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STUDENT ESSAY

18 OCTOBER 1971

US MILITARY PROGRAMS IN LATIN AMERICA

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UNITED STATES MILITARY PROGRAMS IN LATIN AMERICA

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Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

18 October 1971

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(Essay)

US MILITARY PROGRAMS IN LATIN AMERICA

by

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SUMMARY

The essay is arranged to present four themes. The first is an historical survey of our military programs in Latin America, both past and present. The second theme discusses the pros and cons of our present military aid system as expounded by the experts. The third deals with the writer's firm conviction that in the light of recent acts of terrorism, such as bank holdups, kidnappings and murders conducted by urban guerrillas, internal security must be the first order of business for the Americas. Finally, in his fourth theme, the writer makes his recommendations for the future.

PAST MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS

> For more than a century and a half, our most consistent peacetime foreign relations were hemispheric relations. We have shared with our sister republics the experience of gaining and preserving our independence from the Old World. It was only natural that the nations of the New World should see their destinies as intertwined and continue to pay special attention to their ties with each other. Geography and history have bound us together and nurtured a sense of community, now formalized in the treaties and institutions of the inter-American system.
>
> --Pres. Richard Nixon[1]

The military relationships between our country and Latin America have been long-standing. For a considerable number of years we showed our concern for our sister republics south of the border by sending in the marines to put down outbreaks of domestic disorder. However, with respect to causes of civic unrest, such as extreme poverty and social injustices, we gave short shrift.

President Roosevelt and the Congress during the late 1930's became apprehensive about the ever increasing presence of German military missions in Latin America and offered to supply military missions to them at lesser

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[1]US Congress, President Richard Nixon, A Report To The Congress, 25 February 1971

amounts than they were paying the Axis nations. Consequently by late 1941, only American military missions could be found in the South American republics.

Our military assistance to Latin America ceased at the end of World War II, at which time we directed our undivided attention to Western Europe.

Then along came the Korean War and once again under the Mutual Security Act of 1951, we focused our sights on South America. This act authorized our government to supply military assistance to Latin America but the assistance was clearly restricted to

> . . . defense plans which . . . require the recipient nations to participate in missions important to the defense of the Western Hemisphere.[2]

Following this act, Congress appropriated $38 million for military aid to Latin America for 1951, and in 1952 we signed the first bilateral mutual defense assistance agreements with Ecuador, Cuba, Colombia, Peru and Chile. Within the next three years we signed seven more - with Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti and Guatemala and finally with Bolivia in 1958.

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[2] Sec. 105, Mutual Security Act of 1951.

We find through the 1950's or the Eisenhower years military assistance greatly expanded. By 1959, in the light of the submarine threat in the Caribbean, the Eisenhower administration requested the sum of $96.5 million for fiscal year 1960, but the Congress limited the figure to $67 million which was the 1959 appropriation.

However, by the time President Kennedy assumed office the submarine threat evaporated into thin air and we find a distinct change in our rationale for the military assistance program. The concept of defense against external aggression shifted now to defense against internal subversion. In other words, hemispheric defense became passé during the Kennedy years. In order to strengthen the internal security of Latin America, the Kennedy administration gave top priority to 1) civic action projects which were begun in 1962 and 2) counterinsurgency training which began in 1963.

President Johnson to a degree continued the previous administration's policy to bolster Latin American internal security and thus the military assistance program was retained.

With respect to the present, the Nixon administration is carefully reviewing our military assistance program, mindful that the threat of an external attack is wholly

unlikely but that the continuance of shaky economic and political structures fosters subversion which in turn necessitates the maintenance of counterinsurgency training. Conceivably, assistance can be greatly diminished when our Latin American neighbors can maintain on their own an effective counterinsurgency capability or when the diabolical threat of insurgency dissolves.

THE PRESENT ISSUE

Today, many questions come to the fore. How really successful is our present military assistance program? Should we continue it or should we curtail it or perhaps completely abandon it?

We find expert opinions are sharply divided. Keep in mind that, in the past, successive administrations have justified our military programs in Latin America on four basic grounds, namely, a) Hemispheric defense, b) Internal Security, c) As a means of exerting US influence on Latin American military establishments and d) As a means of preempting for the United States the Latin American market for military equipment.[3]

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[3] US Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. United States Military Policies and Programs in Latin America. Hearings. June 24 and July 8, 1969. Washington, 1969.

The three component parts of our military assistance program are 1) furnishing technical advisers, 2) supplying grant materiel and 3) sponsoring formal training. Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, in his interesting report to President Nixon, recommended that grant materiel aid, in the light of

> the growing subversion against hemisphere government, the mounting terrorism and violence against citizens, and the rapidly expanding population[4]

be continued and strengthened.

