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A survey of Security System Reform in Latin America and the Caribbean

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CONFLICT, SECURITY & DEVELOPMENT GROUP

About this survey

The survey, commissioned by the OECD-DAC, found that a diverse range of SSR-related activities are under way in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, despite the wave of democracy that has swept the region in the past decade, armed forces continue to enjoy a high degree of autonomy and influence. Public security and justice systems tend to be weak. While there are incipient processes of reform in these areas, prospects for enduring change are constrained by the wider economic and governance crises affecting the region. In the absence of an over-arching security concept in the region, in few cases can it really be said that countries are undertaking comprehensive SSR as understood in the OECD-DAC sense of the word. Reform processes tend to be piece-meal and ad hoc, reflecting as much constraints in local vision, political will and capacity as external security assistance policies in the region which have generally not been guided by a wide-ranging concept of security either.

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Contents

Summary

The survey[1] found that a diverse range of SSR-related activities are under way in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, despite the wave of democracy that has swept the region in the past decade, armed forces continue to enjoy a high degree of autonomy and influence. Public security systems tend to be weak in many countries, and access to justice remains out of reach of large sections of the population. While there are incipient processes of reform in each of these core security areas, prospects for enduring change are constrained by the wider economic and governance crises affecting the region.

In the absence of an over-arching security concept in the region, in few cases can it really be said that countries are undertaking comprehensive SSR as understood in the OECD-DAC sense of the word. Reform processes tend to be piece-meal and ad hoc, reflecting as much constraints in local vision, political will and financial resources as external security assistance policies in the region which have generally not been guided by a wide-ranging concept of security either. As consequence, countries in the region often adopt narrow institutional approaches to reform.

The key challenge for the region is to assert an independent vision of security that responds to its core needs in a rapidly globalizing and interdependent world. While the traditional security agenda still predominates in the thinking of governments across the region, a more multi-dimensional security agenda, encompassing a focus on 'citizen' security and a broader array of political, economic, social and environmental concerns, is gaining influence. Implementing this new security agenda will, however, also require new institutional frameworks for managing security, These will need to take into account the diverse needs and priorities of countries in the region, while at the same time promoting collective responses to the growing range of trans-national security issues that affect them.

There is a crucial role for international cooperation to assist in developing approaches that effectively balance traditional security concerns with the 'new' security agenda. To date, however, few donors have engaged with security reforms in the region as a long-term evolutionary process requiring constant and carefully targeted support. The SSR concept and policy agenda offers a potentially valuable framework for closer collaboration between donors and Latin American partners.

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[1] This survey was managed by the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at King's College London (www.securityanddevelopment.org). For further information on the methodology for the survey, the key findings, and the implications for donors, see *CSDG Papers* No. 2, A Global Survey of Security System Reform, by D. Hendrickson.

Chapter 1
Introduction[2]

This chapter presents the findings of a survey of security system reform in Latin America and the Caribbean.[3] The survey covered 26 countries across four sub-regions: the Andean countries, Central America, the Caribbean and MERCOSUR (the Common Market of South America).

The survey shows that a diverse range of activities is underway in the region. While the concept of SSR is new, many of the security reforms underway are guided by similar principles. While the traditional military-oriented concept of security no longer meets the region's needs, efforts to develop a new wide-ranging concept are complicated by the different needs and priorities of regional states. Combined with the lack of a clear political vision for SSR and serious resource constraints, this has constrained efforts to develop new security concepts and mechanisms at both national and regional levels. International support is key to advancing the SSR agenda, though the key challenge for the region is to assert an independent vision of security that responds to its core needs in a rapidly globalizing and interdependent world.

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 assesses the availability of data on SSR issues in Latin America and the Caribbean.[4]

- Chapter 3 examines the context for SSR, highlighting the factors that have put security on government reform agendas.

- Chapter 4 focuses on how 'security' is defined in the region, and contrasts this with the DAC SSR concept.

- Chapter 5 assesses the status of SSR in the countries surveyed, highlighting key factors that are necessary to understand current trends.

