

CHANGING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

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- CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND DEMOCRACY.* Edited by Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. Pp. 164. \$38.50 cloth, \$14.95 paper.)
- THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA: THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY.* By Bruce W. Farcau. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996. Pp. 183. \$55.00 cloth.)
- ERODING MILITARY INFLUENCE IN BRAZIL: POLITICIANS AGAINST SOLDIERS.* By Wendy Hunter. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. Pp. 243. \$39.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.)
- THE POLITICS OF ANTI-POLITICS: THE MILITARY IN LATIN AMERICA.* Third edition. Edited by Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies Jr. (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1997. Pp. 426. \$55.00 cloth, \$23.95 paper.)
- WARRIORS IN PEACETIME: THE MILITARY AND DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA.* Edited by Gabriel Marcella. (Portland, Ore.: Frank Cass, 1994. Pp. 163. \$37.50 cloth, \$19.50 paper.)
- BEYOND PRAETORIANISM: THE LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY IN TRANSITION.* Edited by Richard L. Millett and Michael Gold-Biss. (Miami, Fla.: North-South Center Press, University of Miami, 1996. Pp. 317. \$24.95 paper.)

No military regimes now rule in Latin America, but most of the literature on civil-military relations contends that the military remains an immensely powerful and autonomous political actor that civilian leaders cannot afford to antagonize.¹ Recently, however, new studies have emerged to challenge conventional views of civil-military relations by showing how the power and prerogatives of the armed forces have declined in many Latin American countries.² For example, Richard Millett asserts in

1. David Pion-Berlin, "The Armed Forces and Politics: Gains and Snares in Recent Scholarship," *LARR* 30, no. 1 (1995):147-62.

2. See for example David Pion-Berlin, "Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in South America," *Comparative Politics* 25, no. 1 (Oct. 1992):83-102; Paul Zagorski, "Civil-

his contribution to *Beyond Praetorianism: The Latin American Military in Transition*:

... Latin America's military institutions are entering a period of difficult and potentially traumatic change. Missions, threats, relations with other actors, both foreign and domestic, even the traditional immunities and privileges of the officer corps are all open to constant re-examination. . . . The ability . . . of the armed forces to act as an institution separate from civil society and with the power—indeed the obligation—to judge that society seems to be disappearing. Even the military's internal autonomy, its traditional control over assignments, promotions, and finances, is being questioned. (Pp. 291–92)

The authors of these new studies are careful to stress that the military in most Latin American countries remains an important political force. They also recognize that the armed forces have not fully subordinated themselves to civilian authority. The limits of civilian control are highlighted by the inability of democratic governments to imprison more than a handful of officers for past abuses of human rights. Nevertheless, scholars such as Wendy Hunter, Paul Zagorski, David Pion-Berlin, Richard Millett, and others are now arguing that the military has lost substantial political power in many countries in the region and that its position is likely to erode further.

Explanations for this unexpected shift in civil-military relations vary widely, but nearly all analysts cite the end of the cold war and the subsequent demise of communism as principal causes. These developments dissolved the threat from the revolutionary Left (except in Peru and Colombia) that had long served to justify the military's role in domestic politics. With the spread of a new global consensus on democratic government and market economics, the United States and the Latin American private sector no longer need the armed forces to protect them from the Marxist or populist Left. Indeed, the United States has become one of the strongest advocates of downsizing the Latin American military and subordinating it to civilian control. International financial institutions also pressure for military budget cuts to support neoliberal economic reform and, like the newly activist Organization of American States, threaten to isolate any nation whose rulers come to power by military coup.

