaration between Argentina, Chile and Brazil on the complete prohibition on chemical and biological weapons ("the Mendoza agreement") of September 1991, (Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay have since also signed this agreement) and 2. the joint presidential declaration between Argentina and Chile on confidence and security building which mentions in particular the 1998 agreement delineating the border in the Fitz Roy and Cerro Daudet area.

1820's and brought the two countries close to war in the 1970's over the islands in the Beagle Canal. Although he recognizes that many positive developments took place in the Southern cone during the last 20 years, he also stresses that domestic political support for historically contested boundaries has not been easy: the continued political role of the Chilean Military; their little interest in peace-keeping operations and discussion of new security issues; and a doctrine which remains focused on the traditional role of power projection and the protection of borders. According to him, Chile's position seems, consequently, still 'ambiguous'.

Regarding the region between this "emerging loosely coupled security community" and the "consolidated community involving Canada, the USA and Mexico", that is to say the Northern part of South America, Central America and the Caribbean, there are, according to A. Hurrell, "very serious difficulties with the notion of even a loosely coupled security community". He gives various reasons for this among which the specific border conflicts, tensions fed by guerrillas, drugs and illegal immigration, intra-state violence between Colombia and Venezuela.

It is true that most of the border disputes in Latin America which remain unsolved are located in this region and that guerrillas, drugs and social violence are quite widespread within it. But to be more specific the main security problem today in that region and in Latin America in general is the situation in Colombia with its spill over effect not only to Venezuela but also to Brazil and the whole northern part of South America. It is also true that non-traditional threats and human security issues are very much present in this region. But they are also one of the big concerns in the rest of Latin America.

The 'non-traditional' threats more present than ever

Latin America, where there are no more intra-state wars, faces nevertheless important challenges which affect the security of individuals as well as of States. These so-called 'non-traditional' threats, relatively new to us, are to a certain extent old ones in Latin America, which has always had a negative record in human security issues and in transnational organized crime.

1. First, this part of the world has a very long and strong tradition of violence; a recent example, and this is only one of various possible ones, is Central America which has been devastated by the Cold War conflicts of the eighties and has still not recovered .

a) Violence was present long before the conquest of the region, in the Inca, Maya and Aztec Empires.¹⁸ The Spanish Conquest was, as we know, except in some cases, terrible for the Indian populations which were literally decimated by violence and sickness. Before the Conquest, Europe had 100 million inhabitants and the whole American Continent, according to estimates, between 40 and 60 million. In 1810, the Indian population in Latin America had dropped to 8 million. This explains why more and more Africans were 'imported' to Latin America where they replaced the decimated Indian population in another act of violence.

Whereas interstate conflict has generally been limited in contemporary Latin American history, as we saw, intra-state violence has, on the contrary, always been a great problem. Scholars generally distinguish at least three forms of violence in that region: violence exerted by the State, the military, e.g. by the dominating classes against the lower classes; 'revolutionary' violence, for which, as we know, Latin America is a good example; and 'structural' violence linked to social injustice and poverty but also and more so to criminality.¹⁹

In fact, the first two forms of violence, the one exerted by the State and the revolutionary one, have considerably diminished in recent years. But violence has globally increased in Latin America because of poverty and criminality. In the year 2000, the crime rate in Latin America was the double of the world average (22.5 per 1000 versus 10.7).²⁰

¹⁸ Alain Rouquié, *Amérique Latine. Introduction à l'Extrême-Occident*, Nouvelle Edition, 1998, p.59.

¹⁹ Alain Rouquié, *Amérique Latine. Introduction à l'Extrême-Occident*, Nouvelle édition, 1998, p. 313.

²⁰ As Andrew Hurrell observes in "Security in Latin America", *International Affairs*, 74, 3 (1998) p. 542, "The declining capacity of the state to enforce the legitimate order has led to the privatization of violence ... but also to the privatization of security". He adds: "we should be somewhat cautious of interpreting these problems through the extreme and exaggerated categories of 'failed states' and 'coming anarchy' that are often applied to other parts of the developing world. There has not been a sudden move in the

b) Almost a decade after the end of the Cold War and the terrible conflicts which took place in Central America, only a “certain kind of peace” prevails,²¹ despite considerable international aid and attention especially from some European countries and some NGO’s.

Of course, there is no open warfare. Political opportunities opened up, progress has been made on some key issues and voices of women and indigenous peoples are heard in an unprecedented way.

However, the legacy of the Cold War continues to weigh heavily upon the region. Many uncertainties loom over the prospects for deepening the process of democratization, development and peace-building.

This situation is due to many reasons. First, the losses due to the conflict are huge: 300,000 people were killed, mostly civilians; the region was heavily mined during the conflict in Nicaragua (more than 85,000 mines are still believed to be buried in Central America, the vast majority in Nicaragua); and two million people were uprooted internally or forced to flee their country. Second, the process of finalizing the peace agreements was very long and the task of post-war reconstruction and recovery enormous. Third, the political violence of the eighties was replaced by a more social and multifaceted one due to demobilization but also to increasing poverty. In Nicaragua, the main problem was that of the reintegration into civil life of the combatants on both sides. In El Salvador, the yearly average of deaths in the years following the end of the war was higher than in the war itself. Poverty remains very high in the region, particularly in rural areas and in the indigenous population (75% of the population is poor in Guatemala and 58% extremely poor). The new assembly industries which developed provide low wages and concern a small part of the population only.

2. Second, transnational criminality in its various forms like drug trafficking, small arms trafficking, money laundering or counterfeiting

region away from the condition of secure and stable states. Latin American states, even relatively effective and efficient ones, have never been particularly striking examples of Weberian rationality.”

