

Latin American Security: Emerging Challenges

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Latin American policymakers like to portray Latin America as the most peaceful region on the planet, and they are probably correct. There are relatively few conflicts and hot spots in the region; important nonproliferation agreements are in force; and cooperation, rather than conflict, prevails in hemispheric disputes. This condition is not the result of a planned strategy; it is the outcome of several factors, many of them fortuitous, such as the continental proximity with the United States, the absence of major threats, the failure of the military regimes in several countries of the region, or simply the lack of relevant military power. Although interregional conflicts are currently unlikely, and no foreign power threatens the region, there is no guarantee of a peaceful future for the hemisphere. Important variables—such as international crime, drug traffic, fragile democracies, and poverty—exist that are capable either of igniting conflict or of upsetting the regional balance. In addition, a consensus is developing on the need to reform the existing regional security agreements, alliances, and multilateral organizations. Considered outdated, these arrangements inspire little confidence should a serious threat to the region's security appear.

In the last decade, these arrangements have been subjected to considerable stress originating from two major changes affecting the global security environment: the end of the Cold War and the advent of globalization. For about 50 years, the Cold War made security the driving force of international relations and heavily influenced both the relations and the domestic politics in Latin America. The end of the Cold War heralded a new reality for security arrangements. Furthermore, globalization has been increasingly perceived as the most influential agent affecting not only economics but also the entire Latin American security framework. What is the status of regional security today, 10 years after the end of the Cold War? How is globalization affecting the prospects for Latin American security?

The relationship with the United States, during the entire 20th century, was the single most important influence on regional security in Latin America. The United States manifested its influence indirectly—as a political and ideological model inspiring historical and political changes throughout the century. It also manifested its in-

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fluence directly—through its economic positions, military interventions, and efforts to shape the hemispheric security arrangements.

The end of the Cold War—also strongly related to U.S. influence—affected the region in a way usually neglected by scholars and policymakers analyzing the region. During the Cold War, Latin American countries either performed secondary roles or simply watched while the main play unfolded. Now, some of these countries at least want the assurance that they will have better roles in the following acts. Whereas for the major powers the Cold War meant the building up of military forces and the stockpiling of nuclear warheads, for Latin American countries it meant domestic disputes for political power. Whereas for the major powers the end of the Cold War meant foreign security reconsiderations and military downsizing, for Latin American countries it meant the transition to democracy. Furthermore, Latin America's transition to democracy began well before the end of the Cold War, when the communist subversion was defeated in most of the countries in the region. Consequently, the United States and Latin America have different motivations and perceptions regarding regional security arrangements.

Building on this history, globalization brings to bear a number of effects. It accelerates international trade, outpaces overall economic growth, speeds up capital mobility, creates imbalances, deepens the gap between developed and developing countries, and subjects economies to contagion effects from crises in other regions. For Latin American governments, globalization has meant the possibility of the loss of control over external variables that affect their respective domestic realms, to a point that they feel their sovereignty is at stake. In this sense, the financial crises that occurred in Mexico and then in Brazil (in the wave of the Asian and the Russian crises¹) exposed the malfunctioning of the market, as well as the structural weaknesses in regional economies. Its main effect, however, was to expose the astonishment of these governments in the face of capital volatility. On the one hand, the resulting anxiety created concerns regarding the capacity of the new democracies to absorb the crisis. On the other, this anxiety combined with the feeling that globalization favors richer countries to the detriment of poorer ones, and this pressures the stability of the security environment.

Globalization in itself, as a single phenomenon with economic implications, should have a minor impact on hemispheric security. When combined with other destabilizing variables, however, globalization may work as a magnifier of sources of conflict. Particularly, the notion—spreading among developing countries—that globalization favors richer countries to the detriment of the poorer ones impairs initiatives aimed at renewing hemispheric security arrangements.

Current Security Environment

An assessment of the security of a region usually focuses on two main circumstances: the existence of real or potential conflicts, and the existence of trusted multi-lateral and bilateral organizations and mechanisms able to prevent or resolve existing disputes. When analyzing Latin American security, it is necessary to take into account not only these circumstances but others as well. In addition, it is necessary to

examine the position and perspective of the United States on regional security for the entire 20th century, particularly for the last 50 years, for during that time the United States has been the most influential actor shaping the Latin American security environment. After World War II, the United States took the leadership to consolidate existing security arrangements and create new regional multilateral security mechanisms. During the Cold War, either by directly intervening or by indirectly helping governments and training military personnel, the United States was able to impose its security vision on the entire hemisphere.

With regard to the existence of conflicts, Latin America is currently a relatively peaceful region. Border disputes have been settled, and domestic conflicts, which in the recent past led to insurgencies and civil wars, have been resolved or absorbed by recently installed democracies.² Of course, some problems still raise concern in the international arena; examples include the recent war between Ecuador and Peru, and the tension resulting from the dispute between Honduras and Nicaragua.³ Nevertheless, these cases were solved or at least submitted to international mediation.

In the domestic arena, Latin America is still synonymous with fragile democracies. Many problems, latent or not, challenge the stability of newly conceived political regimes. Problems in Haiti and Colombia are among the most recent examples of dramatic domestic situations that could spill over the borders and upset regional security. Haiti required the extreme measure of a foreign military intervention; the situation, although unresolved, is under control. Colombia remains the most serious security threat to the region; problems related to guerrilla warfare, drug trafficking, and poverty, all of them increasingly interconnected and running out of official Colombian control, challenge local and regional security arrangements. Furthermore, the revolution in computing and communications—providing unfettered, easy, fast, and relatively secure opportunity of contact and access—has provided an exceptional leverage for international organized crime, such as drug trafficking and terrorism.

Finally, there is the situation of Cuba, today a dissonant relic of the Cold War increasingly in disagreement with the regional environment.⁴ When in 1961 the United States broke diplomatic relations with Cuba and in 1962 imposed a comprehensive economic embargo against that nation, its actions were seen as compatible with the Cold War political climate. Both the logic and the results of the embargo, however, were always harshly questioned in Latin America. Currently, from the hemispheric security viewpoint, Cuba, because of both its internal situation and its relationship with the United States, is the most dissonant piece in the picture.

