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THESIS

**US MILITARY PRESENCE IN LATIN AMERICA:
MAKING THE MANTA FORWARD OPERATING
LOCATION WORK**

by

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September 2003

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**US MILITARY PRESENCE IN LATIN AMERICA: MAKING THE MANTA
FORWARD OPERATING LOCATION WORK**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The US military's regional concerns in the 1990s focused on the drug war, improving interoperability, and carrying out regional engagement. In the new millennium, military activities have expanded to encompass a growing concern with Colombia's drug problem and the "war on terrorism." After the closure of Howard Air Force Base, Panama, the US established forward operating locations (FOLs) as tools for the realization of its goals in the region.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The closing of Howard Air Force Base (AFB), Panama, in 1999, was a significant loss for intelligence gathering and anti-drug efforts for the United States (US). Operations performed from Howard AFB were vital for the US' efforts towards its "war against drugs." Temporarily the US lost its ability to conduct anti-drug surveillance operations in South America. However, since then, the US has established forward operating locations (FOLs) in Latin America to continue its efforts in the "war on drugs" and the "war on terrorism." The US identified Manta AB, Ecuador, as an alternate location to establish a FOL to conduct anti-drug surveillance. Unfortunately, US FOLs and military bases have long been viewed unfavorably in Latin America based on past experiences with the US. However, as Plan Colombia continues to be more prominent in the Western Hemisphere, the countries of the region are increasingly recognizing the need to strengthen cooperative relations with external actors and enhance their counterdrug and counterterrorism efforts.

Despite this shift, ongoing tension exists between foreign policy and domestic politics in many Latin American countries, including Ecuador, and this tension continues to complicate regional security. In 1999, the US and Ecuador ratified a ten-year cooperation agreement that established the Manta FOL. US military forces perform anti-drug surveillance operations from this FOL at Manta AB, which allows critical full air coverage of Peru, Colombia, and nearly all of Bolivia.¹ Ecuador continues to be a significant asset to the US because it borders the Putumayo region of southern Colombia, which is considered to be the most densely cultivated area in the world for coca, the plant used to produce cocaine.² Due to the geo-strategic location of Ecuador's southern border along Colombia's war zone, for over thirty years, it has been considered a transit zone country for drug traffickers. This has been a growing concern for the US and the US's sustained presence in this region continues to influence Ecuadorian affairs.

This thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

¹ "Ecuador: The Newest Front-Line State," *Foreign Affairs*; Vol. 33, No. 26, 30 Jun 2001. p. 1.

² *Ibid.*

What do Forward Operation Locations (FOLs) in general, and the Manta FOL in particular, contribute to the realization of US national security interests in Latin America?

Given the long history of Latin American opposition to a US military presence in the region, what are the politics of establishing a US FOL in Latin America?

Given the controversy surrounding the FOLs within Ecuador's domestic politics, how was the Manta FOL established?

How can the US best maintain local support for its FOLs in Latin America?

The United States must be able to conduct operations within the region in order to succeed in its "war against drugs" and to combat terrorism. When the US surrendered Howard AFB back to Panama in 1999 this ended a constant radar surveillance of Western Colombia. After years of US hegemony, Panama opted not to renew the agreement for continued US presence, in its efforts to regain its sovereignty. Howard AFB, Panama was considered to be a vital base for anti-drug surveillance aircraft. Since the closure of Howard AFB, USSOUTHCOM has established FOLs in Aruba, Curacao, and Ecuador to continue its counterdrug and counterterrorism missions. Ecuador agreed to allow the US to develop what could become the Pentagon's most important air base in Latin America, the Manta FOL, in 1999. Manta FOL supports US surveillance operations over drug-producing countries in the entire Andean region. Currently, there are only a few FOLs established in the region but the US may consider establishing more in the future.

Since agreement was ratified, significant Ecuadorian opposition towards the US presence has continued. Several indigenous groups, more specifically the 1993 Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and the Pachacutik (Indigenous People and Democracy in Ecuador), human rights groups and the Catholic Church are among the main actors opposing the operation of Manta AB.³ They have led public rallies and arguments against the US-Ecuador cooperation agreement.

Despite the considerable benefits provided by the U.S – Ecuador cooperation agreement, opposition to such collaboration persists. According to some Ecuadorian

³ For more on indigenous opposition to the Manta FOL, see Pachacutik: Indigenous People and Democracy in Ecuador; Pachacutik/Nuevo Pais movement, a complex political organization distinct from CONAIE. Available at: <http://www.geocities.com/aeissing/00028.html>; accessed on 11 March 2003.

officials there is a difference of opinion about the true purpose or intentions of the US in Ecuador, and these suspicions illustrate some of the issues facing future US negotiations in Latin America to establish more FOLs. In addition, during the pre and post-Panama era, the US and Latin America have had strained relations concerning US military forces within the region. This thesis uses the case of the Manta FOL to examine the politics of establishing FOLs within the region and its implications for future efforts in this area.

This thesis seeks to examine both the international and domestic politics involved in Latin America when establishing FOLs in the region. It will focus on the Manta FOL in particular because it is essential for US strategy in Colombia and best illustrates the challenges of dealing with local opposition to a US military presence. Manta AB, Ecuador is a key geopolitical strategic location for the US to base operations towards their anti-drug efforts against Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. Due to its close proximity (30 minutes by air) to the Putumayo region, it is the closest and most strategic site for the US to maintain anti-narcotics operations. To date, Manta FOL has been beneficial for the both the US and Ecuador by allowing the US to successfully gather intelligence for anti-drug efforts, and by improving Ecuador's economy.

This thesis will use a political economy methodology to examine both the domestic and international level of Ecuadorian politics involved in the decision to establish and sustain the Manta FOL. To do so, it will analyze the most relevant actors in the decision making process and the actors' policy preferences and determine how they group themselves in this policy area and interact within Ecuador's political institutions.⁴ Secondary and open sources will be used to conduct this research.

Chapter II describes what Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) in general, and the Manta FOL in particular, contribute to the realization of US national security interests in Latin America. The removal of troops from Howard AFB, Panama, combined with increasing threats from narco-trafficking and terrorism, have required a new theater architecture to combat these regional threats effectively. The development of alternative locations, such as FOLs, within the region enables the US to continue these operations.

⁴ Frieden, Jeffrey.A, and Tomz, Manuel, Modern Political Economy and Latin America Theory and Policy, Westview Press, 2001. p. 37.

However, these new developments have created dissension within Latin America, which makes it difficult for the US to negotiate sustaining its military presence in the region and proposing future agreements with Latin American countries.

Chapter III will focus on the international and domestic politics involving Manta FOL during the presidencies of Jamil Mahuad (1997-2000) and Gustavo Noboa (2000-2001). It will identify the preferences of the key actors involved in the process: the US, the President of the Republic, the Ecuadorian Military, the Ecuadorian Congress, and the indigenous movement. President Mahuad supported the US presence at Manta AB, despite the growing opposition from Ecuadorian indigenous movements, because he believed it would contribute to the necessary ratification of a peace treaty with Peru, improve economic stability, and enhance governability. President Mahuad clearly miscalculated: growing opposition to the accord created complications for the final ratification of the agreement and contributed to his removal from office.

Chapter IV will focus on the international and domestic politics involving Manta FOL during the Gutierrez presidency until today, and how it will affect the future of Manta FOL. The actors and their preferences continue to remain the same for the most part from the Mahuad through the Gutierrez administrations. The recent election of President Gutierrez, who was initially opposed to the Manta accord, raised the question of the viability of the US FOL given his support base in the indigenous movement. This chapter will illustrate how the shifting of President Gutierrez' preferences from opposition to support of the FOL affects alliances among Ecuadorian political actors and in this case, the Manta accord. It will also analyze how the institutional context influenced the change in President Gutierrez' preferences.

Chapter V will offer a summary of the principle conclusions and recommendations for future agreements between the US and Latin America that are similar to the case of Manta FOL. The US must continue its efforts to improve foreign relations with Latin America. Also, it must attempt to establish concise treaties and agreements that firmly establish the US' purpose and intentions for the FOLs.

II. AFTER PANAMA: ESTABLISHING FOLS WITHIN LATIN AMERICA

During the Cold War, the US military presence played a significant role in the Western Hemisphere. Since the end of the Cold War, the US military involvement in Latin America has been consolidated, widely distributed and has had a significant impact on security in Latin America. During the 1980s and 1990s, Howard Air Force Base (AFB) in Panama was vital towards the United States' (US) efforts on its "war against drugs." However, in compliance with the 1977 Panama Canal Accords, US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) and other US military assets reluctantly vacated Panama. This was a significant loss for the US in terms of its efforts towards intelligence-gathering and counternarcotics missions in Central and South America.

In the past, the US and Latin America have had strained relations which made it difficult for the US to negotiate a "forward operating" or "permanent" presence for US military in the region. However, the increased US interest in Plan Colombia has lent a new urgency to the need to negotiate US military access agreements establishing Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) within the region. These new locations constitute a decentralized presence for the US military as well as addressing regional leaders' hesitations to host large US military bases. USSOUTHCOM refers to this complex network of US military facilities and functions in the region as the "theater architecture." These temporary facilities represent concrete commitments to underlying policy priorities, such as ensuring access to strategic resources, especially oil, and to a supply-side drug war that holds source countries responsible for the US citizens' addiction to illegal drugs.⁵

During the 1990s, the US military presence focused on counternarcotics and humanitarian assistance programs within Latin America. Its main goals were to promote democracy, improve economic stability, build military to military relations, and to combat narcotrafficking. However, with evolving national security concerns in the 21st

⁵ Lindsay-Poland, John, "US Military Bases in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (FPIF), October 2001 [journal on-line]; Available at <http://www.fpif.org>; accessed on 4 June 2003.

century, the US missions and goals have also changed to encompass a growing US concern with Colombia's drug problem and the "war on terrorism." This chapter explains how changing US national security concerns and the closure of Howard AFB, Panama in 1999 contributed to the need for new theater architecture after 1999. It begins by discussing US security concerns and the theater architecture prior to 1999. It then discusses the shift to FOLs after 1999 and shows how the FOLs in general, and the Manta FOL in particular, help address enhanced US security concerns in the Andean region.

