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LATIN AMERICA

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This chapter assesses the salience of the new security agenda in the context of Latin America. It is divided into two parts: the first provides a general overview of evolving security trends in the region and how the meaning of security is changing as a consequence, while the second examines more closely the nature of the “new” threats that are becoming the source of growing concern.

Evolving Security Trends in Latin America

Among the factors influencing the security of Latin American states, four deserve particular attention: the emergence of a stable and relatively predictable regional order; the persistence of weak and fragmented state institutions that undermine the capacity of governments to effectively control their territory and to maintain a firm monopoly over the use of organized violence; a shift in the region’s understanding of sovereignty and the principle of intervention; and, finally, the emergence of a new security agenda that has come to highlight the interdependence that exists between the internal and external dimensions of each state’s security. Each of these factors will be discussed in turn below.

While it is true that over the course of this century Latin America has not enjoyed absolute international stability, when compared with most other regions of the world it becomes clear that there has been remarkably little interstate conflict. One reason for this is that Latin America completed the process of decolonization and nation building well before
other regions. What had been a recurrent scene of turmoil and foreign intervention during the nineteenth century progressively subsided in the twentieth century. And to the extent that foreign intervention continued, this was increasingly monopolized by the United States as it consolidated its hegemony over the region.² Some, moreover, have argued that the U.S. hegemonic presence exerted a moderating influence on regional competition. Although countries in the region have remained concerned about U.S. military power and the risk of intervention, particularly during the Reagan years, successive U.S. administrations have shown a greater interest in regional cooperation and in developing common interests as the best way to exercise U.S. hegemony (Abrams 1993, 5; Hurrell 1996a, 206; Varas 1992 and 1995).

Relative international stability in Latin America has also been explained in terms of the apparent acceptance by regional states of the main principles of international order and of the United Nations as the chief arbiter of disputes. The Latin American republics have a long-established practice of seeking peaceful solutions and regional cooperation in dealing with threats to peace.³ The number of conflicts that have led Latin American states to resort to war have been fairly limited.⁴ Indeed, in a significant number of disputes, states have chosen not to pursue their differences to the point of war, and have instead turned to efforts aimed at a peaceful solution. Not only has this pattern been seen as reflecting some degree of maturity in the behavior of Latin American states vis-à-vis the use of force, but it has also encouraged security studies to focus attention on issues related to peace maintenance rather than on the potential dynamics of conflict. However, this appears to owe less to the presence of established regional institutions, including the Organisation of American States (OAS), and more to the inclination of regional states to rely on ad hoc and more flexible mechanisms.

Arms control initiatives are of course part of this tradition. While they have often been promoted by outside powers, they have also found strong advocates among Latin American states (González 1996; Serrano 1997; Varas and Caro 1994). This has been more recently reflected in the interest shown by regional actors in confidence-building measures (CBMs).⁵ Although rudimentary forms of CBMs have long been present in the region, Latin American states have demonstrated an interest in more formal CBMs to handle some of the security problems affecting the region. During the peace process in Central America, the
idea of CBMs first introduced by Canadian representatives in 1983 was subsequently made part of the Esquipulas plan in 1987. More formal and vigorous advancement of CBMs was found in the 1991 plan for global disarmament and confidence building put forward by Honduras, in the drafting of a wider notion of security by the OAS in that same year, as well as in the institutionalization of the Argentine-Brazilian nuclear rapprochement leading to the creation of a common agency for accounting and control of nuclear materials (ABAAC) in 1992 (Varas and Caro 1994; Child 1994, Serrano 1994). Although informal CBMs accompanied the Argentine-Brazilian rapprochement, these were formally endorsed by Argentina’s foreign policy under the Menem administration.

While these factors have helped bring relative stability to interstate relations in Latin America, there is now a growing recognition that the most pressing security problems in the region in the 1990s are predominantly domestic or transnational in nature. These include, among others, acute instability resulting from social tensions, political division, and the weakening of the state’s institutions due to the cumulative effect of drug trafficking, poverty, overpopulation, unemployment, migration, land shortages, and environmental degradation.

Although the Latin American republics could not accurately be described as “anarchic” states, they still show some of the features identified by Barry Buzan (1983) as characteristic of weak states. Indeed, state power has often been wielded by authoritarian leaders rather than being based on a solid foundation of sociopolitical consensus. This has led at times to high levels of political violence and periods of instability to which governments have responded by taking control of the mass media and resorting to the use of force (Buzan 1988). Throughout this century, successive waves of authoritarianism and democratization have revealed the basic weakness of many Latin American states to solve social and political conflicts through legitimate institution-based processes.