With regard to the “existence of trusted multilateral and bilateral organizations and mechanisms,” the problem is more complex. On the one hand, there are multilateral organizations and mechanisms to regulate situations and conditions capable of upsetting the regional security.⁵ On the other hand, there is a spreading notion that the existing organizations are not well suited to respond to the new dynamics of the hemispheric security environment.⁶

The first multilateral organization designed to plan and coordinate hemispheric security was the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB). Established in 1942, IADB had the mandate to plan for hemispheric defense and coordinate resistance to the Axis powers during World War II. IADB is still active in the context of the inter-

American system, as an advisory board with no policy-reporting function to the Organization of American States (OAS).⁷ Recently, because of a mandate given by the OAS General Assembly, IADB has been coordinating demining activities and cataloging confidence- and security-building measures in the region. Its delegates are drawn from militaries in the region: it is always headed by a U.S. officer and, although not by U.S. design, headquartered in a U.S. military installation. Canada and most Caribbean Community (Caricom) countries are not IADB members.

Inter-American Treaty on Reciprocal Assistance

In 1947, motivated by the U.S. interest to organize a collective arrangement for hemispheric defense, American states (with the exception of Canada and Caribbean countries) signed the Inter-American Treaty on Reciprocal Assistance (IATRA), also known as the Rio Treaty. Reflecting the optimistic prospects suggested by the post-World War II climate, IATRA established that an attack on one signatory would mean an attack on all. Attack, as if a premonition of the security problems that the region would face in the 1960s, was defined in such a way to include unarmed aggression (for example, a communist insurgency).

Since it was signed, IATRA has been invoked 17 times; 16 of these calls were related to inter-American conflicts in the Caribbean basin. Because most of these initiatives to invoke IATRA were related to inter-American conflicts, largely within the context of fighting against communist insurgency in the region, the real effectiveness of IATRA as an all-encompassing hemispheric security arrangement remains unrealized. In addition, during the existence of the treaty, the hemispheric security was overwhelmingly dominated by the U.S. concerns with the Cold War; thus, in Latin America, the treaty became increasingly identified uniquely with the Cold War and with the particular U.S. interests rather than with collective interests. This explains why today many Latin Americans claim that the treaty served solely to legitimate U.S. interventions in the region.

Notwithstanding, the most serious problem of the treaty did not arise from these criticisms but from the a conflict in the South Atlantic (the Malvinas/Falkland War). Argentina invoked the treaty, but the United States chose to back the British position. For many Latin Americans, particularly the military, the United States killed IATRA with this decision. This interpretation would become commonplace in Latin American military schools and strategic centers. Nevertheless, apart from the controversy over the ownership of the Falkland Islands, to characterize the initiation of that war as an attack perpetrated by the United Kingdom—which, in theory, could justify the application of the treaty—is a difficult task. In addition, Argentina itself provided the international community with the strongest argument against its own position: the Argentines ejected the military, then ruling the country, from the government, and then prosecuted and condemned its leaders for the decision that led Argentina to embark on that war.

The Malvinas/Falkland War brought to light the real possibility of an armed conflict, then somewhat hard to imagine, between a country in the inter-American system and an extracontinental power. Paradoxically, at the same time that Argentina, as well as the debates over the war, pushed the treaty out of obscurity, diplomatic ser-

vices pushed it back into obscurity. Controversy over the applicability of IATRA to the case—and a hard-to-hide sense that Argentina had made the wrong decision from the beginning—inhibited treaty signatories from providing unequivocal support to Argentina and thus to demand application of the treaty to the case. The presence of an extracontinental country fighting a war against a neighbor country was threatening in many ways. It could be considered, for example, a dangerous precedent. Neither the rationale for Argentina's position nor the embedded rationale to invoke the treaty was convincing; therefore, for many South American diplomatic services, during the war and for many years following it, IATRA became an issue to be avoided. They preferred to let it die by avoiding conversation about it, and they squelched IATRA and every initiative to revise it, merely as a way to avoid dealing with a delicate and polemical matter.

The end of the Cold War brought IATRA once again to the forefront. The rapid and profound changes occurring in the international security environment seemed to be a logical motivation for reassessing regional security arrangements, among them IATRA. Perceptions of this phenomenon would be quite different around the region, however. To understand these distinct perceptions, it is necessary to analyze the effects of the end of the Cold War through the U.S. initiatives to counter the communist spread in the region during the 1960s and 1970s.

Perceptions on the end of the Cold War are different with reference not only to the timing of the effects resulting from the end of that conflict but also to the motivations to revise IATRA. As to the timing, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 is the most acknowledged symbol for the end of the Cold War. Therefore, it is easy to visualize and to define its position in history. However, when the issue relates to the effects of the end of the Cold War, the notion of the timing may be quite different. Whereas, for the United States, the dismantling of the Soviet Union meant the end of the Cold War, for most South American countries, the direct effects of the Cold War had ended in the late 1970s, when subversion and politically motivated insurgencies were defeated in the region. Therefore, these countries did not share the same sense of urgency to renew regional security arrangements.

At least in theory, the end of the Cold War should be an event meaningful enough to motivate initiatives to revise and update the treaty. According to the simplest and most logical rationale, because the Cold War had kept the treaty alive and strong for more than 40 years, its end should have heralded a profound change in the security environment and should have stimulated a revision of the treaty. But again, the reactions were ambiguous. It is true that the end of the Cold War removed the relative urgency of the treaty, or at least provided the institutional framework for the programs designed to face the communist threat to the region. Simultaneously, however, the end of the Cold War led to the downgrading of any eventual interest in modifying the treaty.