The above would include training programs for military and police personnel in the United States and Panama. The Governor further recommended that we

> should provide, on request, military and technical training missions but should no longer maintain the permanent military missions in residence in other nations which too often have constituted too large and too visible a United States presence.[5]

Ralph Dungan who was our Ambassador to Chile from 1964 to 1967 appeared before our Congressional Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs in 1969 and stated:

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[4]US Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. Governor Rockefeller's Report on Latin America. Hearing, 91st Cong., 1st sess. Nov. 12, 1969. Washington, US Govt. Print. Off., 1970, 54 p.

[5]Ibid.

"US military policies and programs in Latin America have been disastrous from a political point of view."[6] The former ambassador called for an immediate end to our military assistance program as well as a curtailment of all joint military exercises. Senator Frank Church who presided over that subcommittee hearing has stated that we are using military aid to "prop up dictatorships."[7] Another opponent of military aid who also testified was George Cabot Lodge, an Associate Professor of Business Administration at Harvard University who cited six US failures in Latin America, one of which was:

> 3. We have failed to recognize that, although we regularly pledge ourselves to support change, we have militarily and economically, in fact, strengthened the obstacles to change, prolonging the status quo and thus frustrating development.[8]

Thus, we have Governor Rockefeller recommending an increase in our counterinsurgency aid in the light of his

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[6] US Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. United States Military Policies and Programs in Latin America. Hearings, 91st Cong., 1st sess. Washington: Govt. Print. Off., 1969.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

analysis that Latin America is "a tempting target for Communist subversion"[9] and George Cabot Lodge, on the other hand, arguing that the Communist menace is merely the figment of one's imagination and that the main revolutionary forces in Latin America consist only of priests, ordinary workers and students who are merely seeking democratic reforms.

Opponents of our military assistance system argue we should not sell war materiel to Latin Americans, even though they buy elsewhere. Yet, Governor Rockefeller contends if we do not sell war goods to them they will purchase them from other sources and "this would not be compatible with the United States' best interests."[10]

There are critics of the program who would deny military aid on the grounds that it contributes to a potential arms race in Latin America. However, the supporters of the program argue that this theory is a fallacious one in that Latin American defense expenditures are the smallest of any area in the world and that most military purchases are well within normal

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[9] US Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. Governor Rockefeller's Report on Latin America. Hearing, 91st Cong., 1st sess. Nov. 12, 1969. Washington, U. S. Govt. Print. Off., 1970, 54 p.

[10] Ibid.

budgetary levels. In fact, total military spending exclusive of Cuba is approximately one and one-half billion dollars a year, or somewhat less than two per cent of their combined Gross National Product.[11]

Finally, General Robert L. Porter, Jr., our former Commanding General of the Southern Command and a staunch advocate of our military assistance system very interestingly points out that in addition to any Communist Castroite threat, military aid helps protect our twelve billion dollars in private investments. He likens it to a very modest premium on an insurance policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

A truism which we Americans should always keep in mind is that which was stated quite recently by Abraham F. Lowenthal of the Ford Foundation:

> The United States cannot disengage from Latin America. The Colossus of the North is bound to cast its shadow southward no matter what direction it chooses to face.

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[11] US Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. New Directions for the 1970's: Toward a Strategy of Inter-American Development. 91st Cong., 1st. sess. Washington: Govt. Print. Off., 1969.

Put quite simply in other words: the interests of Latin America are quite definitely linked to our own and both we and the Latin Americans will be better off as soon as that fact is recognized by both continents. Therefore, we should be primarily interested in strengthening the independence of our Latin American neighbors and their freedom from Communist domination, as well as in advancing their mutual efforts to defend themselves. The very foundation of our strategy should be the defense of the Americas from hostile enemy attack, both direct or indirect. Therefore, there is no question in my mind that our Military Assistance Program requires continued support. For us to frown upon and ignore military influence in Latin America is simply ridiculous. The roots of military tradition stretch far back into Latin American history. In fact, since their very existence, Latin American military forces have been without doubt the strongest pressure group in most of the Latin republics. In some countries, control over the state has almost always been in the hands of the military. To be sure, there are great differences from one state to another. For example, we find republics such as Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela have been controlled by the Army for most of their existence. On the

other hand, the armies of Brazil and Chile have remained somewhat in the background during most of their nations' history. Thus, whether we like it or not, we should pay heed to Gary MacEoin's reluctant advice that the answer lies in the new and informed and public-spirited Latin American military.[12]

This is borne out in Governor Rockefeller's statement:

> Military leaders throughout the hemisphere are frequently criticized here in the United States. However, we will have to give increasing recognition to the fact that many new military leaders are deeply motivated by the need for social and economic progress. They are searching for ways to bring education and better standards of living to their people while avoiding anarchy or violent revolution.[13]

The question now arises - why should we get involved with the Latin American military? The answer is very simple and can be found in two words, namely, "Urban Guerrilla." Very recently in the early part of September 1971, one hundred and six leftist

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[12] MacEoin, Gary. Reluctant Hope in Latin America. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971.