A. USSOUTHCOM: THEATER ARCHITECTURE PRIOR TO 1999

USSOUTHCOM's missions and objectives in the area of responsibility (AOR) dictate the US military involvement in the region. US military involvement is also contingent upon the theater architecture in Latin America. Theater architecture refers to the permanent, semi-permanent, or forward presence in the region. The architecture combined with US operations allows the US to carry out its missions. In this section, I will present the missions and objectives of USSOUTHCOM during the Cold War Era and immediately afterward, until the closure of Howard AFB, Panama in 1999. Next, I will show how the US theater architecture in Latin America during this timeframe contributed to military missions in the region.

1. Missions and Objectives

During the Cold War Era, the primary goal of the United States was preventing "communist expansion" in developing democracies of the region.⁶ The Cold War military missions of "containment of Communism" and counterinsurgency have transitioned to a new security paradigm that provides military-security forces a leading role in confronting diffuse "non-state threats" in a globalized world: drug trafficking, terrorism, illegal immigration, social unrest, and threats to democracy.⁷ Towards the end of the Cold War, the Andes replaced Central America as the focus of US military involvement in the hemisphere.⁸

⁶ "Latin America wary of US military expansion by IPS." *FinalCall.com*, 11 May 2003 [database online]; Available at: http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/article_758.shtml; accessed on 15 May 2003.

⁷ McSherry, J. Patrice. "Preserving Hegemony National Security Doctrine in the Post-Cold War Era." *North American Congress on Latin America, Inc. NACLA Report on the Americas* (1 November 2000) No.3, Vol. 34; pg. 26.

The US military's relationship with Latin America was and currently is governed primarily by USSOUTHCOM, which is one of five unified commands. The Department of Defense designated USSOUTHCOM as the lead agency for detection monitoring of drug traffic. Its AOR is defined geographically and it coordinates the related programs and activities within the region. USSOUTHCOM's AOR encompasses 30 countries, (all the nations in Latin America and the Caribbean), excluding Mexico and Puerto Rico.⁹ The waters surrounding Central and South America, the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean island nations are also part of USSOUTHCOM's responsibility. USSOUTHCOM is the smallest of the US's regional commands.¹⁰ However, in 1997, when its AOR was expanded to include the Caribbean Sea, the organization was faced with two significant concerns – Haiti and Cuba. Furthermore, in 1999, the final expansion of USSOUTHCOM included an additional portion of the Atlantic Ocean, this extended its riverine and maritime operations.¹¹

In the 1980s, General Paul F. Gorman, former USCINCSO¹² declared USSOUTHCOM's missions as follows: 1) exercise operational command over US Forces in South America and Central America with the exception of Mexico, 2) prepare strategic assessments and contingency plans and conduct training or operations, 3) support and assist US country team of the region, 4) monitor security programs within South and Central America, and 5) promote mutual security and development among

⁸ Youngers, Coletta, "Cocaine Madness; United States, Latin America, and Drug Policy." *North American Congress on Latin America, Inc. NACLA Report on the Americas*. (1 November 2000) No.3, Vol. 34; pg. 16

⁹ "Area of Responsibility." *USSOUTHCOM Homepage* [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.southcom.mil/pa/AOR/AOR.htm>; accessed on 21 June 2003. In October 2002, USSOUTHCOM reorganized its AOR from 32 countries to 30 countries, with the exception of Cuba and Puerto Rico. Although USSOUTHCOM components continue to operate from Puerto Rico, these are no longer considered part of its AOR.

¹⁰ Evers, Stacey. "Briefing, USSOUTHCOM Adapts to Meet Divergent Role." *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 20 August 1997, Vol. 28, Issue. 007: 19.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² During the Cold War Era, the regional commanders in the military were referred to as the Commander-In-Chief, or CINC. Specifically, the USCINCSO refers to the United States Commander-in-Chief of USSOUTHCOM. However, in the 21st century, the regional commanders are referred to as Combatant Commanders.

nations of the region.¹³ The main objectives of the US were as follows: 1) support for democracy, reform, and human rights, 2) support economic development, 3) support dialogue and negotiations, 4) support for security as a shield for democratization, development and diplomacy.¹⁴ General Gorman characterized USSOUTHCOM's engagement as "low-intensity conflict," dealing with threats to US interests within its region posed by those who, for political purposes, use violence in forms of coercive crime, sabotage, subversion, terrorism, and guerrilla warfare.¹⁵

The US military's regional concerns in the 1990s focused on the drug war, improving interoperability, developing new missions and carrying out regional engagement for its own sake. US priorities shifted based on vital threats to national security such as terrorism and drug trafficking.¹⁶ According to former drug czar and General Barry McCaffrey, former USCINCSO, "We [the US] are committed to continued engagement in the Latin American area. The importance of Latin America [to the US] is going to grow every decade."¹⁷ McCaffrey refers to USSOUTHCOM's activities as counterdrug missions, military-to-military contact, humanitarian aid, peacekeeping, and a tremendous array of involvement.¹⁸ In the 1990s USSOUTHCOM was involved in additional activities such as its participation in the Military Observer Mission, Ecuador-Peru (MOMEPE), which eventually led to an accord between both countries. Additionally, US Special Forces joined with trainers from Brazil, Colombia, and Honduras to train platoons conducting mine-clearing operations in Honduras and Costa Rica.¹⁹ These activities exhibited improved military-to-military relations and assisted in peacekeeping.

¹³ General, Paul, F, "USCINCO's Perspective, 1983-1985," *Defense Analysis*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (September 1988): 308-309.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 310.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Isaacson, Adam, and Joy Olson, "A quick tour of US Defense and Security Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean," *International Policy Report – Just the Facts* 2001-2002, October 2001 p. 9 [database on-line] Available at: <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/ipr1101.pdf>; accessed on 5 August 2003.

¹⁷ Ide, Douglas, SFC, "USSOUTHCOM's McCaffrey cites the Jungle Operations Training Center as one mission that could remain in Panama," *Update PANAMA*, February 1996 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.army.mil/soldiers/feb96/p18.html>; accessed on 20 August 2003.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

USSOUTHCOM's responsibilities entail patrols and providing interdiction support in what is known as the "transit zone" of illegal narcotics, in addition to its current job of monitoring cocaine, heroin and opium production in the "source zone."²⁰ Two strategic initiatives in the source zone are air interdiction operations, which target the air movement of coca in Colombia that is key to the cocaine trade, and counter riverine operations in Colombia, with a parallel initiative in Peru.²¹ It successfully shut down the air bridge between Peru's growing areas and Colombia's processing plants.²² The riverine efforts responded to concerns that drug traffickers would shift smuggling routes to the Amazon River network as a reaction to the Peruvian air interdiction efforts.²³ Interdiction efforts between Peru and Colombia reduced coca growth in Peru by 18 percent, however, this led to an 18 percent increase in Colombia's indigenous coca crops.²⁴

Throughout the 1990s, USSOUTHCOM was involved in three main types of exercises across the region: operational, multinational, and engineering. Operational exercises are mandated by the Joint Staff and cover areas such as emergency evacuation and counterterrorism. Multinational exercises involve humanitarian, peacekeeping, and counternarcotics, exercises and were an evolution of past bilateral efforts. Engineering exercises involve US military engineers and host nation engineers building hospitals, roads, clinics and schools. This portrays the armed forces as a "very positive force," said Army Colonel Bill Knightly, former operations directorate deputy for joint training and exercise.²⁵

²⁰ Evers, Stacey, "Briefing, USSOUTHCOM Adapts to Meet Divergent Role," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 20 August 1997, Volume. 28, Issue. 007: 19.

²¹ Honorable Brian Sheridan, Assistant Secretary Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, "Colombia: Counterinsurgency vs. Counter-narcotics" (speech presented at the Department of Defense, 21 September 1999); Available at: <http://drugcaucus.senate.gov/colombia99sheridan.html>.

²² Evers, Stacey, "Briefing, USSOUTHCOM Adapts to Meet Divergent Role," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 20 August 1997, Volume. 28, Issue. 007: 19.

²³ Honorable Brian Sheridan, Assistant Secretary Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, "Colombia: Counterinsurgency vs. Counter-narcotics" (speech presented at the Department of Defense, 21 September 1999); Available at: <http://drugcaucus.senate.gov/colombia99sheridan.html>.

²⁴ Evers, Stacey, "Briefing, USSOUTHCOM Adapts to Meet Divergent Role," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 20 August 1997, Volume. 28, Issue. 007. [Statement by USAF Colonel Bruce Cucuel, deputy director of the command's counternarcotics operations]: 19.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

2. Theater Architecture

US concerns with promoting democracy, lending humanitarian aid, and fighting drug trafficking led to the need for its military involvement and dictated its theater architecture in the region. The permanent or forward presence in the region was and remains to be a decisive factor for US capabilities to pursue effectively its counterdrug policy.

USSOUTHCOM's most complex operations are related to counternarcotics. The command utilizes radar capabilities to assist with this mission. Airborne units are utilized to cover the gaps between ground-based units. In Panama, there were 27 separate defense sites operational.²⁶ There are four ground-based TPS-43E radars that will be upgraded to one TPS-59 and three TPS-70s. Additionally, USSOUTHCOM relies on three Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radars (ROTHR) in California, Texas and Virginia, as well as the Caribbean Basin Radar Network and host nation sensors. A fourth ROTHR was installed in Puerto Rico.²⁷

In the 1990s, three bases provided the US with a "forward presence" in Latin America: the Enrique Soto Cano Permanent Air Base (AB) in Honduras (Soto Cano), the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba, and Howard AFB in Panama. In the 1980s, Soto Cano AB in Honduras served as a joint command, while the US was heavily involved in the conflicts of El Salvador and Nicaragua. In 1982, the Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-Bravo) was established at Soto Cano AB, Honduras in order to support US efforts on behalf of Central American militaries and deter "Nicaraguan aggression" during the region's civil wars of the 1980s.²⁸ During the 1980s, over 2,000 US military personnel were stationed at Soto Cano. In late 1988 and 1989, JTF-Bravo played a central role in US military efforts to help Central America recover from Hurricane Mitch.

