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RESOURCES AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING U.S. ARMY ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

Susan L. Clark
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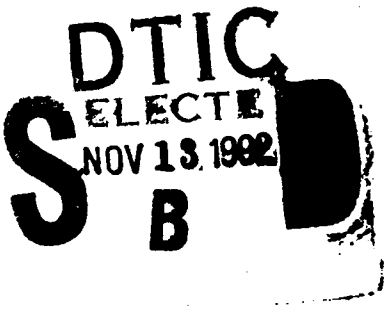

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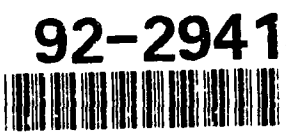

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This paper examines two factors of paramount concern to the U.S. Army's ability to conduct civil-military support activities in Latin America: available resources and potential constraints. In conjunction with other IDA work on Latin America about the challenges facing the region and the kinds of activities the U.S. Army has pursued there, this paper describes the types of U.S. Army forces that have historically been used in these efforts, and the implications of personnel and budgetary reductions. In addition, it assesses constraints that can affect U.S. Army activities such as the role of U.S. and Latin American public opinion, the effects of activities by the U.S. Congress, and the challenge of interagency cooperation.

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PREFACE

This paper has been prepared under funding from the Institute for Defense Analyses' Independent Research Program fund. It analyzes the availability of resources and potential constraints on civil-military support roles that the U.S. Army might pursue in Latin America. In making these assessments, it draws on additional IDA work pertaining to the U.S. Army role in Latin America.

The authors wish to thank the official reviewers for this paper, Dr. Kenneth Maxwell at the Council on Foreign Relations and Gen. (Ret.) Ennis Whitehead, a consultant at IDA, as well as LTC Blas Urquidez, Jr. and LTC James A. McAtamney for their helpful comments and suggestions on an earlier draft.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The extent of future U.S. Army involvement in Latin America will be influenced largely by two factors: available resources and constraints on their use. Other IDA work has examined the kinds of problems Latin American countries are likely to face in the coming years, possible future civil-military support roles for the U.S. Army in Latin America as related to these problems, and the range of programs at the Army's disposal to execute these roles. Utilizing these assessments, this paper further analyzes the first two factors identified: resources and constraints.

Medical and engineer units are the primary participants in U.S. Army civic action activities. The majority of forces used in this role in Latin America come from the Reserves and National Guard. Reductions in U.S. military forces and in the defense budget will clearly have an effect on the size of the relevant forces, as well as on their availability to conduct such training and exercises. An additional uncertainty in the resources equation is the future location and size of U.S. Southern Command, and how that will affect its missions and priorities. Finally, the U.S. Army's Foreign Area Officer program has played an important role in the Service's activities in the region; the future direction of this program will also influence such activities.

Among the constraints likely to affect the U.S. Army's efforts in Latin America—in addition to force reductions and defense budget cuts, the role of public opinion is a significant one. Increasing U.S. isolationism (manifested in an unwillingness to support spending on U.S. commitments abroad), coupled with a general perception that Latin America is not a high priority for U.S. interests, translates into public apathy at best, but more likely antipathy, toward U.S. Army activities there. For its part, Latin American public opinion can also have negative repercussions for U.S. involvement in the region.

The U.S. Congress presents its own obstacles to Army activities in the region, ranging from its own manifestations of isolationism to earmarking of security assistance funds to a range of legislative restrictions on military activities. Finally, the continuing problem of cooperation among U.S. government institutions, such as between the Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense, presents its own challenges to civil-military support activities in Latin America.

This paper addresses each of these issues in detail and offers suggestions for alleviating some of these difficulties, taking into account the realities of today's environment.

RESOURCES AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING U.S. ARMY ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

A. INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War and traditional East-West military confrontation presents both challenges and opportunities for U.S. policy in Central and South America. The region as a whole has not generally received a high priority among U.S. policy interests, and growing domestic pressures for reduced U.S. involvement overseas and reduced levels of assistance to foreign countries combine to present considerable impediments to U.S. policy in the region. Yet there are important reasons for the United States to focus on its neighbors to the South, including: geographical proximity, economic and trading opportunities, the growing significance of regional relations following the demise of the bipolar world, and potential security challenges.

The Latin American countries face serious challenges in the coming years, challenges that may well erode public support for the civilian governments now in power. Unless solutions to problems such as economic development and debt restructuring can be found, increasing instability and growing social unrest are likely to prevail. Given the central role their armies as institutions have played in these countries, a key question is whether the U.S. Army has a special role to play in helping to shape the evolution of civil-military relations in the Latin American countries and in identifying possible ways to address some of the more important challenges to these nations. By virtue of its contacts and special relationship with the armies in Latin America, the U.S. Army has, in fact, the opportunities and vehicles to play such a role.

Other IDA work has identified and assessed possible future civil-military support roles for the U.S. Army in Central and South America.[1] That analysis examined historical U.S. security-related efforts in this region and projected the kinds of problems that Latin American countries are likely to face in coming years, in the solution of which their militaries may have a role to play. It should be noted from the outset that the analysis

[1] See Susan L. Clark, *The U.S. Army in a Civil-Military Support Role in Latin America*, IDA Paper P-2703, June 1992.

contained in both that IDA study as well as in this paper is meant to provide a non-governmental perspective of these factors and issues.

In conjunction with the other above-mentioned IDA work, this paper addresses another important dimension of possible U.S. Army civil-military support roles; namely, the unit and organizational resources that historically have been used for these efforts in Latin America and possible constraints that may affect the U.S. Army's ability to fulfill these functions in the future. Thus it begins with an analysis of the types of personnel and units that have been involved in civic action projects, recent counter-drug support activities, disaster assistance efforts (worldwide), and activities that are seen to contribute to the enhancement of Latin American military support for democracy and civilian rule. This analysis offers projections about likely future trends in these forces, including a discussion of the Army's Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program.