The weakness of state institutions in Latin America can have serious international repercussions, however. The border dispute between Ecuador and Peru in 1995 is a case in point. It revealed how the weakening of domestic economic and political structures can easily fuel threat perceptions and even the reactivation of border disputes that have remained relatively quiescent in the past. Another example can be found in the “balkanization” of Colombia’s territory at the hands of the guerrillas, which
has undermined the Colombian government’s capacity to maintain law and order along its border with Venezuela. This situation has forced both governments to develop a special security policy for their common border to prevent guerrilla incursions into Venezuelan territory. Similarly, increased levels of violence across the U.S.-Mexican border have been linked to the internecine struggle within the cartels for control of the U.S. cocaine market. Again, this has prompted both governments to strengthen their cooperation along the border.

It is conceivable that these kinds of domestically generated international disputes may become more common in the future. That may also lead to greater external intervention as the boundaries between domestic and international problems become more blurred. Already, some authors, like Richard Ullman, foresee a gradual erosion of the long and deeply embraced principle of nonintervention among Latin American states (1996, 39). Although regional states have long praised the principle of nonintervention, and some have even considered it the basis of unity and stability in the Western Hemisphere (Varas 1995, 45), its absolute interpretation is already being challenged. This shift has been triggered by three developments.

The first is the transition to democracy in many states in Latin America. As a consequence, some countries, for example, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, have proposed that the OAS should make the protection and safeguarding of democracy in the hemisphere one of its organizational responsibilities. Subsequently, in June 1991 the OAS General Assembly adopted the “Santiago Commitment to Democracy and the Renovation of the Inter-American System.” Under this resolution, members agreed that the OAS Permanent Council would meet in the event of a breakdown of democracy in any member state. This was followed by the Washington Protocol of 1992, which agrees to eject any member state whose democratic government has been overthrown by force (Abrams 1993, 5; Diéguez 1995, 168–169; Hurrell 1996c, 160). Such sanctions were used by the Rio Group, resulting in both Panama’s and Peru’s membership being suspended and later reinstated after democratic rule was reestablished (Diéguez 1995, 171).

The second development that has contributed to a changed legal context for intervention was the active involvement of both the OAS and the United Nations in bringing peace and democracy to Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. As Andrew Hurrell states, “participation
in elections and political activity has become a more central element of Latin America international human rights law” (1996c, 160).

The third development is the effect of globalization and economic integration in the 1990s, which has produced important changes in the region’s exercise and understanding of sovereignty. Through such trade and economic integration agreements as the North American Free Trade Agreement and Mercosur, states have had to relinquish or share their sovereignty. Although these arrangements have not yet involved the creation of supranational institutions, they have unleashed a complex dynamic in which the activities of interest groups and economic actors now increasingly transcend national borders. Not only have the economies of the region been brought closer together but so also have their political systems, thereby forcing regional states to adopt more flexible definitions of national sovereignty.

Moreover, the legacy of over a decade of neo-liberal reforms in the region has unleashed a wide debate concerning their impact on several domains ranging from poverty and income distribution to the rule of law, and, equally important, the capacity of Latin American states to maintain a monopoly over the use of force. The shift from Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) toward outwardly oriented economic development has also had important military-strategic implications. Apart from the security effects associated with economic integration arrangements taking place in the region, what is clear is that ISI policies were closely linked to state-building processes in Latin America. In other words, under ISI the state had played a large and leading role in national development. This trend came to an end in the 1980s with the rise of neo-liberal policies.

The roll-back of the state would appear to have negatively affected previous sources of order. Although it would be an error to state that internal violence threatens the survival of the state in Latin America, it would be equally wrong to underestimate the potential impact of these policies on the capacity of Latin American governments to control their territory and to maintain their monopoly over organized force. There is little doubt that continued indebtedness and the fiscal crisis of the state have severely reduced the capacity of regional governments to fulfill many of their basic public responsibilities. While corrupt and inefficient police forces have long been evident throughout the region, the magnitude of the crisis of public order in Brazil, unleashed by police strikes in
various provinces in the summer of 1997, left no doubt about the precarious conditions under which these institutions operate.

This fragility of state institutions has been further complicated by the emergence and/or exacerbation of new problems—ranging from demographic, environmental, and social pressures to organized crime and the intractable issue of drug trafficking. These problems have, on the one hand, weakened the belief in security fortresses insulated by national borders and, on the other, increasingly brought into question traditional views about state sovereignty in the region (Buzan 1983; Jackson 1990; Chipman 1992). As John Chipman has pointed out, “strategy needs to be internationally conceived because national borders cannot clearly demarcate areas of security from those of instability” (1992, 112).