Organization of American States

The Organization of American States (OAS) Charter was signed in 1948 and, with respect to security, it restates much of the language of IATRA. The Rio Treaty was a precursor to the development of OAS. Its members were the same as the signa-

tories of the Rio Treaty, with the addition of Canada and the Caricom countries. During most of its existence, OAS has played a relatively minor role in security issues. In 1991, OAS moved to reshape its involvement with security matters and created the Special Committee on Hemispheric Security. In 1995, this Special Committee became the permanent Committee on Hemispheric Security (CHS). Since then, this group has been attempting to formulate a methodology to address hemispheric security problems in a systematic way (as opposed to the ad hoc responses to crisis in the region). CHS has been generating debate on security matters and conflict prevention, and it has been building confidence in the resolution of disputes through diplomatic means. Although skepticism exists on the OAS role in security matters, the organization has been slowly creating motivation and consensus through a program of confidence-building measures in the region. As concrete achievements, OAS has been successful in the coordination of demining operations, in the creation of an institutional framework to improve control of illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms, and in the establishment of an institutional framework to help fight drug trafficking in the region.⁸

Treaty of Tlatelolco

In the 1990s, all Latin American states adopted the Treaty of Tlatelolco,⁹ which established the region as a nuclear-free zone. From a security perspective, this treaty and the regime jointly established by Argentina and Brazil in 1990—by which the two countries committed themselves not to pursue nuclear weapons development programs and designed a system with participation by the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure mutual control on the respective nuclear activities—represent an extraordinary commitment to regional security.

Other Subregional Mechanisms

Although security is not a pressing matter for most Latin American countries, it is possible to observe other mechanisms that affect the security of subregions. Some of them, such as the Rio Group,¹⁰ the Central American Democratic Security Treaty, and the Eastern Caribbean Security System, were specifically designed to face subregional threats. Others, such as *Mercado Común del Sur* (MERCOSUR)—the Common Market of the South and the Andean Pact, were not designed as security arrangements but have had extraordinary influence on subregional security. The Rio Group was conceived to foster a Latin American solution to the Central American crisis of the 1980s. Most Latin American countries participate in the Rio Group, which has proved useful as a body for policy coordination on matters that extrapolate security concerns, such as economic cooperation. In addition, during the 1990s, the Rio Group, along with the European Community, sponsored several initiatives aimed at establishing common ground and identities on security matters between Latin America and Europe. For Latin America, these initiatives brought a new perspective for regional security, distinct from the usual and overwhelming North-South axis.

The Central American and Eastern Caribbean countries belong to subregional security organizations. The signatories of the Central American Democratic Security

Treaty hold periodic meetings of their defense ministers, chiefs of defense staff, and military intelligence agencies to coordinate cooperative border control action and collaborative efforts aimed at the drug trade, ecological threats, natural disasters, and international crime. The Eastern Caribbean Security System was established as an umbrella organization to coordinate the efforts of regional security forces regarding natural disasters, narco-trafficking, and international crime.

MERCOSUR, as a trade arrangement for subregional economic integration in the Southern Cone, does not have provisions for security. However, by creating an opportunity for enhanced dialogue among its members and, particularly, by motivating cooperation, this arrangement has been working as a confidence builder in the Southern Cone. MERCOSUR countries have been organizing joint exercises and other military exchanges. In addition, the MERCOSUR environment has been helping strengthen democracy. For example, when General Lino Oviedo attempted a coup d'état in Paraguay, other member countries immediately moved to emphatically warn him that a military coup would effect immediate ejection of Paraguay from MERCOSUR, and General Oviedo's attempt was aborted.

The United States and New Security Arrangements

The United States has long been the most powerful and influential actor shaping and reshaping hemispheric security. Even before becoming a superpower, the United States had demonstrated its hegemonic intentions over the Americas. At the threshold of the 20th century, still without enough military power to back its intentions, the United States made clear that extracontinental powers would not be welcome in the Americas. During the 20th century, the United States became a superpower and, at the end of the century, it was the only remaining superpower in the world.

During this period, the United States issued policies related to Latin America that characteristically showed little understanding of or concern about Latin American needs and interests. Thus, the United States provoked mixed feelings among its continental neighbors. Its political system and capacity to produce wealth elicited admiration and respect. At the same time, its proclivity to interpret the hemisphere's interests, its tendency to impose its own vision on Latin America, and the apparent ease with which it intervened militarily in the region galvanized suspicions and fed prejudices all over the region. Nevertheless, Latin American policymakers quickly perceived that, despite sometimes being an egotistical and arrogant neighbor, the United States is an unavoidable partner. Its policies, whether right or wrong, as well as its mere influences are paramount for any hemispheric security definitions.

Along with its relationship with the region, the United States has always exercised great autonomy in defining the security agenda. Most recently, in 1995, the United States launched the Defense Ministerial of the Americas (DMA). Embedded in this initiative was the proposition to redefine hemispheric security in a more cooperative way. In essence, this brought a new methodology for the establishment of security arrangements that was based on the identification of common interests and opportunities—as opposed to the traditional methodology, which was based on perceived threats. The most practical aspect of this new methodology was an invitation for Latin American countries to participate in the definition of a new hemispheric

security agenda. Hence, with the goal of promoting open discussions to define a new cooperative arrangement on security issues, the DMA was launched and has been meeting on a biannual basis. However, from the beginning, reactions from the most important Latin American countries were enthusiastic in form, but cautious in matter; apparently, they wanted to ponder carefully before jumping into other associations with the United States. Different reasons fed their caution. Some of the countries do not distinguish this proposition from past U.S. interventions or other propositions—propositions that, in their belief, were plagued by disdain for Latin American interests. Other countries do not see in the current hemispheric and global situations any urgent motivation demanding new security arrangements. Still others prefer to maintain some independence before committing themselves to new associations. These findings suggest that the relationship between countries in the region and the United States is special in many ways.

In *1999 Strategic Assessment*,¹¹ John Cope emphasizes how difficult it is for U.S. policymakers to perceive some peculiarities of Latin American countries. He warns of the contrast between the promises of globalization and its negative effects for many developing countries. Finally, he acknowledges that occasionally the United States has handled its hemispheric concerns in “clumsy and erratic ways” that generated policies harmful for the region.¹² As a consequence, Latin American resentments still pervade the relationship between the region and the United States. Cope correctly asserts that poor management of the current situation will perpetuate socioeconomic inequalities, weaken political institutions, and encourage crime and the creation of private armies in many Latin American countries.

