Fighting the Enemy Within: Terrorism, the School of the Americas, and the Military in Latin America

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Introduction

For years, scholars and policy makers alike have argued whether using the armed forces of Latin America to combat internal threats poses a threat to democracy. Bitter experience with repression and military rule led many observers to conclude that encouraging the armed forces to target enemies within their borders was a dangerous policy, as civilians would find it difficult to control the military's activities. Others have argued that soldiers should not be viewed simply as potential human rights abusers and therefore can play a productive role in protecting the country from its enemies. These arguments, of course, extend to U.S. policy. Should the United States train Latin American officers strategies, tactics, and doctrine that are focused on internal threats? In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 this debate has become even more important, as the United States has begun identifying an increasingly wide variety of internal terrorist threats. This article will argue that training Latin American militaries to fight those perceived threats mirrors the expansion of U.S. military training during the Cold War, and as such represents an obstacle to the process of democratization in the region.

To address the debate, this article will examine the role of one of the key military training facilities in the United States, namely the School of the Americas (SOA), which was renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) in 2001. The analysis is based upon author interviews with permanent instructors, guest instructors (both military and civilian), and senior staff at the school in addition to documents from the school's archives, most notably descriptions of all courses that have been offered (as the school went through a variety of name changes) from 1948, then 1958–2002.[1] In the context of the debate over the military and internal enemies, the analysis will focus upon the activities and skills that the United States teaches Latin American soldiers in order to combat domestic enemies. The historical perspective is essential for understanding the current evolution of teaching at the school, as the negative implications of the school's past course emphases cannot be divorced from the potential implications of current shifts. No detailed analysis of course evolution has yet been done.

After the Cold War ended, efforts were made by the SOA to stress human rights

and to de-emphasize the military's role in fighting such enemies. But after the attacks of September 11, 2001 both Congress and the executive branch in the United States have paid more attention to the threat of terrorism in the western hemisphere. This, in turn, has the strong potential for U.S. encouragement for Latin America to expand the military's role once again in a manner similar to the Cold War, which was not propitious for democracy in the region. As one defender of the SOA argues, the school's ultimate goal has always been to serve U.S. policy and therefore it "has been guilty of carrying out the foreign and defense policy of the United States government to the best of its ability."[2] Given the rapid changes in the post-September 11 era, that policy has begun revolving around fighting the many terrorist threats that have been identified by the United States government in Latin America.

Latin American Militaries and Internal Threats

For over four decades, many analysts of Latin American civil-military relations have raised questions regarding the ability of civilians to maintain democratic control as the armed forces are increasingly employed against an internal threat. In Edwin Lieuwen's classic *Arms and Politics in Latin America*, even as he noted the development projects the military had initiated, he also argued that the fine line between the "progressive" and "predatory" aspects of military activity within a country was often crossed over to the latter side.[3] Meanwhile, Johnson believed that increasing military participation in civic action would bring soldiers closer to the peasantry, thus fostering greater trust and counteracting the influence of insurrectionary groups.[4] Unfortunately, in most countries the next several decades would be bleak for many of those peasants, as military regimes, encouraged and aided by the United States government, sought to cleanse the countryside of "subversives." Once internal enemies were identified, the predatory shift was rapid and, in most countries, represented a simple expansion of activities the military was already undertaking. Barber and Ronning concisely summed up the dilemma: "Strengthening the security forces within Latin America meant a strengthening of the armed forces—the very institutions that had often been associated with reaction and dictatorship."[5] Their analysis advocated extreme caution in utilizing the military in anything more than development of infrastructure.

That debate has continued, unresolved, since that time. In the post-Cold War era, as militaries were shifting priorities and identifying new threats, there were concomitant analyses of the potential effects of preserving internal missions. Echoing Barber and Ronning, Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux argue that internal missions per se do not necessarily translate into a threat to civilian authority.[6] Certainly not all activities are created equal. Nonetheless, a distinction should be made between those internal operations that specifically identify domestic enemies and those that do not. Building a road is very different from making arrests and conducting search and seizure operations. Of course, even the United States Army has undertaken much domestic infrastructure work for many years without posing a threat to de-

mocracy. Yet it has also been restrained by the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which currently serves to prohibit the U.S. military from fighting crime (or terrorism) domestically.[7] There are, in fact, scholars who continue to argue forcefully that internal missions put democracy and the protection of human rights at risk. For example, Diamint suggests that Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux provide "a sort of naive and instinctive perspective."[8]

Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux also argue that "often the greatest challenge to civilians lies precisely in the area of managing an operation once it is underway."[9] Using their terms, fighting terrorism is (and will continue to be) both internal and expansive, since it involves employing a wide variety of skills that go beyond simply knowing how to fight. For example, in the WHINSEC "Counterdrug Information Analyst Course" in 2002–2003 soldiers learn how to gather intelligence, create a computer database to analyze that intelligence, and to apply "concepts and doctrines" to identify and counter threats. It is, in fact, a separate course from Counterdrug Operations, which focuses exclusively on combat (e.g. marksmanship, reconnaissance, explosives, etc.). Such intelligence activities provide the military with a massive amount of information on citizens, and have been described as a crucial element in the weak, or "low intensity," democracies in Latin America.[10]

The threat of terrorism is also open-ended, which makes it even more difficult for changing administrations and civilian officials to manage and control military operations. Similar to the fight against communism, policy makers generally agree that the solution (i.e. eradication of terrorist threats) is not possible in the short-term and success cannot be measured quickly. In adding an "emergency mission" like anti-terrorism to the military's repertoire not only is there the potential for corruption, but a long-term military commitment may lead the military leadership to move from policy implementation to policy formation.[11] As Desch argues, "it is easiest for civilians to control the military when they face primarily international (external) threats and it is hardest for them to control the military when they face primarily domestic (internal) threats."[12] Since the transitions from military rule began, civilian policy makers have been struggling to reduce the military's emphasis on maintaining internal order, so renewing it would reopen old problems.[13]

This debate should not be confused with so-called "mission creep," which refers to the armed forces gradually taking over duties that by law or convention should be performed by civilians. That expansion generally takes place when the military leadership (and perhaps civilian policy makers as well) believes that no other governmental agency, group or organization is capable of undertaking the task. Although it may well be true that in some Latin American countries the police and other agencies are incapable of combating terrorism, the argument here is not necessarily that militaries, once engaged in anti-terrorist activities (whether it be counter drug or counterinsurgency), will necessarily then seek to intervene directly in politics, although such arguments have indeed been made.[14]

Instead, the emphasis here is on the negative effects of identifying and fighting internal enemies simply in terms of democracy and human rights. Teaching the

military how to undertake civic assistance may not represent a menace. But when combined with the belief that an internal threat is present, the likelihood of military action against its own citizens is increased, which in turn raises the likelihood of more civilians being caught in the middle, either by being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or by being viewed as somehow guilty by association.

The School of the Americas

Probably no single institution better reflects the intense debate between supporters and critics of U.S. policy toward Latin America than the United States Army School of the Americas. In the next section is a discussion of the development of SOA courses and the way in which they gradually expanded (and then subsequently restricted) the scope of military action. This, in turn, provides a clearer understanding of the current pressures to widen the scope once again. The SOA was set up to instruct and train members of Latin American militaries in a wide variety of topics that have evolved over time, from relatively innocuous tasks such as repairing jeeps to extracting information from prisoners. Vilified by critics perhaps more than any other agency of the U.S. government, the SOA has been defended as a cheap and effective way to promote democracy and U.S. values. That debate has continued well after the Cold War ended, as the school was closed and reopened under the WHINSEC name.

The arguments of the two sides ultimately come down to the use of military training as a means to achieve policy goals. Supporters of the school argue that training is positive, especially since it ensures some measure of influence on the part of the United States. Without it, proponents assert, Latin American militaries would either develop their own doctrines and strategies or would look to other, perhaps less democratic, models. Opponents of the school take the opposite tack, arguing that training—especially in this particular school—is entirely negative. That argument tends to rest on the assumption that military-to-military contacts are not conducive to democracy, and that the anti-democratic history of the school precludes any chance of substantive and positive change in military behavior. This article will argue that military training and education in general are not automatically positive or negative in terms of promotion of democracy.[15] More important is their nature. What are Latin American soldiers being taught?

Early Years of Training

In 1946, the U.S. Army Caribbean Command began a training center in the Panama Canal Zone, aimed almost exclusively at U.S. military personnel. Over time, the school offered courses in Spanish to Latin American officers. In 1948, the "Escuela Latino Americana Terrestre" bore no resemblance to the school that would become a lightning rod for U.S. policy in Latin America. Its mission was simple: to "supplement the training being directed by the military missions of the United

States." In addition to basic courses on infantry and cavalry, it had a strong emphasis on feeding the troops, including a course on the "theory and practice of food preparation."

The Cold War alone was not enough to change that relatively narrow focus. Only the Cuban revolution sufficed to transform the school into an important element in U.S. policy. For example, in 1958–1959 the mission of what had become the United States Army Caribbean School had not changed significantly. The primary goal was "to contribute to the development of mutual comprehension and good will among the military establishments of the American Republics." Apparently, one avenue for mutual good will was sandwich making and pie preparation. The only nod to the Cold War was a course entitled, "Impact of Atomic Weapons in Offensive Operations."