THE NEW SECURITY AGENDA IN LATIN AMERICA

Most of the “new” and “nontraditional” security challenges, while not strictly novel, stem largely from the failure of many states in the region to guarantee the basic welfare of their citizens and to provide minimum conditions of order within their borders. As noted above, these “domestic” problems can have international repercussions to the extent that they even jeopardize regional stability (Deas 1995; Hurrell 1996b, 5; Abrams 1993, 24). These issues will be discussed in turn below.

Ethnic Self-Determination

In general, Latin American states have found a secure foundation in their link to the nation. Although in recent years ethnic subgroups in Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico have asserted themselves politically, overall it can be argued that the basic integrity of these states is unlikely to change. Indeed, since independence, the idea of the nation has been a legitimizing factor underpinning Latin American states. And, in contrast with other regions of the world, international disputes fueled by ethnic tensions have not been present in the region. Moreover, as the experience in the Chiapas region of Mexico demonstrated, the revival and activation of ethnic demands is closely linked to the manifest failure of the state to deliver peace and prosperity in the southern part of the country (Shehadi 1993; Ullman 1996, 34).

In fact, in Mexico as in other parts of Latin America, indigenous communities were at times encouraged by governments to reassert old
identities in order to counterbalance the power of local bosses and elites. The assertion of historic and linguistic identities enabled some groups to effectively claim property rights over old communal lands and resources. As socioeconomic conditions deteriorated and communities were forced to compete for increasingly scarce resources, the activation of ethnic identities has accelerated in the region. While it is true that the process of “indigenismo”\textsuperscript{13} may help reverse unequal and discriminatory conditions, this trend could become an important source of conflict. In Chiapas, for instance, the weight of ethnic identities has been a recurrent theme in the flourishing literature of the uprising. And while the contribution of the indigenous protest to unveil deep prejudices and racial intolerance was rightly welcomed, recent accounts of the Zapatista rebellion have often neglected the role of interethnic and religious conflict in aggregated levels of violence in Chiapas (Serrano 1997). This was dramatically demonstrated by the sequence of events leading to the Acteal massacre in early 1998 in which the responsibility of local authorities was also established.

\textit{Environmental Degradation}

Over the past decade, the environment emerged as a key issue in Latin American relations due to three main reasons: (1) the urgent need to tackle problems such as deforestation, soil erosion, and urban pollution; (2) the international costs associated with the failure to deal with environmental degradation as demonstrated by the Brazilian experience with Amazonian deforestation; and (3) the perceived potential for cooperation in this area. While it is true that increasing environmental interdependence has magnified the potential for conflict in the region, it has also been perceived as an important framework for cooperation. Evidence of such cooperation includes the UN Environmental Programme, the OAS program on the Inter-American Environment, and the U.S.-Mexico bilateral parallel agreement on the environment (Sánchez 1994). Such cooperation has been partly facilitated by the acceptance of industrialized nations—including a reluctant U.S. government—of the legitimacy of the principle of transfer funds (these types of funds were first considered within the framework of the European Union). However, the potential for friction is still significant and is likely to manifest itself both in wider debates about the compatibility between environmental and economic agendas as well as in potential divergences concerning an acceptable
division of labor in the administration of the environment and the political control of those institutions in charge of that task (Hurrell 1996a, 218–220).

**Insurgency and Civil Violence**

During the 1960s, urban and rural guerrilla warfare was a common problem in Latin America. At the time, most guerrilla movements were influenced by Che Guevara’s “foquista” doctrine, which emphasized agency and political will and was opposed to the dominant view held by Moscow-line communist parties. The military and counterinsurgent responses deployed by different governments largely contained the insurgent threat throughout the region, albeit often with atrocious human rights violations. Despite this, and the increasing support to peaceful and electoral participation which developed throughout the 1970s, insurgency remained part of the Left’s agenda in the region. By 1979, the Sandinista’s success in Nicaragua instilled new vitality to urban and rural guerrilla activities in Peru, El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala, and Chile, where more pragmatic guerrilla movements—with the exception of Peru’s Sendero Luminoso—had emerged. By seizing opportunities and patiently building social support, these groups managed to increase their political influence significantly (Oxford Analytica, Latin America Daily Brief, 24 October 1996). However, by the late 1980s the combined effect of several factors, including the risk of U.S. intervention, the lessons derived from the Sandinista’s electoral defeat, and the uncertainty generated by the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, seemed to dissuade many of the virtues attached to the armed Left (Gillespie 1993).