Agreeing with the heads of state and government that participated in the 1998 Summit of the Americas, Cope called for the modernization of hemispheric relations and collective security arrangements. He suggested two alternatives for U.S. policy: a conservative approach, based on preservation of the traditional strategic framework, or a progressive approach, based on the replacement of U.S. ambivalence toward the hemisphere by a “new commitment to the region through partnership.”¹³

Latin America and New Security Arrangements

There is clearly some agreement on the need to reshape existing arrangements and concepts related to hemispheric security. Nevertheless, in the absence of a common threat, Latin American countries have shown little interest in becoming involved in major security arrangements. These countries are still coping with the effects of the end of the Cold War, coupled with the ongoing transformation of the authoritarian regimes into democracies. This is a universe in which globalization operates as an additional stressing force.

Most Latin American countries—Cuba being the evident exception—suffered only indirect effects of the Cold War. These countries were not involved, as were their European partners, in military movements and nuclear stockpile calculations; nonetheless, they were involuntarily transformed into arenas for ideological disputes between the two major sides. As such, during the 1960s, fueled by the Cold War and by American sympathy and encouragement, most militaries in the region took over their respective governments and installed authoritarian, sometimes dictatorial, re-

gimes. During most of the 1970s, that sympathy and encouragement helped the authoritarian military regimes firmly entrench themselves in the respective political realm. At that time, for U.S. policymakers, fighting communism, not waging democracy, was their most important principle. Yet, by the end of the 1970s, less concerned with the communist threat to the region and more concerned with the promotion of democracy and human rights, the United States began to exert pressure on the authoritarian regimes in the region. By the mid-1980s, almost every military regime in the region had been replaced by elected governments.

Bringing an end to authoritarian rule and consolidating democracy in the region, however, would be a much longer process. This process necessitated the resolution of two main interconnected issues: to build democratic and reliable institutions and to create assurances that the military would return to their traditional activities. Neither task would be easily or quickly accomplished, and in most Latin American countries these are still sensitive and carefully negotiated issues. Truly, to break with the old ideas was easier than to escape from them and generate new ones.

As a net outcome of these situations, the Latin American countries would demonstrate a markedly different appetite for discussing new regional defense arrangements. For some countries, such as those of the Caribbean, responding to a U.S. invitation to create a new security arrangement for the entire region seemed appropriate; furthermore, such an invitation could incidentally include a more-than-welcome new package of military aid. Similarly, countries such as Colombia, attempting to combat a guerrilla-mixed-with-drugs war, welcomed both a new security arrangement and military aid.

Other countries, such as Chile and Argentina, could show enthusiasm—although less enthusiasm than did the previously mentioned countries—for different reasons. Both had apparently redefined the missions of their militaries to limit their activities in the political realm. They welcomed broader security engagements that could help legitimate the new domestic arrangements. Their strategies were different, but the result was similar: to push the military away from domestic politics. The Chilean military turned to traditional missions after having secured budgetary and salary prerogatives. The Argentine military found its interest in peacekeeping, and such engagements assisted in rebuilding its self-esteem, which had been heavily damaged by the Malvinas/Falkland War.

Brazil initially showed very little enthusiasm about joining new security arrangements. Brazil's lack of interest in engaging too deeply in security debates originates in both domestic and foreign policy. Domestically, Brazilians have been struggling to complete the conception of a new, postauthoritarian decisionmaking model. In these circumstances, and considering the Brazilian political culture, it is better not to place emphasis on security. For example, to allow the hemispheric debate on security to enter in the domestic agenda could excessively promote the military in a context of a carefully negotiated transition to democracy. In this context, even the admission that a transition was in place could be a sensitive matter, to be avoided as a way not to ignite rebounds. Concerning foreign policy implications, Brazilian representatives considered premature the debate on hemispheric security. Clearly, they were concerned that the redefinition of hemispheric security arrange-

ments would create pressure for definitions, which would limit Brazil's strategic options. In fact, after having unilaterally broken its bilateral agreements for military cooperation with the United States in the late 1970s, Brazil had been able to create a more diversified set of alliances. Establishing a wrong association with the United States now could be costly in the future. Finally, the Brazilian decisionmakers could not distinguish clearly the nature of what could be a right security association with the United States.

All these facts emphasize the heterogeneity of the hemispheric security challenges today. Indeed, Latin America is all but a homogeneous region. If a new map capable of orienting strategic security policies for Latin America is necessary, it must address at least six distinct regional realities:

- The United States as the world superpower with global commitments and leadership responsibilities
- Canada, influenced by the proximity with the United States and by its geopolitical quasi-isolation in relation to the rest of the hemisphere
- Mexico, heavily influenced by its proximity with the United States
- The Caribbean countries, also influenced by U.S. interests in the region, where Cuba remains the major single disrupting factor to any regional security initiative
- The countries of Central America and the northern countries of South America, also strongly influenced by the United States
- The South American countries, where, slowly and apparently reluctantly, Brazil is assuming a leadership role

Latin American Security and Globalization

The current Latin American security structure, although predominantly peaceful, is all but a stable structure. Organizations as well as concepts have been going through a revision process. This revision has been slowed both by the absence of a real, common—or at least commonly perceived—threat and by the attempt of some Latin American countries to reduce the overwhelming U.S. hegemony. This situation has resulted in a relatively fragile system that might well find it difficult to act cooperatively should a threat or crisis occur. Therefore, from a security perspective, the regional system is structurally weak and relatively unchallenged. This is the security environment where globalization is operating.

Whatever disagreements there may be on the concept of globalization, agreement does exist on the finding that globalization accelerates international trade, outpaces overall economic growth, and speeds capital mobility. Furthermore, globalization creates effects with a high degree of unpredictability by “contagion.” For example, the financial crisis in Russia led investors, fearing that such a crisis could spread, to withdraw their money from risky countries. Consequently, Latin American policymakers began to perceive globalization as a cause for loss of control and sovereignty. In this sense, the financial crises that occurred in Mexico and then in Brazil revealed some fragility in the economies of these countries and jeopardized the political stability of

their emerging democracies. Moreover, globalization affected their sense of security and is increasingly affecting their perception of sovereignty. Interestingly, some analysts have concluded that globalization renders sovereignty a less important value. The opposite, however, is true: proportional to the growing sense of loss of control, Latin Americans give to sovereignty an even more important and emotional connotation.