[13] US Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. Governor Rockefeller's Report on Latin America. Hearing, 91st Cong., 1st sess. Nov. 12, 1969. Washington, US Govt. Print. Off., 1970, 54 p.

Tupamaro guerrillas, including their founder and patron saint, tunneled their way out of a prison in Uruguay and thus seriously disabled the administration of President Jorge Pacheco Areco. The most successful urban guerrilla movement in all of Latin America reared its ugly head. In nearby Argentina simultaneously a similar event on a smaller scale took place when a band of guerrillas attacked a municipal jail at San Miguel de Tucuman about 60 miles northwest of Buenos Aires, killed six guards, wounded seven others and freed seven inmates. We must bear in mind that these Uruguayan terrorists have been conducting themselves in this manner for over seven years. It would appear on the face of things that the Uruguayan law enforcement authorities are wholly incapable of coping with the situation. Those same Tupamaros have kidnapped US security advisor, Dan A. Mitrione, who was murdered in August 1970; Dr. Claude Fly, one of our soils experts, who was incarcerated for six months and then released; and British Ambassador Geoffrey Jackson who was just recently released after being held a captive for over eight months. Not only are they specialists in kidnapping, but they are also excellent bank robbers. On November 12, 1970,

they robbed the Uruguayan Bank of the Republic of nearly six million dollars' worth of jewels and money.

Obviously, Uruguay is not the only South American Republic racked with this horrible disease. The increasing importance of this diabolical type of warfare can be found in a book written by Carlos L. Marighella, a Brazilian urban guerrilla leader who was killed in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 1969. The title of his infamous book is "Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla" and it can be said without qualification that it has widespread circulation in Latin America. This former member of the Brazilian Congress stated very coldly that:

> It is necessary for every urban guerrilla to keep in mind always that he can only maintain his existence if he is disposed to kill the police and those dedicated to repression, and if he is determined to expropriate the wealth of the big capitalists, the latifundists and the imperialists.[14]

Unlike the late Che Guevara who put faith in Bolivian peasants and was betrayed by them, Marighella believed the proper approach to overthrowing the established order could be found in Latin America's crowded and very vulnerable urban areas. He found it much easier to hide

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[14] Marighella, Carlos L., Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla. London, 1971.

from the military in a crowded city than in a sparsely populated rural district.

Terrorist groups roam about Argentina, Chile, the Dominican Republic, and it was in Guatemala in 1968 that our Ambassador John Gordon Mein was brutally kidnapped and murdered. In fact, his was the first of the so-called diplomatic kidnappings in Latin America. Another diplomatic kidnapping was that of Switzerland's Ambassador to Brazil, Giovanni Enrico Bucher, last December in Rio. Thus, we find "Urban Subversion" the order of the day in Latin America and it should be carefully noted that Marxist revolutionary theorists give top priority to the urban guerrilla. Bear in mind that the urban guerrilla lends support to the rural guerrilla who, in fact, is the only revolutionary force that is capable of defeating the regular military establishment.

Therefore, we can readily see now where the target lies. In Latin America the population has a tendency to concentrate in and around the big cities and towns. For example, in Argentina the city population is approximately 68% of the entire nation. Recruits can easily be drawn from young radicals and students dwelling in these populous areas. Marighella saw the

light, whereas Guevara and his follower, Regis Debray, the revolutionary intellectual who is now living in Chile, overemphasized the peasant and underestimated the importance of the denizen of the city.

Military history makes evident to us that urban riots and insurrections have always been a source of worry to a commander. The Russian Revolution was concentrated in the cities and Lenin was fully aware of "Urban Subversion" and its great importance. The Russian troops failed to distinguish themselves when confronted by the Bolsheviks who had brain-washed them for weeks with psychological propaganda. In fact, many of the Russian troops joined the forces of the insurgents.

Again in World War II, we saw many urban insurgencies against the German Army of Occupation. Past experience has taught us that nearly all revolutionary movements in Latin America take seed in the populous capital city and the leader who captures the capitol controls the entire nation. Therefore, without doubt, in the light of the growing problem of urban terrorism, the internal security of Latin America should be our greatest concern and, like the master strategists of Communist subversion in Latin America and the Soviet

Union who are constantly considering new courses of action, we too should be considering new ways to combat them and to improve counterguerrilla methods presently used.