By the beginning of the 1990s, many began to foresee an end to civil violence and guerrilla movements within the region. Such predictions have proved premature, however. While many of the armed movements in Central America transformed themselves into political parties, the insurgent threat has returned with new vitality to Colombia, Mexico, and Peru. In fact, a new generation of guerrilla movements has emerged with a number of distinctive features, among which the most important are their capacity to create and exploit political opportunities, their ability to utilize the media, their ability to coordinate concerted actions, and, equally important, their considerable dose of pragmatism when it comes to sources of finance.¹⁴

As in the past, civil violence and armed protest has taken place where
the presence of the state is relatively weak if not absent. The ineffectiveness of state institutions to address and resolve local social and political conflicts has strengthened the perception of guerrilla groups as valid political interlocutors. In Colombia, as has been the case in Peru and Mexico, insurgent movements gained the support of the population either by displacing the corrupt and arbitrary presence of the state or by performing functions that the state had failed to accomplish. The latter has ranged from the basic provision of security to more sophisticated tasks. In Colombia, for example, guerilla movements play a role in exploitation of gold and oil as well as the regulation of labor relations in areas dominated by drug trafficking, such as Guaviare Caquetá and Putumayo. These activities have enabled guerrilla movements in Colombia, more specifically the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionaria de Colombia (FARC) and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) to attract the pragmatic support of the population as well as to increase their resource base. As a consequence, over the past fifteen years both the FARC and ELN have grown significantly: FARC from 8 fronts in 1979 to 18 fronts in 1983 and an estimated 60 fronts involving 7,000 men by 1997. Similarly, ELN expanded from 11 fronts in 1986 to 32 fronts comprising 3,000 men in 1996. Moreover, and through the political control of municipalities and “armed clientelism,” its territorial base has expanded from 170 municipalities in 1985 to over 600 in 1997, representing more than half the total number of municipalities in Colombia (Pizarro 1996; Pecaut 1997). The increasing power of guerrilla groupings in Colombia has been linked more to its control over important resources than simply to its capacity to channel social protest. The guerrilla movements have become rich, pragmatic, and powerful, and their actions follow a military, political, and economic logic. According to some observers, the active and equally unstable support offered by the population, rather than representing antisystemic protest, conceals a basic desire for the presence of the state (Pizarro 1996, 165–166).

The growth of guerrilla movements in Colombia, Mexico, and Peru has been accompanied by the virtual eviction of law enforcement agencies either through the manipulation of public discontent or through violent attacks. This process has in turn encouraged the creation of de facto autonomous provinces under the control of either guerrilla movements and/or drug cartels. Not only has this eroded the central government’s authority and monopoly over the use of organized force but, as noted
above, it has also led to interstate friction. The incursion of Guatemalan troops in Mexican territory, as well as the more recent incidents on the border between Colombia and Venezuela illustrate that guerrilla groupings do not always respect national borders. Indeed, they often rely on neighboring countries for sanctuary or supply routes.

Migration Flows and Control over Resources

Migration flows and U.S. policies toward legal and illegal immigration have long been a source of tension in U.S.–Latin American relations and in particular U.S.-Mexican relations. Although up to the mid-1960s the U.S. government officially encouraged Mexican immigration, migration flows emerged as an issue in the bilateral agenda in 1971. Even though several studies showed that both countries gained more than they lost from migration, by the 1980s a consensus had emerged within the U.S. Congress about the need to protect the national borders. Not only had migration flows increased dramatically, but also the birth rate among Mexican-Americans was three times that of the rest of the population. Since the late 1980s, the U.S. government has sought to contain these flows both with new legislation and surveillance measures, which, according to some observers, have virtually militarized the border.

Unemployment and population density have underpinned what some authors term as a “culture of migration” in the region. According to some estimates, 25 percent of the English-speaking Caribbean population has emigrated to Britain, Canada, and the United States, and for many of these countries more than 10 percent of the total population now reside in the United States (Abrams 1993, 15). While most flows have been motivated by economic considerations with the United States acting as a major magnet of attraction, the crisis in Central America was also instrumental in creating a wave of political refugees.

Elsewhere, migration flows have become enmeshed with questions of resource scarcity and management, though as yet this has not been the source of significant international friction. As the recent conflict in Chiapas demonstrated, colonization and migration patterns had created an extremely complex dynamic of disputed property claims and intercommunal conflict. The process of colonization that started in the 1930s accelerated in the 1960s. By the 1980s, demographic growth in the southern state exceeded that of the country as a whole. In Chiapas as in Colombia, the main factors underlying migration and resettling were (1) changes in
production and land demands, (2) official policies that sought to avoid equitable land redistribution in areas dominated by the local elite, and (3) the expansion of pastures and cattle ranches forcing hundreds of peasants to relocate and resettle. Not surprisingly, environmental conditions in Chiapas deteriorated as the flow of migrants intensified in the 1980s following the eruption of the El Chichon volcano and the arrival of thousands of Guatemalan refugees to the area. As a consequence, 70 percent of the rain forest in Chiapas was cut down, but the ephemeral productivity of tropical land meant that the redistributive impact of the forest’s colonization was very limited indeed.