The paper then examines how the Army might be constrained in performing civil-military support roles in Latin America. A significant constraint will, of course, be the drawdown of U.S. military forces across all services and the concomitant reductions in their budgets. Related to this is the question of U.S. Southern Command's (SOUTHCOM) future size, viability, and location. Another important consideration will be the effect of public opinion and perceptions, both in the United States and Latin America. U.S. public opinion can clearly have a notable effect on how the U.S. Congress acts, including its willingness to appropriate necessary funds and its determination to scrutinize various U.S. Government activities such as those carried out by the U.S. military. Thus, legislative restrictions and Congressional priorities in general can significantly impact the U.S. Army's ability to execute civil-military support efforts in Latin America.

In conclusion, this paper addresses the continuing problems of various U.S. institutions trying to work together. Here, consideration is given not only to Congress' role, but also to the level of cooperation between the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) and the Department of Defense, for example.

All these factors will obviously influence the U.S. Army's ability to make a substantial contribution to the dynamic and fluid environment in Central and South America today. Without the threat of communist expansionism in the region, which was itself a divisive subject within the U.S. Government and the American public at large during the 1980s, the need today is to focus on promoting and assisting stable democratic governments in the region. This cannot be done without addressing the underlying causes of instability, above all economic problems (such as the foreign debt, underemployment,

and inflation) but also the fragility of the very institutions for democratic governance. Many of these fundamental problems require a multinational approach, one in which the United States certainly has an important role to play, but it should not play the only or even the central role. For its part, the U.S. Army can play an important and useful role through maintaining its long-standing ties with counterparts in various nations, [2] helping to shape their understanding of and support for democratization as well as assisting in certain civic action activities. This objective can best be accomplished through the involvement of relatively small numbers of personnel and generally by observing a low profile presence.

B. PERSONNEL RESOURCES AND REQUIREMENTS

1. General Trends

a. Involvement, Past and Present

Throughout the Cold War, when U.S. Army forces were involved in counter-insurgency operations, an important part of these efforts was the commitment of Army units in a civil-military support role. In that capacity Army personnel conducted civic actions to encourage the indigenous civil population to accept the presence of U.S. forces and support the local government that our forces had been sent there to assist. The concept for developing civic action roles for U.S. forces was to employ specific troop units with special capabilities in a way that improved the overall standard of public services and general living conditions, resulting in a healthier, safer, and happier local population. The theory is that such improvements will naturally derive from civic actions, and will eventually produce the desired attitude and outlook. The concept has been employed with varying degrees of success in the theaters where counterinsurgency has been attempted, such as in Southeast Asia, as well as in Latin America. One long-standing problem however, is that expectations of success have traditionally been unrealistic, given the depth of feeling against established authority ingrained in the target populations. Nevertheless, while these attempts at civic action may not have caused the indigenous populations to accept their own governments to the extent that we would have liked, there is little doubt that they went a long way in ameliorating attitudes toward the presence of U.S. troops.

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[2] Recognizing, of course, that Costa Rica and Panama do not have armies, the U.S. Army does maintain relations with other appropriate government agencies in these countries.

b. Resources

The types of units required to perform the civic action missions and tasks reside in active U.S. Army formations from the combat division level up through the corps and army levels. Typically, they are the medical and engineer battalions assigned to divisions or placed in support of those divisions at the Corps and Army levels. Each division has, within its Division Support Command, one of each of those two types of battalions, in addition to battalions which perform the supply, transportation, and maintenance functions for all the divisional units. A battalion's specific configuration—meaning the numbers and types of equipment as well as numbers and qualifications of personnel—varies according to the type Division to which it belongs. External to the divisions, separate Corps- and Army-level support units of similar types may be assigned to support the divisions and other non-divisional units assigned to the formation. It is many of these Corps- and Army-level support units which may be drawn from U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard resources. The U.S. Army Reserve, particularly, holds the target concentration of those non-divisional support units.

One should emphasize that, regardless of their level, medical units tend to be able to treat common injury and disease as well as the combat injuries for which they are trained. Thus, they are well-suited for traveling a local circuit to provide medical screening and care, as well as establishing temporary semi-permanent treatment sites. Medical treatment so provided is counted as the most popular benefit from civic action. Engineer units, on the other hand, can be categorized according to their major intended purpose; the two major categories are "combat engineers" and "heavy combat battalions." The heavy combat battalions perform most of the construction tasks, and are in great demand for the building of facilities such as schools, aid stations, sanitation facilities, and the like. The combat engineer battalions, however, have considerable amounts of equipment which permit them to perform construction functions when they are not committed to the support of combat operations or exercises. Divisional Engineer Battalions fall into this last category and would not normally be sent to an exercise area unless they went as part of the division. This last comment applies to divisional Medical Battalions as well.

Transportation Battalions may also perform useful functions in isolated and relatively undeveloped areas, using their large numbers of trucks to move people and goods over roads of varying quality. They exist at the same levels and under the same general organizational rules which apply to Medical and Engineer Battalions, except that

Transportation Battalion capabilities are expressed in terms of the size or tonnage of the trucks assigned to the Battalion.

In some cases, signal (communications) units and maintenance and military police organizations may have a role to play, but their employment probably would be occasioned by unique circumstances. Additionally, there are the specialized units to consider—those of the Special Operations Forces and their associated organizations such as the psychological operations battalions and companies, and civil affairs units. While they are part of the full spectrum of forces currently involved in low intensity and noncombat operations in less developed regions, these units are normally involved in operations which bear directly on the civil population as their primary mission. They will therefore be maintained as part of a force structure designed to meet a specific need in a specific environment. We draw this distinction to point out that such units differ fundamentally from those which are designed primarily to support combat units and are assigned roles such as civil-military support only on an ancillary basis.

A final consideration in this context is that there is another type of "resource" that may not have been fully explored. The United States has been innovative in the field of combat simulation and in the use of those simulations as vehicles for training and wargaming. Latin American officers attending courses in the United States under various programs will be familiar with some uses of simulations, but most Latin American armies will have neither the facilities nor the depth of experience to use simulations for their own purposes. We have facilities such as the one at the Joint Warfare Center which present the opportunity to conduct exercises and training of short duration, perhaps 2 or 3 weeks, using computer simulations. In one particular case, where Argentine officers participated in an exercise at the Center, Argentina paid for the officers' support in terms of transportation, meals, etc. The United States provided the facilities and personnel to interface with the visitors, help run the sessions, and participate as allies in a simulated military effort.