In addition to analyzing the level of subordination of the armed forces to civilian authority, much of the current literature on civil-military relations also attempts to determine what missions the Latin American

Military Relations and Argentine Democracy: The Armed Forces under the Menem Government," *Armed Forces and Society* 20, no. 3 (Spring 1994):423–37; Richard L. Millett, "An End to Militarism? Democracy and the Armed Forces in Central America," *Current History* 94, no. 589 (Feb. 1995):71–75; Wendy Hunter, "Politicians against Soldiers: Contesting the Military in Postauthoritarian Brazil," *Comparative Politics* 27, no. 4 (July 1995):425–45; and J. Mark Ruhl, "Redefining Civil-Military Relations in Honduras," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1996):33–66.

military should perform in the era after the cold war. Some analysts believe that a wide variety of military missions are compatible with democracy. In addition to their external defense role, soldiers could participate in civic-action projects to aid national development or assist police in internal security tasks such as combating drug trafficking. Other analysts, however, are convinced that the armed forces should concentrate exclusively on external defense and closely related tasks like international peacekeeping. They argue that civic action and internal-security activities will immerse the armed forces too deeply in domestic politics and that participation in the regional drug war will corrupt the military. Counterinsurgency warfare also brings the armed forces into domestic politics, but most scholars recognize that no other institution would be able to deal with the remaining leftist guerrilla groups. General agreement seems to exist that it is unwise to permit the armed forces to enhance their income and autonomy by operating nonmilitary business enterprises.

The six books to be reviewed in this essay offer a range of views on the relative power of the military in Latin American politics today. They also present a variety of opinions about appropriate military missions. The volume edited by Brian Loveman and Thomas Davies asserts that the power of the armed forces remains intact, and Bruce Farcau's study of democratic transition in Bolivia and Brazil is skeptical of views that predict decreasing military influence in Latin America. In sharp contrast, Wendy Hunter's study of Brazilian civil-military relations makes a strong case that the military is losing its hold on Latin American politics even in countries where it emerged from the transition to democracy in a strong position. The other three edited volumes contain a mix of viewpoints on the current civil-military balance, although most contributors take a position closer to Hunter's perspective than to Loveman and Davies's more traditional interpretation. The volume edited by Gabriel Marcella offers the most positive views of a multifunctional military. Several selections in the volume edited by Millett and Michael Gold-Biss also favor a broad military role within a democratic system. Hunter, in contrast, is convinced that democracy will have a greater chance of success if the armed forces concentrate narrowly on external defense and international peacekeeping. Many contributors to the Millett and Gold-Biss volume as well as Louis Goodman in the book edited by Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner generally share this view. The Loveman and Davies book has little to say on this lively debate, but Farcau perceives potential problems with both internal and external military missions.

Loveman and Davies's *The Politics of Antipolitics: The Military in Latin America* is the third edition of a widely used reader. The editors explain that the Latin American officer corps has always valued order and hierarchy and has considered itself superior to the corrupt, incompetent civilian political class. Disgusted by civilian politicians' selfish personal

rivalries and demagogic appeals to emerging social classes, the armed forces have regularly intervened in politics to cleanse the body politic of these evils. The contributors to the Loveman and Davies volume carefully trace the evolution of the military's antipolitical behavior from the early nineteenth century to the present. Many chapters were written by leading authorities such as Frederick Nunn on Chile and Robert Potash on Argentina. A fascinating section entitled "The Military Speaks for Itself" presents sixty pages of antipolitical speeches and public statements made by military leaders.

Although the most recent edition of *The Politics of Antipolitics* continues to be an excellent source on the history of Latin American civil-military relations, it does not evidence enough appreciation of recent civilian successes in curbing the military to provide an accurate description of the current situation. Loveman's concluding essays note briefly that external pressure and the lack of security threats have enabled civilian governments to begin to whittle away at military prerogatives. The volume also includes a new article on El Salvador by Knut Walter and Philip Williams showing how the Salvadoran Peace Accords point toward a small and politically marginal military in the future. Yet the entire thrust of Loveman's comments is to argue how little military attitudes and civil-military relations have changed since the cold war ended. He asserts that beneath a veneer of elected civilian rule, Latin American governments are still "protected democracies" securely under the tutelage of the armed forces. This claim would be more convincing if Loveman and Davies had updated this edition with detailed discussions of new developments in civil-military relations during the 1990s. Unfortunately, except for the selection on El Salvador and a few sentences on Chile, none of the articles on specific countries say anything about the events of the current decade. Thus one finds little discussion of the shrinking military budgets, reductions in force, lost military prerogatives, and political defeats of the armed forces that other scholars have interpreted as indicating a striking contraction in military influence. Nor has the collection of military speeches and public statements been expanded to include any examples after 1986.