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[2] This paper was first published by the OECD-DAC as part of a report entitled *Security System Reform and Governance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series*, Paris 2005.
[3] The following countries were covered: *MERCOSUR countries*: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and the two associate countries of Bolivia and Chile; *Andean countries*: Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela; *Central America*: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama; *Caribbean*: Barbados, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Excluded from the survey were Mexico, which is an OECD country, Surinam, a former Dutch colony, French Guiana, an overseas department of France, and several smaller Caribbean island states.
[4] Annex B provides a selected bibliography of SSR in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Chapter 2
Information availability

Information was gathered from a variety of sources including the internet, primary sources and academic works; Interviews with academics, civil society and government officials specializing in security issues; and participation in governmental meetings and international seminars on security topics. Internet sources—including the main pages of governmental departments including defence, police and justice—were a particularly valuable source of information on most of the countries in the region.[5] The FLACSO network, made up of ten Social Science faculties across the region, was the main academic source of information for this survey.[6]

While access to information on security issues in Latin America and the Caribbean is growing, the quality and comprehensiveness of this information is variable. It is difficult to find reliable sources of SSR-related information pertaining to the region that provides a systematic analysis of the issues. The main problem is the absence of a common language of 'security' in the region; the concept of SSR is new in Latin America and the Caribbean and there is no comparable indigenous concept that is wide-ranging and brings together 'hard' and 'soft' security issues. As a consequence, few institutions in the region organise security-related information in a manner that allows one to gain a sense of the cross-cutting institutional issues that underpin the governance of security. While transparency on security-related issues in Latin America and the Caribbean is still restricted, this is less the case today than in the past because the information is considered confidential. Rather, institutional capacity to process, organize and disseminate security-related information in regionally-based

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[5] See, for instance, the following sites: Organisation of American States (http://www.oas.org), World Factbook – Inter-American Development Bank (http://www.iadb.org), International Information Programs (http://www.usinfo.state.gov), Center for International Policy (http://www.ciponline.org), Database on Security and Defense (http://www.ser2000.org.ar), Regional Coordinator of Social and Economic Investigations (http://www.cries.org), Transparency International (http://www.transparency.org).

[6] See http://www.flacso.org for additional information. Another useful source of security-related information on the region is RESDAL (http://www.resdal.org).

organizations is still weak which has wider implications for maintaining peace and stability (see Box 1). This is changing, however, as the internet becomes a more common medium for disseminating information, though at present a significant number of the websites are external in origin. This can make it difficult to gain a genuinely local perspective on security matters, for instance relating to the issue of military expenditures.[7] Notwithstanding these challenges, the trend across Latin America and the Caribbean is towards greater openness and debate on security matters.

Box 1. Locally generated information and confidence building

Generating statistical data on security issues within the region is important in terms of both ensuring local ownership of data and building cooperation between countries in the region. On the initiative of the Argentinean and Chilean governments, a decision was taken to standardize the reporting of military expenditures in the region in order to ensure comparability. Both countries requested support from the United Nations Commission for Latin America (ECLAC/CEPAL) to develop a common methodology to measure military expenditure. This initiative has come to be seen by other countries within the region as a practical tool for enhancing transparency and building confidence between states. Peru and Chile have subsequently signed an agreement to apply the same methodology to their own military and security expenditures.[8]

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[7] For example, there does not exist a regional source of information on military spending. Military spending data for the region comes from specialized institutions such as SIPRI, the International Institute of Strategic Studies (which produces the *Military Balance)* or the US Arms Control Agency (ACA), in the Department of State.
[8] ECLAC, *Standardized Methodology for Comparing Defence Spending and Its Applications in Argentina and Chile*, November 2001, Santiago, http://www.cepal.cl.

Chapter 3
Context for SSR

Latin American and the Caribbean are characterized by a high degree of social, economic and political heterogeneity that contributes to a diverse range of security problems in the region requiring, in turn, different kinds of responses. Huge disparities in developmental terms are evident both between and within countries in the region, including high levels of social polarization. The existence of pockets of extreme poverty in countries with high levels of economic wealth is perhaps most evident in Mexico, an OECD member, and Brazil, which has one of the largest economies in the world. An understanding of the dynamics of security problems, including the developmental factors that generate and sustain them is thus an essential starting point for outsiders seeking to engage in security-related activities.

Representative democracy has come to be seen as an indispensable condition for stability, peace and development of the State in Latin America and the Caribbean. On 11 September 2001, the same day as the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York, the countries in the region signed the Inter-American Democratic Charter. The Charter recognizes the common values underpinning democracy in the Americas. It states that 'the peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it'.[9] The Charter also specifies that in the event of an unconstitutional change of government in a regional state, other states can take appropriate measures to bring about a restoration of a democratic regime. The Charter constitutes the fundamental basis for other agreements between American states in different spheres, including security.

Compared with the other regions covered by the global survey of SSR, Latin America and the Caribbean have among the lowest levels of interstate conflict. Military expenditure in the countries surveyed, in terms of both the volume of resources invested and the percentage they represent of the overall expenditures of central government, is generally low. Both of these factors can be partly explained by the important strides that the Latin American and Caribbean

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[9] Inter-American Democratic Charter, http://www.oas.org.

countries have made in recent years in establishing confidence-building mechanisms, both at sub-regional and regional levels. Another factor is the declining (formal) influence of the military across the region in recent years that has enabled governments to channel public resources to other priority developmental sectors.