²⁶ Ide, Douglas, SFC, "USSOUTHCOM's McCaffrey cites the Jungle Operations Training Center as one mission that could remain in Panama," *Update PANAMA*, February 1996 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.army.mil/soldiers/feb96/p18.html>; accessed on 20 August 2003.

²⁷ Evers, Stacey, "Briefing, USSOUTHCOM Adapts to Meet Divergent Role," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 20 August 1997 Volume. 28, Issue. 007: 19.

²⁸ "Enrique Soto Cano Air Force Base Honduras," *Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to the US defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean*; Available at: <http://www.ciponling.org./facts/soto.htm>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

It was the hub for US military Human Civic Assistance Programs (HCA) infrastructure-rebuilding projects.²⁹ In the 1980s, US activities in Honduras illustrated the purpose and nature of its response to the low intensity conflict in Central America. This increased interoperability between US and Honduran forces supported President Reagan's policy objectives.³⁰ By 1995, however, a GAO report determined that although Soto Cano provided useful and convenient support for counternarcotics, it was no longer considered a critical asset for US policy objectives in the region, such as economic growth and democratic reform.³¹

In 1898, after the Spanish-American War, the US marines established a base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and it is considered the oldest US base outside the continental US.³² According to Article VII of the Treaty of 1934, Cuba continues to maintain its independence, while the US protects the people and the Cuban government sells or leases the US the lands necessary for coaling or naval stations.³³ This allows the US "complete jurisdiction and control" of the area, while Cuba maintains its sovereignty.³⁴ It was the most convenient location that allowed the US to watch one of its oldest Cold War foes, the Soviet Union. The base was a strategic strongpoint for the US fight against communism, its harbor was ideal for refueling-retooling for US ships patrolling the Caribbean, and its presence deterred Nazi submarines from Caribbean waters during

²⁹ "Enrique Soto Cano Air Force Base Honduras," *Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to the US defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean*. Available at: <http://www.ciponling.org/facts/soto.htm>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

³⁰ Gorman, Paul, F, General, "USCINCO's Perspective, 1983-1985," *Defense Analysis*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (September 1988): 313.

³¹ General Accounting Office: "Honduras: Continuing U.S. Military Presence at Soto Cano Base is not Critical." February 28, 1995. GAO/USAID-95-39. Available at: <http://www.gao.gov/archive/1995/ns95039.pdf>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

³² "Guantanamo Bay, Cuba – Mission," *Guantanamo Bay Homepage*; Available at: <http://www.nsgtmo.navy.mil/mission.htm>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

³³ Agreement Between the United States and Cuba, 1934. "Appendix D Texts of United States-Cuban Agreements and Treaty of 1934: Treaty Series No. 418, Leasing of Coaling or Naval Stations," [document on-line] Available at: http://www.nsgtmo.navy.mil/gazetter/History_98-64/hisapxd.htm; accessed on 25 August 2003.

³⁴ "Guantanamo Bay, Cuba – Mission," *Guantanamo Bay Homepage*; Available at: <http://www.nsgtmo.navy.mil/mission.htm>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

World War II. During the 1980s and 1990s it housed refugees and has been used for anti-drug smuggling operations since the 1980s.³⁵

In 1939, Howard AFB was established in Panama, and then in 1942, the 24th Wing was established as the component responsible for Air Force (AF) operations over Latin America and the Caribbean.³⁶ The 310th Airlift Squadron, also known as the Coronet Oak, was the flying unit in the 24th wing responsible for counter-drug flights. Howard AFB, Panama was the center for counternarcotics detection, monitoring, intelligence gathering and communications during the 1980s and 1990s. Howard AFB also provided the US the capability to carry out humanitarian, quick-reaction, counter-narcotics, and search-and-rescue missions throughout the region.³⁷ The Coronet Oak was responsible for airlifting cargo and transporting personnel for USSOUTHCOM. In the 1990s, over 2,000 counter-drug flights per year originated from Panama.³⁸

Furthermore, Panama was also the hub for the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force South (JIATF-S, formerly known as the Joint Air Operations Center), which was established in 1992. The military, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the US Customs Service and civilian intelligence personnel were integrated in the JIATF-S. It planned counternarcotics operations, trained, and advised the hemisphere's counter-drug forces, and monitored South America for drug-related activity. JIATF-S also included military representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. It targeted only source zone countries where drugs were produced whereas JIATF- East (JIATF-E), located in Key West, Florida, focused on transit zone

³⁵ "Reasons the US Chose Guantanamo," *New York Times*, 10 January 2002; Available at: <http://www.rose-hulman.edu/~delacova/us-relations/reasons.htm>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

³⁶ "Howard Air Force Base," *Howard Air Base Homepage*, April 1998 [database on-line]; Available at <http://www.howard.af.mil>; accessed on 27 May 2003.

³⁷ Ide, Douglas, SFC, "USSOUTHCOM's McCaffrey cites the Jungle Operations Training Center as one mission that could remain in Panama," *Update PANAMA*, February 1996 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.army.mil/soldiers/feb96/p18.html>; accessed on 20 August 2003.

³⁸ Farah, Douglas, "Handover of Panama Base Hinders Anti-Drug Efforts," *Washington Post*, 30 May 1999: Page: A19. Available at: <http://www.forusa.org/Programs/panama/Archives/34.htm>; accessed on 5 June 2003.

countries.³⁹ JIATF-E was responsible for supporting interdiction activities in the transit zone, primarily in the Caribbean and Central America.⁴⁰ Panama provided an advantage in responsiveness and cost-effectiveness in the counternarcotics battle while maintaining regional engagement with the armed forces in the AOR for JIATF-S, a coordination and communication center.⁴¹ In the past, AWACS aircraft flew counternarcotics missions into South America from Panama.⁴²

In the 1980s, international narcotics trafficking was a key interest while problems existed with intelligence gathering for counterterrorism warfare and countertrafficking. In summary, increased US military presence in the region and improved intelligence also strengthened and reassured friendly nations about US commitment to their security.

B. USSOUTHCOM: THEATER ARCHITECTURE POST 1999

Post 1999, the missions remained the same as during the 1990s, but with the addition of Plan Colombia and counterterrorism. At the same time that its missions were expanding in Latin America, the US military found itself confronted with the closure of its main base of operations, Howard Air Force base in Panama. The Panama Canal Treaty of 1977, required the US to turn over control of the canal to Panama and withdraw its troops by 31 December 1999, unless other arrangements were made.⁴³ The US and Panama were unable to negotiate an agreement for the US to remain in Panama after 1999.⁴⁴ The removal of US forces in Panama proved to be a drastic change for the US. The SOCSOUTH HQ a subordinate command of USSOUTHCOM transferred to Puerto Rico while other USSOUTHCOM HQ and other assets were relocated to Miami, Florida,

³⁹ ‘Howard Air Force Base,’ *Howard Air Base Homepage*, April 1998 [database on-line]; Available at <http://www.howard.af.mil>; accessed on 27 May 2003.

⁴⁰ Evers, Stacey, “Briefing, USSOUTHCOM Adapts to Meet Divergent Role,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 20 August 1997, Volume. 28, Issue. 007: 19.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Lindsay-Poland, John, “Republicans Push Pentagon to Stay at Howard Air Base – Military Sets up in Ecuador and Dutch Antilles,” *Panama Archives*, Number 27, July 1999 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.forusa.org/Programs/panama/Archives/34.htm>; accessed on 21 June 2003.

and the mission of JIATF-East was expanded to include JIATF-South.⁴⁵ In addition to this reorganization, the US would need to negotiate new bases in the AOR in order to maintain a forward presence.

1. Missions and Objectives

Since the closure of Howard AFB, US military missions in Latin America have increased, particularly in Colombia. Colombia's situation of enduring difficult social, economic and security challenges has serious implications for US national security and humanitarian interests.⁴⁶ Colombia's situation threatens regional stability, considered essential to the growth and sustainment of strong democracies and free market economies throughout the region.⁴⁷ Plan Colombia was former Colombian President Andres Pastrana's response to these interrelated challenges and is part of a regional strategy to combat narcotrafficking and guerrillas within the region, mainly Colombia.⁴⁸ Ecuador is an area of concern since it borders southern Colombia and targets the same economic and political strategies as Colombia.⁴⁹ The US and Colombia have cooperated for years towards fighting drug cartels; however, the rebels have become more deeply involved in illegal drug operations, such as cultivation to transshipment and using the proceeds to purchase arms, bribe government officials, and commit acts of terrorism. The US views threats from drugs and terrorism as two fronts in the same war.⁵⁰ September 11, 2001 marked a significant turning point for US policy toward Latin America, and Colombia in particular. Even though Colombia has become a lower priority, US military aid has

⁴⁵ "Relocation of U.S. Special Operations Command-South," *Defense Link*, U.S. Department of Defense, 29 January 1999 [database on-line]; Available at: http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan1999/b01291999_bt036-99.html; accessed on 23 September 2003.

⁴⁶ "White House Fact Sheet on Increased US Assistance for Colombia," *The White House. The Center for International Policy's Colombia Project*, August 4, 2000 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/080401.htm>; accessed on 17 August 2003.

⁴⁷ General Charles E. Wilhelm, United States Marine Corps, Commander-in-Chief, USUSSOUTHCOM, "Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources," [Statement of before the House Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on 15 February 2000]. Available at: http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2000_hr/000215-col-usa-usia4.htm; accessed on 15 August 2003.

⁴⁸ "White House Fact Sheet on Increased US Assistance for Colombia," *The White House. The Center for International Policy's Colombia Project*, August 4, 2000 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/080401.htm>; accessed on 17 August 2003.

⁴⁹ "The Regional Impact of Plan Colombia: Ecuador," *Colombia Solidarity Campaign*. Available at: <http://www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk/Solidarity%206/ecuador.html>; accessed on 5 February 2003.