In the period immediately following the end of the Cold War, scholars interested in international relations were divided between those who believed that little had changed and those who believed that a completely new approach to international security was necessary.¹⁴ Concern over globalization reoriented the debate, and positions have only begun to be defined around this theme. At this early stage of the debate, some believe strongly that globalization has—or will have—a great impact on international relations and international security. Others are convinced that globalization has no influence at all, apart from economic and trade implications. Still others do not even see globalization as a distinctive phenomenon.

Overall, globalization has raised concerns because it apparently has been leading to a wide polarization of wealth at the global level—a polarization that favors some countries (eventually, the wealthier ones) to the detriment of others. In a report published in 1977, the UN Development Program found evidence of a widening gap between the rich and poor countries.¹⁵ Of course, the existing division between rich states in the North and poor states in the South precedes the appearance of globalization; its causes are rooted in a more distant past. Yet there is a widespread perception in the South that globalization is responsible for expanding that gap, by promoting accumulation of wealth in the North and poverty in the South.

Furthermore, globalization itself produces a clearer awareness of such a gap; by definition, globalization means—and this is globalization's most obvious evidence—the increase of information circulating around the world. Consequently, everybody is more aware of what is going on in other parts of the world, a phenomenon that, on the one hand, feeds expectations, but on the other, feeds frustrations. The less favored and less advantaged in the globalized world have had their expectations not only inflated by globalization but also further deflated by the perception of the differences between developed and less developed states. Therefore, besides the evidence of polarization as a growing source of global instability witnessed in the extensive conflict and humanitarian disasters in developing societies and in the increasing incidence of mass migration from the South to the North, globalization revived the importance of what is *perceived* as a threat in Latin America. Scholars such as Paul Rogers have suggested that unless the systemic cause of wealth polarization is tackled at its root, there is likely to be a growing incidence of armed conflict throughout the globe, as the frustrated expectations of the world's poorest populations translate into various forms of violent protest and social unrest. He describes globalization as a major threat to peace and security in the near future.¹⁶

Another meaningful observation comes from two studies conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), both of which show an impressive correlation between poverty and conflict. In the first study, which involved examining military expenditures, security, and development, OECD found that the failure of development to take hold is the chief cause for insecurity and

conflict in developing countries.¹⁷ Although this seems an obvious and intuitive finding, the study serves as concrete evidence for this argument. In addition, some observers perceive the existence of a vicious cycle, wherein conflict itself results in missed developmental opportunities and, therefore, in more conflict.^{18,19} In the second study, by examining 34 developing countries, OECD confirmed the close relationship between conflict and lack of development or poverty.²⁰

Latin America currently exhibits some of the elements responsible for distress: poverty, lost developmental opportunities, fragile democracies, and in-transition security systems. Globalization has not yet been noted as a particular cause for distress, but it works as a magnifier of these problems and helps generate instability.²¹ Globalization alone, as well as lack of development, will not be able to dismantle democracy and hence unleash conflict throughout the region; democracy is today commonly viewed as an important foundation for stability in Latin America. Nonetheless, economic facts usually occur in association with other events, and democracy does not have a strong tradition in the region to guarantee a stable future.

Globalization and Structural Adjustment in Latin America

In general, Latin America has been characterized by low economic development and difficulties. The 1980s were particularly difficult years. Most Latin American countries were going through painful measures aimed at completing structural adjustments to replace state-oriented economic models with market-oriented paradigms. The mentors of these reforms aimed to restore growth and curtail inflation were international lending agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Therefore, the first effects of globalization struck in the midst of this reformation process, and the effects were particularly harmful to the poorest classes in these countries. In this sense, globalization forces were stressful and served to magnify the social crises in the region.

In the meantime, scholars and policymakers raised doubts about the benefits of such stressful adjustments for Latin American countries. For example, in 1999, Brian Crisp and Michael Kelly examined data from 16 countries in the region and concluded that although reform did seem to reduce inflation, it was only weakly associated with growth. They also concluded that the extent of structural adjustment could be negatively associated with both poverty and inequality. Finally, they found that the best remedy for poverty and inequality is growth, even in low levels or, at the very least, economic stability.²²

Globalization as a Factor of Stress for Latin America

There have been passionate debates over the consequences of globalization in Latin America. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of Brazil, maintains that globalization has lessened the comparative advantage of developing countries and has reduced the capacity of their governments to influence foreign trade and investment.²³ Henry Kissinger goes beyond this and sees a huge gap between the traditional political thinking based on the nation-state and the sophistication of the dominant economic model called globalization.²⁴ In particular, debates have been focusing on the

effects of globalization on economic realities already stressed by structural adjustment processes. In many senses, these debates are revisiting the old dispute between developed and developing countries that achieved its climax in the last decade with the debt crisis. In addition, they brought attention to the capacity of the newborn democracies to resist such stressing forces. Indeed, for Latin America and for concerns with hemispheric security, the crucial point is the capability of the Latin American democracies to resist this stress, which globalization magnifies and enriches with new variables. Hence, it will be necessary to advance to another level where the regional leaders will be allowed to think more positively regarding the future instead of being kept attached to the problems of the past.

Globalization's impacts may be perceived in two distinct yet intertwined arenas: the practical and the psychological. In the practical and most visible arena, globalization became influential because most Latin American countries, after a decade of negative growth and pressured by external and internal debt, were looking for ways to integrate themselves in the world market as a way to promote growth and to reduce inequality. In addition, for these countries, the meaning of democracy included the replacement of their respective economic and political models: from state-oriented to market-oriented models.

Under the pressures presented by these challenges, Latin American countries were pushed to face unexpected instabilities caused by globalization. Two characteristics of globalization have been major factors pressuring these countries: changes in the relations between capital and labor, and the volatility of the capital flows, which have had extraordinary impacts on monetary and exchange policies. The first, related to the interplay between capital and labor, is less perceived internationally but has been undermining the conditions of the blue-collar sector and affects directly the poorest classes in the region. Compared with products manufactured in the developed countries, Latin American products are still highly labor-intensive. Manufacturers are facing either increasing competition from high-technology production or pressure to pay their workers better salaries. Moreover, in addition to the difficulties of competing effectively in the international market, domestic, social, and economic conditions have worsened and raise doubts about the capacity of new democracies to cope with these challenges.