Regional mechanisms for managing security are well developed and take different forms: region-wide systems to manage security, for instance, have been established within the framework of the Organization of American States' (OAS) Security commission. The last three meetings of the OAS on security issues that took place in 1995, 1998 and 2003 focused principally on confidence-building mechanisms and inter-state issues, including efforts to interdict drug trafficking. The inclusion of HIV/AIDS on the agenda in 2003 is nonetheless indication that the security agenda is broadening though the question of how non-traditional issues should be linked to matters relating to the use of force remains unresolved. The need for more holistic approaches to security was made clear at the last Summit of the Americas where regional states declared that 'among the principal causes of instability in the region are poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, which we must confront comprehensively and urgently'.[10] In addition, security matters are being addressed as part and parcel of regional processes of economic integration which is contributing to more holistic security thinking.

At a sub-regional level a number of complementary mechanisms to address security issues also exist. In the Caribbean region we find the Regional Security System, while in Central America the Democratic Treaty on Central American Security was established. In South America, especially in the Andean region (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia), security issues are dealt with as part of broader institutional mechanisms which relate to economic and political matters, and the same is true among the MERCOSUR countries (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay, Chile and Bolivia).

The progress made in addressing security issues at the regional level contrasts with the national level where many countries in the region are immersed in a deep and often destabilizing crisis of governance that shapes their efforts to deal with security problems. The governance crisis is most accentuated in South American countries: Venezuelan society is polarized and divided over the Chavez administration; Colombia is embroiled in a civil war which has intensified over the past year in response to a new militaristic strategy driven by President Uribe with the renewed support of the United States administration. In Peru, President Toledo's administration is losing popular support and public demonstrations are increasing. Argentina is traversing its most serious economic crisis in a century, which has impacted strongly on a public that is increasingly critical of political elites. Notable exceptions in the region are Costa Rica and Chile.

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[10] Declaration of Nuevo Leon, Special Summit of the Americas, Monterrey, January 2004, http://www.oas.org.

Despite the wave of democracy that has swept the region in the past decade, armed forces in many countries continue to enjoy a high degree of autonomy even though they no longer play formal political roles. In a context of persisting political instability, this leaves the door open to continuing military influence on the political process and may bode poorly for security-related reforms designed to increase civil control. Judicial systems tend to be weak, and access to justice is a long and expensive process that remains out of reach of large sections of the population. Police forces face an array of problems ranging from poor leadership to weak organizational structures and severe resource deficiencies, all of which undermine efficiency and increase corruption. While there are incipient processes of reform in each of these core security areas, prospects for enduring change will be shaped by the success of efforts to deal with wider economic and political problems.

This is particularly the case in relation to defence modernization which is constrained, on the one hand, by the entrenched autonomy of the armed forces across the region and, on the other, by competing demands on government attention and resources. In many countries, government's focus has shifted to the public security agenda, including justice, in response to both popular and elite perceptions of a growing crisis of personal safety. In this context, there has also been growing space for consideration of a range of so-called 'new' security threats that include organised crime, terrorism, environmental issues, AIDS, and migration. Recognition of the ways in which these threats impact upon human development and state stability is contributing to a more nuanced understanding of security. Yet, inclusion of these new threats in state security agendas also runs the risk of overloading the reform agenda in countries where the institutional mechanisms required to implement the new security thinking have not yet been developed.

This crisis of governance in Latin America and the Caribbean is accentuated by the problems facing regional economies which have fared consistently poorly since the Asian financial crisis struck in 1997. With the prospect of another half decade of growth lost, the image of the 'lost eighties' has once again come back to haunt governments. The economic problems in the region are directly associated with the volatility of financial markets. External debt continues to be an important problem for most Latin American and Caribbean countries, as is corruption, which further hampers efforts to manage competing demands on scarce public resources. Only two Latin American countries come in the upper third of the international ranking on corruption according to Transparency International:[11] Chile, which is ranked 20, and Uruguay, ranked 33. This is coupled with a more deep-seated crisis of confidence in national institutions which poses a further obstacle to reform efforts.