It would have been useful to include speeches by military officials such as Argentine military commander General Martín Balza, who has become a spokesperson for strict military obedience to civilian authority. Balza's statements notwithstanding, Loveman and Davies are no doubt correct in assuming that military officers still harbor antipolitical attitudes. The new democracies of contemporary Latin America continue to be plagued by the corruption, inefficiency, and unseemly squabbles over patronage that have always appalled military professionals. But in the new political world after the cold war, it is no longer so easy for the armed forces to act on their antipolitical attitudes by intervening in politics.

Bruce Farcau's *The Transition to Democracy in Latin America: The Role*

of the Military concentrates on explaining transitions from military to civilian rule during the 1980s but also offers noteworthy views on contemporary civil-military relations and future military missions. Farcau examines the reasons for the rise and fall of military dictatorships of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. He explains the nature of factionalization within the Latin American military and cites competition among military factions as the main explanatory factor in case studies of democratic transition in Bolivia and Brazil. Unlike most analysts of democratic transitions, Farcau claims that the military does not divide over the issue of democratization per se. Rather, preexisting factions within the armed forces use the democratization issue as a tactical weapon in their struggles for promotions, command positions, and institutional control. He even contends that a supposedly pro-democratic soft-liner faction will reverse itself and oppose democratic transition if its leaders come to believe that the end of the authoritarian regime will leave a competing military faction in a stronger position.

Farcau is certainly right to remind readers of the potential importance of military factions and officers' pragmatic self-interests in explaining military behavior. He supports his thesis well in the case of Bolivia (where he once served as a U.S. Foreign Service officer) by linking developments in the democratic transition in that country to an ongoing conflict between two Bolivian military factions. This argument is much less persuasive, however, when he applies it to the Brazilian case. Farcau divides the Brazilian officer corps into two principal factions, the Sorbonne Group or Castelistas, associated with General Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco and other officers who served in the Brazilian expeditionary force in Italy during World War II, and the Duros, who were led by officers who did not participate in that expedition. Farcau claims that Brazil democratized under Castelista Generals Ernesto Geisel and João Figueiredo not because they were more committed to democratization but because it served their primary goal of factional dominance within the armed forces. As Farcau knows, Thomas Skidmore and other scholars who have studied the Brazilian transition in depth have argued that the leaders of the Geisel-Figueiredo soft-liner faction genuinely believed in liberalization and controlled democratization, opposing a hard-liner faction that strongly disagreed.³ To overturn the existing interpretation, Farcau would have to present compelling new evidence for his claims. But except for a handful of interviews with Brazilian officers serving as military attachés abroad, his chapter on Brazil is based on standard secondary sources. Farcau's case also would be more plausible if at some point the

3. Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964–1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

Castelistas had switched sides with the Duros on the issues of liberalization and democratization, but such a reversal never occurred.

The Brazilian case actually suggests that not all military factions are as purely materialistic as those Farcau studied closely in Bolivia. Moreover, most students of the Latin American military would argue that military institutions are not all as factionalized as the Bolivian armed forces. In reality, factionalization may have little to do with explaining the political behavior of more unified, hierarchical, and professionally disciplined institutions like the Chilean Army. Hunter argues in *Eroding Military Influence in Brazil* that the Brazilian military became a much more centralized, hierarchical, and unified organization because of institutional reforms carried out during the military dictatorship (pp. 27–29). She claims that no prominent factions exist in today's active-duty Brazilian Army.