A similar outcome occurred with the colonization of the Colombian Llanos region, including Arauca, where the control of the state was fairly weak or nonexistent. With the encouragement of official colonization programs, the influx of settlers soon grew faster than available resources, with the towns growing at annual rates of approximately 20 percent. Not only did this lead to land disputes among the colonists, but also guerrilla groups became an active force in the region, imposing taxes on the annual cattle roundups. Some of the immigrants were bandits who stole and smuggled cattle across the border with Venezuela (Peñate 1991, 9, 11)

These two experiences again point to the consequences of Colombia’s and Mexico’s inability to deliver economic prosperity and to guarantee internal order and security, which has in turn caused friction with their respective neighbors—Guatemala and Venezuela.

Drug Trafficking, Arms Flows, and Organized Crime

The surge in drug trafficking in Latin America over the past two decades has dramatically eroded state institutions throughout the region. Sanctuaries controlled by drug cartels have become a major problem in countries like Colombia, Peru, and Mexico, and, in some cases, their alliance with insurgent forces has not only challenged state authorities but has also weakened the state’s ability to control its borders. The transnational manifestations of the drug trade have been abundantly clear in Latin America, with shifts in production both among producer countries and drug supplies, as well as along the main transit routes. Indeed, political instability and weakened or illegitimate state institutions are not only the consequences of burgeoning drug trafficking but also the prerequisites for its existence. In Latin America, as in other regions
of the world, these enterprises more often take place "where government authority is weak or absent" (Stares 1996, 52). Moreover, the militarization of the war against drugs has not only endangered democratic institutions but also has had important security implications.\textsuperscript{20} These range from violent resistance against antidrug campaigns to changes in regional military balances from arms transfers originally aimed at strengthening the capabilities of states besieged by drug traffickers.\textsuperscript{21}

The explosion of drug trafficking in Latin America over the past two decades cannot be explained simply in terms of the inability or unwillingness of regional states to address the problem. According to Toro (1997), the exacerbation of drug trafficking in Mexico and in other Latin American states since the mid-1980s is, to a significant extent, the result of the implementation of policies of prohibition which have sought to reduce both the production and consumption of drugs by increasing their cost and price, respectively. As the U.S. government increased surveillance in ports of entry in 1981, prices skyrocketed to compensate for the increased risk faced by drug traffickers.\textsuperscript{22}

Although the financial and institutional resources invested by Latin American states in the fight against drugs have increased exponentially, the results have been rather poor. Moreover, current antinarcotic policies have also produced disastrous unintended social consequences in a manner that calls to mind Hirschman's "perversity thesis."\textsuperscript{23} The efforts of Latin American countries in the war against drugs may briefly improve relations with Washington, but to the extent that these also produce more violence, they inevitably worsen relations with the United States (Abrams 1993, 26). Antinarcotic policies not only appear to threaten domestic law and order, but by encouraging alliances between drug producers and guerrillas they may end up endangering the very survival of those states deeply affected by drug trafficking.

In consequence, the overall cost of antinarcotic efforts should take into account both the financial resources devoted to this purpose and also the damage inflicted to the institutions of the state, not least its capacity to ensure law and order.\textsuperscript{24} Clearly, the exorbitant financial resources in the hands of drug lords have enabled them to buy protection from the justice system and other authorities, to organize security forces, and to finance violent campaigns against their enemies. In both Colombia and Peru, drug cultivation and drug production have also fostered significant
flows of internal migration with important implications for regional ecological balances (Lerner 1997). Moreover, in these regions an alternative system of “profit and power,” an alternative social and economic order, has emerged in which organized violence plays a role and openly defies the state’s supremacy (Pecaut 1997).

As was previously the case in Colombia, in Mexico drug lords have showed their capacity to manipulate the judiciary and to recover in this way not only their freedom but also confiscated properties. The continuing scandals are indicative of the high levels that corruption has reached within the institutions of the Mexican state. Corruption and drug-related violence now seem out of control. Evidence of this has been provided by the assassination of numerous police officers as well as the arrest in 1997 of General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, who had just been appointed as director of the National Institute for the Combat of Drugs, the highest federal antinarcotic agency, on charges of collaborating with the most prominent drug lords. Moreover, the contamination of elements of the Mexican army—a unique institution in a regional environment characterized by undisciplined and highly politicized armed forces—by drug trafficking has left no doubt about the high institutional cost of the war against drugs. The scandal surrounding General Gutiérrez Rebollo has unleashed a debate about the consequences of involvement in antinarcotic policies by the army, which has come to replace police forces as the main instrument in the war against drugs in several states. As evidence of acute corruption has come to the surface, the fears expressed back in the 1980s about the risks of exposing the armed forces to the drug war have materialized.25