While the church (71 per cent), education and media rank highest, parliaments (23 per cent) and political parties (14 per cent) in general are seen as

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[11] Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2003, http://www.transparency.org.

the least reliable institutions. Armed forces fall somewhere in the middle (38 per cent), with some important national variations. In Venezuela, for example, 54 per cent of the public have confidence in the army; it decreases in Uruguay and Bolivia to 32 per cent and in Peru to 36 per cent and Argentina to 34 per cent, respectively.[12] These relatively low figures can be explained by the perceived negative impact of the military governments in the region and the failure of efforts to date to extend meaningful civil oversight over the armed forces. Generally speaking, neither the police nor justice fare well either. Public support for the two institutions in 2002 was 33 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively. Confidence in Parliament is 23 per cent and in political parties just 14 per cent which is perhaps most worrying since they might be considered key drivers of reform.[13]

Recent increases in poverty across the region, associated both with poor economic performance and unequal distribution of income in societies, also need to be taken into account. In 1999, 43.8 per cent of Latin Americans lived in poverty, which is roughly equivalent to 1997's level. Since 1990, however, the overall number of poor people in the region has increased from 200.2 million to 211.4 million. This situation is worsened by the unequal distribution of income: 10 per cent of households at the top of the scale take 30 per cent of income, while 40 per cent of the households at the bottom of the scale only earn between 9 and 15 per cent of domestic income. High levels of poverty exacerbate the crisis of governance, particularly in the domestic security arena where social tensions, criminality and household violence pose particular challenges for governments in the region.[14]

At the sub-regional level, the security challenges vary quite extensively in line with differing historical, political and geographic circumstances.

Central America

Central America faces a unique mix of security challenges that have their roots in the cold-war era conflicts that gripped much of the sub-region. While the wars have formally come to an end, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua are still struggling to build a durable peace in the face of persisting social and political divisions and the destructive economic legacy of war. In this light, ensuring citizen security is one of the most important security challenges facing the sub-region. Increases in violent criminality, fueled in part by the many arms in society left over from the war, are a key security issue. Weak judicial systems are struggling to cope with the new types of legal problems flourishing in the post-war environment, including delinquency linked with drug issues.

At the sub-regional level, Central American countries have sought through the elaboration of a new Democratic Security Treaty to construct a more

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[12] Latinobarometro, 2002, http://www.latinobarometro.org.
[13] Latinobarometro, 2002, http://www.latinobarometro.org.
[14] CEPAL, *Foreign Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2002, report, http://www.cepal.cl.

holistic concept of security that balances both traditional security threats and the newer threats.[15]

Caribbean

In the Caribbean, the key security challenges are a product of the unique economic, geographic and social make-up of small island states. The security challenges include: addressing the impact of natural disasters such as hurricanes which can, in a single incident, undermine the stability of state institutions and destroy the tourist infrastructure upon which Caribbean countries are heavily reliant; managing their precarious economic status in the face of rampant globalization – countries dependent on one export crop like bananas are particularly vulnerable to economic factors outside their control; curbing the problem of drug trafficking which has gripped the region due to the reliance of criminals on sea-borne vessels for transporting drugs; managing health problems linked with AIDS which can have a potentially devastating effect on the small population base of the island economies.[16]

The Caribbean countries cooperate in addressing these issues through their regional security mechanism (the Eastern Caribbean Regional Security System (RSS) which enables them to articulate their special needs at both a regional and international level. The close proximity of Caribbean states to the United States and the shared interest they have with the Americans in dealing with certain problems like drugs trafficking also defines how the Caribbean countries address their core security needs (see Box 2).

Box 2. Eastern Caribbean Regional Security System

The member countries of the Eastern Caribbean Regional Security System—Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines—are often referred to as the 'Eastern Caribbean'. Information about US security assistance they receive is usually reported jointly. While the vast majority of US military and police assistance is oriented towards combating narco-trafficking, there is a new focus on preventing terrorism, alien smuggling and preventing financial crimes. Funding from the various programs is directed to bolstering the region's national security forces along with the role of the RSS in helping these agencies to deal with terrorism, drug trafficking, financial crime, illegal trafficking in arms, alien smuggling, natural disasters, and external threats.

Andean countries

Violent conflict is the most visible security challenge facing the Andean region as a consequence of the war in Colombia and the resulting spillover in

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[15] Adopted at the Special Conference on Security held in Mexico City, 27-28 October 2003.
[16] Griffith, I., *Caribbean Security in the Age of Terror*, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 2004.

neighbouring Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru. Though the economic, political and social roots of the conflict are complex, it has an important drugs-related dimension that has, as in the case of the Caribbean, shaped the nature of US interest and engagement in the security affairs of the sub-region. The US focus on eradicating the raw material used to produce cocaine has, however, had contradictory effects in the sub-region, leading to a decline in production in some areas and a corresponding increase in other countries, including Colombia itself. The United States is currently supporting the Government's aggressive militaristic response to the insurgency, which risks widening the conflict beyond Colombia's borders.