Fidel Castro's triumphant march into Havana changed that, as it changed all aspects of U.S. policy toward Latin America. The 1960–1961 catalog was identical to its predecessors, but 1961–1962 marked a significant change. The mission was expanded: "The mission of the USARCARIB School is to provide military training for officers and enlisted men of the Latin American countries. A wide variety of courses designed to teach principles and techniques used by the United States as a result of experiences in World War II, Korean, and the ever present 'Cold War' are presented." In practice, this meant a noticeable shift in course offerings. Gone forever was food preparation, replaced by Jungle Operations, Orientation on Communism (including "Theory of Communism and its Fallacies"), and Military Intelligence. For the first time, the school began to teach techniques intended to eradicate internal enemies.

Fighting Communism in the Western Hemisphere

Clearly, by that time one of the lessons that the U.S. Army had learned in its recent conflicts was that military intelligence was central to winning a war. The course on Military Intelligence included counter-espionage, counter-subversion, the study of Communist objectives in Latin America, and Soviet security and espionage agencies. So sensitive was the topic that "officers attending course must be cleared for access to material classified 'Confidential Modified Handling.'"[16]

The following year (1962–1963) the mission changed yet again and for the first time included the idea of the promotion of democracy ("Instill in the Latin American personnel present at the School a further appreciation of democracy and the American way of life"). Ironically, that occurred precisely at a time when U.S. policy began to reflect decreasing concern about whether governments in the region were democratic and, indeed, that concern was never strong historically. At the same time, another strand of U.S. policy—military involvement in economic development—also made its entrance. Not only were lectures prepared to explain the Alliance for Progress, but a new Counter-Insurgency course was developed that would "discuss mutual problems in the areas of civic action, intelligence and counter-

intelligence, and tactical operations against dissident groups." The strategy was to gain the support of the local population while simultaneously weeding out the subversive elements of that population. As a part of that overall strategy, military intelligence expanded to include an "introduction to psychological warfare and its tactical and strategical uses."

The 1963–1964 academic year marked a critical shift for two reasons. First, the school's name had been changed to the United States Army School of the Americas. The attention of the U.S. government was focused on Latin America to the greatest degree for decades. Second, the name change was accompanied by new strategies for combating the hemispheric threat of communism. In particular, the Latin American militaries' role in economic development became even more prominent, and would be addressed in a wide variety of courses. Guerrilla warfare, with all its attendant strategies (jungle operations, propaganda, communist theory, etc.) also made its way into many courses. In fact, by the late 1960s anyone taking the Automotive Maintenance course would learn the "fallacies of the Communist theory" in addition to motor pool operations.

Economic development was folded into the counter insurgency course. The course's goal was to "have a thorough understanding of the assistance that the Armed Forces can provide in the betterment of the living conditions of the people, thereby increasing their faith in their government's desire and ability to help them achieve a better life." In order to thwart communist attempts to gain control of resistance movements that sought to criticize the military's role in the country, the course also had a component on "Communist expansions," which emphasized "Communist capture and use of resistance movements."

The mid–1960s saw an ever-expanding conception of counter-insurgency, containing the seemingly contradictory strategies of fighting the enemy that hid among the local population on the one hand and helping that same population on the other. Actions intended to improve people's faith in government went hand in hand with the following: "Brigade and division employment when committed to the maintenance of internal security, use of infantry, airmobile, airborne, and armored cavalry units in harassing, reaction, denial and elimination operations against insurgents." By 1966–1967, the United States Army deemed the military intelligence courses so sensitive that security clearance was required simply to view the course description.

By 1970, then, the School of the Americas had firmly embedded within its courses the two tracks of helping the population while simultaneously fighting it. In the area of civic action, cadets and officers alike were learning how to run a country. A 1967 conference at the school outlined the importance of military participation in education, agriculture, horticulture, mining, medicine, sanitation, building roads, homes, schools, and sports fields, reforestation, constructing dams, canals and bridges, mapping, building airports, responding to natural disasters, aerial photography, showing movies and providing entertainment, postal service, and oceanography.[17] The Alliance for Progress may have been dismantled as official policy, but in terms of military action its tenets were actually being expanded.

At the same time, through the 1970s courses were added that reflected the tension between nation building and warfare. In 1971–1972, the Irregular Warfare Operations course and a new Military Intelligence for Non-Commissioned Officers course added interrogation components. These included "handling captured personnel and documents"; "interrogation techniques"; "loyalty investigations"; and "interrogation of illiterates and its problems." Meanwhile, the goal of a new Small Unit Warfare Basic course was "to provide the students with an internal security operation orientation." In practice, this meant studying ambushes and raids, psychological operation planning, Communist expansion in Europe, Chinese Communist doctrine, Communist strategy in Latin America, and even the art of the "quick kill" in jungle warfare operations.

Increasingly, the tactical military operations and civic action were becoming fused. For example, the Urban Warfare course included a segment on "psychological operations in military operations of internal development and socioeconomic development." Further, the interrogation component developed into its own course, first offered in 1975–1976. This new Military Intelligence Interrogator was intended to serve "in support of tactical units engaged in internal defense development operations."