Events in Colombia, Mexico, and Peru also point to the sometime pernicious link between drug traffickers and insurgency groups when their interests temporarily converge.26 The growth of drug trafficking in Colombia since the late 1970s contributed to the reactivation of insurgent movements. The increasing resources associated to illegal activities, including drug trafficking, could have benefited guerrilla movements, but more clearly, by weakening state institutions such resources facilitated the expansion of insurgent movements (Pizarro 1996, 110). Drawing on the tendency of the new generation of Colombian insurgencies to flourish in the same areas troubled by the “Violencia” of the 1950s, some authors have explained their increased reliance on practices such as kidnapping and extortion. As mentioned earlier, guerrilla movements in
Colombia have become significantly stronger both in economic and military terms. Financial resources obtained through ransoms and taxes have not only strengthened the ELN and the FARC but also have enabled them to perform "para-state" functions in several regions under their control.

Similarly, in Mexico, the recent emergence of the guerrilla movement Ejército Popular Revolucionario (EPR) in the state of Guerrero has been linked to drug trafficking, high rates of robberies, and kidnappings. Evidence of the presence of armed groups in the southern state had been mounting before the EPR came to the surface in 1996. Local authorities had already acknowledged the emergence and proliferation of rural self-defense groups as well as considerable arms flows. Moreover, not only is Guerrero one of the most important producers of opium poppies in the country, but between April 1993 and May 1994, fifty-five kidnappings were reported in the state and the total ransom collected by organized crime reached over US$4 million. Although Mexico is still far from Colombia's total, it now holds the second place in terms of kidnappings with a total of 1,450 abductions reported in 1995.

These trends have been accompanied by an important increase in arms flows in the region. As has been widely documented, stability in various states in Central America, and more recently in southern Mexico, was significantly affected by the availability of arms in neighboring states leading to transnational flows. The decision of the United Nations to monitor arms transfers in Central America was, to an important extent, motivated by the appreciation of the dangers these arms flows represented for regional stability.27

CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to demonstrate the increased weight of domestic and internally driven threats to the overall security of Latin America. With few exceptions, the international behavior of regional states has shown considerable maturity in relation to the use of force. However, this chapter has argued that the growing salience of those problems that both exploit and exacerbate the basic weakness of some Latin American states could affect the stability that has long characterized the region. In analyzing some of the security issues and problems currently facing Latin American states, the interaction between the domestic and international
spheres is becoming increasingly clear. The overview of the problems examined in this chapter not only highlights the logic of domestically driven problems but also the danger of regional instability.

NOTES

1. During the Colonial period, the role of Latin America in the international market was to supply raw materials. Independence did not modify this dependent status of regional states, nor did the replacement of Spain by Great Britain as the dominant external power in the nineteenth century. Throughout the twentieth century, Latin American economies have remained significantly dependent and vulnerable to external factors. See Drake (1992).

2. Although the emergence of Latin America by 1949 as a peripheral theater of the cold war marked a shift in the position of the U.S. government vis-à-vis regional organizations, important differences underlay the U.S. and Latin American views of the Organisation of American States (OAS). The latter not only emphasized economic cooperation but also harbored reservations about the risks of U.S. intervention. Notwithstanding this, the Charter of the OAS (drafted in Bogotá in the midst of the crisis unleashed by the assassination of the Liberal Party leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948) conformed to the U.S. view of an agency designed for the “collective defence of the Americas.” See Trask (1977, 281–282).

3. The crucial role played by diplomatic mediation and more recently by confidence-building measures has been reflected in a significant number of negotiations. Among the most important, one could mention the resolution of the 1980 dispute between Colombia and Venezuela, the agreement to disengage forces in the context of the 1981 armed border conflict between Peru and Ecuador, and the mediation of the Pope in the 1984 Beagle Channel dispute between Chile and Argentina. Argentina and Chile were again involved in border negotiations over the Laguna del Desierto in 1991, and Argentina and Venezuela negotiated over the exploitation and use of channels of Martín García in that same year. The dispute between Honduras and El Salvador was settled by the 1992 resolution of the International Court of Justice, and more recently the group of trustees has offered a favorable framework to deal with the border dispute between Peru and Ecuador. Confidence-building measures have also played an important role within the region. Such measures became part of the peace process in Central America with the adoption of the Arias Peace Plan, and played a key role in the institutionalization of the nuclear rapprochement between Brazil and Argentina.
4. Resort to the use of force in the region has been limited. Among the most important armed conflicts in this century, one could mention the 1932–1935 Chaco war, the 1969 Futball war between Honduras and El Salvador, the 1981 breakout of hostilities between Peru and Ecuador, the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war, the Central American crisis, and the more recent border conflict between Peru and Ecuador.