The Colombian war has also had an important humanitarian impact on the sub-region, resulting in significant forced displacement of populations and creating a climate of insecurity that is impeding economic and social life both in Colombia and its neighbouring countries. While the Andean community has developed a range of confidence-building measures (such as Presidential Summits between Colombia and Venezuela, or joint supervision of borders by Colombia and Ecuador) to manage the build-up of state forces along the sub-region's national frontiers, activity by both insurgents and paramilitary forces in the border regions is more difficult to control. Recent political instability in both Venezuela and Peru frustrates efforts to develop a coherent sub-regional security mechanism in the Andean region.

MERCOSUR countries

The MERCOSUR countries have, through different various agreements and confidence building measures, resolved the traditional security problems linked with border issues and the build-up of national armed forces that have threatened inter-state relations in the past. While these countries are today looking to improve their cooperation in the fight against international terrorism, in part a response to international pressure, the primary security problems affecting their populations are internal in nature. The key security challenges today relate to managing the fall-out of the economic and political crises in the sub-region, and in particular addressing citizen security needs which are moving up the public and political agendas. The inequitable distribution of resources in MERCOSUR societies and the growing vulnerability of populations to the fluctuating economic fortunes of the region is one of the most important barriers to development and a key ingredient in recent social unrest in countries like Bolivia.

Factors shaping SSR

In light of these broad trends, there are three key factors that will affect prospects for SSR in Latin America and the Caribbean in coming years. The first factor will be the success of efforts to enhance regional cooperation on security matters.

While significant progress has been made, there are many outstanding security issues that relate to disputes over maritime and territorial borders. Resolution of these differences is essential to enhance trust and cooperation to address other transnational security issues, including organised crime. Latin American and Caribbean governments are learning that globalization transforms domestic security issues into regional and international matters, and vice versa. Moreover, current security policies and mechanisms are in many ways ill-adapted to the new security challenges facing the region: the burgeoning array of non-traditional security issues that Governments now need to address require the development of new conceptual frameworks and a corresponding set of policy frameworks and institutional mechanisms to implement them.

Second, strengthening democratic governance and revitalizing regional economies, both of which are key to state stability and human security, will require a greater focus on structural reforms. Achieving this will, in turn, require more integrated approaches to addressing the closely interlinked economic, political and security challenges facing the region. During the 1980s and early 1990s, government reform agendas (strongly influenced by the international financial institutions) focused primarily on macroeconomic reforms. A second generation of 'good governance' reforms emerged during the 1990s, though this agenda has only been partially taken on board. Despite good intentions, progress has been constrained by the lack of a clear vision for reform, weak political will, and resource constraints. This has been most evident with regard to state security institutions where a holistic transformation concept has been missing.

A third factor has to do with the role of the United States in the region. The United States can be considered simultaneously as an 'external' and a 'domestic' actor. For many countries, the United States is the primary guarantor of security, both providing vital security equipment and organizing security. The United States, furthermore, influences the strategic position of the region vis-à-vis other parts of the world by shaping the nature of their security cooperation arrangements with European or other nations, including in the area of arms purchases. Through extensive military assistance to the region, the United States has a powerful influence on how countries address security threats (examined below), which does not always coincide with regional priorities. While there is a common understanding between the United States and most countries on the security challenges facing the region, the proposed responses often differ in line with differing policy objectives, definitions of security, and perceptions of priorities.

Chapter 4
How security is defined

In Latin America and the Caribbean the traditional security agenda is military focused, revolving around the protection of the state and borders, though it has also included non-military elements associated primarily with economic development. While this traditional agenda still predominates in the thinking of governments across the region, a more multi-dimensional security agenda encompassing a focus on 'citizen' security and a broader array of political, economic, social and environmental concerns is gaining influence.

While development of a single integrating concept of security that effectively links the use of force with non-military concerns is a priority, this remains difficult given the different circumstances facing countries across the region. Differences in priorities are most evident with regard to the Caribbean countries which strongly emphasize the need for an approach that addresses the specific problems facing small island states, most of which can be categorised under the new security agenda. This includes issues such as the illicit trafficking of drugs, persons, arms and chemicals; transportation security; and natural disasters. This agenda also includes health (HIV/AIDS) and environmental issues. These security issues are of particular concern due to the strong reliance of many Caribbean countries on tourism as a major source of revenue. While many of these issues are also relevant to the larger countries, they continue to place priority on the more traditional security issues.