²¹ Jenny Pearce, “From Civil War to ‘Civil Society’: Has the end of the Cold War brought peace to Central America?” *International Affairs*, 74, 3 (1998) 587-615.

have existed for a long time in Latin America and the Caribbean, certainly long before the end of the Cold War.

a) The collapse of the Communist system and the failure of various states in Europe opened the way to huge transnational crime on this continental space. In Latin America, the conditions have always been ideal in that respect: extended and permeable national borders; a huge territorial space underpopulated and consequently difficult to control; and very often, corrupt local institutions, mainly police, army and justice. The incentives have also been important: the huge North American or European markets for drugs; the Brazilian or Argentinian markets for smuggling or counterfeiting; and some Latin American guerrilla movements or even in non-Latin American countries (like South Africa during Apartheid) for arms sales, especially small arms. But the new element is that all these activities are in fact closely interconnected through mafias which are becoming more and more international.²²

b) Many examples can be given to illustrate these trends. Let us take just one, most preoccupying and more than ever on the agenda: the “Three Frontiers Zone” at the border of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina in the Southern Cone where the Paraguayan city of Ciudad del Este and the Brazilian city of Foz de Iguacu are located. This zone has become in the last 30 years one of the most active areas in the world for transnational crime.²³

The whole process started with the creation of Ciudad del Este in 1957, formerly named Puerto Presidente Stroessner, by the dictator. This creation of the city was part of his policy of *rapprochement* with Brazil which he promoted at that time. The city developed rapidly but in an

²² See: “Curbing illicit trafficking in small arms and sensitive technologies: an action-oriented agenda.” A UNIDIR publication (1998) edited by Gasparini Alves, Pericles and Cipollone, Daiana Belinda. The following points are, among others, studied in it: the interrelationship between illicit trafficking in small arms, drug trafficking and terrorist groups in South America (33-47) and in Central and Northern Southern America (49-76); the case of Peru – terrorism and drug trafficking (88-92); and the situation of small arms in South America.

²³ On the “Three Frontiers”, various Argentinian newspapers: *Clarín.com*, Oct. 3 and Nov. 2001; www.terra.com.ar/canales/politica/27/27671 Oct. 11 2001; *La Republica* Oct. 10 2001; *El Dia*, Oct. 30 2001; *La Nacion* Nov. 19, 2001; *Semana.com* Dec. 7 2001.

anarchical way, boosted by the so-called 'triangular trade' which consisted in importing goods from other countries to Paraguay, where the import taxes were very low, and re-exporting them illegally to Brazil where they were very high. Ciudad del Este – and also to a certain extent Foz de Iguacu – became progressively an outlaw zone, hardly controlled by the Paraguayan police where other kinds of traffic like drugs, money laundering, counterfeiting, arms trade, etc... developed in a dramatic way. In the 1990's, the informal business in that city was, according to various sources, comparable to that of Hong Kong.

The creation of Mercosur at the beginning of the Nineties which led to a certain extent to the suppression of trade tariffs, reduced the comparative advantages of Ciudad del Este. However the general situation of the city went on worsening for various reasons: the presence of an important Arab Community established there for a long time which encouraged many Lebanese citizens including some 'retired' terrorists to take refuge in Ciudad del Este; and the absence of any control which made this city a perfect shelter for the Chinese mafias which were operating in Hong Kong and who could not stay there after it became Chinese territory again. More generally, Ciudad del Este attracted other kinds of mafias, like various African groups associated together in the so-called 'Nigerian connection'²⁴. On top of this, this city, which is the second largest in Paraguay, is facing huge social problems because of the important flux of countrymen who, struck by the economic crisis, settled in the last years around it creating shanty towns. No wonder then, that Ciudad del Este has become a major security problem not only for the Mercosur countries, who are trying actively to deal with it, but also for the United States.

3. Third, Colombia, the last remaining conflict-torn country in the region, represents in itself a synthesis of all the threats described above: guerrillas; counter revolutionary violence; organized crime, principally narco-trafficking but also small arms; and criminality, such as street crime.

²⁴ See: "Curbing illicit trafficking in small arms and sensitive technologies: an action-oriented agenda." A UNIDIR publication (1998) edited by Gasparini Alves, Pericles and Cipollone, Daiana Belinda, 38-39.

The current 35 year old conflict shares certain underlying causes that historically have fueled the country's long series of civil wars, notably the war between conservative and liberal parties during the 1940's and 1950's known as *La Violencia*. It began in the 1960's with the creation of two main guerrilla groups – the FARC (a peasant-based organization) and the ELN (which represents university students, workers and catholic priests) as a reaction to a long history of socio-economic exclusion that created great disparities between the wealthy and the poor. Concurrently, small peasant organizations, known as self-defense or paramilitary groups were armed by the Colombian army and authorities to combat the insurgents. They were progressively transformed into major para-military organizations which could operate legally. At the same time, an interaction began to develop between both the rebel and the paramilitary groups, on the one side, and the drug cartels on the other, in various forms: protection of the latter by either group; revolutionary taxes levied on production, etc..., depending on the circumstances. As a consequence, the conflict was galvanized and came to the fore.

The consequences of it were catastrophic for the country and for the region: loss of control by the Government of part of the territory under FARC jurisdiction; humanitarian tragedy with over 300,000 people killed and 1.2 million people internally displaced; a spill-over effect on the neighbouring countries²⁵; and the beginning of an internationalisation process of the conflict (huge American military aid, etc...). The various peace plans which have been launched to date did not produce lasting results.

But, and this is most surprising, social violence due to war represents only ten per cent of Colombia's 25,000/27,000 annual murders. 20% are due to organised crime and 70% to street criminality.

²⁵ See Julia E. Sweig: "What kind of war for Colombia", *Foreign Affairs*, Sept./Oct. 2002, p. 137: "The spillover from Colombia's war has extended well beyond the drug trade, affecting the entire Andean and Amazonian region. Weapon's smuggling, refugees, gruesome violence, kidnapping, assassination and lawlessness are pervasive along Colombia's borders with Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru, and endemic corruption is corroding the already weak democratic institutions in most of the cities".