Farcau does not examine current civil-military relations in Bolivia or Brazil in any detail, but he comments favorably on Loveman's claim in a recent article that the military remains a dominant political actor in Latin America despite the return of civilian governments. Farcau is also skeptical of factors that other analysts believe will promote civilian control, such as the collapse of communism, the antimilitary attitude of U.S. leaders, and the fact that the military generally left power discredited by policy failure. He argues that the interests of the armed forces could still be threatened by noncommunist popular revolts sparked by persisting poverty and inequality in Latin America. Farcau also observes that civilian leaders are themselves becoming discredited by high levels of corruption. Moreover, he claims that the attitude of the United States matters much less than in the past in Latin America. Although Farcau believes that democracy may survive in spite of these problems, most of his advice to civilian leaders for handling civil-military relations implies that the military will remain a powerful force that must be placated.

In light of Farcau's views on the importance of military factions, it is not surprising that he recommends that civilian presidents gain an understanding of the factional structure of the armed forces and attempt to maintain equilibrium among competing military factions to prevent an imbalance from causing a coup. He also warns that downsizing the military may provoke a dangerous factional scramble for the reduced number of promotions and senior appointments. Factors like these are more prominent in Farcau's thinking about how to help civilian governments survive than any specific mix of military missions. He dislikes having the armed forces assume broad civic-action roles that involve them in domestic politics, but he remains unconvinced by proponents of external-defense missions. Farcau points out that few Latin American nations face external threats credible enough to justify such a mission focus and suggests that peacekeeping opportunities may actually stimulate new factional conflicts.

The best new book on Latin American civil-military relations is Wendy Hunter's *Eroding Military Influence in Brazil: Politicians against Soldiers*. During the dictatorship from 1964 to 1985, the Brazilian military defeated the threat from the Left, achieved notable economic success, and gained substantial popular support. Consequently, the armed forces conducted the transition to democracy from a position of strength and were confident that they would maintain their extensive political influence and prerogatives. Students of Brazilian politics uniformly endorsed this assessment. But contrary to these expectations, as Hunter convincingly shows, the political power of the Brazilian military has eroded significantly since civilian government was reestablished. Democratically elected politicians have successfully contested the military over a wide range of issues and narrowed its scope of influence. Plans to expand the armed forces have been reversed, the military budget has been slashed, and military salaries have fallen so low that Brazilian officers have had to seek second jobs. The armed forces have also been forced to give up control of the intelligence service, the national security council, and militarized state police forces. In addition, civilian politicians defied strong military opposition by expanding the right to strike and curbing the armed forces' grandiose plans for developing and occupying the Amazon. The military also lost its previously unchallenged control over nuclear matters.

Drawing on rational-choice theory, Hunter explains these developments by arguing that the reestablishment of democratic electoral competition creates strong incentives for self-interested politicians to contest the military. Politicians' need for patronage and popular programs to win votes leads them to try to capture resources from the military budget and to challenge the military's policy preferences when they conflict with public needs or demands. The greater the popular mandate of the civilian government, the greater its capacity to win budgetary and policy battles against military opposition because it is too risky for the armed forces to use forceful measures against any government with solid popular backing. Hunter demonstrates that while President Fernando Collor enjoyed broad popularity, he was able to make major progress in reducing the power of the military. In contrast, a weak chief executive like José Sarney leaned on the military for support. Hunter reasons that before the cold war ended, popular political leaders might have feared challenging the armed forces despite the potential electoral payoffs. Now, however, the lack of threats to the socioeconomic and political order in the era following the cold war renders the current domestic and international political climate hostile to military coups and other strong-arm tactics. As saber rattling loses credibility, civilian politicians become bolder in confronting the military.