With regard to the mobility of capital flows, Mexico and, more recently, Brazil have experienced the full power of the globalization variable in the region. Without any possibility of effective action, governments stood as huge amounts of foreign capital left their countries and rendered their economies hostages to speculative actions. The unbalanced global economic and trade environment suddenly turned countries defenseless against the contagion of crises in distant regions.²⁵ One may, on the other hand, argue that these cases also proved the vitality of globalization. They were resolved with the help of developed countries and international organizations (in Latin America, under the stimulus provided by U.S. leadership), and the referenced economies are recovering credibility. While this is a correct but negative outcome, still present and too big to be ignored is the incapacity of elected governments of democratic regimes to resolve the problem.²⁶ Further, the remedies conditioned by in-

ternational institutions—drastic austerity measures as a way to restore credit worthiness—are being perceived as a new form of colonialism.

The second important outcome is in the less visible, psychological arena—the arena of individual and collective perceptions. Globalization has been increasingly perceived as benefiting the developed industrial economies to the detriment of the less developed countries. There is a spreading sense in the region that the latter countries are at the mercy of forces that neither individuals nor governments can control. This perception is not particularly new. For example, writing in 1974, before globalization had become a buzzword, Samir Amin held that accumulation on a world scale always benefits the central economies and not the periphery; a hierarchy is imposed from the center to the periphery.²⁷ Brazilian President Cardoso, formerly the most active advocate of dependency theory, defended the notion that the international process of capitalism created negative outcomes for development. According to him, the capitalist process promoted some development, but it happened in an unbalanced and unjust way. Under these circumstances, international integration was perceived as essentially negative for developing countries, thereby necessitating the adoption of an inward-oriented economic model. More recently, Cardoso has acknowledged that his view has changed. He believes that participation in the global economy can be positive and that the international system is not necessarily hostile. However, he is also concerned about the effects of globalization upon the comparative advantage of nations. In a globalized market, cheap labor and raw materials become less important as value-added products than are science and technology as value added to production methods. Consequently, the less developed countries lose their main advantages in the global market. In addition, he warns of the effects of external and uncontrollable variables upon domestic agendas. In consequence, he suggests, globalization reduces dramatically the capacity of developing countries to take advantage of international investment and trade flows.²⁸

The most recent annual report of the Inter-American Development Bank indicates that the gap between the rich and poor countries in Latin America is similar to the gap of 30 years ago. And, the dramatic way by which the press presented these findings in the region makes it easy to conclude that globalization is being increasingly perceived under a negative connotation in the region.²⁹ Of course, one may argue that the economies of these poorer countries are better off today because of globalization. This is true, and many Latin American officials acknowledge it. Nevertheless, the perception of the increasing gap between richer and poorer is much more appealing, for the insecurity created by the globalization is more easily perceived than is an eventual upgrading in their economies.

Finally, at the meeting of the Group of 77³⁰ in Havana in April 2000, the leaders of the developing nations issued a strong protest against globalization. Calling for a new “global human order,” they complained that globalization has been damaging the economies of developing countries for the benefit of the wealthy nations. Arguing that the booming wealth of some few countries has been achieved while spreading poverty among the less developed nations, they advocated forgiving foreign debts, increasing foreign aid, and changing the world financial system to allow developing countries to have more influence on decisions over economic and trade policies.³¹

Conclusions and Recommendations

Discussions about whether globalization is truly a new phenomenon or whether it is only a new name for interdependence do not matter. What does matter is that globalization has already secured its position in the psychological milieu of international relations.³² Scholars may continue arguing about the validity—or the novelty—of this concept; however, this will not change the fact that globalization has acquired consistency, and even ideological colors, for decisionmakers around the world. Globalization is part of the political realm, and little can be done to change it. Moreover, globalization has been acquiring an increasingly negative connotation. Soon, it will be qualified—perhaps unfairly—as a new form of colonialism. It will feed—perhaps fairly—more suspicion and criticism of the egotistical nature of the wealthier countries.

Globalization challenges sovereignty, but it does not reduce its importance. Moreover, it does not diminish the role of states as the main actors in international politics. Rather, by putting pressure on the notion of sovereignty and, thus, on the government's monopoly on the legitimate power within a territory,³³ globalization induces reactions that energize the role of states. Kenneth N. Waltz observes that “states perform essential political, social and economic functions, and no other organization rivals them in these respects.”³⁴ For him, states' capacity for transformation and adaptation will make them able to maintain their relevance within the international system. States that adapt easily to technological and economic changes will enjoy advantages over the others, but in any event, states will remain the main players in international politics.

Finally, globalization reignited the criticisms of the underdeveloped southern countries against the wealthier northern countries. The perception that the wealth of the developed countries grows in proportion to the misery of the developing countries is becoming increasingly popular.³⁵ Consequently, themes associated with labor and trade have become subjects of tension, usually associated with globalization.

From the perspective of security, globalization alone has not been a cause for insecurity in Latin America. The association between globalization and existing stressing forces has been working as a magnifier for problems that affect both domestic security and international security. By exposing crudely and vividly the contrast between expectations and realities, globalization amplifies the existing problems related to poverty and economic underdevelopment. It creates additional demands on the political systems; in turn, this causes undue stresses for the new and not fully consolidated democracies in the region. Consequently, since democracy has also become an important foundation for the hemispheric security environment, nontraditional security themes such as poverty and underdevelopment must gain relevance in the hemispheric security agenda.

On the one hand, organizations and arrangements related to security in Latin America seem outdated for the current post-Cold War environment. On the other hand, regional security is favored by the absence of any major threat, and existing border conflicts are under negotiation. Colombia and Cuba are the two trouble spots in the security environment. Colombia requires attention; the drug issue will remain a nightmare for the entire region, and the guerrillas who are ripping the country apart

will remain a nightmare for both the Colombian government and Colombia's neighbors. Colombian drug traffic and its guerrilla insurgency are serious problems that spill over into the hemisphere and threaten the prospects for regional stability. However, it is becoming obvious that these are simply manifestations of the most serious problems in the region: poverty and underdevelopment. U.S. security interests in the hemisphere should not be disassociated from this reality.