How are these traditional and non-traditional challenges confronted today?

'Proliferation' of initiatives

In order to try to face these challenges a good deal of institutional measures were taken at the hemispheric and regional levels. Parallel to that, the US presence and posture in Latin America was modified. But governments – especially the American one – feel now the necessity to put some order and coordination into all that vast and essential work which had nevertheless developed in a disorderly way.

1. The hemispheric and regional work done at the institutional level was focused on the following points: defence of democratic stability; enhancement of security and improvement of conflict resolution; and the fight against transnational threats.

a) Regarding the enhancement of democratic stability, most of the effort was concentrated within the Organization of American States²⁶ which developed its activities and actions in three directions: promotion, protection and crisis responses.

The promotion and protection activities are of now part of the routine²⁷ (see annex no. 4). More importantly, the OAS is now able to react in the event of a Coup or any other disruption of constitutional order. Two texts are important in that respect:

First, Resolution 1080 adopted in 1991(see annex no 5) which stipulates that the Secretary General “must call for the immediate convocation of a

meeting of the Permanent Council in the event of any occurrences giving rise to the sudden or irregular interruption of the democratic political institutional process or of the legitimate exercise of power by the democratically elected governments in any of the Organization’s member states”. There have been four Resolution 1080 cases so far: Haiti, Peru, Guatemala and Paraguay.

Second, the Washington Protocol adopted in December 1992 - which amended the OAS Charter - contemplates the possibility for “a Member of the Organization whose democratically elected government has been overthrown by force” to be “suspended from the exercise of the right to participate in the General Assembly of the OAS” by a 2/3 majority vote.

These decisions represent a “true conceptual and juridical revolution within OAS. For the first time, a multilateral political organization creates mechanisms of interference through a collective and automatic response in case of an illegal interruption of the democratic process in one of the Member-States”.²⁸

The Inter-American Charter which was presented by the Permanent Council on September 11, 2001 is the most recent development in the OAS longstanding democratic commitment. It is aimed at “reinforcing OAS instruments for the active defence of representative democracy”. It was formally applied for the first time in April 2002 in Venezuela when the OAS condemned the “alteration of the constitutional order” that temporarily forced President Chavez out of office. It also intervened later during the crisis to “further the process of dialogue and consolidate” democracy²⁹ (see annex no. 6).³⁰

²⁶ See: <http://www.oas.org>

²⁷ The OAS created in 1990 a “unit for the promotion of democracy” which provides technical assistance, internships, and organizes seminars in that specific area. It is also monitoring electoral missions. Its role in that respect was particularly critical in the case of Peru when President Fujimori was elected for the third time. The OAS called the process “far from what could be considered as free or fair” and withdrew the observers. It is also working “on several fronts to strengthen democracy in Haiti and help resolve the political impasse from that country’s controversial legislative and municipal elections of May 2000”. See also: “key OAS issues”: the OAS role in Haiti http://www.oas.org/XXXIIGA/english/key_issues/Gahaiti.htm. The OAS is dealing as well with post conflict peace-keeping like in Nicaragua after the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas at the beginning of the Nineties.

²⁸ See: Alfredo G. A. Valladao, “Le retour du panaméricanisme. La stratégie des Etats-Unis en Amérique Latine après la guerre froide”, Crest, La documentation française, 78 and 87-90.

²⁹ See: “Strengthening the democratic commitment” in http://www.oas.org/XXXIIGA/english/key_issue/Gastrengthdemocratic.htm

³⁰ In the last years, mediation of third parties took place various times in bilateral tensions or conflicts. The OAS played a particularly important role over the past two years in reducing tensions between two sets of neighbors: Belize and Guatemala on the one hand and Honduras and Nicaragua on the other. In the first case, tensions had arisen because of their longstanding territorial differendum. In the second case because of a maritime boundary dispute. As it is well explained in the USIP study on this topic which can be found in annex 2, the Guarantors under the 1942 Rio

On a regional level, the Mercosur countries adopted in June 1998 in Ushuaia, as a result of General Oviedo's failed Coup attempt in Paraguay, a 'democratic clause' making possible the expulsion from that organization of a State whose government has come to power illegally. The Andean countries also approved a "commitment to democracy" on the 10th of June 2000 in an additional protocol to the Cartagena agreement which contemplates the suspension from the Andean Community of a member country whose legal government is overthrown. Finally, the communiqué issued after the meeting of the Presidents of South America in Brasilia in September 2000 states that "they agreed to conduct political consultations in the event of a threat of disruption of the democratic system, having due regard for existing regional mechanisms".

The principle of military non-intervention, the respect of which is a *sine qua non* condition for Latin American countries, limits, at least theoretically, the scope of these agreements. But military threat can sometimes play a hidden and complementary role. In fact, General Oviedo did not succeed in his coup, partly because of the internal opposition he faced, more surely because of the intervention of the OAS (the Secretary General of the OAS and the foreign ministers of the other Mercosur countries came to Asuncion during the coup in order to assess the situation and to support democracy and President Wasmosy), and definitely because he knew that he would provoke a Brazilian military reaction.

Protocol (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States) intervened in the conflict between Ecuador and Peru which broke out in 1995. The territorial dispute between these two countries is the Western hemisphere's only territorial dispute in which deadly conflict has broken out repeatedly since World War II, first in 1941, then in 1981 and finally in 1995 when these two Latin American nations waged an intense border war during nineteen days that involved five thousand troops and all branches of the armed forces of both countries. In addition, the relatively brief border conflict gave both countries new reasons to replenish and upgrade their military arsenals as both Ecuador and Peru announced plans to equip their forces with sophisticated jet fighters. The mediation of the Guarantors allowed tensions to cool, a ceasefire to be achieved, forces to be separated and pulled back and helped reach an agreement for a joint Ecuadorian – Peruvian security commission to take over responsibilities upon the departure of the guarantor observers. An agreement could not be reached on all issues for the 30 May 1998 deadline date. Consequently, the 'Guarantors' had to take an arbitration decision which came 5 months later and put an end to the dispute.

b) A lot of work was also done in the field of traditional and non-traditional security issues within the OAS but also outside of it.