Although the military has lost political influence in the last decade, Hunter makes it clear that Brazilian civil-military relations have not

evolved into a model of democratic control. Many officers continue to view themselves as guardians of the nation with the duty to criticize political leaders. Defense policy also remains almost entirely a military preserve. In addition, the armed forces maintain enclaves of autonomy in areas unrelated to politicians' electoral incentives, such as military education, training, and promotions. Hunter argues that although the weakly institutionalized Brazilian party system encourages politicians to seek increased patronage resources at the military's expense, it also inhibits efforts to develop a coherent policy that would redefine the role of the armed forces. The Brazilian military participates extensively in both civic action and internal security, but Hunter believes that it would be less prone to interfere in domestic politics in the future if it were reorganized to concentrate on external defense.⁴ She also sees a need to reform military education so as to promote within the officer corps a narrower and more democratic conception of the military's place in Brazilian society.

In the final chapter of *Eroding Military Influence in Brazil*, Hunter tests the comparative applicability of her argument about electoral incentives by examining recent civil-military relations in Chile, Argentina, and Peru. She finds that electoral competition has imposed pressures on civilian politicians to roll back military influence and that popular support has increased their capacity to do so in each of the countries, despite significant differences among the three cases. The Chilean military was the most successful in constructing legal protections for itself and its conservative allies during the democratic transition. Consequently, it retained more power than its counterparts. Nonetheless, Hunter claims that Chilean civilian politicians have achieved more success over the armed forces than is generally appreciated. The Chilean military budget has been cut, the national police (*carabineros*) have been removed from military control, and the military has been excluded from the new anti-terrorist agency. Over fierce military opposition, two high-ranking officers were imprisoned for their role in the 1976 assassinations of Orlando Letelier, a former foreign minister in the Allende government, and his assistant.

The Argentine military was so discredited by human rights abuses, economic failures, and its defeat in the Falklands that it could win no legal protections for itself during the transition to democracy. Demoralized and deeply unpopular, the armed forces were unable to defend themselves against the drastic reductions in force size, budget, and prerogatives demanded by civilian politicians. Although military rebellions forced the Argentine government to cease human rights prosecutions against military officers, in every other respect, the Argentine armed forces continued

4. For a thorough discussion of the issue of military missions, see Wendy Hunter, *State and Soldier in Latin America: Redefining the Military's Role in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1996).

to lose ground. The military draft was abolished, and the armed forces were obliged to focus exclusively on external defense and international peacekeeping.

Hunter also documents civilian successes in reducing the influence of the Peruvian armed forces until the Sendero Luminoso guerrilla insurgency forced President Alberto Fujimori to resuscitate the military. Lacking his own political party base and faced with economic crisis and guerrilla warfare, the Peruvian president relied on military support to carry out his 1992 *autogolpe*. Hunter notes that the Peruvian case indicates that a minimal level of political and economic stability is necessary for the competitive dynamic of democracy to result in diminishing military power.

Richard Millett and Michael Gold-Biss examine the current status of civil-military relations in the region in their edited volume, *Beyond Praetorianism: The Latin American Military in Transition*. The most intriguing piece in this valuable collection is Millett's concluding essay, in which he cites numerous examples of the Latin American military's political decline and argues that the institution is undergoing traumatic changes since the cold war. Although military officers remain highly critical of civilian elites, Millett claims that they have become extremely reluctant to use force unless they are certain that military intervention will attract broad popular support. He nonetheless views the military as a potentially powerful political force. Although coups are now unlikely to be precipitated by civilian efforts to trim military prerogatives, civilian governments that become widely reviled because of extreme corruption or incompetence could become vulnerable to military overthrow. Millett expects military coups to be relatively rare occurrences, however, and predicts that military governments replacing failed civilian rulers will be short-lived. Disappointing experiences with governing and fears of international economic isolation have dissuaded the armed forces from contemplating long-term military rule. Like Hunter, Millett believes that civilian politicians will shrink the size and budget of the armed forces further in coming years. Civilian authority over the military will gradually increase in most countries, although Millett anticipates that the process will be neither smooth nor steady.