Only with the election of President Jimmy Carter did the U.S. government begin (albeit temporarily) to de-emphasize the all-inclusive nature of U.S. military training, and his administration had a major impact on the school's courses. By 1980, all the courses on irregular warfare, psychological operations, interrogation, etc. had been eliminated, replaced by a focus on combat techniques, communications, and other more strictly tactical concerns. In addition, the word "communist" was no longer used in the catalog. This is not to say, of course, that ideology simply disappeared from the classroom. It did mean, however, that for the time being the United States would no longer be openly promoting military participation in every facet of Latin American life.

As the Reagan administration's concern over communism in Central America and the Caribbean intensified in the early 1980s, old titles began to crop up once again. In particular, the words "internal defense" appeared in a number of courses. Military Intelligence was once again offered, with an emphasis on "intelligence security, electronic warfare, tactical counterintelligence, the enemy threat, and internal defense and development." In 1986–1987, a revived Psychological Operations Course "consists of an analysis of the role of the military in PSYOP programs, analysis of target populations, [and] establishing programs in support of national development programs."

Specific countries also had tailored courses. For example, from 1986 until 1991 El Salvador had a cadet course that included psychological operations, military civic action, and internal defense.[18] Through 1991 (when such specific country courses were eliminated) these programs were also established for Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Honduras.

In 1996, the U.S. Army revealed that between 1987 and 1991, the school had

used seven Spanish-language manuals that were found to include instructions for such topics as interrogation, dealing with urban terrorism, and counterintelligence. These manuals included the use of drugs for extracting information, the arrest of relatives of the prisoner, extortion, and spying on government officials.[19] Only about two dozen of the 1,169 pages contained such passages, but they served to emphasize the way the School of the Americas had broadened its courses that targeted a wide variety of citizens as potential enemies or as sources of military intelligence, and how virtually any means available would be utilized to deal with such enemies.

Not surprisingly, the SOA became the focal point for protest against the wars of anti-communism, especially in Central America. This vocal opposition grew steadily in the 1980s and ultimately called for the school's dissolution. Critics argued, for example, that "it was widely known that the school bolstered Latin American dictators, thereby contributing to the escalating violence."[20] Many officers who passed through SOA were later involved in coups, military rebellion, and serious human rights violations. These included some who became dictators in Argentina (Leopoldo Galtieri), Bolivia (Hugo Banzer), Ecuador (Guillermo Rodríguez), Panama, (Manuel Noriega), Peru (Juan Velasco Alvarado), and others active in high-profile political murders, such as two of the three officers involved in assassinating Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador in 1979.[21]

The school's defenders countered that violence perpetrated by individuals could not be traced directly to tactics learned in the SOA, and that without the school the United States would have less leverage with regard to teaching respect for human rights, and that the school provides a way for Latin American soldiers to learn U.S. values.[22] That argument is not new. It was emphasized by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in 1962, when he argued that military training would provide those soldiers with "democratic philosophies, democratic ways of thinking, which they, in turn, take back to their nations."[23] The SOA's response to critics can be summed up by Russell Ramsey, an instructor at the school who, as a member of the U.S. Army, was also present in the early 1960s as counterinsurgency courses were being developed: critics are predominantly leftists who perpetuate an unfair "black legend" that paints "all Hispanic men-at-arms as savage cowards, morally incapable of soldierly behavior" for the purposes of a "vendetta" for the failed policies of Marxism.[24]

Aside from such casting of aspersions, however, it should also be noted that through author interviews with instructors and staff, both civilian and military, it became evident that within the school there exists the sincere belief that it is doing good for both U.S. foreign policy and democracy in the region. Furthermore, it is argued that, given its established courses and organizations, after the end of the Cold War the SOA represented an excellent way for hemispheric military cooperation to combat common threats such as drug trafficking, environmental degradation, and subversion.[25] For supporters of the school, all of these arguments are neither mere propaganda nor public relations cover stories. They are deeply held beliefs.

Post Cold War

As the Cold War wound down, two other issues became more prominent. In 1989–1990, anti-terrorism was first introduced in the Command and General Staff Officer Course. It would subsequently become a component of other courses. Then in 1990–1991, the first Counter Narcotic Operations Course was established, and the Colombian Cadet course also included a discussion of fighting terrorism in general and drug traffickers specifically. By 1994–1995, cadets from all countries were given a Counterdrug Orientation Course. Perhaps not coincidentally, the school also introduced a Sniper Course, teaching students how to "deliver a first round hit on targets at extended ranges."