A first and important step was the establishment in 1991 by the OAS during its General Assembly in Santiago of what has since become the Standing Committee on Hemispheric Security. This Committee is a forum where all security issues are debated: anti-personal mines; special preoccupations of the small insular states, etc.

The US Secretary of Defence invited his Hemispheric colleagues to a 'Ministerial' in Williamsburg in 1995 with the intention of creating a process for Defence Ministers to exchange views on common interests and problems. This process has since been institutionalized and meetings are held every two years.

Security issues are also regularly discussed as well in most of the fora which have blossomed in Latin America during the Nineties (Hemispheric Summits; Summit of the Chiefs of States of Latin America held in Rio in 2000; Rio Group; Andean Group; Mercosur). In the OAS alone, more than fifty resolutions have been passed since 1995.

c) In the context of the strictly traditional security issues, great strides have been made in the areas of civil-military relations, cooperative security and confidence and security building measures³¹ (see annex no. 2).

Civil-military relations were a constant preoccupation and a backdrop to all security questions because of the history of Latin America with three main questions: the need to provide effective civilian leadership for military institutions; the reflexive and latent fears of the officers that multilateral norms and agreements could be manipulated to destroy the armed forces as an institution; and the necessity and difficulty of identifying the missions of the armed forces in peace time and in face of the new threats in consolidating democratic regimes.

At the 21st General Assembly in Santiago in 1991, the Member States adopted the notion of cooperative security (equilibrium and deterrence have to be achieved through transparency of military procedures, confidence-building

³¹ See: "Key OAS issues – Resolving disputes"
http://www.oas.org/XXXIIGA/english/key_issues/Gadispute_s.htm

measures and collaboration on joint specific problems).

Regarding confidence and security building measures, there were already rules in Latin America based on the 1974 Ayacucho agreement (intention of 8 Latin American countries to discuss arms limits); the Tlatelolco Treaty; and the 1991 Joint Declaration of Argentina, Brazil and Chile on the complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons. In addition, article 2g of the OAS Charter lists as a purpose of the Organization, the achievement of “an effective limitation of conventional weapons that will make it possible to devote the largest amount of resources to the economic and social development of the Member States”.

Since 1991, three meetings have been particularly important regarding confidence and security building measures: the Governmental experts meeting held in Buenos Aires, which was the first regional dialogue ever held on that topic in Latin America; the November 1995 meeting in Santiago; and the February 1998 meeting in San Salvador (see annexes no. 7 and 8). The declarations adopted at these meetings contemplate a series of measures (notification of military exercises, exchange of exercise observers, expansion of educational programs, increased communications in border areas, etc.). Another meeting of experts was scheduled for December 2002 in Miami which would continue the work and push it further.

The prevention of destabilizing accumulations of conventional weapons, the limitation of spending on foreign defence and of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have also been main areas of concern. The member countries are strongly encouraged to submit the necessary information to the UN register of conventional arms and the United Nations standardized international reporting of military expenditures. An Interamerican convention on transparency in conventional weapons acquisitions was signed in 1997.

Moreover, a series of documents (treaties, charters or declarations) which were signed at the regional level since 1995, contributed to the strengthening of mutual confidence in Latin America. The main ones are the following: the treaty of democratic security in Central America (December 15, 1995); the political declaration making the Mercosur, Bolivia and Chile a zone

of peace free from weapons of mass destruction (March 5, 1996); the 1996 Treaty establishing a regional security system in the Caribbean; the 1989 declaration of Galapagos on the Andean Zone, complemented by the Andean Charter for peace and security and the limitation and control of the expenditures on foreign defence; the declaration creating a South American peace zone (26/27 July 2002)³²; and the communiqué of the Presidents of South America of September 2000 where “they reaffirmed their allegiance to the principle of a peaceful and negotiated resolution of disputes, as opposed to the use of force ...against any other sovereign state ...”.

d) Regarding non-traditional issues, both the narcotics problem and terrorism have been on the OAS agenda for some time.

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (IADACC) was established in 1986 but did not begin to function until 1988. It focuses on non-enforcement aspects of the drug problem: stimulating and preventive legislative measures; sponsoring and disseminating information; advice and research on drug problems, etc.

The 1994 Miami Summit declaration and Plan of Action contains a number of provisions that, in effect, ratify the regional and bilateral anti-narcotic agreement of the past decade and commit governments to a new set of guidelines.

In December 1995 an OAS Conference on money laundering was launched in Buenos Aires and issued a declaration of norms and recommendations.

In October, IADACC established and approved an antidrug strategy in the Hemisphere.

A multilateral evaluation mechanism was put into place in 1999 which measures progress against drugs in 34 countries and the hemisphere as a whole. It is based on cooperation and does not impose sanctions.³³

³² See: “Documents, conventions and treaties related to hemispheric security” in <http://www.oas.org/csh>

³³ The first round of evaluations which covered the 1999-2000 period looked at specific actions each country had taken since then to carry out these recommendations. For example, the US is conducting the necessary research to develop a method for estimating total national marijuana cultivation. The MEM responds to the idea of ‘shared responsibility’ for the problem of the drugs affirmed in the 1996 antidrug strategy in the hemisphere – with a practical

As to terrorism, the 1994 Miami Summit adopted a declaration of the Heads of States that pledged to combat it with “unity and vigor” and a Plan of Action which basically called for harmonizing laws amongst the member states; strengthening mutual cooperation, including the exchange of intelligence or information; promoting prompt ratification of international conventions on terrorism; advancing measures for mutual legal assistance; compliance with applicable extradition Treaties and cooperation in training.