Most of the other selections in *Beyond Praetorianism* also emphasize how much power the military has lost. Carina Perelli and Juan Rial describe the South American military as in the throes of an existential crisis. Peru and Colombia need their armed forces to combat insurgencies, but a lack of credible external or internal military threats has led a growing segment of the population in Argentina, Uruguay, and elsewhere to consider the military superfluous. As a consequence, Perelli and Rial assert, the military is being bled to death and is losing public respect in many Latin American countries. As resources dry up, morale sags, equipment becomes obsolete, and talented officers abandon the institution. Drawing on

her recent book, Deborah Norden describes the weakening of the Argentine military,⁵ and Bonnie Tenneriello, Geoff Thale, and Millett show how the armed forces have been purged, reduced in size, and restructured in El Salvador. Tenneriello et al. think that a redefinition of the military's role in Guatemala will be more difficult but believe that present conditions encourage increasing civilian control. In addition to the favorable international climate after the cold war, Guatemalan civil society has become much more assertive in recent years, as demonstrated by the successful mass resistance of an attempted autogolpe by President Jorge Serrano in 1993. The two contributors to *Beyond Praetorianism* who emphasize the military's continuing strength instead of its decline are Luis Guzmán and Max Manwaring. Guzmán correctly characterizes the Nicaraguan Army as still too large, too influential, and too allied with the Sandinistas. Manwaring offers a description of Brazilian civil-military relations at odds with Hunter's analysis. Manwaring claims that the Brazilian military has simply "resumed its former position behind the proverbial throne" (p. 235) and is likely to become even more deeply involved in political and economic decision making. But he does not explain why such a supposedly dominant military has been starved for resources and defeated in key political battles over the Amazon and other issues.

As the military has declined, it has been forced to seek new duties to justify its existence. The United States also has begun to pressure Latin American militaries to adopt nontraditional missions such as suppressing drug trafficking. But as Perelli and Rial as well as Millett point out, Latin American military officers are unhappy with many of the new tasks they have been assigned. Protecting the environment in response to international pressure often goes against the military's sense of national sovereignty and independence. Involvement in the drug war threatens to corrupt the institution and makes it unpopular with peasant cultivators. In addition, the military despises police work and risks committing new human rights abuses by engaging in law enforcement. Millett recognizes these concerns but counters that the police are overwhelmed by rising crime and that the military is the only institution with the requisite air, naval, and intelligence assets to assist them. Manwaring, in a second essay on threats to the Americas posed by guerrillas, narcotics, and terrorism, also sees a central role for the military in fighting drug traffickers and insurgent groups like Sendero that collaborate in the narcotics trade. Stephen Wager adds a positive evaluation of the Mexican military's extensive involvement in civic action and internal security.

In contrast, other contributors to *Beyond Praetorianism* advocate a narrower focus on external defense and international peacekeeping. Tricia

5. See Deborah L. Norden, *Military Rebellion in Argentina: Between Coups and Consolidation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

Juhn concentrates on El Salvador, while Argentine Ambassador Hernán Patiño Mayer discusses the region as a whole. Norden shows that the Argentine military has already been restricted to these two missions. Jack Child documents the increasing involvement of the Latin American military in international peacekeeping during the 1990s.

Gabriel Marcella's useful edited volume, *Warriors in Peacetime: The Military and Democracy in Latin America*, focuses on the future missions of the armed forces. Several of the contributors provide additional evidence that the military has already lost significant political influence. Uruguayan scholar Juan Rial explains how the end of the cold war has rapidly eroded military power and offers a valuable overview of the status of civil-military relations in most countries in the region. He finds that the military is still a dominant political player in Paraguay, where the democratic transition is incomplete, as well as in a handful of other countries. In the rest of Latin America, the military is no longer strong enough to impose restrictions on civilian governments. Rial admits, however, that most of the Latin American armed forces resent their loss of status and resources and have not fully subordinated themselves to civilian control. Rial believes that to improve civil-military relations, the military must be given a clearly defined mission and sufficient resources to carry it out. He thinks the armed forces should concentrate on external defense and international peacekeeping, but he recognizes that at times they will have to be called on for assistance in the internal security tasks that they dislike. Rial emphasizes that it is in the interest of civilian politicians to become much better informed about defense issues and to collaborate with military officers to develop a more productive civil-military relationship.