At the same time, human rights training also became more prominent. In 1992–1993, "mandatory human rights awareness training" was included in all but a few classes (such as Computer Literacy). The goal of the class was "to introduce students to human rights issues which affect military operations." Within a few years, students in any course were required to have human rights instruction. By 1997–1998, a new Human Rights Train-the-Trainer Qualification Course emerged as a way for Latin American officers to train their own battalion-sized units on human rights issues. Instructors at SOA argue that it "is actually the cutting edge of regional military teaching for the armed forces and the police in the applied Human Rights process," and that this contribution "is now tainted by a flood of negative, ignorant, and sensationalistic journalism."[26]

The changes of the mid–1990s coincided with greater pressure from members of the Democratic Party in Congress to investigate the role of the School of the Americas in human rights abuses in the region.[27] In 1996, the General Accounting Office issued a report on the school, which provided a generally positive review of its activities.[28] In particular, it copied the language of a 1995 Army study of the School by finding that "the School is strategically important to the United States as a foreign policy tool because it supports short—and long-term U.S economic, political, and military interests in Latin America." In addition, the study noted the U.S. Army's acknowledgment that "negative publicity about the School would probably continue and that a new name for the School may be an appropriate way to break with the past."

In the United States House of Representatives, a debate in the late 1990s ranged from references to nuns who were murdered "with help from" SOA graduates to claiming it would be a mistake to cut off funds and thereby take on a "namby-pamby" attitude that would allow foreign governments to get a foothold in Central America.[29] Despite the bad press it was receiving, the school still had fervent supporters within Congress. Congressman Mac Collins (R-GA), for example, equated any attack on the school as an affront to the United States as whole:

> Implicating our own dedicated soldiers in the wrongdoing of criminals throughout Latin America represents an attack not only on the School, but also on the U.S. Army, on the

> U.S. Armed Forces as a whole, and on American foreign policy and the American government's right to protect her national interests abroad.[30]

Congressman Doug Bereuter (R-NE) made more muted but no less pointed criticism of the school's detractors: "it is really time for the congressional and religious opponents of the SOA to abandon this misguided attack on the SOA that misleads so many well-intentioned Americans who write their Senators and Congressmen."[31]

Ultimately, Congress found a compromise. For the fiscal year 1998 budget, Congress required that the school's curriculum and activities be certified by the Departments of Defense and State, and that a report be provided to the House Appropriations Committee on the training programs being offered by the School. In 1998, Secretary of Defense William Cohen reported that the school "is an integral part of our efforts to develop closer and more effective ties to the militaries of Latin America."[32]

The school's critics have persevered in recent years. In 1999, Congressman Joseph Moakley (D-MA) introduced a bill to close the school. The essential rationale was that "continued operation of the school stands as a barrier to United States efforts to establish a new and constructive relationship with Latin American armed forces after the Cold War."[33] Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) introduced a bill with identical language several months later.[34] Ultimately, they failed to pass.

The following year, Congressman Michael Forbes (D-NY) introduced a bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act, which included funds for grants to local governments regarding water issues. To offset the cost, the bill's last paragraph stated, "sums otherwise available under other authority of law for the Army School of the Americas in the Department of the Army shall be reduced by $15,000,000," which would serve to eliminate the school's entire budget.[35] It was sent to the Committee on Commerce and was not heard from again.

For the most part, however, there was agreement even among supporters that the school should emphasize respect for human rights to a greater degree, and that greater oversight over curriculum should be exerted. Ultimately, in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, the School of the Americas officially disappeared and the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation was created. Signed into law in October 2000, it stipulated that "the curriculum of the institute shall include mandatory instruction for each student, for at least 8 hours, on human rights, the rule of law, due process, civilian control of the military, and the role of the military in a democratic society."[36] The "new" organization opened on January 17, 2001 in the same location (indeed, the same building in Fort Benning, Georgia). Several months later, Congressman James McGovern (D-MA) introduced a new bill to repeal the statutory authority for WHINSEC in order for a joint congressional task force to study what types of training and education would be most appropriate.[37] As of August 2002, that bill was still in the House Armed Services Committee awaiting executive comment from the Department of Defense.

In addition to curricular changes, a "Board of Visitors" was created to oversee curriculum and activities, and to submit written evaluations to the Department of

Defense. This would include "six persons designated by the Secretary of Defense including, to the extent practicable, persons from academia and the religious and human rights communities." In practice, the initial board included a total of thirteen members, with members of Congress (an equal mix of Democrats and Republicans), the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs (Otto Reich), two U.S. Army Generals, a former missionary to El Salvador who has spoken in defense of SOA, a retired ambassador, a lawyer (whose focus is international law) and members of academia. The Institute would thereby presumably be more scrutinized and accountable, though since the board was named in May 2002 (with its first meeting the following month), it is not yet clear how active a role it will play.

From an institutional perspective, the changes in curriculum are a potential step forward in terms of democratic military engagement. In the 1990s, the SOA had begun to offer more courses on human rights and military obedience, but the new rules would mean that those and other courses would be overseen. The 2002–2003 course catalog offers 24 courses, 11 of which are intended to include civilians as well as soldiers. In other words, it seemed that the wide expansion that began in the 1960s was finally being reined in.