2. Future Prospects

a. Unit Constraints

The numbers of units of all types which will remain on the Active, Reserve, and National Guard rosters in 1995 seems to vary with each passing day. Some analysts predict that the number of active divisions may be cut to as few as eight. In the minds of

most analysts, the intentions of Congress notwithstanding, it would be hard to understand a Reserve and National Guard structure that did not reflect similar reductions. By any estimate, it is apparent that the projected numbers of support battalions, i.e., Engineer, Medical, Transportation, and other types, are insufficient to allow such units to be dedicated in a large way to civic action missions on a regular basis. Undoubtedly, in times of disaster, units can be airlifted to affected areas using not only Active Air Force assets, but those of the Air National Guard and U.S. Air Force Reserve as well. These emergency efforts do not constitute a program, however, no matter how noteworthy their results. Moreover, because of budgetary pressures, commanders will likely be constrained in their efforts to move troop units on exercises to areas outside the United States, and their concerns are likely to focus on the immediate issues of training easily accomplished at home station, retention of qualified personnel, and readiness.

Additionally, one must recall that SOUTHCOM, the unified command headquartered in Panama and responsible for military activities in Latin America, will be moving out of Panama by the end of 1999, when the Panamanians will assume complete control of the Panama Canal. It is expected that half of the 10,000 troops currently stationed there will be withdrawn by 1996, providing for a gradual reduction. The continued uncertainty about SOUTHCOM—including its future location and size—naturally raises questions about the future activities of the U.S. military in Latin America. In short, the possibility of narrowing SOUTHCOM's mission, its position in the priority of resources, and its overall budget levels for training and exercises will significantly affect the types of activities and level of military efforts pursued in this region.

Finally, the effect of U.S. public opinion on efforts to influence Latin Americans through the use of military forces is also an important consideration. While pressures to project the American view of human rights and democracy abroad seem to remain a priority with many vocal political action groups, neither they nor the American public at large are likely to support large-scale military activities as a means to that end. Moreover, there may be political danger in exposing U.S. military personnel to injury or death in a Latin American country where it is not absolutely clear to the general public that we are there in pursuit of some clearly defined mission. In short, the American public may see efforts such as Exercise Related Construction (ERC) and Humanitarian and Civic Assistance (HCA) as frivolous and unnecessary expenses.

b. The Foreign Area Officer Program

The U.S. Army's Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program, which has been in operation since 1947, has played an important and substantial role in U.S. Army activities in Central and South America. Indeed, some would argue that the FAO program represents the very backbone of the U.S. Army role in the region. In today's world few would dispute the value and importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness in international affairs; these characteristics which might traditionally be thought of as diplomatic skills are increasingly important for military personnel as well, particularly with the decline in emphasis on military solutions to international problems and the greater reliance on political solutions. They are also vital because of the growing importance of coalition-building in every sense (military, political, and economic). These emerging considerations, combined with the fact that the military uniform continues to carry considerable weight in Latin America, point to the fact that FAOs should be the cornerstone of U.S. Army efforts in the region because they can offer both these capacities (cultural sensitivity and a military uniform) in one person. Finally, the skills FAO officers have to offer can be all the more important should ambassadorial positions be filled with political appointments rather than regional experts.

Yet despite the logic of this line of reasoning, many analysts remain skeptical of sufficient Army institutional commitment to and support for the FAO program. Admittedly, the pressures on this and other programs will inevitably grow given planned force cuts and declining budgets. On the other hand, the importance of having such skills available to the Army has been proven on a number of occasions, including in crisis situations (such as the Gulf War) and in humanitarian and relief assistance. In short, the goals and policies of the FAO program remain sound. And although it is unlikely that the program will be abolished even with the budget cuts, increasing attention will have to be paid to the application of the program to ensure that it is best utilized to the fullest extent possible.

Among the 2,400 or so Foreign Area Officers in the U.S. Army,[3] the Latin American region accounts for almost 500 of these slots. Of this latter group, currently 137 are in training (at the rank of captain), 180 are majors, 114 are lieutenant colonels, and 56 are colonels. Looking at the figures for promotion rates over the last decade, the trends appear healthy for both majors and lieutenant colonels, with FAO promotion rates higher

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3 This figure includes personnel who are in the process of retiring and more than 700 who are in training.

than the promotion rates for the Army as a whole. The problem comes at the colonel level, where promotion rates have been lower among FAOs, especially during the late 1980s. Unless and until this trend is reversed, skepticism about the overall health of the FAO program will understandably persist.[4]

It is recognized that the best way to ensure promotion is to pursue a dual track, at least through consideration for battalion command. In other words, the officer maintains FAO credentials as well as his branch specialty. The problem with this dual track approach is that it requires 2.5 officers for every slot, which will be difficult to support as the force is downsized. Nevertheless, it is believed that a dual track approach is still possible even with a smaller force; indeed, it is argued that without such an approach, there will be a backlash against FAOs who would not be seen to be "operators" in the military field. As for the future of the Latin American program, the numbers of its FAO slots are increasing (along with those for the states of the former Soviet Union), while positions in Western Europe are being curtailed.

It should be noted that efforts are under way to reduce the length of the FAO training period, which has been one of the long-standing problems of the program because it removes FAO personnel from their branch specialty for longer than the length of a normal tour. This, consequently, puts them out of synch with officers of their yeargroup and obviously affects promotion schedules. The FAO training period consists of language training, a masters degree, and a utilization tour in-country. For the FAO program as a whole, this period can vary in length in connection with the difficulty of the language; the advantage for Latin American (except Brazilian) FAOs is that Spanish is a category one (easiest) language to learn. The plan is to bring this entire training period (language, masters degree, and tour) to a 36-month period, or the equivalent of a normal tour.[5] This should then bring FAOs and non-FAOs alike back into their branch specialty at the same time, thereby putting them on an equal and competitive footing.

Finally, the active Army should protect its investment in this program during the downsizing of its force by encouraging departing FAOs with appropriate skills to enter the

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4 Although it is still too early to fully assess the potential impact of overall Army force reductions on the FAO program, the most recent data (as of August 1992) indicates that both majors and lieutenant colonels in the FAO program continue to have higher promotion rates than the Army average.