Since then, two specialized Inter-American conferences on Terrorism took place. The Lima Conference in April 1996 adopted a Declaration and a Plan of Action. At the Second Conference, held in Mar del Plata in November 1998, an Inter-American Committee in charge of fighting against Terrorism, known by its Spanish acronym (CICTE) was created composed of Governments representatives.

The September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, where 30 out of the 34 member countries lost citizens, were immediately and strongly condemned by the Latin American countries at their Lima OAS extraordinary assembly which took place coincidentally on that same day.

On the 21st of September, the Foreign Ministers adopted in Washington a resolution on the strengthening of the Hemispheric cooperation against terrorism. They also invoked the 1947 Rio treaty of reciprocal assistance in declaring that “these terrorist attacks against the United States are attacks against all American States”.

On the 3rd of June 2002, an Inter-American Convention on Terrorism got adopted which contains some very specific and strong provisions. It seeks to prevent the financing of terrorism, strengthen border controls and increase cooperation among law enforcement authorities in different countries, amongst other measures (see annex 9).

2. Parallel to this set of resolutions, conventions and treaties taken or signed at the regional or hemispheric levels by the American States, Washington changed progressively its strategy and its military posture in Latin America.³⁴ Its

program that gives this basic principle form in national actions.

³⁴ The following documents provide a lot of data, information and analysis on the American military involvement in Latin America: 1) “Les programmes

action was mainly based on bilateral agreements.³⁵

a) The defence of democracy became one of the US’s main political objectives – as seen in their interventions in Panama and in Haiti in the 1990’s. This strongly contrasted with the Cold War period where they supported dictatorships and military regimes for tactical reasons. The fight against transnational threats is their other priority with a particular focus on drug trafficking and terrorism which concerns them directly.

Given this new context, the United States, which kept its bases in Soto Cano (Honduras) and Guantanamo (Cuba), redeployed its other military installations in Latin America. It withdrew from the Panama Canal Zone in 1999 and relocated the military headquarters which were based there (Southern Command transferred to Miami, etc...). At the same time it opened new anti-drugs surveillance facilities in Aruba, Curaçao, El Salvador and Ecuador.

militaires américains en Amérique Latine et leur incidence en termes de sécurité humaine”, Joy Olson, Forum du Désarmement no. 2/2002 (published by UNIDIR); 2) “Still pulling the strings. The US military in Latin America after the Cold War”, Prepared by Matthew Yarrow for the Latin America/Caribbean program of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Peacebuilding unit: <http://afsc.org/lac/strings/default.htm>; 3) 1998 Strategic Assessment – Engaging Power for Peace. Chapter Seven. The Americas. <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/sa98/sa98ch7.html>; 4) International policy report. Just the facts 2001-2002. A quick tour of US defense and security relations with Latin America and the Caribbean by Adam Isacson and Joy Olson, November 2001;

<http://ciponline.org/facts/1101jtf.htm>; 5) US military bases in Latin America and the Caribbean by John Lindsay – Poland, October 2001:

http://www.americaspolicy.org/briefs/2001/body_v6n35milb_ase.html; 6) US bases in Latin America and the Caribbean: Overview. <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/bases.htm>. The websites of the US Southern Command and of US Army South 3 are also very useful:

<http://www.southcom.mil/DA/Facts/OpOverview.htm>; and http://WWW.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/usars_o.htm

³⁵ See the national security strategy of the United States of America. President Bush said in Berlin in May 2000: “We have formed in the Western Hemisphere flexible coalitions with countries that share our priorities, particularly Mexico, Brazil, Canada, Chile, and Colombia. <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/secstrat2.htm>. It should also be added that Argentina was given by the US in 1997 the status of “Non-NATO Ally” country.

b) The support they used to provide to the Latin American Governments was reoriented. The US physical military presence remains very important in the region. They donate or sell weaponry and equipment to the Latin American governments under various modalities. But their aid focuses nowadays on anti-drug and anti-terrorist programs, human rights, civil-military and U.N. peace-keeping operations training, humanitarian actions and support in natural catastrophes. About 50,000 military personnel rotate every year in Latin America where they stay for training or assistance programs for shorter or longer periods. The School of the Americas which was so much criticized during the Cold War for its methods was replaced by the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. Altogether, the US has formed 13,000 Latin American military officers and personnel in 1999 and probably more in 2000 and 2001.

On this new basis the United States developed bilateral links in the strategic field with various Latin American countries, the nature of which varies according to the problems, their own interest and priorities, the specificity of their partners and the kind of relationship they maintain with them individually.

One example of a particularly strong action and cooperation in a region considered as strategically important by the United States, and where the problems are huge, is Colombia.³⁶ In fact, this country became their “main cause of concern” and “replaced Cuba” in that respect for three reasons: it is the main provider of drugs to the United States; it is also a global partner for them (it has the fourth economy in Latin America, it is a major provider of oil and a source of immigration; and its problems can expand to the whole region. Traditionally, American interventionism in South America normally used to be more political contrary to Central America or the Caribbean where it was more of a military kind. This was also the case in Colombia during Ernesto Samper’s Presidency. But as from 1998, Colombia became the third recipient of the US military aid after Israel and Egypt. Washington’s contribution to Plan Colombia is mainly focused on its military component (supply of weapons

³⁶ See: J.M. Blanquer p.98 in “Amérique latine: Colombie. Quelle stratégie pour la paix?”, IHEAL, Université Paris III, Sorbonne, Nouvelle, La documentation française.

and chemical products; presence of military counsellors; control of the territory by radar systems and spy planes).