5. Although most papers in Varas and Caro (1994) include “traditional” arms control schemes in their analysis of CBMs, this concept in fact marked a shift to “military operations” in view of the stalemate reached in arms control negotiations in the 1970s. Initiatives such as the following fall under the “traditional” category of arms control: the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established a nuclear weapon-free zone in the region; the 1974 Ayacucho declaration, aimed at reducing military budgets in the region; the 1991 Compromiso de Mendoza signed by Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, which prohibits chemical and biological weapons in the region; and the 1991 declaration by Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru by which these countries renounced all weapons of mass destruction. For a critical analysis of CBMs, see Desjardins (1996).

6. Other schemes that parallel some versions of CBMs include the 1984 Tratado de Paz y Amistad between Chile and Argentina, which resolved the Beagle Channel dispute and which contemplated a number of measures modeled on CBMs to regulate naval maneuvers. Similarly, the joint Argentine-British declaration of 1990 included a number of maritime and naval CBMs, including early notification of military maneuvers. Notwithstanding these improvements, it is clear that one of the main obstacles to the further development of CBMs within the region is the resistance shown by strong armed forces to civilian intrusion into what they consider their reserved domains (Child 1994, 57; Morris 1994, 122; Diamint 1994, 147, 152).

7. The improvement in relations between the two countries has been traced often to President Figueiredo’s visit to Buenos Aires in May 1980. However, frequent and friendly naval visits and exercises started in 1976. These were followed by the 1980 agreements on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and on nuclear research and development. While these agreements enabled both countries to jointly oppose suppliers’ restrictions, equally important was their impact on increased security through the promotion of confidence and mutual understanding at a time when the development of nuclear programs provided fertile ground for misperception and miscalculation. These measures laid the basis for the ensuing adoption of formal CBMs and Argentina’s endorsement of these mechanisms as a central element of its defense and foreign policies. In 1994, an OAS conference on CBMs took place in Buenos Aires. See Hurrell (1983, 186) and Serrano (1994, 238–239).

8. The cyclic presence of strong governments in the region, often backed
by the armed forces, has not substituted for the fundamental weakness of the state.

9. On August 9, 1997, the governments of Colombia and Venezuela reached a security agreement to patrol the border. This move prompted the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionaria de Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional to establish a “strategic alliance” in the departments of Arauca, Casanare, Boyacá, and Santander. A week later, in the context of a new guerrilla offensive, the president of the Colombian Congress put forward a proposal for the creation of an international force to help control the further decay of public order and to assist in the pacification of the country (Reforma, 12 and 17 August 1997).

10. These events have been linked to the death of Amado Carrillo, the head of the Juárez drug cartel (Reforma, 25 August 1997).

11. For a thorough analysis of the role of the UN in Central America, see Eguizabel (1995).

12. As Paul Drake has pointed out, Latin America may have remained a “colony of overwhelmingly indigenous peoples ... if it had not been for the growth of the mestizo population.” The proliferation of racial and ethnic types made it almost impossible to “sustain stratification and discrimination by straight genotype or phenotype” (1992, 28–29). In consequence, race was increasingly defined in cultural terms, and by the early twentieth century the mestizo population came to dominate Latin America.

13. Indigenismo refers to the process by which successive governments relied on and made use of the “indigenous” discourse to build institutions and mobilize the population against the power of local elites.

14. In Colombia, a new generation of guerrilla movements emerged in the mid-1980s more inclined toward social-partisan strategies. The platforms of these organizations identified as main targets unions and popular districts in major cities and sought to develop popular fronts as well as international networks of support. The overall perspective was one of a protracted popular war. The recent guerrilla movements that have appeared in Mexico show some similarities with their Colombian counterparts. The literature on these issues is extensive. See, among others, Pizarro (1996), Pecaut (1997), and Serrano (1997).

15. Such municipalization has not only changed the administrative landscape of the country but also that of the insurgency. “Armed clientelism” refers to the private appropriation of public goods by the use of force. The guerrilla now appoints public officers and deducts a percentage of public wages and a quota from public contracts. The legacy of this process includes twenty-nine mayors, twenty-six councilors, and twelve deputies assassinated from 1986 to 1996 and a total of one hundred seventy-eight kidnappings of public servants.
16. According to Malcom Deas, eruption of violence in Colombia, during both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has been the expression of violence among equals, rather than that which tends to see a permanent confrontation between the state and the opposition (1995, 21).