Cuba, the only nondemocratic country in the region, is the usual suspect on all lists of potential security problems in the region, beginning with human rights offenses. Fidel Castro's Cuba remains the most defiant symbol of the U.S. hegemony and of the made-in-U.S.A. inter-American security system. Castro was able to suppress violently any opposition that rose against his regime, and much resentment exists inside and outside the island. For 30 years, Castro built Cuba's leadership and regime upon both Soviet support and U.S. hostility. Now, only U.S. hostility feeds Castro's regime and leadership. The Cuban regime is in disharmony with the hemispheric political reality, but the open hostility of the United States has been invigorating rather than debilitating Castro's leadership. A subtler U.S. policy aimed at integrating Cuba into the hemisphere—what is already in place with all the rest of the region—would work better, not only to integrate Cuba but also to create prospects for democracy on the island. It is not repression that creates revolutionary prospects; it is the prospect of change that motivates people to press for a regime change. The U.S. isolationist policy toward Cuba, besides having failed to oust Castro from office, serves, in fact, to strengthen Castro's regime and helps perpetuate a political warp in the hemisphere.

There is a spreading consensus that inter-American security arrangements should be completely overhauled; however, the absence of a commonly perceived threat decreases the pressure for such a revision. In addition, both U.S. hesitation about its interests in the region and Latin American hesitation about its interests have slowed revision attempts. Paradoxically, globalization, although not directly related to security, should bring some sense of urgency for new arrangements. Finally, most officials in the region concede—although some reluctantly—that the United States is essential for the establishment of new regional security arrangements.

Consequently, the way out of the current difficulty depends on U.S. leadership. U.S. leaders should perceive that, in a post-Cold War era—eventually, a globalized age—they must build new security arrangements based on something other than the traditional perspective of security. This new perspective is suggested by the replacement of the traditional paradigm of national security with a new paradigm based on national interest. Whereas national security inspires an essentially negative paradigm because it is sustained by the perception of external threats, national interest inspires a positive paradigm because it is sustained by the search for opportunities. Under such a perspective, promoting the national interest currently is more important than identifying what may prospectively impair security. Consequently, the first outcome of this new perspective would be a different, privileged, and more constructive U.S. approach to Latin America. For example, this new approach would contemplate ways to address economic underdevelopment and poverty as causes of insecurity in the region. Finally, this would oxygenate the inter-American security system and advance the currently deadlocked reform of the regional security arrangements and organization. 🌐

Notes

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¹ The Brazilian crisis happened in January 1999, in the aftermath of financial crises that began in Asia in 1997, hit Russia—which declared a moratorium—in August 1998, and spread to Latin America.

² Jack Child, “Geopolitical Conflict in South America,” in *Security in the Americas*, ed. Georges Fauriol (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1989), identified 17 conflicts that originated from different causes in South America.

³ By the end of 1999, tension had heightened between Honduras and Nicaragua over the definition of maritime boundaries in the region. The situation was achieving a dangerous level and could have resulted in confrontation. The Organization of American States assigned a Special Representative, Ambassador Luigi Einaudi, a retired U.S. diplomat, to help reduce tensions in the region. In the final days of December, under OAS sponsorship, the foreign ministers of Honduras and Nicaragua began conversations that culminated with an agreement signed in February 2000. The two parties agreed to establish a military-free zone, pushing the military positions to their situation in September 1999 and letting the situation be decided by the International Court of Justice in The Hague. The debate helped reinforce the OAS role in hemispheric security matters.

⁴ In 1991, when it would be fair to expect that Cuba would derail from the communist track in the wave of the dismantling of the Soviet Union, which led the Cuban economy to shrink by more than 60 percent, Fidel Castro pledged “socialism or death.” Between 1991 and 1996, many incidents related to Cuban attempts to flee the island tarnished even more the already poor relations between Cuba and the United States. In 1996, President Clinton declared his support for the Helms-Burton Law, which establishes punishment measures for foreign companies that do business in Cuba. (Canada, members of the European Union, and other countries declared the Helms-Burton Law to be in violation of international norms and law.) See James Rohrbough, *Timeline of Important Events in Cuba-United States Relations: 1959–Present*, available at <<http://www/earlham.edu/www/polsci/ps17971/weissdo/timeline2.html>>.

⁵ Three organizations are particularly relevant for the definitions of hemispheric security: the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), the Organization of American States, and the Inter-American Defense College (IADC). IADB is oldest organization preoccupied with defense in the hemisphere. IADC is designed to prepare civilians and military officers to assume leadership positions at the national level within the hemisphere. Attendance is open to all hemispheric governments (except Cuba), regardless of whether they are IADB members. IADC has served as a useful tool for networking and provides scope for a broad interchange on issues related to military-civilian relations and democratic culture. In addition, two other initiatives have prospective relevance: the Defense Ministerial of the Americas meetings and the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies. The Defense Ministerial of the Americas process started in 1995, under the U.S. initiative to provide a forum for the discussion of security issues. It meets on roughly a biennial basis. The Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies at the National Defense University in Washington was created in September 1997, particularly dedicated to create civilian expertise on security matters in the region.

⁶ See, for example, Ricardo Ubiraci Sennes, “Brazilian Foreign Policy in the 1990s,” in *Peace and Security in the Americas*, no. 14 (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Flasco/Chile, May 1999). In addition, the Special Committee on Hemispheric Security was established within OAS in 1991. In 1995, this committee was transformed into the permanent Committee on Hemispheric Security, which was given, in 1998, the mandate to conduct a thorough review on the hemispheric security system.

⁷ When OAS was conceived in 1947, its charter excluded IADB from the OAS structure; OAS has only budgetary approval over IADB activities.

⁸ The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) was established during the General Assembly of OAS held in Guatemala City in November 1986 (resolution AG/RES. 813, XVI-0/86).

CICAD is an autonomous OAS agency and designs programs to help member states organize, formulate, and coordinate “long-term national programs to combat drug trafficking and abuse, and strengthen their capacity for international cooperation” (CICAD Objective, OAS home page).