5 For some of the more difficult languages, the aim is to reduce the training period to 42 months (vice the current 48 months).

reserves. The availability of their skills and training would be of particular utility in the event of a crisis situation.

C. CONSTRAINTS

This section examines more closely a range of factors that can affect the U.S. Army's ability to perform civil-military support roles in Central and South America over the coming years. While not exhaustive, these factors are certainly some of the most important that need to be considered as the Army plans its future activities in the region. First the plans for reducing military forces and the defense budget are examined, with special emphasis on those components of particular relevance to civil-military efforts. The impact of public opinion is also assessed, which then leads to a discussion of the role of the U.S. Congress and various legislative restrictions. Finally, the problem of interagency coordination and cooperation is addressed, with particular focus on the relationship between the Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense.

1. Drawdown of U.S. Forces and Budgetary Pressures

The end of the Cold War has certainly spawned a series of new debates about military force requirements and security policy priorities. Within that context, considerations about the future size and shape of the U.S. Army must include assessments of the active, reserve, and national guard components. Herein, in fact, lies one of the fundamental confrontations between the Department of Defense and the U.S. Congress. The broad question is: What is to be the role of the reserve and national guard forces in the post-Cold War world? The answer to this question may well be driven more by politics than by military requirements, as DoD would prefer.

Agreement has not yet been reached on the size and shape of the overall Army force. From the existing force of 16 active Army divisions and 10 National Guard and Army Reserve divisions, the Bush Administration plan calls for 12 active divisions, 6 guard and reserve divisions, and 2 cadre divisions (which would be filled out during times of mobilization). The rationale is that, logically, reserve forces should be cut commensurately with active forces, thereby reducing them by about 25 percent over the next 5 years. Hence, by 1995 the reserve force would be cut by 245,000. Deeper cuts in

the Army National Guard would be sought, drawing that force down to 321,000 from 446,000 by the mid-1990s, with a particular emphasis on diminishing its combat role.[6]

On the Congressional side, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Les Aspin has proposed 9 active divisions and 6 guard and reserve divisions. Congress has repeatedly fought attempts to cut reserve and guard forces, largely owing to the political influence wielded especially by the Guard. Indeed, Representative Montgomery sought to ensure that no guard or reserve forces would be cut, but when that attempt failed he ordered that a study be conducted on the proper role of these forces. And whereas DoD proposed cutting the reserves by approximately 150,000 for 1992 and 1993, Congress approved cuts totaling only 66,200: 37,600 in 1992 and 28,600 in 1993.[7] While most recognize that Congressional support for these forces is primarily politically motivated, there has also been some concern that by cutting these forces, the United States may be moving away from its traditional reliance on citizen-soldiers, which is of course something that the United States is interested in promoting in Central and South America. Nevertheless, the logic that reserve levels need to be commensurate with active force levels is particularly strong and should be a more important consideration than these other factors.

Part of the debate about reserves and guard forces also centers on appraisals of their performance during the Persian Gulf war. As Chief of Staff of the Army Sullivan indicated in an interview, the support and logistics reserve troops were called up quickly and performed well, while "round-out" reserve combat brigades performed less ably and were determined to be inadequately prepared for their designated duty.[8] His assessments are generally mirrored by the evaluations of other agencies as well as individual analysts. Hence, support and logistics troops are likely to have a more stable future than reserve and guard combat forces. And, as noted above, the current plan is to reduce the combat role of the Army National Guard.

In assessing the impact of these force structure changes on U.S. Army activities in Latin America, it has already been noted that these activities are overwhelmingly carried out by reserve forces. Thus, to the extent that Congressional support continues to thwart DoD attempts to reduce the reserve forces, one benefit is that personnel resources would be

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6 "Mississippi Guard Unit Fighting on Many Fronts to Avoid Cutbacks," *Washington Post*, 17 January 1992, p. A12.

7 Reported in Rick Maze, "Pentagon Persists on Reserve Cuts," *Army Times*, 30 December 1991, p. 6.

8 As discussed in Peter Grier, " 'Base Force' Plan Keeps 12 Active-Duty Divisions," *Christian Science Monitor*, 13 February 1992, p. 7.

available to meet SOUTHCOM priorities. Another question is whether there will continue to be the financial resources available.

In terms of overall defense budget figures, the Bush Administration has proposed a $50 billion cut over the next 5 years, while Congressional proposals range from cuts of $74 billion to $115 billion over this time period. For its part, the U.S. Army's budget authority declined by more than 14 percent from fiscal year 1990 to 1992, and the proposed budget for fiscal year 1993 represents a decline of almost 5.5 percent from 1992.[9] The current Army position is that readiness and combat effectiveness are to be maintained and are not to suffer in the ways they have historically when budgets have been significantly pared. In this context, one of the key questions still to be answered is whether the Army's civic action activities will be seen as an independent and funded mission, rather than as a collateral one. It is argued that it is, in fact, such training that best ensures the Army's ability to carry out its war-fighting mission when necessary. One way in which the Army might seek to address this issue is to consider increasing the exercise monies allocated to SOUTHCOM at the expense of exercise budgets for other theater(s) in the world.

Finally, amidst all the negative trends, one positive financial reality is that the Army has at its disposal several programs which are of particular value in civil-military support activities (such as Personnel Exchange Programs, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges, and other Latin American Cooperation Fund programs) which actually represent very little in the way of financial expenditure. Such programs, it should be argued, provide great value for only small personnel and monetary investments; assuming that the U.S. Army wishes to maintain contacts with its Latin counterparts, efforts should be made to maintain these programs at existing funding levels, if not higher.

2. Public Opinion and Perceptions: U.S. and Latin America

While the end of the Cold War has certainly benefited U.S. interests and policies, the new world environment has spawned certain changes in the priority that the public and politicians give to international matters which are not necessarily beneficial to long-term U.S. interests. This trend can be summed up in one word: isolationism. The public perception that defense spending can—and should—be radically reduced in light of the demise of communism, coupled with serious domestic economic problems, is diminishing

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9 Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, "How the Army Sees a New World," *Washington Post*, 23 February 1992, p. C3.

public support for spending to maintain U.S. commitments overseas and will probably continue to do so. Such an attitude is likely to be even stronger with respect to Latin America for at least two reasons.