17. The area in Chiapas dedicated to pastures and cattle grew by 95 percent from 1960 to 1970, an annual rate of 6.3 percent. According to some sources, out of a total of one hundred fifteen agrarian disputes, eighty-seven originated in land invasions by cattle ranchers and large landowners. Moreover, in Mexico as in Colombia, the shift of haciendas to cattle ranches led to the massive ejection of peasants who had until then remained as “peons,” a process that would prove highly explosive (Serrano 1997).

18. At the height of the Peruvian crisis, multilateral military intervention to reverse Sendero’s gains was considered (Abrams 1993, 30, 56). Similarly, the power accumulated by the alliance between drug traffickers and the guerrillas could help explain the decision of both Colombia and Venezuela to back the proposal for the creation of a hemispheric agency to assist regional countries in the war against drugs. So far, the main tasks contemplated for the new organization would be intelligence operations (Reforma, 17 August 1997; La Jornada, 18 August 1997).


20. More vigorous eradication campaigns prompted angry farmers to occupy state-owned oil stations in 1994, a move that had international implications as it blocked the flow of Ecuadorian oil to the Pacific coast. Most dramatically, as antinarcotic police measures stepped up in Colombia, police forces became the target of attacks by drug traffickers. This was particularly the case in Medellin, where car bombings of police posts and assassinations of police officers took place “almost weekly.” From 1982 to 1992, the number of police officers killed in the line of duty totaled 2,834 (Stares 1996, 64; WOLA 1993, 12, 14).

21. Under the Bush administration, Colombia received more U.S. narcotics-related assistance than any other country. Total economic, military, and law enforcement assistance increased from US$1.4 million to US$1.43 million from 1988 to 1992. Military aid jumped from US$4 million in 1988 to US$92.3 million in 1990. Although the deterioration of relations with the United States leading to the 1996 decertification underlay the decline in U.S. assistance, the resumption of narcotics-related aid and new transfers of military equipment were announced in mid-August 1997. See WOLA (1993, 3–5), Reforma (16 August 1997), and La Jornada (18 August 1997).

22. According to experts, profits are mostly derived from drug contraband rather than drug production. And the main profits are those earned within the
U.S. market. Although estimates of profits from drug trafficking vary considerably, in Mexico these were calculated for 1988 at around US$2.1 billion, which represents 1.25 percent of the gross domestic product, or 5 percent of total exports (Reuter and Ronfeldt 1992).

23. This is one of the theses developed by Albert Hirschman (1991) in his book *The Rhetoric of Reaction.*

24. Since the mid-1980s, about 60 percent of the budget of the Office of the Attorney General has been allocated to antinarcotic policies. And the total number of troops deployed in antinarcotic tasks increased from 5,000 in the late 1970s to over 25,000 by 1987. During the Salinas administration, the budget allocated to antinarcotic policies quadrupled and more than 1,500 elements from the Federal Judicial Police were replaced (Toro 1997).

25. The costs of transferring such responsibilities to the army have already been made apparent in a number of scandals polluting the record of the armed forces. In 1986, the press reported allegations involving the then secretary of defense, General Arévalo Gardoqui, and three more generals of links with drug traffickers. During the Salinas administration, the head of the Mexican Navy, Mario Scheleske Sánchez, was removed from his post on similar grounds. In 1991, the clash in the state of Veracruz between police agents and soldiers as a Colombian airplane carrying cocaine was preparing to take off evidenced the protection offered by the latter to drug dealers. Scandals of drug-related corruption are by no means new, but the seniority of those currently involved and the decision to prosecute responsible officers are without precedent. Although the decision to hand over corrupt military men to the civilian justice system could in principle foster discipline within the armed institutions, as well as provide them with some measure of protection against the corrosive effects of drug trafficking, given the high rank of Gutiérrez Rebollo—accused of having engineered strikes against some drug lords to benefit other cartels, specifically that of Amado Carrillo Fuentes—the damage already inflicted to the armed forces would appear to be considerable.

26. Indeed, such convergence became particularly clear during the massive mobilizations of over seventy thousand peasants in the states of Caquetá Putumayo and Guaviare in Colombia. Equally important, the negative stalemate that gradually emerged between the Colombian government and the guerrilla movements was undoubtedly aggravated by the wave of narco-terrorism, sparked by extraditions, that distressed Colombian society in the late 1980s. See Pecaut (1997).

27. According to some estimates, in 1993 light weapons were responsible for over 90 percent of the deaths and injuries in over ninety conflicts then in progress. The end of the cold war may have in fact accelerated the proliferation of these types of weapons. In Central America, despite the significant contribution
of disarmament and demobilization initiatives to the pacification of the region, as recent events in Nicaragua have demonstrated, hidden arsenals of light weapons still remain (Berdal 1996, 18).

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