⁹ The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Tlatelolco) was signed on February 14, 1967, and ratified by 11 states in April 1969.

¹⁰ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela established the Rio Group in 1986.

¹¹ John A. Cope, “The Western Hemisphere: Rethinking Strategic Relations?” in *1999 Strategic Assessment: Priorities for a Turbulent World* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1999), 169–188.

¹² *Ibid.*, 169.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁴ Susan Strange, “The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy,” in *Cambridge Studies in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 49.

¹⁵ UN Development Program, *The Human Development Report 1997: Poverty from a Human Development Perspective* (New York: UN Development Program, 1997).

¹⁶ Paul Rogers, “A Jungle Full of Snakes? Power, Poverty and International Security,” in *A World Divided: Militarism and Development After the Cold War*, eds. Geoff Tansey, Kath Tansey, and Paul Rogers (London: Earthscan, 1993), 1.

¹⁷ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Military Expenditures in Developing Countries*, 12.

¹⁸ See, for example, Nicole Ball, “The Challenges of Rebuilding War Torn Societies,” in *Managing the Global Chaos: Sources and Responses to International Conflict*, eds. Chester A. Crocker and Fen Osler Hampson (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 607.

¹⁹ Susan Willet, “The Economics of Security in the Developing World,” in *Disarmament Forum* (Geneva: UN Institute for Disarmament Research, 1998), 19–30.

²⁰ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, “Measuring Development Progress: A Working Set of Core Indicators.”

²¹ For a different perspective, see Minxin Pei and Ariel David Adesnik, “Democracies Grow More Resilient to Economic Crisis,” *International Herald Tribune*, March 4–5, 2000, 8. These authors disagree with what they call “recent trends suggesting the erosion of democracy in Latin America.” They see no foundation in the fears of some observers who see the possible resurgence of authoritarian regimes in the region as a consequence of the economic crises. Based on a study of 93 episodes of economic crises in 22 countries in Latin America and Asia since World War II, they conclude that democracies are far more resilient than are authoritarian regimes in the face of economic adversity. They think that political factors (such as ideological polarization, labor radicalization, guerrilla insurgencies, and anticommunist military), rather than purely economic factors, lead to the breakdown of democracies. For them, the severity of economic crises (which they measured in terms of inflation and economic growth) has no relation with the demise of democracy in developing countries. Finally, they affirm that “Since 1980, only one democracy—Peru—has fallen in the midst of crises. Of the 23 crises that struck democracies in Latin America and Asia after 1980, 10 had no serious political effect, while only 12 led to constitutional changes of government.” There are at least two problems in the conclusion of Pei and Adesnik. First, although they may be right by saying that political aspects, rather than purely economic ones, are the causes for the erosion of democracies, one cannot separate economic facts from political facts; economic difficulties faced by a country ignite political circumstances and vice versa. Economic problems alone may not cause the erosion of democracies, but economic problems never happen alone; moreover, in developing countries, they are serious and powerful magnifiers of any crises. Second, and more important, while being optimistic about the capacity of democracies to assimilate economic crises, the authors did not take into account that the Latin American countries considered are emerging from

long periods of authoritarianism. The failure of the authoritarian administration is still fresh in the memory of the Latin American societies. In addition, the military, usual captors of the political power in the region, do not feel tempted to new adventures. Finally, they minimize another important aspect in favor of the resilience of democracy in the region: the fact that, under the leadership of the United States, democracy in the Americas became, for a while at least, an asset highly valued to be kept at any cost; eventual attempts to overthrow governments in the region in the old style (for example, in Paraguay) were countered by strong regional diplomatic initiatives and did not prosper. Thus, the fact that democracy endures in Latin America should not be taken for granted as an argument for the conclusion that lack of development does not represent a threat for democracies.

²² Brian F. Crisp and Michael J. Kelly, "Structural Adjustment in Latin America," *International Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (1999), 533.

²³ Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "Social Consequences of Globalization: Marginalization of Improvement," Conference at the Indian International Centre, New Delhi, 1996, homepage: Brazilian Embassy, Washington, DC, <www.brasilemb.org>.

²⁴ Henry A. Kissinger, "Making a Go of Globalization: For Free Trade to Work, Political Imagination Must Match Economic Growth," *The Washington Post*, December 20, 1999, A33.

²⁵ Luiz Felipe Lampreia, "Statement by Ambassador Luiz Felipe Lampreia, Foreign Minister of Brazil, at the III Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference," November 30, 1999, Brazilian Embassy, <www.brasilemb.org>.

²⁶ Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "The Impact of Globalization on Developing Countries: Risks and Opportunities," Conference at the *Colegio de Mexico*, February 20, 1996. Brasilia, DF: *Presidencia da Republica, Secretaria de Comunicacao Social*, 1996.

²⁷ Samir Amin, *Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment* (Sussex, England: The Harvester Press, 1974).

²⁸ Cardoso, 1996.

²⁹ Vicente Nunes and Paulo Silva Pinto, *Estamos Mais Pobres* (Correio Braziliense, March 28, 2000), 5.

³⁰ Since its foundation in 1964, the Group of 77 has expanded and now includes 133 countries, which comprise about 80 percent of the Earth's population.

³¹ *The Washington Post*, April 15, 2000, A15.

³² About the importance of perceptions in the international relations, see Robert Jervis, *Perceptions and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).

³³ Wolfgang H. Reinicke, "Global Public Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 6 (November/December 1997).

³⁴ Kenneth N. Waltz, "Globalization and American Power," *The National Interest*, no. 59 (Spring 2000), 50–51.

³⁵ During the Group of 77 meeting in Havana (April 2000), Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo stated, "It is indeed time to recover our fighting spirit. No doubt that from here we go forward, determined to make a difference." In the same meeting, Fidel Castro stated, "The current economic order, imposed by the rich countries, is not only cruel, unjust and inhuman . . . but also carries a racist view of the world which inspired the Nazi holocaust and concentration camps." John Ward Anderson, "Poor Nations' Leaders Back Washington Protesters," *The Washington Post*, April 16, 2000, A31, A36.