First, given the current economic difficulties in the United States, there is a certain level of resentment about providing aid to countries which represent economic competition for U.S. jobs. This has, of course, been most evident in the debates surrounding the Free Trade agreement with Mexico, but other trade preferences granted to Central and South American countries (such as through the Andean Trade Initiative) could also foster similar sentiments.

Second, the fundamental problem is that the U.S. public at large is simply not convinced that Central and South America are of vital importance or interest to the United States. The exception to this line of thinking was found among some during the 1980s who saw a real danger in the events taking place in Nicaragua and El Salvador. However, the demise of the Sandinista threat supported by the USSR and Cuba and the signing of the peace accord in El Salvador have largely eradicated this line of support. Today the main U.S. strategic interest in the region is seen to be the drug threat.

Yet in the drug arena as well, the level of U.S. public support for U.S. military involvement is unlikely to rise in the coming years. As reflected by President Bush himself at the San Antonio drug summit in February 1992, the U.S. Government commitment to the drug war continues, but additional monies will not be forthcoming, primarily because of the need to devote resources to domestic concerns. Thus, the U.S. public may prove willing to continue to tolerate—if not fully support—current levels of effort overseas in the drug war, but if Latin commitment to the cause is seen to waver and/or if U.S. efforts to enlist the support of European and Asian allies in this effort prove unfruitful, public support will likely erode. The additional factor to be considered is the possibility of the loss of U.S. life. The American public obviously understands the risk of the loss of military life in training missions as the result of accidents; while such accidents certainly would cause sorrow, there would be no outpouring of opposition to U.S. activities. On the other hand, if loss of life were the result of U.S. military activities in support of counterinsurgency operations (a particular threat in the case of Peru), it should be expected that a groundswell of opposition to continuing U.S. military efforts in this arena would

occur.[10] Such a tragedy would only fuel the arguments that the military has no business in this role and heighten concerns about the possibility of being drawn into "another Vietnam."

Among the other missions discussed for the U.S. Army in Latin America, civic action activities could be seen in a positive light among the U.S. public at large. Such perceptions would, however, depend on the ability to publicize the benefits provided not only to the recipient nation, but also to those performing the activities. In other words, it may not be enough to emphasize the benefit of medical treatment and building schools to the poor nations in the region. For instance, with today's problems in medical care and the deterioration of urban life within the United States itself, the public might perceive such efforts to be yet another way of using valuable U.S. assets abroad instead of allowing U.S. citizens to benefit from these assets. Thus, in order to develop public support for such programs, (at least) equal emphasis should be placed on the positive experience for the participating troops, the lessons from this experience that they might be able to apply back home, etc.

In short, the main effects that U.S. public opinion will have on U.S. Army roles in Latin America will center on the increasing support for isolationist positions and for decreasing the defense budget in general, sentiments that will clearly translate into greater pressure on Capitol Hill along these lines. Consequently, there is good reason to question whether the money for continuing the war against drugs—especially for military support activities beyond U.S. borders—will be as forthcoming as it has been in previous years.

Turning to the effects of Latin American perceptions, the issue receiving the greatest amount of attention is obviously the counter-drug effort. From the perspective of the Andean countries, the U.S. strategy has had several shortcomings, some of which have begun to be addressed. One issue on which these countries differ with the United States is their determination that economic and social instability which foster drug trafficking must be dealt with first before trying to eradicate the drugs themselves. For example, in September 1990 both Bolivian President Paz Zamora and Peruvian President Fujimori were openly critical of the U.S. Andean drug strategy "owing to its excessive emphasis on military strategies and tactics and the absence of funds for socio-economic development."[11]

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[10] In fact, in April 1992 the Peruvian air force shot at and forced down a U.S. military plane, which resulted in the death of one of its crew. This event has affected the level of U.S. activity in that country and has raised anew serious concerns about U.S. military involvement there.

[11] Bruce Bagley, "The Andean Drug Dilemma: Anti-Narcotics Enforcement Actions and the Economic Political Structures of Coca Production," in Institute for National Strategic Studies, *Proceedings of the*

The ideas of alternative development as well as the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative and the Andean Trade Initiative seek to meet such concerns, although the solutions remain quite distant. Until the local populations see concrete improvements, opposition to U.S. policies—at least at the public level—should be expected to continue. An added twist to be considered is the notion that in addition to providing employment to poor peasants, cocaine trafficking "is the single most important source of foreign exchange for the region's debt-burdened economies."[12]

In addition to the economic linkage, there is also the problem that drug trafficking has increasingly become linked with insurgencies, particularly in Peru, although Colombia has also experienced problems in this area. Fighting an insurgent threat together with illicit drug trade obviously makes the task all the more complex. While the U.S. Government continues to restrict its involvement in counterinsurgency efforts, it has come to recognize that the two threats can be virtually impossible to separate. Nevertheless, the prioritization of these threats can continue to have a detrimental effect on collaborative efforts, especially between the United States and Peru. As Carol Graham explains, in addition to differing with the United States on the priority to be given to economic development, "Peru also puts a higher priority on curbing the growth of Shining Path [*Sendero Luminoso*] than on fighting the drug trade. Peru fears that using its military, and possibly U.S. personnel, to eradicate coca runs the risk of turning hundreds of thousands of displaced farmers into supporters of Shining Path."[13] Such reasoning was certainly echoed by Peru's President Fujimori during the February 1992 drug summit in San Antonio, Texas.

Another area of disagreement centers on a perceived U.S. attitude that the drug problem is somehow the Andean countries' "fault." Carlos Garcia Priani, a colonel in the Mexican Army, argued in 1989 that one of the reasons for tensions in U.S.-Latin American relations was the tendency of the United States to divide countries into "victims and executioners." He reasoned that all countries are victims in the drug problem but did not believe that U.S. policy had adopted this perspective fully.[14] This sentiment may be less

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Latin America Strategy Development Workshop (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 26-27 September 1990), p. 101.