⁵⁰ Bender, Bryan, "Narco-Terrorism in Colombia –Visible Cracks," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 9 July 2003: 4.

steadily increased. In August 2002 the “2002 Supplemental Appropriations Act for Further Recovery From and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States.” (P.L. 107-206. Sec. 601) broadened the purpose of lethal assistance from “limited to counternarcotics” to include counterterrorism.⁵¹ This allowed US-aided units to combat the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN), and paramilitary United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC).⁵²

USSOUTHCOM’s theater strategy, derived from the President Clinton’s 2000 National Security Strategy, was based on promoting regional security and stability among supporting democracies and these goals remained the same as those pursued in the 1990s, with the exceptions of Plan Colombia and terrorism. Building regional cooperative security is accomplished by promoting activities to develop cooperative arrangements and confidence building measures between neighbors to reduce inter-state and regional tensions.⁵³

USSOUTHCOM and the interagency developed a three-phased counterdrug air interdiction plan to maximize efforts against drug smuggling aircraft in the Andean region. FOLs play a key role in this plan. Phase I is a prioritized effort to assist Partner Nations in developing counterdrug capabilities. The US organizes, trains, and where necessary, equips the Partner Nations to conduct air, riverine, and ground operations against the drug traffickers. Phase II accomplishes regional decisive operations in which the Partner Nations conduct a series of offensive operations to neutralize all aspects of the illicit drug trade by isolating drug production areas from their markets and by extending

⁵¹ “2002 Supplemental Appropriations Act for Further Recovery From and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States.” (P.L. 107-206. Sec. 601) August 2, 2002 (a) COUNTER-TERRORISM AUTHORITY. (1) In fiscal year 2002, funds available to the Department of State for assistance to the Government of Colombia shall be available to support a unified campaign against narcotics trafficking, against activities by organizations designated as terrorist organizations such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC).

⁵² Vaicius, Ingrid, and Adam Isacson, “The “War on Drugs” meets the “War on Terror: The United States’ military involvement in Colombia climbs to the next level,” February 2003 [document on-line]; Available at: <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/0302ipr.pdf>; 25 August 2003.

⁵³ “USSOUTHCOM’s Theater Strategy,” *USSOUTHCOM Homepage*, 5 March 2003 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.USSOUTHCOM.mil/pa/Facts/Strategy.htm>; accessed on 7 July 2003.

police presence into the drug production areas.⁵⁴ Phase III is the sustainment phase that allows Partner Nations to adapt to the constantly evolving drug trafficker attempts to outmaneuver the Partner Nations' military and law enforcement forces. FOLs allow the counterdrug assets to use source zone operational support, which is required to successfully employ the counterdrug campaign plan. Additionally, critical Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions from the FOLs enhance the coupling of US detection and monitoring assets with partner nation interceptors.⁵⁵

2. Theater Architecture

The success and effectiveness of counterdrug efforts is contingent upon timely, accurate, predictive, and actionable intelligence.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, there are deficiencies regarding significant ISR in the source zone that impact the timely and actionable tactical intelligence needed to counter diverse and mobile drug trafficking operations.⁵⁷ Additionally, the Department of Defense's Unified Command Plan known as VISION 21 transferred the responsibility for the adjacent waters above Brazil and an additional portion of the Atlantic Ocean to USSOUTHCOM in 1999 and 2000, placing even greater strains on US intelligence capabilities.⁵⁸ The following paragraphs describe the positive changes and also the shortcomings that characterized the theater architecture after the closure of Howard AFB in 1999 and suggest how FOLs can remedy these deficiencies.

Since 1999, USSOUTHCOM has continued to operate 17 radar sites, mostly in Peru and Colombia, each typically staffed by 35 personnel to detect smuggling flights.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ General Charles E. Wilhelm, United States Marine Corps, Commander-in-Chief, USUSSOUTHCOM, "Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources," [Statement of before the House Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on 15 February 2000]. Available at: http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2000_hr/000215-col-usa-usia4.htm' accessed on 15 August 2003.

⁵⁵ General Charles E. Wilhelm, United States Marine Corps, Commander-in-Chief, USUSSOUTHCOM, "Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources," [Statement of before the House Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on 15 February 2000]. Available at: http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2000_hr/000215-col-usa-usia4.htm' accessed on 15 August 2003.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "US Southern Command Mission: Expanded Area of Operation," *USSOUTHCOM Homepage* [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.USSOUTHCOM.mil/pa/Facts/Expansion.htm>; 7 June 2003.

⁵⁹ Lindsay-Poland, John, "Republicans Push Pentagon to Stay at Howard Air Base – Military Sets up in Ecuador and Dutch Antilles," *Panama Archives*, Number 27, July 1999 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.forusa.org/Programs/panama/Archives/34.htm>; accessed on 21 June 2003.

Information gathered from existing radar sites has been useful; however, they do not conduct aerial interdiction flights that allow the US to identify positively suspicious aircraft. The number of Ground Based Radars (GBRs) has increased from four to seven, three in Peru (Iquitos, Andoas, Pucallpa) and four in Colombia (San Jose del Guaviare, Marandua, Leticia, and Tres Esquinas).⁶⁰ Other sites are mobilized in secret locations or are part of the Air Force's Caribbean Basin Radar Network, which operates in six countries. Two of these sites are Colombia's Caribbean coast in Riohacha and the island of San Andres.⁶¹ The three ROTHRS that existed prior to 1999 continue to be operational.⁶² Reinforcing the growing US military contribution to Plan Colombia and to President Bush's Andean Counternarcotics Initiative, radar sites and the FOLs constitute a cordon around Colombia. Combined efforts from the FOLs and the radar sites that monitor the skies and waters of the region are fundamental for increased surveillance operations in Washington's Andean drug war.⁶³

According to General Peter Pace, former USCINCSO, "Puerto Rico has replaced Panama for forward basing headquarters in the region."⁶⁴ After Panama, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico has the highest concentration of US military forces in Latin America. Furthermore, the "National Defense Authorization Act" (P.L. 107-107. Section 1049) authorizes the termination of military training on the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico.⁶⁵ It is now the headquarters of Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH). Fort

⁶⁰ "Counter-Drug Radar sites," *Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to US defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean*. [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/radar.htm>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

⁶¹ "USSOUTHCOM Facilities on 'Forward Operating Locations,'" USSOUTHCOM Homepage [database on-line] Available at <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/radar.htm>

⁶² "Southern Command Presence in Puerto Rico," *Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to US defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean*. [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/scpr.htm>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

⁶³ Lindsay-Poland, John, "Republicans Push Pentagon to Stay at Howard Air Base – Military Sets up in Ecuador and Dutch Antilles," *Panama Archives*, Number 27, July 1999 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.forusa.org/Programs/panama/Archives/34.htm>; accessed on 21 June 2003.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ "National Defense Authorization Act" (P.L. 107-107), 28 December 2001. Sec. 1049. Termination Of Referendum Requirement Regarding Continuation of Military Training on Island of Vieques, Puerto Rico, and Imposition of Additional Conditions on Closure of Training Range. For further information on this issue reference "Sec. 1503. Conditions on Closure of Vieques Naval Training Range."

Buchanan, Puerto Rico hosts the headquarters of the US Army South (USARSO), USSOUTHCOM's army component.⁶⁶ The 56th Signal Battalion, the US Army Garrison Command, a Military Intelligence Detachment, and a Military Intelligence Support Detachment were all transferred from Fort Clayton, Panama to Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico.⁶⁷

The loss of Howard AFB, Panama resulted in the loss of runway access in the AOR. At the time, Soto Cano, Honduras remained the US military's only capable airfield in Latin America; it stills plays a key role combating drugs.⁶⁸ Without AWACS capabilities, airtime operations would not be as effective against narcotraffickers. If E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) were forced to operate from their home base of Tinker AFB, Oklahoma, operations would require a tanker for air refueling to and from the mission. Thus, the missions would involve three aircraft versus one, which would be much more costly.⁶⁹ The development of FOLs resolved this problem by allowing AWACS capabilities to continue within the AOR.

Today, the US continues to carry out military operations from Soto Cano AB and Guantanamo Bay Naval Station. The US utilizes the existing Honduran military facility on a "semi-permanent" basis based on an agreement with the Honduran government.⁷⁰ The JTF-Bravo's current mission is "to enhance cooperative regional security through forward presence and peacetime engagement operations."⁷¹ Additionally, the US Navy has maintained a presence in Guantanamo Bay since 1903; it provides support for US

⁶⁶ "Southern Command Presence in Puerto Rico," *Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to US defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean*. [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/scpr.htm>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "Enrique Soto Cano Air Force Base Honduras," *Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to the US defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean*. [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/soto.htm>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

⁶⁹ "United States Southern Command: Profile of the US Southern Command," USSOUTHCOM Homepage April 1998 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.USSOUTHCOM.com/USSOUTHCOM/graphics/profile.htm>; accessed on 27 May 2003.

⁷⁰ "Enrique Soto Cano Air Force Base Honduras," *Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to the US defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean*. [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/soto.htm>; accessed on 25 August 2003.

⁷¹ Ibid.

contingency operations in the Caribbean, support for counter-narcotics operations, and houses immigrants. There is no termination date for the US lease on the Guantanamo base. Currently, it is mostly known as the holding facility for captured Taliban and al Qaeda prisoners.⁷² These facilities augment FOL operations and maintain a semi-permanent presence in the region vital for US capabilities.

Partnership nation cooperation and the “will to succeed” are also crucial to the execution of the USSOUTHCOM strategy. The US has generally tried to maintain close relationships with Latin America. These relationships normally involve US training and assistance with an analysis of defense needs. The US military has invested time to enhance its relationship with the militaries of the region and their relationships with one another, through the provision of defense articles and coordination of multinational training exercises. Familiarity and contact with the region’s militaries can reduce tensions and contribute to a more positive military-to-military relationship and human security as well as alternative military roles. As a result, it is considered imperative that the US maintains its presence in the region.

C. FOLS

In 1999, US officials began negotiating arrangements to use existing airfields in Central America, the Caribbean and northern South America to base operations for counter-narcotics missions. The development of FOLs was part of the international counter-narcotics effort agreed to by all of the presidents of the Organization of American States (OAS) at the Miami and Santiago summits in 1994 and 1998, and at the United Nations General Assembly “Special Session on Counternarcotics” held in June 1998. The Department of Defense established FOLs to replace counterdrug operations conducted from Panama.