The key challenge in articulating a multidimensional approach to security is simultaneously addressing within a single framework international security demands, state necessities, and human or citizen security. The largest countries in the region make a conceptual and legal difference between defense and military issues, on the one hand, and domestic and police issues, on the other, and are reluctant to address them together. Conversely, in the Caribbean and to an extent in Central America, the police problem and the defense issue are perceived as one and the same. In the first case, security is defined more narrowly, while in the latter case it is increasingly defined in a broad manner.

A shared understanding of security issues in the countries across the region is yet to emerge. Mexico's 2001 decision to denounce the 1947 Rio Treaty, which institutionalized the concept of security as 'protection from external threats', has nonetheless opened the way to more discussion about the limits of traditional collective security mechanisms in the region. Changes in the international system, in turn, which are leading to a greater emphasis on the human dimensions of security have further underscored the urgency of elaborating a new concept of security that fits in with the emerging democratic dispensation across the region. This was the focus of the Special Conference on Security, held in October 2003 in Mexico, under the sponsorship of the Organization of American States, where governments made a formal political declaration about the need for a more integrated concept of security (see Box 3).

Box 3. Declaration of Nuevo Leon, México, 2003

'The security threats, concerns, and other challenges in the hemispheric context are of diverse nature and multidimensional scope, and the traditional concept and approach must be expanded to encompass new and non-traditional threats, which include political, economic, social, health, and environmental aspects.

'In our Hemisphere, as democratic states committed to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the OAS, we reaffirm that the basis and purpose of security is the protection of human beings. Security is strengthened when we deepen its human dimension. Conditions for human security are improved through full respect for people's dignity, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, as well as the promotion of social and economic development, social inclusion, and education and the fight against poverty, disease, and hunger.

'The Heads of State and Government of the Americas, in the Special Summit in the city of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, reiterate the commitment to the objectives and purposes contained in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, approved at the Special Conference on Security, held in Mexico City in October 2003, based on, inter alia, the multidimensional concept of security as well the principle that the basis and purpose of security is the protection of human beings.'

Efforts to develop a region-wide concept of security are further complicated by the special role of the United States in the region, which is indirectly shaping how countries respond to security problems. This is most evident with the security threats arising from organized crime and trafficking in drugs where the United States has generally favoured militarized responses. One practical consequence of the US approach has been the further militarization of domestic security as the army in a number of countries has been encouraged to take on a greater role in addressing problems that might otherwise be considered to fall within the mandate of the police or other policy actors. This has had consequences for regional security and stability. This contrasts with the perspective of many Latin American and Caribbean countries that attribute these

problems to structural weaknesses in their economies, hence favouring more of a developmental response.

In contrast to the US approach, a number of multilateral development agencies including the United Nations and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) are supporting development programmes that are associated with security under its widest sense. The UNDP, for instance, is actively supporting institutional reforms aimed at modernization of judicial systems, police services and in a few cases, the defence sector. The IADB has been an active supporter of programmes to address domestic violence. Governments in the Latin American and Caribbean region are therefore being confronted with an array of external perspectives on security that challenge existing conceptual frameworks and institutional mechanisms in the security domain. This is no more evident than with regard to the recent 'war on terror', led by the United States, which has affected Latin America in different ways (see Box 4).

Box 4. Impact of the 'war on terror'

Latin American countries have been strongly encouraged to play an active role in addressing this threat despite a lukewarm response from many governments in the region. After Sept. 11 there has also been a tendency for the United States to lump together a range of security issues—including drugs, money laundering and terrorism—which might otherwise be considered to be distinct, and require different responses. This has forced some governments in the region to prioritize security-related activities that might not otherwise top their own agendas. The expulsion of illegal immigrants or other imprisoned people back to their home countries following the domestic crack-down on terrorism in the United States has posed an additional burden on policing capacity in certain Latin American countries. While governments in Latin America have generally been split down the middle in terms of their support for the war on terrorism, there is recognition that the region's security thinking must also accommodate the new global security concerns.[17]

The process of developing the security frameworks to engage with new global security concerns is still underway and has important implications for the success of security-related reforms. The issues at stake are broader than SSR as defined by the DAC, and include the development of new political alliances and collective security mechanisms which will allow the region to assert its authority on security matters and address the structural roots of the economic and political crisis that give rise to insecurity.

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[17] Rojas Aravena, *Francisco, Security on the American Continent: Challenges, Perceptions, and Concepts*, FESCOL, Colombia, 2004, http://www.fescol.org.co.

Chapter 5
Assessment of findings

The survey indicates that a tremendous number of reform activities are taking place across the security domain in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Activities can be found under all nine of the reform categories examined though, as to be expected, the emphasis varies from country to country and from sub-region to sub-region. There is a greater emphasis on military and defence issues in the Southern Cone, while public security issues tend to receive more attention in Central America and the Caribbean. These differences in emphasis can be understood with reference both to local political dynamics and external policy priorities in the region, including those of both the United States and other donors.