12 This point is examined in some detail in Peter R. Andreas and Kenneth E. Sharpe, "Cocaine Politics in the Andes," *Current History*, February 1992.

13 Carol Graham, "The Enterprise for the Americas Initiative: A Development Strategy for Latin America," *The Brookings Review*, Fall 1991, p. 27.

14 Carlos Garcia Priani, "Drugs in the Americas: Their Influence on International Relations," paper prepared for the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, March 1989, p. 22.

prevalent today as the drug problem is becoming increasingly widespread throughout the region. For example, the San Antonio drug summit involved seven countries rather than just the Andean nations and the United States, as the 1989 Cartegena summit had done.[15] Moreover, at least during this summit there was evidence of a more proactive role by some of the other countries, as reflected in Colombia's proposal to establish specific goals and timetables for reducing and eventually eliminating cocaine production and consumption.[16]

Another prevailing sentiment among Latin countries is that U.S. policy should actually devote more attention to its own domestic situation. In other words, it should focus on reducing the demand for these drugs rather than on emphasizing control over the supply side of the equation. Related to this concern is the fact that public figures such as former Washington, D.C. Mayor Marion Barry receive minimal, if any, punishment for their own involvement with illicit drugs. Until such criminals receive harsher punishments in the United States, it is hard to expect Latin judges to risk their own lives in prosecuting drug traffickers, although some certainly are doing so. At the same time, Peruvian President Fujimori has insisted that without additional assistance from the United States (particularly for economic development), desired results in his country will be impossible to achieve.[17]

In terms of the U.S. presence, particularly at the outset of the counter-drug efforts, local reaction was quite negative. The local populations raised concerns about how extensive the U.S. presence would become as well as arguments that their countries were being controlled—or at least unduly influenced—by the United States. In short, they perceived that their sovereignty was being called into question. For example, during Operation Blast Furnace in 1986, it has been argued that "the presence of U.S. military forces conducting operations on Bolivian soil brought forth nationalistic concerns about sovereignty."[18] It has been suggested that if some mitigating civic action had been undertaken in conjunction with these actions, the public reaction might not have been so negative.

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15 The new participants were Venezuela, Ecuador, and Mexico.

16 For more detail on this proposal, see Michael Isikoff, "Peru's Leader Hits U.S. Drug Policies," *Washington Post*, 27 February 1992, p. A4.

17 Fujimori aired these views during the February 1992 summit in San Antonio. See ibid. and Eugene Robinson, "Peru's Summit Stance Raises Questions for U.S. Anti-Drug Effort," *Washington Post*, 3 March 1992, p. A13.

18 Kenneth M. O'Connor, "Strategic Analysis of the War on Drugs," paper prepared for the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 1991, p. 26.

Finally, in addition to concerns about the U.S. presence, local populations have indicated concerns about the involvement of their own militaries in counter-drug activities, which is largely seen to have been encouraged (if not forced) by the United States. Indeed, the militaries themselves were reluctant to take on this mission since it was outside their traditional national security mission and for fear of becoming more subject to corruption. Nevertheless, the militaries also realized that it provided an opportunity for justifying their existence and that this was the area where U.S. funds would be spent. Many of these fears have proved justified as corruption and human rights abuses have become more manifest among military forces.[19] The involvement of Latin American militaries also raised fundamental concerns about threats to democratic stability, a greater insurgent threat, and even an army coup. Lastly, an apparently growing phenomenon is the toleration and even support of drug trafficker violence by security forces in Colombia and elsewhere, a development that is related to the corruption problem.[20]

The other area of U.S. civil-military support activities in which Latin American perceptions could play an important future role is in the realm of civic action projects. There is little question that such projects engender considerable good will toward the United States among the local populations who receive the assistance. There are concerns, however, that the projects do not always necessarily meet the local population's needs. Such is particularly the case with engineering projects, especially those that focus on road building or other horizontal construction efforts. Just as some in the United States question the expediency and efficacy of these projects, the local population's good will toward the United States can erode if the people perceive that these projects have been conducted for reasons other than altruism or basic infrastructure development. In light of these considerations, medical civic action activities are the least likely to cause any negative

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19 In response to this problem, both Colombia and Peru announced the creation of agencies to deal with human rights abuses and control over police and military involved in counter-drugs. However, according to GAO, in the 6 months since this decision was announced Peru had not allocated any money or personnel to this agency. See Frank C. Conahan, "The Drug War: Observations on Counternarcotics Programs in Colombia and Peru," statement before the House of Representatives, U.S. General Accounting Office, 23 October 1991, p. 3.

20 See, for example, ibid., pp. 3, 5; Bagley, "The Andean Drug Dilemma," in *Proceedings of the Latin America Strategy Development Workshop*, p. 106; Department of State, Office of the Inspector General, *Report of Audit: Drug Control Activities in Bolivia*, October 1991, p. 38; Priani, "Drugs in the Americas," U.S. Army War College, p. 19; Andreas and Sharpe, *Current History*, February 1992, p. 74; Jorge Gomez Lizarazo, "Colombian Blood, U.S. Guns," *New York Times*, 28 January 1992; Stephen G. Trujillo, "Corruption and Cocaine in Peru," *New York Times*, 7 April 1992; and Clifford Krauss, "In Shift, U.S. Will Aid Peru's Army Against Drugs and Rebels," *New York Times*, 25 January 1992.

repercussions. The other factor to be emphasized is the continuing need to ensure that civilian authorities from the host nations are adequately involved in these activities, thereby ensuring appropriate military subordination to civilian authority.

3. U.S. Congress

Previous sections of this paper have already detailed several important ways in which Congress plays a crucial role in determining what activities the U.S. Army may pursue in Latin America (and other regions of the world). One example is that of Congressional support for making comparatively smaller reductions in Reserve and National Guard forces than in active-duty military forces. In addition, the effect of public opinion can obviously have significant influence over Congressional actions. Here it may be difficult to assess whether the public is spurring the growing sentiment of isolationism within the Congress, or vice versa. In either event, the result is a Congress that is increasingly unwilling to spend money on foreign policy priorities. This reluctance is clearly fueled by both serious domestic economic problems and by the notion that in the post-Cold War world the level of such expenditures should be able to drop dramatically. It is further compounded in 1992 by the politics of election campaigns.