FOLs are usage agreements that allow US aircraft on detection and monitoring missions to utilize foreign airports or airbases for counternarcotics surveillance flights.⁷³

⁷² Olson, Jay. “Human Security in Latin America: US military programmes with Latin America and their impact on human security.” *Disarmament Forum* 2002, Available at <http://www.unidir.ch/pdf/articles/pdf-art1448.pdf>; accessed on 6 June 2003.

⁷³ “Fact Sheet: Combating Drugs Through Forward Operating Locations,” *US Department of State, International Information Programs, Washington File*, 9 August 2000. [database on-line]; Available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/drugs/fol.htm>.

These foreign facilities are owned and operated by the host country and are not considered US bases. However, these installations often serve similar purposes to those of a US military base. In each country, the US signed a ten-year interim agreement to upgrade and use the existing airfields for US personnel and equipment, in order to facilitate the tracking and interdiction of drugs on their way to the US.⁷⁴ The US makes aircraft, crew, and support personnel available; these rotate in and out of the FOLs as necessary. Meanwhile, small numbers of military, DEA, Coast Guard and Customs personnel are stationed at the FOLs to support US aircraft and coordinate communications and intelligence. Negotiations concerning the agreements caused a certain amount of controversy; however, the civilian government in each country ultimately ratified the agreement.

The FOLs are augmented by US military bases at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Soto Cano, Honduras.⁷⁵ Some of the FOLs are expected to host F-16s fighter jets, refueling aircraft and reconnaissance aircraft for missions in the Caribbean, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.⁷⁶ Other types of counternarcotics aircraft that will be utilized for counterdrug missions are the AWACs, KC-135 tanker, P-3 Orions, the C-130 Flowing Pen, and C-130 Furbish Breeze, image and communications intelligence aircraft, and Airborne Reconnaissance-Low image.⁷⁷

Four major sites were identified as FOLs: the Reina Beatrix International Airport in Aruba, the Hato International Airport in Curacao, Netherlands Antilles, the Eloy Alfaro International Airport in Manta, Ecuador, and the International Airport in San Salvador, co-located with Comalapa Airbase, El Salvador. Even though US defense officials have shown strong interest in the international airport at Liberia, Costa Rica, negotiations have not begun for an FOL agreement because it is likely to violate Costa

⁷⁴ Olson, Jay. "US military programmes with Latin America and their impact on human security." [document on-line]; Available at <http://www.unidir.ch/pdf/articles/pdf-art1448.pdf>; accessed on 6 June 2003.

⁷⁵ Lindsay-Poland, John, "Republicans Push Pentagon to Stay at Howard Air Base – Military Sets up in Ecuador and Dutch Antilles," *Panama Archives*, Number 27, July 1999 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.forusa.org/Programs/panama/Archives/34.htm>; accessed on 21 June 2003.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Evers, Stacey, "Briefing, USSOUTHCOM Adapts to Meet Divergent Role," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 20 August 1997, Volume. 28, Issue. 007: 19.

Rica's constitution.⁷⁸ It was mandatory for all of the FOLs to meet the requirements enumerated by Gen. Wilhelm, "Each site must be night and all weather capable with an air traffic control facility, an 8,000-foot runway with the capability to support small, medium and heavy aircraft. Each FOL must also have refueling and crash/fire rescue capabilities and minimum ramp, hangar, office, maintenance, and storage space."⁷⁹ Estimates of the funds needed to upgrade the airfields vary. According to Coletta Youngers, a senior advisor from the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), "even a minimal level of investment guarantees a long-term US presence."⁸⁰ The FOLs will significantly build military-to-military ties in those locations, and allows the US to highlight the military's subordinate role to democratic, civilian leadership.

After Howard AFB, Panama, was closed Coronet Oak was transferred to two locations in Puerto Rico: the Borinquen Airport in Aguadilla and the Muniz Air National Guard Base in Carolina. Meanwhile, other 24th wing assets moved to Puerto Rican airfields and FOLs in Aruba, Curacao, El Salvador and Ecuador.⁸¹ As of May 1999, JIATF-S merged with Key West facilities to consolidate the task force. Now it coordinates counternarcotics activities in both the source and transit zones. According to former USCINCSO, General Charles Wilhelm, "We have created a single organization capable of 'seeing' from the Florida Straits into the Andean Ridge."⁸²

⁷⁸ General Charles E. Wilhelm, United States Marine Corps, Commander-in-Chief, USUSSOUTHCOM, "Forward Operating Locations," [Statement before Senate Appropriations Committee Defense Subcommittee and the Military Construction Subcommittee on 14 July 1999]. Available at: http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2000_hr/000215-col-usa-usia4.htm accessed on 15 August 2003. The Costa Rican Constitution prohibits armed aircraft that belong to other nations to land without approval or permission of the legislature.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ In Lindsay-Poland, John, "Republicans Push Pentagon to Stay at Howard Air Base – Military Sets up in Ecuador and Dutch Antilles," *Panama Archives*, Number 27, July 1999 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.forusa.org/Programs/panama/Archives/34.htm>; accessed on 21 June 2003.

⁸¹ "United States Southern Command: Profile of the US Southern Command," *USSOUTHCOM Homepage*, April 1998 [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.usUSSOUTHCOM.com/USSOUTHCOM/graphics/profile.htm>; accessed on 27 May 2003.

⁸² General Charles E. Wilhelm, United States Marine Corps, Commander-in-Chief, USSOUTHCOM, "The Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, Narcotics and Terrorism," [Statement before Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on 22 June 1999]. Available at: http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2000_hr/000215-col-usa-usia4.htm accessed on 15 August 2003.

A “northern drug source zone” was based from Aruba and Curacao; the Andean region FOL was planned for Manta AB, and finally in 1999, a Central American FOL was established in Comalapa, El Salvador. Since 1999, Department of Defense and Customs aircraft have been operating from Aruba and Curacao. In Curacao, there are seven to nine aircraft, 12 to 15 permanently assigned staff personnel and approximately 200-300 temporarily deployed operations and maintenance personnel.⁸³ Aruba’s facilities are smaller, with four US customs aircraft, 15 permanently assigned personnel and 20 to 25 temporarily deployed personnel.⁸⁴ Personnel numbers are expected to start out small and grow as the FOLs facilities are improved. The Aruba-Curacao FOL provides effective, rapid response operation to the northern source zone, which includes Guajira Peninsula of Colombia and the Venezuelan border region as well as the large transit zones.⁸⁵ The Air National Guard F-16’s, US Navy P-3 Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), E-2 AEW, USAF E-3 AWACS conduct operations for ISR platforms.⁸⁶

In Central America, the El Salvador FOL ensures air coverage in the Eastern Pacific along the west coast of Mexico and Central America to focus on transit, while building enhanced counterdrug capabilities in the source zone. The El Salvador FOL is operated by the Navy and extends for detection into the Eastern Pacific where 50 percent of illegal narcotics are distributed to the US. This location has demonstrated the capability of operating the US Navy P-3 MPA, which contributes to its maritime counter-drug detection and monitoring missions. So far, there are four P-3 MPAs dedicated to support and target these missions. There are no limits on the number of US personnel who have access to any ports, air space, and unspecified government installations that the US considers pertinent concerning the El Salvador FOL. The Front Farabundo Marti for

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ “ONDCP Fact Sheet – Forward Operating Locations,” [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/international/factsht/operating.html>; accessed on 6 June 2003.

⁸⁶ Ana Maria Salazar, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support to the House of Representatives. “Counter-Drug Implications of the US leaving Panama,” [Statement before United States House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources, 9 June2000] [database on-line]; Available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/drugs.canal.htm>; accessed on 8 June 2003.

National Liberation (FMLN) argues that the agreement affects Salvadoran sovereignty, thus it should have required the ratification of more than a majority of a legislature.⁸⁷

D. THE CASE OF MANTA FOL

In 1999, Ecuador agreed to allow the US to develop what could become the Pentagon's most important air base in Latin America, the Manta FOL, especially after US operations are shut down in Puerto Rico. Manta FOL supports US surveillance operations over the drug-producing countries in the entire Andean region. An interim agreement for Manta FOL was signed in April 1999, but the FOL was not operational until mid-June 1999 due to infrastructure improvements.⁸⁸ Approximately five to eight US aircraft and 10-15 US support staff are allowed permanently in Manta. These assets include AWACS, US Customs P-3 (AEW), and US Navy P-3s.⁸⁹ A maximum of three medium P-3 sized aircraft and four large to medium aircraft are allowed to be operational from this FOL. Although the number of temporarily assigned staff may fluctuate, it is expected to reach the maximum number of 475 personnel during peak periods.⁹⁰ The case of Manta FOL is projected to be a significant asset in order for the US to carry out effectively its counternarcotics efforts within the region. It offers a fundamental geopolitical location for anti-drug efforts against Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia because of its close proximity to the Putumayo region (northern border of Ecuador and southern border of Colombia). This allows US aircraft accessibility to the area for surveillance and detection monitoring. According to Gen. Charles Wilhelm, Manta Air Base is "crucial" to achieving "full [air] coverage of Peru and Colombia and nearly all of Bolivia."⁹¹ Therefore, Ecuador plays a significant role in the US Andean Initiative, together with Colombia's cooperative attitude towards the US policy on drug

⁸⁷ Lindsay-Poland, John, "US Military Bases in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (FPIF), October 2001 [database on-line]; Available at <http://www.fpiif.org>; accessed on 4 June 2003.

⁸⁸ "United States, General Accounting Office, Drug Control: Narcotics Threat From Colombia Continues to Grow," *Report to Congressional Requesters no. GAO/NSIAD-99-136*, Washington, June 1999. [database on-line]; Available at <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/useftp.cgi?>; accessed on 27 May 2003.