The trajectory of SSR processes in the region has also been shaped not only by the difficulties of achieving new concepts of security but also by the wider economic and governance crises affecting the region. In the absence of an over-arching security concept in the region, in few cases can it really be said that countries are undertaking a comprehensive reform of the security system as understood in the sense of the OECD-DAC concept. Reform processes tend to be piece-meal and ad hoc, reflecting as much constraints in local vision, political will and financial resources as external security assistance policies in the region which have generally not been guided by a wide-ranging and integrated concept of security either. As consequence, countries often adopt narrow institutional approaches to reform.

One example would be a focus on police training with insufficient attention to the linkages with judicial reform or the question of how reform processes can be sustained in the absence of strong political leadership and financial resources. While many reforms have been driven by democratization—for instance, the withdrawal of the military from formal political roles—reform processes have often stopped short of actually redefining the roles and missions of the military and developing both the new policy frameworks and legislation required to implement these new roles. In most cases, the modernization processes of armed forces has been self-generated, that is, driven by armed forces

themselves. This is in large part a consequence of weak civilian leadership, though the weakness of civil management bodies—including defence and interior ministries—where the civilian expertise required both at the technical and policy levels is often absent, should be noted.

A weak framework for reforms

During the 1990s the narrow focus of most countries on economic liberalisation gave way to an expanded 'good governance' reform agenda that sought to tackle the institutional constraints to effective economic management and growth. This agenda also opened the way to wider state reforms, focusing greater attention on justice and penal systems, public security and defence. While this 'good governance' reform agenda paralleled emerging thinking within Latin American societies on the need for greater democracy, a clear vision is still lacking among both the local and external proponents of reform regarding the institutional architecture for the new security systems.

The different waves of reform in Latin America since the early 1990s have failed to develop a clear vision about state modernity in the 20th century. There is still not consensus on how to build modern and efficient states that can effectively harness the benefits of globalization while minimising its most negative effects. In the 13th Ibero-American Summit, the Heads of Government recognized that structural economic reforms that have been carried out with great sacrifices by Latin American towns and governments have, in many cases, not produced adequate results in terms of reducing social inequalities and exclusion, and even in some cases, have made the situation worse.[18]

Weak popular participation

In general, reform processes in Latin America and the Caribbean have been driven by either governments or inter-governmental institutions. Involvement by civil society in reform processes in terms of either debating government plans or contributing to policy development is very limited across the region. In an increasing number of cases, in the more open governments, processes are being organized to increase the participation of civil society. This is often as part and parcel of internationally supported reform programmes, however. In the economic and judicial arenas, reform processes have been driven by both international and regional institutions including the IMF, the World Bank and the IADB.

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[18] XIII, Cumbre Iberoamericana de Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno, Declaración de Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

Resource constraints

The second-generation reforms being undertaken in the region, including those within the security system, are facing a basic constraint- the lack of resources available for governance-related reforms. As is increasingly apparent, creating the institutional frameworks to ensure that judicial systems, police services, and armed forces function effectively and in line with democratic norms is an expensive business. SSR is thus in most countries competing for limited public resources with other priority sectors related to poverty reduction. Without wider state reforms, including efforts to tackle corruption, as well as more sustained economic growth, it will be difficult to resolve this dilemma. While this is forcing national governments to seek international support, this also comes tied with certain conditions—including support for the 'war on terrorism'—that certain Latin American and Caribbean countries have been reluctant to accept.

Mixed international engagement

The international record of support for SSR in the region is mixed. While the recent shift in US policy towards waging the 'war on terror' has raised concern, the United States has traditionally played a privileged role in the region through its active support for a large number of security-related programs across the region. The most notable area of intervention has been in support of the development of measures of mutual trust and security, particularly in Latin America. Support for the preparation of defense white papers (books) is another important area where the United States has been active. Perhaps the most important consequence of the US focus on global terror and on Iraq, however, has been a decline in the importance of Latin America on the US foreign policy agenda.

More generally, donor agendas in the region tend to be short-termist. This reflects both the natural programming cycles of donor agencies and a failure to engage with SSR as a long-term evolutionary process requiring constant and carefully targeted support. There has also been a tendency to compartmentalize reform efforts between different international agencies, overlooking key linkages between activities. Underpinning the problem is the lack of a clear framework for evaluating the security environment on the ground or a transparent and coherent system of benchmarks and guidelines for deciding when to encourage countries to undertake certain kinds of reforms.