Proof of this line of thinking can be found, for example, in the case of requested monies for peacekeeping operations. Not surprisingly, the new world environment requires greater investment in these operations, especially by multinational organizations such as the United Nations. At the present time, the United States is committed to paying 30 percent of U.N. peacekeeping costs, which translates into an increased expenditure for the United States from $81 million in 1990 to an expected $350 million for 1992 and 1993.[21] But despite appreciable savings in the defense budget elsewhere, Congress has been reluctant to approve this increase in peacekeeping costs. Some of this reluctance may well stem from concerns about the proposed U.N. force going into Cambodia; nevertheless, the image this position creates is that Congress is not even willing to pay relatively minimal costs to help ensure greater prospects for international peace and stability.

In addition to these trends, there are more long-standing policies that affect the U.S. Government's security assistance-type activities, and clearly the U.S. Army's role as well. One of the most discussed policies is that of Congressional earmarking of security

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21 Don Oberdorfer, "Lawmakers Balk at Peacekeeping's Cost," *Washington Post*, 4 March 1992, p. 17.

assistance funds. As a result of this earmarking, better than 85 percent of security assistance is allocated to only five countries: Israel, Egypt, Greece, Turkey, and Pakistan. Despite an almost universal opinion that this is not an effective or just way of distributing foreign aid, the consensus is that earmarking will remain a Congressional mandate. It is largely because of the strength of the political lobbies maintained by these countries, especially Israel and Greece, that this system continues to perpetuate itself. And particularly during election years, those serving in Congress are extremely reluctant to antagonize such powerful lobbies.

A problem related to the earmarking of funds is the policy of providing security assistance on a year-to-year basis. The lack of multiyear funding can present agencies, including the U.S. Army, with difficulties when trying to undertake substantial projects. Thus, although U.S. agencies try to work with the countries to develop long-term programs, it is never possible to guarantee that the funding for subsequent years will actually be made available. When programs fail to be funded beyond the initial year, the U.S. Government, and especially its representatives in-country, risk losing much of their credibility. Unless and until Congressional constraints on multiyear funding are eliminated, it is probably more beneficial to U.S. interests to plan smaller-scale projects that can be accomplished within one fiscal year than risk having to abandon a half-completed project because follow-on funds cannot be obtained.

Legislative restrictions in general represent a serious constraint on U.S. Army activities, a point well made in the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command publication on low-intensity conflict:

> While Congress supports United States economic and military assistance to developing nations and considers it an important part of national policy, current legislation governing the implementation of these policy objectives hampers the efforts of the United States government to accomplish them. It has promulgated a series of laws and regulations that prohibit, delay, or dilute actions needed to assist a host nation governmen. to successfully oppose insurgencies. Collectively, the statutory limitations make efficient, effective United States programs more difficult to implement and create confusion and frustration among policymakers and foreign governments.[22]

While these comments are directed at programs to help governments deal with insurgent threats, they largely apply to U.S. security-related activities in general. For instance, the Congress has attached amendments to assistance funds, stipulating that before these funds

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22 Joint Low-Intensity Conflict Project, *Volume I: Analytical Review of Low-Intensity Conflict* (Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1 August 1986), pp. 11:16-17.

can be released, the recipient country's human rights practices must meet U.S. requirements. Another restriction is the recipient country's performance in making payments on its national debt. If such restrictions are not met (as, for example, in the recent case of Peru and its human rights record), security assistance funds are withheld and planned projects obviously must either be delayed or eliminated. The counterproductive aspect of such policies is that even programs such as the International Military Education and Training fund can be affected. While it is sensible to have such restrictions apply to the delivery of weapons or to military exercises with the country, the elimination of IMET funding in these cases is actually detrimental to U.S. interests. IMET provides the U.S. Government with an opportunity for influencing the thinking of military and (now) civilian defense personnel. If IMET is suspended for the country, the United States loses an important opportunity for maintaining contact and trying to influence these people.

Finally, in terms of specific U.S. Army efforts in Latin America, the most controversial in the coming years will be the extent of military involvement in counter-drug activities.[23] Although it was originally the politicians who spearheaded the move to involve the U.S. military in the drug war, Congressional sentiment now appears to be moving away from a "military solution." In contrast to two years ago, the mood on Capitol Hill is now more cautious and this trend is likely to continue. One factor which has certainly precipitated this shift is a growing appreciation for the extreme difficulties of operating in a corrupt environment such as the drug trade engenders. Moreover, it has become apparent that the military's high technology and resources have not been able to bring a swift victory in this war, however such a victory would be defined. In short, it seems probable that the level of financial support for military operations in support of counter-drug efforts overseas will decrease in the coming years.

4. Inter-Agency Obstacles

The lack of cooperation and trust among various U.S. Government institutions is hardly a new phenomenon. Distrust between the executive and legislative branches, for example, has been a relatively constant state of affairs in recent memory. Moreover, such differences of opinion—and the resulting conflicting signals sent by U.S. policy—are clearly apparent to outside observers, including foreign officials. Such fissures can then be exploited by these latter parties in the interests of furthering their own objectives.

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[23] For more detail on the background to the U.S. military's involvement in counter-drug activities, types of activities, and forces, see Clark, *The U.S. Army in a Civil-Military Support Role*, pp. IV:21-23.

The focus of this discussion, however, is primarily on relations between the Department of Defense and other agencies, especially the U.S. Agency for International Development. The central issue lies in whether it is possible to overcome the Cold War mentality and to assess the role that DoD might play in dealing with non-traditional security challenges. To date, AID continues to view cooperation and coordination with the U.S. military as largely beyond its charter. The exceptions to this way of thinking are in the areas of disaster relief (where AID and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance have the primary responsibility but have found military resources and skills to be extremely efficient and timely) and, perhaps to a lesser extent, in medical care assistance (such as aid provided through Humanitarian and Civic Assistance efforts). AID sees its mandate to be to encourage and develop private organizations and capabilities; unless there are no resources other than military ones (or unless using the military costs appreciably less[24]), AID does not believe that it can or should involve the military. One of the other fundamental impediments to enhanced coordination is the difference in approaches adopted by the two agencies: the military tends to focus on achieving results and is operationally oriented, whereas AID tends to focus on studying the problem and how it can be solved (more than actually implementing the solution). For the most part, the types of activities for cooperation between these organizations are civic action efforts, both medical and engineering.