⁸⁹ US Department of State. "Operating Arrangement for the Forward Operating Location at the Ecuadorian Air Force Base in Manta-Ecuador." *United States Treaties and Other International Agreements*, Guayaquil, June of 2000, p.9 (Annex 2).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ "Ecuador: The Newest Front-Line State," *Foreign Affairs*; Vol. 33, No. 26, 30 Jun 2001 (2001): p. 1.

trafficking.⁹² Intelligence gathered from FOLs and radar sites on suspicious flights are shared with host nation security forces, which carry out the “endgame operation.”⁹³

E. IMPACT OF FOLS

FOLs have had a positive impact on US security goals, such as counternarcotics activities and military-military relations. They have also served a number of Ecuadorian goals. However, opposition to the Manta FOL within Ecuador threatens democratic stability and calls into question the likelihood of continued Ecuador cooperation.

The FOLs have proven to be strategically important and cost-effective for the US. The locations of the FOLs have given the US access to both the transit zone and source zone countries, which are heavily involved in drug trafficking. Despite the ongoing fight against drug traffickers, the US’ efforts have steadily improved since the FOLs have been established. According to Ana Maria Salazar, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support, shortly after the FOLs were operational in their counter drug detection and monitoring missions, the interagency surpassed the missions that were previously flown from Howard AFB (primarily in the Caribbean) by 15 percent.⁹⁴ Manta FOL’s location vastly improves the US source zone and Eastern Pacific counterdrug presence, because of aircraft access to Southern Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia. Manta FOL is capable of 24 hour, 7 days a week, all-weather operations by AWACS Airborne Early Warning (AEW) aircraft, US Customs P-3 (AEW)

⁹² General Charles E. Wilhelm, United States Marine Corps, Commander-in-Chief, USUSSOUTHCOM, “The Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, Narcotics and Terrorism,” [Statement before Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on 22 June 1999]. Available at: http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2000_hr/000215-col-usa-usia4.htm’ accessed on 15 August 2003.

⁹³ “Endgame operation” refers to contacting, forcing down or shooting down suspected smugglers: US Counter-Drug Assistance to Latin America: A Program-by-Program Overview,” *Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)* p. 32. [database on-line]; Available at http://www.wola.org/publications/ddhr_military_overview.pdf.; accessed on 4 June 2003.

⁹⁴ Ana Maria Salazar, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support to the House of Representatives. “Counter-Drug Implications of the US leaving Panama,” [Statement before United States House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources, 9 June 2000] [database on-line]; Available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/drugs.canal.htm>; accessed on 8 June 2003.

and US Navy P-3s.⁹⁵ The interagency projected significantly greater source and transit zone coverage than operations from Panama once the FOLs were fully operational.⁹⁶ Concerns about the effect of the drug trade on Panama still remain. The DoD and the interagency continue to monitor the country and are ready to assist Panama. However, there is no counterdrug requirement for a FOL-like presence in Panama.

To date, all facilities, and Manta in particular, have required a significant amount of US investments for repairs and infrastructure improvements. The funding is included in the appropriation for the US' large Colombia aid package.⁹⁷ An October 2000 White House report to Congress indicated that the military costs to improve the FOLs totaled at least \$137.2 million.⁹⁸ While DoD reported that in September 1994, its cumulative treaty related cost in Panama since 1977 totaled an estimated \$813 million, an average of \$47.8 million per year.⁹⁹ The costs of the FOLs is projected be less expensive than past operations conducted from Howard because it is improving already existing facilities versus establishing a new military facility overseas.

Despite the opposition within Ecuador regarding the FOL, it has been beneficial for the province of Manta. The US military personnel temporarily stationed at Manta have brought in revenues throughout the provinces, which has improved local businesses

⁹⁵ US Department of State. "Operating Arrangement for the Forward Operating Location at the Ecuadorian Air Force Base in Manta-Ecuador." *United States Treaties and Other International Agreements*, Guayaquil, June of 2000, p.3 (Annex 2). At the same time, as illustrated in Manta FOL, the USAF contracts out the operation of the Manta Airbase and the "host nation riders" accompany the US counterdrug flights. "Host nation riders" are those Ecuadorian military members that must accompany all US flights, in accordance with the US – Ecuador agreement for Manta FOL.

⁹⁶ Ana Maria Salazar, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support, "Counter-Drug Implications of the US leaving Panama," [Statement before United States House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources, 9 June 2000] [database on-line]; Available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/drugs/canal.htm>; accessed on 15 August 2003.

⁹⁷ Walter Slocombe, Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), "DOD Counterdrug Forward Operating Locations," [Statement before the Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittees On Defense and Military Construction, Washington, July 14, 1999].

⁹⁸ "United States, The White House, Report on US Policy And Strategy Regarding Counterdrug Assistance to Colombia And Neighboring Countries." *Washington: The White House*, 26 October 2000. [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/10261.htm>; accessed on 5 Aug 2003.

⁹⁹ "General Accounting Office: DoD's Drawdown Plan for the U.S. Military in Panama." August 1995. GAO/NSIAD-95-183; Available at: <http://www.gao.gov/archive/1995/ns95183.pdf>; accessed on 22 September 2003.

and hotels. Moreover, infrastructure improvements for the base were completed through US aid.¹⁰⁰

The opening of the FOL has also contributed to steady increases in cooperation between the US and Ecuador, which in turn has improved the security situation. In March 2003, the Ecuadorian Navy deployed airplanes from its headquarters in Guayaquil to the Manta military base. These aircraft will be used to control the Colombia-Ecuador border. General Oswaldo Jarrin, chief of the Joint Command, says the Navy and the Air Force will stage a joint security operation to provide domestic security against possible incursions by armed groups.¹⁰¹ The combined efforts by both the US and Ecuadorian militaries clearly demonstrate how the FOLs have positively impacted their relations.

Although the US and Latin America continue to maintain military-to-military relations with one another, there are constituents who remain discontented with the US' presence or involvement in the region. Some Ecuadorians view the installation of US military bases in the Latin American region as a reflection of an increase in militarization of the continent.¹⁰² Although the US and Latin America's general objective of combating drug trafficking provides a platform for joint efforts, the opposition sees the "war on drugs" as an excuse for US military presence. At the same time, the 'war on terrorism' also became a considerable threat in the region. Adolfo Perez Esquivel, 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner and head of the non-governmental Peace and Justice Service (SERPAJ) in Argentina, suggested that intervening in internal social affairs in various countries could be another US objective. Esquivel referred to Ecuadorian President Lucio Gutierrez's foreign policy as ambiguous.¹⁰³ Esquivel believes that if Ecuador becomes involved in Plan Colombia, Latin America could turn into "a new Vietnam,"

¹⁰⁰ Olson, Jay. "US military programmes with Latin America and their impact on human security." [document on-line]; Available at <http://www.unidir.ch/pdf/articles/pdf-art1448.pdf>; accessed on 6 June 2003.

¹⁰¹ "Highlights from the Ecuadorian Press on 11 Mar 03: Navy Sending Aircraft to Manta." *Quito El Comercio. FBIS*, 11 Mar 2003 [database on-line]; Available at <https://portal.rcgb.osis.gov>; accessed on 7 June 2003.

¹⁰² Sanchez, Fernando, "LATIN AMERICA, Latin America could become a new Vietnam." *Noticias Aliadas/Latinamerica Press 2002, Independent news & analysis*, 15 May 2003 [database on-line]; Available at <http://www.lapress.org/article.asp?IssCode=&lanCode=1&artCode=3322>; accessed on 15 May 2003. p. 2.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

since allowing US troops in Ecuador will be perceived as counterinsurgency.¹⁰⁴ It is his belief that Ecuador's sovereignty will be disregarded and will be compelled into the "war against drugs." Esquivel believes that these are the main arguments against the development of FOLs and the increased US military involvement in the region.

The soldiers and DoD contract personnel that deploy to Latin America and the Caribbean outnumber personnel of US civilian agencies in the region. According to critics of the United States policy, such an abundance of military personnel in the region potentially conveys that the US prefers force to diplomacy when settling the region's problems, including conflicts with the US. Additionally, the military base's role to facilitate military operations has symbolized past US intervention and its use of local armies to control local populations and resources. Although, the 10-year leases for the FOLs are lease agreements to monitor drug traffic, they are perceived as potentially damaging to a country's sovereignty, which can generate strained relations with host countries.

Increasing US military involvement in Colombia and the spillover of refugees from the border and conflict in the Putumayo region have caused apprehension among the Ecuadorian society over the destabilizing role of the Manta base.¹⁰⁵ The democracy in Ecuador is under pressure from increasingly radicalized populist and indigenous movements. In the past few years Ecuador has had six presidents, which indicates the political instability that exists within the country.¹⁰⁶

Ecuadorian domestic politics continues to be a concern for the US. The last six years have witnessed a succession of presidents upholding widely varying opinions, as can be seen through Presidents Gustavo Noboa and Lucio Gutierrez. In 1999, after

¹⁰⁴ "Latin America wary of US military expansion." Published figures illustrate that US military overt and covert operations have clearly been expanding in the Andean Region, *FinalCall.com*, 11 May 2003 [database on-line]; Available at: http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/article_758.shtml. p. 1; accessed on 15 May 2003. Published figures illustrate that US military overt and covert operations have clearly been expanding in the Andean Region.

¹⁰⁵ Lindsay-Poland, John, "US Military Bases in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (FPIF), October 2001 [journal on-line]; Available at <http://www.fpif.org>; accessed on 4 June 2003.

¹⁰⁶ Sanchez, Fernando, "LATIN AMERICA, Latin America could become a new Vietnam." *Noticias Aliadas/Latinamerica Press 2002, Independent news & analysis*, 15 May 2003 [database on-line]; Available at <http://www.lapress.org/article.asp?IssCode=&lanCode=1&artCode=3322>; accessed on 15 May 2003. p. 2.

President Jamil Mahuad was overthrown, the former Vice President Noboa became the next Ecuadorian president. President Noboa allowed the US special privileges in the FOL at Manta, and increased Ecuadorian military presence along the southern Colombian border.¹⁰⁷ In contrast, prior to his victory in the presidential election, President Gutierrez participated in the revolutionary uprising of 2000 that was opposed to the Ecuadorian government's willingness to aid the US in Plan Colombia. In the beginning of his presidency, his support for Plan Colombia was questionable. However, he has minimized his opposition to Manta FOL and in fact, he has become a supporter.