In this regard, SSR offers a potentially valuable framework for debate between donors and Latin American partners though there is a danger of it being perceived as an external tool unless the terminology, approaches and objectives are more responsive to local needs, and priorities. Given the sensitivities at a governmental level surrounding security-related reforms, it may also be necessary to introduce SSR as part of second-track security initiatives that engage civil society, though there are also entry points at the inter-governmental level

where debate on new security frameworks has become acceptable. Given suspicions in the region regarding the motives of external actors, introducing new security thinking through the framework of multi-lateral organizations such as the United Nations or the OECD may also facilitate debate.

Lack of a long-term political vision

The main issue in Latin American is the consolidation of its democracy, which will require that citizens regain a basic trust in their political institutions. The prestige level of armed forces is low and, in turn, the lack of interest in politics has increased. This makes governance in the region a central issue. To date, the security arena has generally not been considered a priority sector in the face of other competing demands linked both to institutional reform and poverty reduction. Fundamental in shaping the evolution of public debate on security in coming years will therefore be political processes, in particular the path adopted by the crop of new Presidents that is emerging in the region following recent elections.

      The best case in point is Colombia, where President Alvaro Uribe is opting for a military solution to the country's long-running Marxist insurgency. This represents a complete turn around from the strategy of negotiation that characterized the approach of his predecessor, President Pastrana. Even though the incidence of homicides and kidnappings has diminished considerably in Colombia since Uribe's administration assumed power, public perceptions of insecurity remain high. In Brazil, President José Ignacio Da Silva, who assumed power in January of 2003, has taken a contrasting approach. Da Silva has made poverty reduction his priority, in particular ensuring that the 40 million poorest people in the country are adequately fed.

      How the wider crisis of governance in Latin America and the Caribbean is addressed will shape the success of SSR efforts. Since the end of the Cold War, the region's security forces have not been key players in changes of governments. This is significant in a region that experienced a long sequence of military coup d'etats in the 1970s and 1980s. The political crises gripping Latin American states have their roots in intractable problems that stem from the weak legitimacy of ruling parties or more deep-seated economic problems that have spawned powerful social movements with the ability to bring about changes in Government.

Chapter 6
Conclusions

SSR in Latin America is an ongoing process. Recent events show that it will be necessary for countries in the region to approach this challenge in a global perspective. In brief, the four main challenges for the region are:

- To develop new institutional frameworks for managing security that taken into account the diverse needs and priorities of countries in the region, while at the same time promoting collective responses to the growing range of trans-national security issues that affect them. There is a crucial role for international cooperation to assist security actors in the region in developing approaches that effectively balance traditional security concerns with the 'new' security agenda.

- To develop civilian leadership in strategic defense and other security matters. As a consequence of the Cold War, the political leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean is largely disinterested in defense and security issues. For this reason, SSR has not been viewed as an essential part of wider state-building and reform processes. Ensuring the final and irreversible disengagement of the military from politics will be key to developing the civilian and constitutional leadership required in defense and broader security affairs.

- Enhancing professionalism of the armed forces and police will be essential to achieving their disengagement from politics. To this end, constructive engagement is required with both armed and public security forces. A clearer understanding will be required of their respective roles and missions in light of new security challenges facing the region. A key challenge is to avoid further militarization of domestic security, either through the transformation of armed forces into policing units, or the granting of excessive powers and military capabilities to public security forces.

- Without transparency it is impossible to increase trust, and without trust the security dilemmas that have led to inter-state tensions in the region in the past may return. It is particularly important to develop a regional

process to increase the transparency of military expenditures and arms acquisitions. In view of increasing cooperation between the security establishments of the region, there is much scope for joint programmes to train the police and other security forces.

Annex A
Organisational details

FLACSO (Latin American Faculty of Social Science), www.flacso.org

FLACSO is an international academic institution of a regional and autonomous nature created in 1957 by the governments of countries across Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, FLACSO has academic sites in ten countries in the region: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. The Secretariat-General of the institution is based in San Jose, Costa Rica.

For more than 40 years, FLACSO-Chile has been a vital and important center for research and learning in the field of social sciences, both in Chile and throughout the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean.

FLACSO-Chile has a well-developed program on international relations and security studies. It also produces a well-know publication called *Fuerzas Armadas y Sociedad* (*Armed Forces and Society)*, which is dedicated to research and studies on governance, integration, conflict and cooperation in the Western Hemisphere. One important focus is the relationship between the United States and the Latin American countries.

FLACSO's research also has a policy-relevant focus which aims to generate practical recommendations for different actors, including states, civil society, and international organizations, seeking to strengthen peace and cooperation in the region.

Annex B
Selected bibliography of SSR in Latin America and the Caribbean

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