Terrorism in the Post-September 11 Era

As already noted, terrorism was introduced as a topic in courses beginning in 1989–1990, primarily in response to the increasing importance the United States government was attaching to drug trafficking. After the attacks in New York City and Washington D.C., however, terrorism began receiving far greater attention from policy makers than ever before, and shows signs of becoming a central component of U.S. defense policy toward Latin America. Indeed, WHINSEC is receiving pressure from the Department of the Army to incorporate anti-terrorism as its own course.[38] From the perspective of promoting democracy and protecting of human rights, the problem is that anti-terrorism mirrors the older concepts of anti-subversion and counterinsurgency. That fact is not lost on WHINSEC. As one official put it, a focus on terrorism would represent a "needless return to the past."[39] In short, the military is taught to identify, combat, and eliminate an enemy that resides within the borders of the state, and as a result is attempting simultaneously to assist and to fight fellow citizens.

That training strategy would not actually represent a major shift in U.S. policy, since the United States government is already funding military action against drug traffickers in Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Andean region. Rather, it would simply translate and expand anti-terrorism to a regional context, in which fighting drugs would be one component. That expansion seemed perfectly logical not only to most members of Congress, but also to President George W. Bush. Standing next to Colombian President Andres Pastrana in April 2002 he noted that they "had a good discussion about a variety of issues about how to change the focus of our strategy

from counternarcotics to include counter-terrorism" and promptly asked Congress for funding to pay for that shift in focus.[40] In October 2001, the House International Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere convened to discuss threats in the hemisphere, and Chair Cass Ballenger (R-NC) stated almost immediately that, "If you traveled to Latin America as often as I have, you know that there are two basic facts of life, drug trafficking and terrorism."[41]

The all-encompassing nature of that statement echoes the concerns held by members of Congress after the Cuban revolution, presaging the increased U.S. emphasis on training Latin American militaries to fight internal threats. One important difference is that terrorists, unlike communists, do not have the goal of overthrowing the government. Nonetheless, from the U.S. policy perspective they represent no less a threat because, for example, money laundered in Paraguay can fund terrorist attacks in the United States.

The very wide definition of terrorism has meant that the U.S. Congress and the U.S. State Department have identified terrorist threats throughout all Latin America.[42] Drug trafficking is considered a problem in Bolivia, the Caribbean, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and Peru. Shipments of drugs as well as money laundering by terrorist organizations take place in Central America. Middle Eastern terrorist organizations such as Hizbollah have been identified in the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. An article in the U.S. Army's *Military Review* provides an overview of that area and concludes, "we are entering an age of uncivilized behavior in which we must focus on the lost geographies, the fertile ground for piracy and terror."[43]

Even further, the potential threat to democracy posed by greater military participation in combating perceived internal enemies is not automatically viewed by the United States Congress as serious. Upon returning from a trip to Latin America in early 2002, Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) noted the history of dictatorship in the region, and how "It is just a way of life there."[44] That viewpoint is not uncommon among policy makers. As Schoultz has analyzed in detail, there is a pervasive and long-standing belief that Latin American countries have little chance of maintaining democratic systems.[45] This is not to say that these same policy makers are not bothered by military rule, but rather that the potential consequences of increasing the use of military force is not deemed out of the ordinary.[46]

Conclusion

The growing importance of anti-terrorism in U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America, which was first rooted in counter drug operations but subsequently expanded after the attacks of September 11, 2001, can have a significant impact on civil-military relations and human rights in the hemisphere. The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation will play a role in the military aspect of U.S. policy, as it—with its predecessors—has done for half a century. Its mere

existence, the fact that it offers courses to Latin America soldiers, need not represent a problem for the respect of human rights and democracy in the region. Military training per se is not automatically negative, even given the SOA's history.

The challenge both to civilian supremacy over the military and the protection of human rights is the identification of internal enemies as legitimate military targets. Most armed forces in Latin America have had domestic missions since independence, and will have them for the foreseeable future. They can assist in economic development projects without exerting undue influence over politics or attacking citizens, but targeting terrorists is a different matter, especially when viewed in light of the damage done during the Cold War to innocent citizens who were arrested, interrogated, tortured, and killed because the military claimed they were too sympathetic toward communism. The blunt instrument of widespread militarization utilized after the Cuban revolution is not a model to be replicated.

Ultimately, the school develops its own curriculum with only rough guidelines from "outsiders" elsewhere in the U.S. government. However, like any other governmental body it has to fight for funding. As a result, it responds to pressures from the Department of Defense (through the Department of the Army) and the U.S. Congress. Most often, new courses are developed out of components of an already existing course once policy makers deem the particular topic sufficiently important. Anti-terrorism falls squarely into that category.