Another example of cooperation is the one which developed with Brazil.³⁷

In 1996 the Brazilian Government announced a National Defence Policy, the first of its kind in Brazilian history, which tries to combine the classical military needs of the country with the new challenges it has to face.³⁸ The protection of the Amazon region, very vulnerable to guerrilla groups and drug-traffickers (Cobra plan), governmental development initiatives in remote regions where the civilian presence is scarce and illicit trans-border activities by land, sea and air, are part of the preoccupations. The United States has financially backed the Cobra plan. It has increased from 1.2 million dollars in 1999 to 15 million in 2002 its aid to Brazil’s Federal Police, responsible for fighting against illegal drugs. Brazil, which buys a good quantity of weaponry in the U.S., also receives from this country “excess defence articles” and weapons outmoded by U.S. military standards under Protocol 505. Brazilian military personnel are sent for training in the U.S. and finally, Brazil contracted U.S. firms to build the SIVAM project which will allow it to monitor the entire Amazon region. This important cooperation, which received criticism in Brazilian circles, in particular because the Brazilian military opened their bases to U.S. inspections in 2002 in exchange for free weaponry, seems nevertheless to have developed in a very advantageous way for both parties on a pragmatic basis.

The Bush administration’s “Andean regional initiative” extends also to the other neighbouring countries of Colombia.

3. The events of September 11 reinforced Washington’s desire for more cohesion and efficiency in the way the security issues are dealt within the Interamerican system. Consequently,

³⁷ See: “Brazil Drug War Replaces Cold War” The Public i. An investigative report of the Center for Public integrity. July 12, 2001 <http://www.public-i.org/story-06-071201.htm>.

³⁸ See: 1. The Brazilian policy of sustainable defence. Edmundo Sussuma Fujita. *International Affairs*, 74.3 (1998) pp. 577-585; 2. “National defence policy of Brazil”, website of the OAS Committee on Hemispheric security <http://www.oas.org/csh>; 3. “Brazil’s SIVAM: as it monitors the Amazon, will it fulfill its human security promise”, Thomaz Guedes da Costa (ECSP Report, issue 7, pp. 47-58).

the United States pushed strongly to convene as soon as possible an OAS Special Hemispheric Conference with the mandate of updating the whole system.³⁹ This conference which was scheduled to take place in 2004 will finally be held in May 2003 in Mexico.

These are some of the topics which Washington would like to discuss at this conference⁴⁰:

- The new security architecture should reflect the common hemispheric values (democracy, human rights, etc...) and a common definition of what the common security threats are. The 1947 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance and OAS should nevertheless remain the institutional pillars of the system as they proved to have functioned in a satisfactory way after the events of September 11.
- The Inter-American system should become 'inclusive': 25 members only out of the 34 OAS countries are part of the Inter-American advisory board; only 13 have ratified the pact of Bogota;⁴¹ only 22, the Rio Treaty, and only seven, its protocols. With a few exceptions, the Caribbean States are not participants in any of the Inter-American security instruments, neither is Canada.
- It is necessary to strengthen and seek better coordination among the institutions and processes of the Inter-American system of hemispheric security which has developed in an anarchic way during the last few years. The United States are in favour of a more important role for the Committee on

hemispheric security; of an increased interaction and effectiveness of other processes, like the defense ministerials, the conferences of armed forces, etc.; and of the definition of a clear mandate for the Interamerican defense board. Some more progress should also be made in the CSBM's (confidence-building measures) field, like the setting-up of an early warning system.

- There should be more efficiency. The commitments taken in the resolutions adopted in the various fora dealing with security are not always implemented. The interoperability among similar government agencies of various countries should be improved. The governments should have the appropriate means to operate and in particular have more professional forces. This should be achieved through common training. A right balance in the responses to threats between the civil and military entities should be found, the tendency being to rely too much on the civilians.
- Some kind of hemispheric security construction should be set up. The trend in the United States is to think hemispheric security as an over-arching framework.⁴² Hence the projects which appear from time to time to promote multilateral responses to common security concerns and to set up "conflict prevention instruments", "collective security mechanisms" or "multilateral forces" able to intervene in order to protect democracy or to fight drug trafficking and terrorism. "But there is also a trend towards avoiding such comprehensive efforts, increasing subregional integration and creating ad hoc groups to deal with specific, time-limited issues". The Americans recognize also the need for "diversity"⁴³ and flexibility in the approach to the hemispheric security issues. They are aware of the fact that the Latin American countries would cooperate only as far as their sovereignty is fully taken into account. They

³⁹ See: "the interamerican agenda and multilateral governance", A report of the interamerican dialogue study group on western hemisphere governance, April 1997. <http://www.iadialog.org/oas.html>

⁴⁰ See: 1) Statement presented by Ambassador Luis Lauro on 20/04/2000 at the special meeting of the committee on hemispheric security (website of the State Department); 2) Report of the committee on hemispheric security in compliance with general assembly mandates emanating from the second summit of the Americas 23/01/01. <http://www.oas.org>; 3) Statement by Ambassador R. Noriega before the preparatory meeting for the summit-mandated conference on security on 6/11/2001 (website of the State Department); 4) Remarks by Ambassador Luis Lauro on "New approaches to new hemispheric security" at the Inter-American Defense College in Washington D.C. on 31/01/2001 (website of the State Department).

⁴¹ The American Treaty on pacific settlement was adopted at Bogota in April 1948. See:

<http://www.oas.org/csh/english/newdocPeaceSett.htm>

⁴² See: 1998 Strategic Assessment. Engaging power for peace. Chapter 7, The Americas. Hemispheric Security p.12 <http://www.ndu.edu/wss/sa98/sa98ch7.html> 24/02/2002.

⁴³ See: 1) Remarks by Secretary of Defence William Cohen at a press conference in Brasilia in Nov.1999 <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2000/s2000101-secdef.html> and by the same minister at the opening session of the Defense Ministerial of the Americas IV Manaus October 2000; 2) the final declaration of the IVth Defense Ministerial.

also agree that “each region faces its own challenges”, that “each nation must respond in the manner that best suits its national and regional situation” and that the smaller states, particularly the small islands, have specific security issues. This dilemma remains open for the moment.