Other AID concerns about cooperating with the military include a belief that the military has not tended to involve sufficiently the local population in the planning and participation of civic action activities. Connected with this is the concern that military involvement in civic action efforts, especially in Latin America, runs the risk of undermining the authority of the very civilian governments that U.S. policy is seeking to support. If the local people see that it is the military that performs beneficial activities for them, the fear is that they will begin to wonder what good is being done for them by their civilian government. Such concerns certainly have some merit, although the U.S. Army appears to be placing a greater emphasis on addressing these concerns.

The issue of interagency cooperation within U.S. embassies has historically been sporadic, and cooperation has frequently been carried out on an ad hoc basis and has relied on individual (rather than institutional) efforts. Hence, in some embassies, the personal rapport between representatives from different agencies has made interagency cooperation

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[24] In fact, in most cases the military cost is quite high since. if DoD does not have the mission, it must charge the full cost of its services.

possible and quite successful. An important consideration is the capability of the ambassador and his or her appreciation for the resources available and desire for enhancing cooperation among these resources. Here the vital ingredient is for the country team plans to identify the assets that can be used to meet overall U.S. goals and objectives and for the ambassador to make the best use of these assets.

The solution to strive for is the pooling of military and AID expertise and allowing this cooperation to serve as a model for civil-military cooperation within the host nation and its agencies. Not only would this approach help avoid any duplication of efforts, it would also make the best use of declining resources. In fact, budget and personnel cuts may well be the greatest incentive for improving cooperation between agencies. Such accommodation will prove increasingly necessary if assistance efforts are to continue. It should be noted, moreover, that a certain distinction can be drawn between those countries receiving significant levels of counter-drug assistance and other countries in the region. In the case of the former (where the counter-drug issue provides a unifying focal point for the country team plans), a higher degree of interagency coordination appears to have developed.[25]

Other ideas for enhancing cooperation have been discussed and merit further consideration. Among them are the possibility of conducting joint TDYs, implementing instructor exchanges between DoD and AID personnel, and perhaps having personnel exchanges—military civil affairs specialists serving in AID/OFDA and AID personnel serving either within the Pentagon or on a CINC staff. As in the case of other specialties (such as FAO training) which take the military officer away from combat specialties, there would need to be adjustments made in the Army's institutional attitudes toward such service before this would become an attractive option for military personnel. Working in favor of such an option is the fact that since forces are being cut, there is talk about the need for personnel to specialize in more than one field of expertise.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Even the most casual perusal of the information contained in this paper reveals that the subject of U.S. Army activity in Latin America encompasses multiple areas of competing interests, conflicting political views, and diametrically opposed approaches. They tend to span the full spectrum—from detailed questions concerning the future for

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25 See, for example, "The Bus Stops Here: Agencies Act as Allies," *Washington Times*, 6 July 1992.

officers in the Army's FAO program, to the general question of whether there should be any involvement of U.S. military forces in Latin America at all.

Within this spectrum, however, the colors of several points of interest shine more brightly than others. For example:

- There is a certain amount of nascent resentment harbored by populations from both sides of the Southern U.S. boundary, one against the other. In this post-Cold War era, Americans as a whole have difficulty comprehending why they should be interested in projecting any sort of influence toward Latin America beyond that necessary to help deal with the narcotics problem. Solutions to the Latin American socioeconomic problems do not seem important to their welfare. They also are wary of what is viewed as a threat posed by the general availability of cheap labor available south of the border.

  On the other hand, Latin Americans generally are resentful of any North American intervention in their affairs. They particularly feel that U.S. emphasis on military solutions to the problem of narcotics traffic is a dangerous and unwarranted approach, and they resent U.S. assertions that the problem exists due to some form of "evil" in Latin America, rather than the drug situation within the United States. The U.S. approach is viewed as an attack on their sovereignty.

  The combination of these views, North and South, would seem to define political forces that would advocate less U.S. involvement in Latin American countries in terms of physical presence, particularly those of U.S. forces. At the same time, the implementation of the Free Trade agreement among Mexico, Canada, and the United States would portend an increasing level of activity in the economic sphere.

- Budget constraints, occasioned by economic decline and adjustments driven by the demise of the Cold War, pre-ordain continuing defense force reductions in the United States. Internally, the U.S. Army will be looking for ways to husband its resources and to maximize capabilities within the scope of its primary mission, i.e., success in combat. In this climate, it is likely that Army decisionmakers will view civic action activities in Latin America as a side show to which they are less and less willing to devote resources.

  The battle for Reserve and National Guard strength reductions continues between the DoD and the Congress. In the end, their end strengths will be somewhat greater than those proposed by the DoD and less than the Congress desires. But the result will be fewer of the support types of units normally used for civil-military functions. Barring some crisis which begs direct U.S. involvement, exercises held out-of-country for U.S. forces will of necessity diminish in number, size, and duration.

- Department of Defense methods, interests, and inclinations generally differ from those of the second major actor in the Latin American arena in which U.S. interests are represented. The fact that relations and coordination between AID and DoD are badly in need of review is well known. Unfortunately, the probability that stimuli for such review will exist is likely to decline rather than increase due to the overall decrease in the role of direct U.S. military involvement. Both agencies need to emphasize the need for such review at the highest levels if progress is to be made.

In the final analysis, the U.S. Army leadership should expect to receive neither free reign to deploy in Latin America what meager assets they will have at their disposal for operational, civil-military support or training roles, nor due consideration by the Congress where reductions to those assets are concerned. And if greater in-country cooperation between competing U.S. agencies is expected, it is to be gained by specific concession given by agency chiefs. The bottom line may be that the Army can expect to achieve little in Latin America through direct involvement of Army units over the course of the next several years, and that their remaining options are to be found under the heading—"The Indirect Approach."

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