Regional stability in Latin America remains a high priority for the US and USSOUTHCOM. Improved intelligence preparation of the battlefield, better cooperation between the armed forces and the national police, improved air-ground coordination, and more effective command and control have all contributed to the effectiveness of the FOLs on counterinsurgency in combating narcotrafficking.

In summary, the counterdrug FOLs are critical elements in the execution of the DoD's detection and monitoring mission in support of host nation and interagency efforts to curb the shipment of illegal drugs to the US. So far, the Department of Defense and their interagency partners have made significant progress over the past year, and with continued congressional support, they hope to continue in the future.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, opposition among local constituencies remains to be a factor that could hinder further cooperation from potential partners.

F. CONCLUSION

In the past, US interests revolved around promoting democracy, the threat of communism, humanitarian efforts, and narcotrafficking. A significant change since the closure of Howard AFB is the centrality of the Colombian problem, which exhibits all of the problems the US was concerned with in the 1990s, such as drug trafficking and

¹⁰⁷ Smith, Ron, "Drug War, Plan Colombia, and US Air Base at Manta, Test the New President," *Progressive Activism in Austin, TX*, 21 January 2003. Available at <http://www.progressiveaustin.org/ronsmith.htm>; accessed on 11 March 2003.

¹⁰⁸ Ana Maria Salazar, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support, "DoD official on Anti-Drug Efforts Following Panama Canal Transfer: US Department of State, International Information Programs on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources," [Statement before United States House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee, 9 June 2000] [document on-line]; Available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/drugs/canal.htm>.

democracy, and the new concerns of terrorism. Through continued efforts towards joint military training with foreign militaries, technology assistance and other assets for counterdrug missions and surveillance, the US has sustained its military presence in the region. After Panama, the development of FOLs was the US' much-needed response to go forward with its counternarcotics missions while attempting to improve relations with Latin America. The development of FOLs has also improved military-to-military relations and enabled Latin American countries to maintain their counterdrug efforts.

The closure of Howard AFB, Panama led to a more diverse and widely distributed US military presence in the Caribbean and South America. Although USSOUTHCOM has established radar sites to detect and monitor the seas and skies for drug traffickers, there still remains a need for a 'forward presence' within the region. One officer describes the Manta base as "the eyes and ears of Plan Colombia." Although the establishment of the FOLs has proven to be effective for the US and Latin American militaries in their "war against drugs," the FOLs have also reinvigorated opposition from constituencies within Latin America as the US transitions to include efforts towards the war on terrorism. This illustrates the dissension that continues amongst the Ecuadorian populace regarding US military at Manta.

The next chapter will focus specifically on the case of Manta FOL and the process of ratifying the US-Ecuador agreement involving Manta. The use of Manta by the US created several points of contention within Ecuador's internal politics, which led to growing instability in Ecuador's fragile government. The following chapters discuss the politics behind the initial US-Ecuadorian agreement on Manta AFB and its maintenance over time.

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III. ECUADOR: POLITICS OF THE MANTA FOL DURING THE MAHUAD PRESIDENCY

The signing of a ten-year agreement between the US and Ecuador in November 1999 established a new Forward Operating Location (FOL) in Manta, Ecuador. Although FOLs also exist in Aruba, Curacao, and El Salvador, their geographical locations do not permit the US to gather intelligence over the Andean region, while Manta's FOL grants US operations access over the Andean region.

However, Manta FOL remains a controversial debate within Ecuadorian politics. This case illustrates significant issues that must be considered when establishing a military presence in Latin America. Although there is an overlap of US and Latin American interests, the region has not been entirely willing to provide infrastructure for US military operations. Given their past experiences with the US military, Latin American countries are concerned with losing their sovereignty by granting the US access to their land for military operations.

This chapter examines both the overlapping interests and fears of Ecuadorian actors that made the Manta FOL agreement possible but controversial. The first section identifies the goals and preferences of the individuals and groups involved in ratifying the agreement. The second section describes the alliances of the groups in favor of or against the Manta accord. The third section analyzes the institutional context, which can be understood as the institutional framework where decisions are made. The fourth section addresses the political outcomes, that is, how Manta FOL was established and why it remains a controversial issue.

A. ACTORS

According to political economist Jeffrey Frieden, actors in political processes can be assumed to be rational, utility maximizers who, "attempt to achieve whatever goals they have by the best means at their disposal."¹⁰⁹ This does not mean that they will make the best objective decision to achieve their goals. They will most likely make the best

¹⁰⁹ Frieden, Jeffrey.A, and Tomz, Manuel, Modern Political Economy and Latin America Theory and Policy, Westview Press, 2001. p. 38.

decisions to achieve their goals given the best information available. Even though these decisions are assumed to be rational, they may be viewed as irrational because of the distortion derived from inaccurate or partial information. In the situation of Manta FOL, the actors are assumed to maximize their economic benefits as well as address security concerns to a lesser extent or merely seek some improvement for the current situation for themselves or their group.

In the case of the US-Ecuador lease agreement, the actors involved were the US government (including the Department of State and Department of Defense), President Jamil Mahuad, the Ecuadorian Congress, the Ecuadorian Military, and social organizations (Indigenous groups, Church).¹¹⁰ I have categorized the actors into two groups based on their interests towards the US presence in Ecuador. The two groups that formed were those in favor of the FOL and those opposed to it. The former consisted of the US, the Mahuad administration, and the Ecuadorian Military. The Ecuadorian congress and civil society organizations were mostly opposed to the Manta agreement, although there were some who favored the US presence.

In the first group, actors shared the general objectives of fighting against drug traffickers in a cost-effective manner and improving bilateral relations. The US recognized the need for alternative locations within the region to continue its counternarcotics efforts, and Manta FOL was projected to be the most vital of the three FOLs. According to General Barry R. McCaffrey, former White House drug control policy director, “from a geo-strategic standpoint, we’re going to be better off than we ever were in Panama. These new operations offer us the opportunity for far greater coverage than we’ve ever had in the region.”¹¹¹ Manta’s close proximity to source countries allows overall coverage of Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia, which was a feature that Panama did not offer. At the same time, conducting operations from the FOLs is more cost-effective for the US. According to Steve Lucas, former spokesman for

¹¹⁰ Although there are other existing social organizations within Ecuador, the two most prominent organizations regarding Manta AB are the indigenous movement and the Church.

¹¹¹ Faiola, Anthony, “US Flights Sow Discord in Ecuador – Military Base Is Hub For Anti-Drug Effort.” *Washington Post*, January 25, 2001: Page A01. [document on-line]; Available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A18702-2001Jan19?language=printer>; accessed on 3 June 2003.

USSOUTHCOM, the estimated total cost of infrastructure improvements at all four FOLs will be \$116 million, with yearly maintenance at an estimated \$14 million.¹¹² In 2001, the annual base operating expenses for the Manta FOL were estimated at \$7.4 million and these costs would increase in the following years.¹¹³ In comparison, the US spent \$78.5 million on operations from Panama in 1999.¹¹⁴ Although the agreement did not require the US to pay rent for the use of Manta AB, it did agree to refurbish the base's infrastructure. These improvements would allow AWACS and P-3 Orions to operate from Manta as well as enable direct flights for commercial aircraft.

As part of his economic reform agenda, President Mahuad proposed Manta AB as a future US FOL. President Mahuad's objectives were to remain in office, stimulate economic reform, and improve governance. He sought to improve Ecuador's economic situation through increased US aid and protection for its threatened borders. President Mahuad expected an accord for foreign debt as a payback in exchange for allowing the US to use Manta.¹¹⁵ President Mahuad could save funding on security issues and invest it towards other interests. The improved runway would also allow direct commercial flights thus facilitating Ecuadorian exports from its port while using US military forces as a deterrent along its borders. Mahuad believed the FOL would allow him to achieve both his monetary and security objectives.

In the past, the Ecuadorian Armed Forces (FAE) and the US military forces have engaged in joint military exercises to train against and combat narco-threats, which has led to an improved militarized cooperation between both countries. Moreover, intelligence collected by an increasing number of US military operations would improve the potential for counternarcotics cooperation between the US and Ecuador.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ "General Accounting Office: Drug Control: International Counterdrug Sites Being Developed." December 2000. GAO-01-063BR; Available at: www.gao.gov/new.items/d0163br.pdf; accessed on 22 September 2003.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ General Charles E. Wilhelm, commander-in-chief, US Southern Command Statement Of General Charles E. Wilhelm, United States Marine Corps Commander-In-Chief, United States Southern Command, "On International Trade," [Statement before The Senate Caucus On International Narcotics Control And

Information generated from Manta-based monitoring flights would greatly enhance the detection and interdiction of illegal drugs in the region. Although not documented, the FAE have limited funding due to the country's economic instability and US operations would be beneficial for the FAE in its fight against illegal activities and security concerns.

Since President Mahuad signed the peace accord with Peru, the main border problem along the northern border was guerrilla infiltration and the drug trade. US operations from Manta would assist with these problems and the US would also provide aid to modernize the base. But the Ecuadorian government and its Armed Forces would control the military operations from the base, which protects the country's sovereignty.¹¹⁷ Therefore, the Ecuadorian Congress' Foreign Affairs Committee and President Mahuad approved the US-Ecuador agreement for Manta AB. This document clarified that the cooperation between the US and Ecuador was aimed at the employment of aerial operations for detection, observation, tracking, and control of illicit drug trade that "compromises the sovereignty and dignity of the country."¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Mahuad affirmed that the US would not interfere with internal affairs incumbent upon the Ecuadorian government.¹¹⁹ Moreover, the US counternarcotics policy stated that, "Ecuador seeks to strengthen the technical capability of Ecuadorian police, military, and justice sector agencies to attack the narcotics trafficking problem in Ecuador, including improved border and port control, investigation and prosecution of narcotics trafficking organizations, and reduction of domestic drug consumption."¹²⁰ Due to Ecuador's economic instability this was the most effective way to achieve its goals since it was not receiving sufficient funds to improve its massive debt. Although the FAE have increased

The Senate Finance Committee, Subcommittee, 22 February 2000] [document on-line]; Available at: <http://ciponline.org/colombia/022207.htm>; accessed on 5 August 2003.