A complex dialogue between Latin America and Washington

In reality, the security relations between Latin America and the United States are impelled by two contradictory tendencies.

1. The new wind which blew in Latin America in the Nineties and brought democracy as well as regional and hemispheric cooperation back, made possible the institutional developments which took place on security issues. It inspired also some years before the Argentinean-Brazilian agreements in the nuclear field and the Latin American peace initiatives taken in the Central American conflicts. The reasons given for this shift are numerous and complementary: it would be a universal phenomenon, Samuel’s Huntington ‘third wave’; the consequence of a sufficient level of economic development; the result of international contagion; a cultural phenomenon impelled by the media and even a religious one, with the growing influence of the protestant churches in Latin America. But these developments were also to a great extent the expression of the so-called Pan-American tradition which can be defined as the respect for international law in a world where security would be guaranteed by regional cooperation and arbitration between equal states.⁴⁴ This tradition was interrupted in the 1960’s by the ambitions of the military regimes on the one hand and the consequences of the Cold War in that region on the other. It had started in 1823 with the Monroe Declaration which – not so surprisingly – was most favourably received by Latin America: it corresponded to the aspirations to freedom and sovereignty of the whole Hemisphere. Other “Pan-American” initiatives, more or less

⁴⁴ See: Alfredo Valladao in: “Le retour du panaméricanisme. La stratégie des Etats-Unis en Amérique Latine après la guerre froide”, Alfredo G. A. Valladao, CREST, La Documentation Française, 1995, p. 78-97, and: “les politiques étrangères: rupture et continuité” under the direction of Frédéric Charion, La documentation Française May 2001.

successful, followed in the 19th century. Bolivar tried to create a “League of the American Nations” in 1826 in Panama. A first Pan-American conference convened in 1889 in Washington. The Pan-American Union, the oldest regional organization for cooperation in the world, was created in 1890. It was finally replaced by the Organization of American States after the Second World War.

2. But this “Pan American” tendency, which brought such good results, also encountered some basic political difficulties. These are as follows:

a) The great asymmetry in power existing between the United States and Latin America and the misperceptions it creates.

The Americans consider themselves as ‘an ordering power’, want to be ‘in control’ and have an “ingrained preference for unilateral and bilateral responses” to regional problems. The Latin American countries “tend to be reflexively wary” about proposals to improve hemispheric security “because they think it will increase their vulnerability to the American domination”.⁴⁵

The United States are also often and easily accused of seeking a new form of global domination through its crusades against drugs and terrorism. For some commentators, they are in fact trying to control the southern hemisphere which is strategically important to them at a time when the economic and social stability of the 1990’s has disappeared and social unrest is growing. This measure would also be parallel to the progress of the FTAA negotiations.⁴⁶

b) This imbalance has always complicated the relations between the United States and Latin America. But today the problem is more serious.

The period when the United States used to consider Latin America and especially Central America as its ‘backyard’ is over. The Latin Americans have to a certain extent at least begun to emancipate themselves from Washington.

⁴⁵ See: Andrew Hurrell, “Security in Latin America”, *International Affairs*, 74, 3 (1998) p. 546 and also: the interamerican agenda and multilateral governance: the organization of OAS, ch II: obstacles to multilateralism.

⁴⁶ See: “US is preoccupied as Latin America erupts”, Canadian Foundation for drug policy. 3/04/2002. <http://www.mapinc.org/newscfdp/v02/n377/a06.htm> and: *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 2002, J.Habel, “En prévision d’un accroissement des conflits sociaux, nouvelle architecture militaire dans les Amériques.”

In this new context Brazil, the biggest and the richest country in the region, has gained new importance. It is trying to consolidate a political and economical South American space.

On traditional security matters, where any autonomy from the United States would be totally unrealistic, the Latin Americans are trying to obtain at least a more equitable treatment (for example within the Inter-American Defence Board). Moreover they are not generally in favor of setting-up multilateral projects, like an integrated regional force aimed at fighting terrorism, drugs, etc. They also tried to define a common approach on non-traditional security issues at the 2000 Brasilia Summit of the South American Heads of State.⁴⁷

c) Latin America and the United States have diverging conceptions on drug trafficking, terrorism, Colombia and the use of the armed forces to combat these threats.

- The United States, which considered that the producer countries were exclusively responsible for drug trafficking, recognized in 1996 the notion of shared responsibility between the producers and the consumers, which was the Latin American position, and by the way also the European one. This was a major change in their approach. But they still stick to their 1961 certification policy which creates tremendous resentment throughout Latin America.⁴⁸ An evolution on that point is nevertheless not excluded in the next months: officials of the Bush administration have publicly stated their openness to ending that process, which by the way is inefficient and unfairly applied.
- Although the recent Interamerican convention on terrorism provides an indirect definition of this phenomenon (through its materiality and through the various specific international conventions in force), the philosophical difference between the US and Latin American conception is still there. Any terrorist attack is considered as a crime by the

Americans. The Latin Americans think that terrorist acts cannot be assimilated to organized crime when they are politically motivated.

- The Latin Americans support the peace process but have reservations regarding the military aspects of Plan Colombia.⁴⁹ They feel that it neglects the political, economical and social causes of the conflict which triggered it and that the US military support to it is ineffective, induces more political violence and undermines the peace process. In addition, they are concerned by the negative regional impact of the conflict.

The American idea of relying on the armed forces in Latin America in order to fight non-traditional threats is resisted by a majority of Latin American governments. They feel that this trend could have a very negative impact on the democratic stability of some states with still fragile democracy.⁵⁰

Agenda for the Future

1. Today, Latin America is one of the most peaceful parts of the world, if one considers interstate relations. The absence of real stakes, the low quantity of armaments in the region, the presence almost everywhere of democratic regimes, the regional and global processes which developed in the eighties and the nineties are positive factors which enhance that situation. It is nevertheless necessary to protect what was gained over the past decade and to avoid new tensions and conflicts. But this task is manageable and there is, it seems, a general consensus in the hemisphere on that point.