No do , these vital internal security problems will continue to increase in the years to come because the Communist insurgency forces have a sanctuary, not only in Cuba, but also in Chile. Furthermore, the growing Soviet seapower conceivably could be called upon to lend support to an insurgent movement conducting an assault and attempting to establish a beachhead either in Central or South America. Soviet submarines of the Polaris type Yankee class could be serviced at the new missile carrying submarine base located at the south Cuban port of Cienfuegos. Governor Rockefeller very aptly put it:

> One other point not clearly understood in the United States is that no one country today can effectively protect its own internal security by itself. The youth that go abroad for training in subversive activities, the money and directives that flow through agents, and the propaganda that comes from outside their borders are all beyond their effective control. Only through hemisphere cooperation can these problems which so vitally affect internal security, be adequately dealt with.[15]

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[15] US Congress, House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. Governor Rockefeller's Report on Latin America. Hearing, 91st Cong., 1st sess., Nov. 12, 1969. Washington, US Govt. Print. Off., 1970, 54 p.

Therefore, when the next military assistance program for Latin America is drawn up, it is respectfully recommended that proposals offered by Governor Rockefeller be adopted. His proposal for modernizing internal security planning is an excellent one and should be adopted to replace the present archaic one known as the "Special Consultative Committee on Security of the Organization of American States." This committee would be superseded by a "civilian-directed Western Hemisphere Security Council to cope with the forces of subversion that operate throughout the Western Hemisphere." [16] Conceivably, it would be analagous to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Council which furnishes advice to our NATO military staffs. The committee would be located outside our country and thus should please our Southern neighbors and be in keeping with President Nixon's philosophy of achieving "a more mature partnership in which all voices are heard and none is predominant." [17]

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[16] US Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. Governor Rockefeller's Report on Latin America. Hearing, 91st Cong., 1st sess. Nov. 12, 1969. Washington, US Govt.Print.Off., 1970, 54 p.

[17] US Congress. President Richard Nixon, A Report To The Congress, 18 February 1970.

Governor Rockefeller further recommended that consideration be given to reequipping the Latin American armed forces. Specifically, he stated:

> The United States should meet reasonable requests from other hemisphere governments for trucks, jeeps, helicopters and like equipment to provide mobility and logistical support for these forces; for radios and other command and control equipment for proper communications among the forces; and for small arms by security forces.
> The Executive Branch should seek modification of the Conte and Symington amendments to permit the United States to sell aircraft, ships and other major military equipment without aid cut penalties to the more developed nations of the hemisphere when these nations believe this equipment is necessary to protect their land, patrol their seacoast and airspace, and otherwise maintain the morale of their forces and protect their sovereignty.[18]

In the light of present Soviet Union policy of shipping arms into Cuba for urban guerrillas and terrorists, the above-mentioned recommendations of Governor Rockefeller seem to be pretty much in order.

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[18] US Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. Governor Rockefeller's Report on Latin America. Hearing, 91st Cong., 1st sess. Nov. 12, 1969. Washington, US Govt. Print. Off., 1970, 54 p.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Now that it has been established that there is definitely an internal security threat that Communism poses by being committed to the support of Cuban-type guerrilla revolutions in the Americas, it is in the interest of all American nations to engage in a frank and fruitful dialogue which will greatly help resolve our policy disagreements concerning inter-American military cooperation. This dialogue should be conducted in accordance with President Nixon's wish to present a "low profile" yet bearing in mind that nationalism is sweeping Latin America and aiming at our 12 billion dollars' worth of private investments. There still remains a huge amount of good will towards us in Latin America today, but it could all go down the drain if we insist upon economic reprisals as compensation for nationalized US companies.

It is proposed that the vehicle which could effectuate this dialogue be the "civilian-directed Western Hemisphere Security Council" recommended by Governor Rockefeller. Once it meets, it would be agreed by both Americas that the threat is basically an internal one and immediately discussions would be conducted

concerning the type of equipment and force structures our Latin American neighbors would need to meet this internal threat of the "Urban Guerrilla." Then Governor Rockefeller's recommendations for a re-equipment program would come to the fore to meet our Latin American friends' needs.

Perhaps the above recommendations, simple as they may be, might help reinvigorate the collective security which was enunciated in Article 3 of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance signed by us at Rio de Janeiro in 1947 and which provided:

> The High Contracting Parties agree that an armed attack by any State against an American State shall be considered as an attack against all American States. . . .[19]

William A. Shue
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[19] Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, opened for signature on September 2, 1947; entered into force for the United States on December 3, 1948; 62 Stat. 1681; TIAS 1838; 21 UNTS 77.

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