The decision to use the military against terrorism must come from each Latin American government. Yet at a time when the "war on terrorism" dominates all aspects of U.S. foreign policy, it is highly likely that increased pressure will be exerted on those governments to do so. It is also likely that armed forces in the region will be ready and willing to take on the tasks associated with anti-terrorism. For over a decade, military forces across the region have been attempting to redefine their roles in the absence of a communist threat. The fight against terrorism can easily be regarded as a way to protect national sovereignty from insidious foreign elements that have taken root domestically, while also fostering closer ties to the United States. Meanwhile, WHINSEC has been making strides to incorporate more oversight and to continue developing a human rights curriculum. An explicit shift in focus toward anti-terrorism would be counterproductive in the context of this still nascent undertaking. The lessons of the Cold War have shown that once the genie of fighting internal enemies is out of the bottle, it is difficult to squeeze it back in.

Notes

1. The catalogs for the school years between 1948-1949 and 1958-1959 are missing from the archives. From an analytic standpoint, this does not a pose a problem since—as will be argued—the major transformations in the school occurred only after the Cuban Revolution in 1959. All quotes come from the year's corresponding catalog.
2. John T. Fishel and Kimbra L. Fishel, "The Impact of the U.S. Army School of the Americas on

Host Nation Militaries: An Effective Instrument of Policy or Merely a Scapegoat?" *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement* 7, 1 (Summer 1998): 67.

3. Edwin Lieuwen, *Arms and Politics in Latin America* (New York: Praeger, 1961), 137-140.
4. John L. Johnson, *The Military and Society in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 262-266.
5. Willard F. Barber and C. Neale Ronning, *Internal Security and Military Power: Counterinsurgency and Civic Action in Latin America* (Columbus: Ohio State Press, 1966), 3.
6. David Pion-Berlin and Craig Arceneaux, "Decision-Makers or Decision-Takers? Military Missions and Civilian Control in Democratic South America," *Armed Forces & Society* 26, 3 (Spring 2000): 413-436. The authors note that the terms "mission" and "operation" are often conflated. Fighting terrorism, even if not explicitly included in constitutions or military organic law, is easily interpreted as defending the nation from destruction which, in turn, is a mission deemed critical to the armed forces.
7. For an analysis of the U.S. and the Posse Comitatus Act, see Noah Feldman, "Choices of Law, Choices of War," *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 25, 2 (Spring 2002): 457-485.
8. Rut Diamint, "The Military." In Jorge I. Domínguez and Michael Shifter (eds.). *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America*, 2nd edition (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003): 44.
9. Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux, "Decision-Makers," 421.
10. Dirk Kruijt, "Low Intensity Democracies: Latin American in the Post-Dictatorial Era," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 20, 4 (October 2001): 409-430.
11. Deborah L. Norden, "Redefining Political-Military Relations in Latin America: Issues of the New Democratic Era," *Armed Forces & Society* 22, 3 (1996): 435-436.
12. Michael Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999): 6.
13. For example, the negotiations to end civil wars in Central America had as a central goal the redefinition the military's role to make it focus on external defense. Economic crises, rampant crime, and easy availability of weapons is sparking more support for the military to be brought back in (see George Vickers, "Renegotiating Internal Security: The Lessons of Central America" in Cynthia J. Arnson, ed., *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). In that context, pushing for a re-expansion of the military's role would be counterproductive to the democratization process.
14. E.g. 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, Peaceworks 10, 1996): 4-7.
15. For example, see Fitch's analysis of U.S. military influence over Latin America, in which he argues for "treating Latin American military officers as neither puppets of U.S. imperialism nor eager students of U.S. democracy, but also rejecting the thesis that U.S.-Latin American military relations are inconsequential or political neutral." J. Samuel Fitch, "The Decline of U.S. Military Influence in Latin America" in Lars Schoultz, William C. Smith and Augusto Varas, eds., *Security, Democracy, and Development in U.S.-Latin American Relations* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 78.
16. "Confidential Modified Handling" is a term used for material that will be seen by citizens of a foreign government (or in some cases is information provided by foreign governments). It is generally less restrictive than "Confidential," which in turn is less restrictive than "Secret" and "Top Secret."
17. "El segundo seminario Latinoamericano sobre acción militar en el desarrollo de la comunidad." United States Army School of the Americas internal document, 22-26 May 1967.
18. As the Fort Benning newspaper noted, in 1986 Salvadoran Chief of Staff General Adolfo Blandon spoke the cadet course, arguing, "With our firm arm, we will always be free." "Salvadoran Chief of Staff Guest Speaker for Cadets," *The Bayonet* 27 June 1986. The brutal effects of that firm arm in the Salvadoran civil war would become a bone of contention for SOA critics.
19. To view those documents, see the website of the National Security Archive: http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/archive/news/dodmans.htm. Accessed on 27 May 2003.
20. Sharon Erickson Nepstad, "School of the Americas Watch," *Peace Review* 12, 1 (2000): 69.