Marcella's contribution to *Warriors in Peacetime* criticizes recent cuts in military budgets as too drastic. He argues that such precipitous reductions heighten civil-military tensions and damage military readiness and morale. Attempts to marginalize the military are counterproductive and may even nurture future coups. Like Rial, Marcella believes that civilians should enter into a dialogue with military officers to improve mutual understanding and ease the redefining of the military's role. He asserts that the military remains a valuable institution that can support democracy by performing an array of missions. He reminds readers of the role played by the U.S. Army in developing the American West and the ongoing contributions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Marcella believes that the Latin American armed forces can be used similarly to bring public services to remote areas and build infrastructure without undermining democracy. The armed forces can also help preserve national resources, assist in disaster relief, fight domestic insurgencies, and aid law enforcement in the struggle against drug trafficking. Other selections in *Warriors in Peacetime* such as those by Howard Wiarda and U.S. Army engineer Jack Le Cuyer also endorse a multifunctional role for the Latin American mili-

tary. Kenneth Sharpe offers a lone but effective dissent against using the Latin American military in the regional drug war, a U.S. policy that he feels has become a costly and foolish obsession.

In *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy*, edited by Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, only two selections focus on Latin America. Rial presents an updated version of the views expressed in his earlier piece in the Marcella volume, while Louis Goodman offers what I found to be the most persuasive discussion of military missions. In the Diamond and Plattner volume, Rial is more convinced than ever of the military's fall from power and claims that military subordination to civilian authority is now becoming the norm in the region. But he reaffirms the need for more extensive civil-military interaction and more effective mechanisms of civilian oversight.

Goodman's contribution makes it clear that he would prefer to see the military concentrate on its primary purpose—external defense. But he argues sensibly that it may not be possible or even desirable to restrict the military to this role at this time. In Goodman's opinion, the first question to ask in determining the appropriateness of a particular military mission is whether its performance by the armed forces would enhance or diminish prospects for democratic consolidation. Goodman proposes three criteria for making this determination. First, does the military's involvement in this activity exclude other viable alternative groups such as the police or private entrepreneurs and prevent them from acquiring critical skills? Second, do the armed forces by their involvement gain added privileges that may lead them to promote their own institutional interests in politics and thereby undermine democracy? Finally, will the military begin to neglect its core defense mission by failing to maintain combat readiness because of its involvement in the activity? Using these criteria, Goodman reasons that if a democratic nation's well-being depends on a particular task being carried out and no other institution is capable of undertaking it, then the military should assume the mission. Examples would be counterinsurgency activities or delivery of social services to remote areas. But if the police can handle illegal activities and private enterprises can build needed infrastructure or provide goods currently produced by military industries, then the military should not be allowed to engage in these activities. Goodman also stresses that any noncombat roles that are assumed by the armed forces must be clearly transitional missions with a timetable for their return to civilian hands.

In contrast to what most literature on contemporary civil-military relations in Latin America has led analysts to expect, it is clear from recent works by Hunter, Millett, Rial, and others that the armed forces have begun to lose substantial political power and prerogatives. But it is also evident that the rate of the military's political decline has varied from country to country. In Argentina the once arrogant military has become a small,

politically weak institution obedient to civil authority, while in Paraguay, the army continues to be the country's most powerful political player. Although not as influential as it once was, the military is still a much more important political actor in Chile or Nicaragua than it is in El Salvador. Civil-military relations now appear to vary widely across Latin America.