2. It is certainly more difficult to struggle against drug trafficking, transnational crime in general

⁴⁷ See: communiqué issued at the end of the meeting of the Presidents of South America in Brasilia in August 2000: points 4 to 8; 23, 24 and 47 to 52.

⁴⁸ See: "Explaining the failure of US-Latin America drug policies", ch.9, pp. 215-233 in *The United States and Latin America in the 1990's beyond the Cold War* ed. Jonathan Hartlyn, Lars Schoultz and Augusto Varas, The University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill and London, 1992.

⁴⁹ See: the position on Colombia of the Latin American countries in: 1) the Brasilia summit (website of the State Department), and also; 2) an article by Cynthia A. Watson in National Strategy Forum: "That sinking feeling again: deterioration in US-Latin American relations" (website of this organization); 3) "Latin American leaders call for a new approach in Colombia. Questions and Answers." April 2001. File://A:\leslatinos020201plan%20Colombia.htm

⁵⁰ See: "US security policy could affect democratic process in Central America". This article appeared in Central America Report (18 January 2002, vol. XXIX N° 2) published by Inforpress Centroamericana, Guatemala City.

and terrorism where, as it appears clearly, there are some diverging opinions.

Human security issues, under their two main components, “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want”,⁵¹ are even more difficult to deal with. The hemispheric, regional and sub-regional organizations, as well as the governments of Latin America, are perfectly conscious of the necessity to improve personal security, economic security, and food security in order to promote human security. The work done since the restoration of peace and democracy on the continent in the field of civil-military relations or in bettering the control of the traffic of illicit arms⁵² are important steps which go in the right direction. The nations of the hemisphere have also demonstrated a strong commitment to solving the global landmine problem. With the exception of the United States and Cuba, they have all ratified the anti-personnel mines convention the so-called Ottawa convention.⁵³

But the situation in Latin America is probably worse today than it was in the past because of the spillover effect of the Colombian civil war and also because of the increasing insecurity in the cities. The challenge is manifold: cultural, economic and social. It implies a very strong and coordinated action at both national and international levels. In addition, there is a risk that the ‘national security’ logic⁵⁴, which is

operating more significantly than ever in the current fight against terrorism, could overshadow the necessity to tackle the human security issues.

3. In the OAS General Assembly which met in Barbados in July-August 2002, several delegations⁵⁵ stressed the importance of human security, a concept that “shifts the concern about security from the traditional perception of the State towards a perspective centered on the needs of the individual,” as Chilean Foreign Minister Maria Soledad Alvear put it.

For the Barbadian Prime Minister Owen Arthur, “any meaningful definition of security can no longer be limited to the traditional military operations, but must recognize the need for an integrated approach to confronting the conditions which create instabilities in our society and which degrade our humanity”.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Suriname, Maria Levens said, “While we continue to fight international terrorism, let us also search for solutions to the other pressing issues facing the Americas, such as ending dangerous political situations in our region, morally unacceptable and unfair trading rules, the widening gap between rich and poor. In other words, ensuring the well-being of our peoples, by first and foremost guaranteeing their basic rights to food, education, health and development.”

In a speech made on November 6, 2001⁵⁶ the American Permanent Representative to the OAS, Ambassador Roger F. Noriega recognized that “economic development and prosperity are important underpinnings for democracy” but that “the primary engine for economic advancement is trade and foreign advancement and that the region must be careful about viewing problems that are primarily economic or social as security issues,” or else it could “use the wrong tools to fix real problems.”

⁵¹ See: “Human security: emerging concept of security in the twenty-first century” p.7 by Francisco Rojas Aravena, director of Flacso, Chile in *Disarmament Forum* (UNIDIR) Issue 2, 2002.

⁵² A convention against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and ammunition, explosives and other materials was signed in 1998. The implementation of the United Nations 2001 Programme of Action to prevent, Combat and eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, particularly the recommendations for the region is also part of the priorities. See also: “un point de vue régional sur le problème des armes légères et de petit calibre”, Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba in *Forum du désarmement*, no 2, 2002.

⁵³ See: “Key OAS issues: Mine Action. Removing landmines”

http://www.oas.org/XXXIIGA/english/key_issues/Galadmin.es.htm Ecuador and Peru were estimated to each have at the end of the 1998 conflict 120,000 mines in the ground. They have both destroyed their landmine stocks since and have begun the task of clearing their territories of landmines. Approximately 85,000 mines are still believed to be buried in Central America.

⁵⁴ See: 1) Introduction to the special issue of *Disarmament forum* on human security (no 2, 2002) by former President of Costa Rica and 1987 Nobel Peace Laureate, Dr Oscar

Arias; 2) “US aid and Colombia’s human security” by Alan Isacson, senior associate the Center for International Policy in Washington DC; 3) “war on drugs and civil-military relations: challenges for democratizing countries”, David R. Mares. Presented at the international political science association, June 28-30, 2002, Bucharest.

⁵⁵ See: OAS General Assembly in Bridgetown (Barbados) in OAS news (July/August 2002).

⁵⁶ See: speech by Ambassador Roger F. Noriega, US Permanent Representative to the OAS, before the Summit-mandated conference on security. 6/11/2001 (website of the State Department).

The final declaration of Bridgetown⁵⁷ states that the security of the Americas “encompasses political, economic, social, health, and environmental factors” and “that this multifaceted perspective should be included in the agenda of the upcoming special conference on security”. It remains to be seen, on this point like on the others, whether the US and Latin America will be able to find common grounds.

⁵⁷ See the declaration of the OAS General Assembly in Bridgetown (Barbados).

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