21. School of the Americas Watch is an organization created in 1990 for the purpose of exposing human rights abuses of SOA graduates and closing the school. Its website maintains a "Graduates in the News" section that catalogues the activities of military personnel who took courses at the SOA. It also provides a list of every graduate from 1944 to 1996. See http://www.soaw.org. Accessed on 27 May 2003. Over the years, the growth of this and other organizations turned opposition to the SOA into an industry in itself, with organized protests, letter-writing campaigns, and other public relations efforts aimed at closing the school.
22. For example, one argument points to the rise of military-led violence in Central America after the U.S. government cut off military-military ties. Interview with WHINSEC Officials, January 2002. Conversely, an increase in those ties would have the opposite effect. Ramsey argues that in El Salvador during the 1980s, "as U.S. influence increased longitudinally and numerically, human rights violations decreased dramatically." Russell W. Ramsey, *Guardians of the Other Americas: Essays on the Military Forces in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America), 239. It should be noted that the same author argued that human rights violations were "not verified" in Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, and Mexico (ibid., 249).
23. Quoted in Lars Schoultz, *Human Rights and United States Policy Toward Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981): 234.
24. Russell W. Ramsey, "Strategic Reading on Latin America, Parameters Summer 1994," in Russell W. Ramsey, ed., *Strategic Reading on Latin America* 3rd Edition (Bloomington, IN: First Books, 2001): 4.
25. Geoffrey Demarest B., "Redefining the School of the Americas," *Military Review* (October 1994): 44.
26. Russell W. Ramsey and Antonio Raimondo, "Human Rights Instruction at the U.S. Army School of the Americas," *Human Rights Review* 2, 3 (April-June 2001): 112-114.
27. Congressional debate over the School of the Americas and its successor almost always runs along partisan lines, with Democrats criticizing and Republicans defending. Beginning in 1993, Representative Joseph Kennedy (D-MA) introduced the first bill to dismantle the SOA. Between 1993 and 1998, Kennedy introduced five bills or amendments to achieve that end.
28. U.S. General Accounting Office, *School of the Americas: U.S. Military Training for Latin American Countries* (Letter Report, 22 August 1996, GAO/NSIAD-96-178).
29. Donna Cassata, "A Few Bad Apples?" *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 55, 35 (1997): 2090.
30. *Congressional Record-Extension of Remarks*, v. 144, 7 May 1998, 795. Representative Collins' district includes Columbus, Georgia, where Fort Benning is located.
31. *Congressional Record-Extension of Remarks*, v. 144, 10 June 1998, 1086.
32. "Congress Approves Funding for U.S. Army School of the Americas." United States Department of Defense News Release, 2 February 1998.
33. *H.R 732*, 106th Congress, 1st Session, 11 February 1999.
34. *S. 873*, 106th Congress, 1st Session, 22 April 1999.
35. *H.R.* 3798, 106th Congress, 2nd Session, 1 March 2000.
36. *H.R. 4205,* 106th Congress, 1st Session, 6 April 2000. The stated purpose was as follows: "The purpose of the Institute is to provide professional education and training to eligible personnel of the Western Hemisphere within the context of the democratic principles set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States and supporting agreements, while fostering mutual knowledge, transparency, confidence, and cooperation among the participating nations and promoting democratic values, respect for human rights, and knowledge and understanding of United States customs and traditions."
37. *H.R. 1810*, 107th Congress, 1st Session, 10 May 2001.
38. WHINSEC Official, Interview with the Author, May 2002.
39. Ibid.
40. "Remarks following discussions with President Andres Pastrana of Colombia and an exchange with reporters," *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents,* 38, 16 (22 April 2002).
41. "The Western Hemisphere's Response to the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attack on the United States." Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Committee on International Relations, 107th Congress, 1st Session, Serial No. 107-43: 2.

42. e.g. see "Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002," United States Department of State, Office of Counterterrorism (30 April 2003).
43. William W. Mendel, "Paraguay's Ciudad del Este and the New Centers of Gravity," *Military Review* (March-April 2002): 51.
44. *Congressional Record-Senate*, v.148, 27 February 2002, 1242.
45. Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).
46. The reaction of the U.S. government to the coup and counter-coup in Venezuela in April 2002 is instructive in this regard. Given U.S. opposition to the government of President Hugo Chávez, his ouster by dissident members of the armed forces was regarded as a positive development by the Bush administration. An administration official admitted that prior to the coup, when meeting with the opposition coalition that attempted to overthrow Chávez, "We were sending informal, subtle signals that we don't like this guy. We didn't say, 'No, don't you dare.'" Christopher Marquis, "Bush Officials Met with Venezuelans Who Ousted Leader," *New York Times,* 16 April 2002.