Our next step in research should be to develop and test theories to explain this variation. Because we have only recently begun to recognize that the Latin American military is no longer as dominant as it was once thought to be, little has been done to explain the range of civil-military relations in Latin America since the cold war ended.⁶ Possible explanatory factors may include structural context variables such as level of economic development. We may find that more economically developed countries in the region with stronger civil societies will tend to have the least politically powerful militaries, although Chile would seem to be an exception. Or following the trend of the current democratization literature,⁷ we may discover that process variables have greater explanatory power. It would be revealing to analyze, for example, the degree to which successful civilian presidents have followed the policy guidelines outlined by Huntington in their attempts to curb the military: limiting military missions to external defense, ruthlessly punishing leaders of attempted coups, and reducing the size of the armed forces but improving salaries, professional training, and equipment.⁸ In addition, the relative economic performance of civilian governments and their levels of corruption may prove to be influential process factors. Both Hunter and Millett have suggested that civilian governments made highly unpopular by economic failure or corruption become more vulnerable to military pressure. Clearly, the current variation in civil-military relations in Latin America gives scholars an important new research puzzle to solve.

6. There will always be considerable subjectivity involved in measuring the military's political power and autonomy. Use of a common standard such as Alfred Stepan's indicators of military prerogatives might help narrow disagreements in the future. See Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 94–97.

7. On the importance of process variables in the current literature on democratization, see Doh Chull Shin, "On the Third Wave of Democratization: A Synthesis and Evaluation of Recent Theory and Research," *World Politics* 47, no. 4 (Oct. 1994):135–70.

8. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 251–53.

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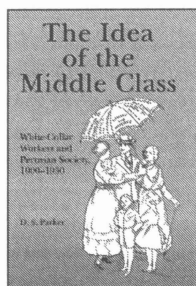
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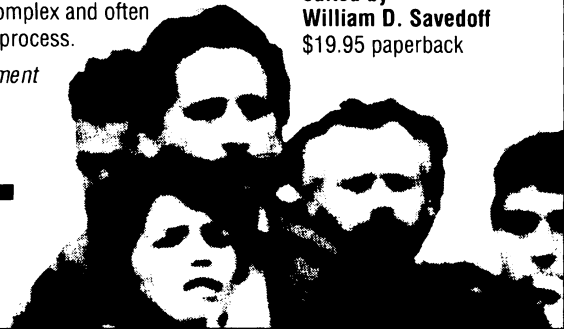
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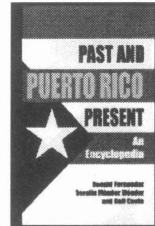
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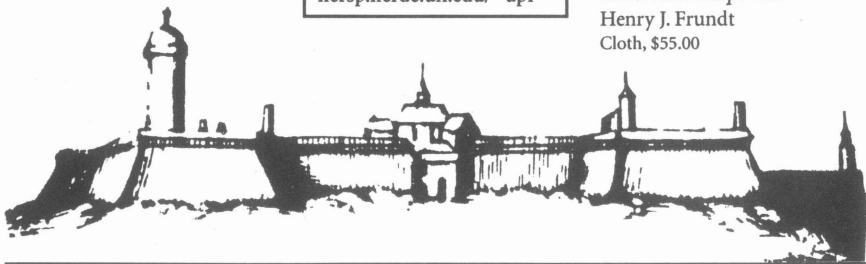
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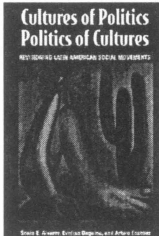
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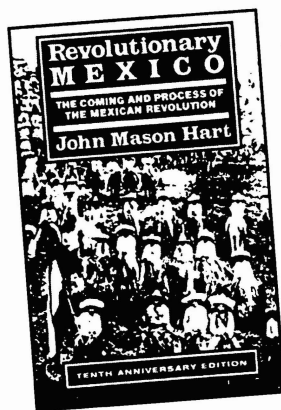
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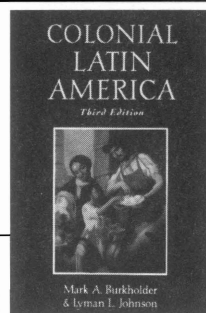
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