¹¹⁷ "Ecuador Press Highlights 11 November," *FBIS*, 11 November 1999. Document ID: FTS19991111001192, [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov>; accessed on 15 September 2003.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ US Department of State, "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 1999." [Released by the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Washington, DC, March 2000] [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/nrcpt>; accessed on 4 June 2003.

border security, unfortunately they lack the capabilities to conduct counter drug surveillance missions. However, having a US force presence permits critical data collection as well as increased forces along the border. The improved runway will also help exports of main industries, such as shrimp and tuna, which would be beneficial for its economy. For instance, Gwen Clair, the former US ambassador to Ecuador advised the improvements of the landing strip would foment interest among foreign airlines in the use of the terminal, and thus improve the Manta area's tourism and commercial sectors.¹²¹

Although the actors in favor of Manta FOL wanted to achieve the most economically beneficial and security oriented goals, their interpretations were not always the same. The US counternarcotics policy in Ecuador focused on strengthening the technical capability of Ecuadorian police, military and justice sector agencies to attack the narcotics trafficking problem in Ecuador. Focused on its interests in the region, the US also wanted a base for cost-efficient operations in the coca-producing countries of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. Meanwhile, President Mahuad was concerned with staying in office, improving Ecuador's economic instability through US aid as well as addressing external threats. He assumed the US would concede to an accord on the foreign debt as a payback.¹²² At the same time, the Ecuadorian military was concerned with the possible implications resulting from US operations. Even though US military assistance would be a significant asset for its fight against drug traffickers and guerillas, there were some military officers who opposed the US presence. According to Col. Jorge Brito, one of Ecuador's chief military strategists, the base was part of the "regionalization" of the Colombian conflict and was closely tied to Plan Colombia.¹²³ Other concerns were the military implications of the agreement, because the base would serve as "the eyes and

¹²¹ Lucas, Kintto, "POLITICS-ECUADOR: Military Base Feeds Threat of Involvement in War." Available at: http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/nov00/19_39_063.htm; accessed on 4 June 2003.

¹²² Rohter, Larry, "As US Military Settles In, Some in Ecuador Have Doubts." *New York Times*, 31 December 2000 [database on-line]; Available at www.tni.org/drugs/document/nyt3112000.htm; accessed on 7 June 2003.

¹²³ Lucas, Kintto, "POLITICS-ECUADOR: Military Base Feeds Threat of Involvement in War." Available at: http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/nov00/19_39_063.htm; accessed on 4 June 2003.

ears of Plan Colombia.”¹²⁴ This regionalization could provoke further threats or attacks from guerillas that targeted those assisting Plan Colombia.

By contrast, after dollarization of the Ecuadorian economy, the indigenous groups feared that establishing a FOL would further US intervention. They were concerned that the US military presence would threaten their sovereignty. Some believed that the US had ulterior motives for using Manta, which could include a staging area for a “bigger plan” that consisted of more permanent operations and possibly targeting terrorist organizations in addition to drug traffickers.¹²⁵ Additionally, some thought this situation would invite intervention, rather than negotiation in a crisis. Ecuadorian Congressman Henry Llanes stated that, “we are compromising our neutrality in the Colombian conflict with Manta base, dragging ourselves into a war between the Americans and their enemies in Colombia.”¹²⁶ On the other hand, military commanders thought that the spillover effect from drug traffickers and guerrillas was inevitable whether the US was present or not due to Ecuador’s close proximity to Colombia.¹²⁷ Colonel Jose Bohorquez, commander of the air base said that, “it was a result of the geography and the situation in Colombia, not of the American presence, and we should be clear about that.”¹²⁸ Even Lt. Colonel Edison Sanchez, who would eventually support an indigenous uprising against Mahuad’s government advised, "Ecuador was already involved in a conflict that was becoming regional."¹²⁹

124 Ibid.

125 Lindsay-Poland, John, “US Military Bases in Latin America and the Caribbean.” *Foreign Policy in Focus* (FPIF), Vol. 6, No. 35 October 2001 [journal on-line]; Available at <http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/pdf/vol16/35ifmilbase.pdf>; accessed on 4 June 2003. p. 2.

126 Faiola, Anthony, “US Flights Sow Discord in Ecuador – Military Base Is Hub For Anti-Drug Effort.” *Washington Post*, 25 January 2001: Page A01. [database on-line] Available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A18702-2001Jan19?language=printer>; accessed on 3 June 2003.

127 Rohter, Larry, “As US Military Settles In, Some in Ecuador Have Doubts.” *New York Times*, 31 December 2000 [database on-line]; Available at www.tni.org/drugs/document/nyt3112000.htm; accessed on 7 June 2003.

128 Ibid.

129 Lucas, Kintto, “POLITICS-ECUADOR: Military Base Feeds Threat of Involvement in War.” Available at: http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/nov00/19_39_063.htm; accessed on

Gilberto Talahua, president of the Committee on Indigenous Affairs in parliament said, “the accord was signed in violation of constitutional norms and without citizen discussion or participation.”¹³⁰ Ecuador’s Congress never approved the agreement, as required by the Constitution and it was therefore, deemed unconstitutional and created strong opposition towards the US.¹³¹ Additionally, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), numerous social and non-governmental organizations, and several political parties, filed a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court, claiming the agreement was unconstitutional. ¹³² In Manta’s case, the President believed that Congress’ approval was not required to ratify the agreement. As a result, Congressional representatives assumed that the agreement was ratified under false pretenses and thus violated the Constitution. Because both the US and Ecuador governments circumvented Congress’ approval authority, this soured relations.¹³³

As a result the Ecuadorian Congress considered the “convenio”¹³⁴ unconstitutional until further review. Despite the unusual absence of Congress’ role, eventually the document was deemed constitutional. (Section C, below, provides an extended discussion of the constitutionality issue.) Opposition continued – for some Congressional members because they did not want the American presence, and for others it was a way to assert a role for Congress in the political process. Antonio Posso, an influential leftist member of Congress insisted that, “this base is a provocation to all of the irregular forces in Colombia.”¹³⁵ So far the Colombian guerrillas have attacked the oil pipeline, while paramilitary groups have killed people on Ecuadorian territory, and

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Lindsay-Poland, John, “US Military Bases in Latin America and the Caribbean.” *Foreign Policy in Focus* (FPIF), Vol. 6, No. 35 October 2001 [journal on-line]; Available at <http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/pdf/vol16/35ifmilbase.pdf>; accessed on 4 June 2003. p. 2.

¹³² Lucas, Kintto, “POLITICS-ECUADOR: Military Base Feeds Threat of Involvement in War.” Available at: http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/nov00/19_39_063.htm; accessed on 17 June 2003.

¹³³ Lindsay-Poland, John, “US Military Bases in Latin America and the Caribbean.” *Foreign Policy in Focus* (FPIF), Vol. 6, No. 35 October 2001 [journal on-line]; Available at <http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/pdf/vol16/35ifmilbase.pdf>; accessed on 4 June 2003. p. 2.

¹³⁴ The literal translation of the Spanish word “convenio” in the English language is “agreement.”

¹³⁵ Rohter, Larry, “As US Military Settles In, Some in Ecuador Have Doubts.” *New York Times*, 31 December 2000 [database on-line]; Available at www.tni.org/drugs/document/nyt3112000.htm; accessed on 7 June 2003.

some Ecuadorians are afraid that the military installation could be viewed as another possible target for terrorists attacks.¹³⁶ The reason for some Congressional representatives' hostility towards the accord was to make a political statement against the Presidency. This issue eventually contributed to the environment that led to a coup d'etat.

One point of contention was that US military bases represented a commitment of resources in the region, displacing assistance for civil society and social programs. In addition, US military installations have been characterized by a lack of transparency and accountability.¹³⁷ For instance, bases in Puerto Rico distort islanders' choices about political status, while training in Vieques represents an extreme of undemocratic policy.¹³⁸

Overseas bases similar to Manta have presented problems for environmental cleanup that has been interpreted as an abuse to the host country's human rights.¹³⁹ From the Latin American perspective, once Washington no longer has interests in a region, the US normally abandons both jurisdiction and responsibility for the contamination its military has caused.¹⁴⁰ This has contributed to the pessimism about the FOL.

B. ALLIANCES

Although President Mahuad was able to ratify a peace treaty with Peru, he failed to improve the economic situation and the indigenous people held an uprising against the administration. Some of factors that weakened his political support were adopting a dollarized economy, proposing Manta AB as an FOL, and the increasing financial crisis. In the beginning of 2000, the indigenous movement declared their intention to force the exit of the three powers¹⁴¹ of the State. In the beginning, the military supported the administration, but later they demonstrated their support for the march to oust President

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Lindsay-Poland, John, "US Military Bases in Latin America and the Caribbean." *Foreign Policy in Focus* (FPIF), October 2001 [database on-line]; Available at: http://www.americaspolicy.org/briefs/2001/body_v6n35milbase.html; accessed on 18 June 2003.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches

Mahuad. This shift in support created confusion within Congress and the administration. The leader of the mid-level officers who had joined the indigenous uprising, Colonel Lucio Gutierrez, disavowed the President of the Republic, the National Congress, and the Supreme Court. He replaced them with a Sovereign Civic and Military Junta consisting of a triumvirate: Antonio Vargas, President of the CONAIE, Colonel Lucio Gutierrez, and Carlos Solorzano (Ex-president of the Supreme Court).¹⁴² “The only certainty is that there is a tacit pact between the indigenous people and the colonels: if the movement advances and achieves a blockade of the three powers’ seat, then officers will support them.”¹⁴³ In order to maintain unity of the armed forces, Colonel Gutierrez ceded his place in the Triumvirate, which allowed the interim President Noboa to succeed former President Mahuad. In the end, there was a lack of oversight in the judicial branch, military support was lost, and the actors remained in the same groups.

C. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The Ecuadorian Constitution prescribes a complex process of ratification of international agreements. Article 171, number 13 of the Ecuadorian Constitution, defines the President of the Republic’s duties as follows: He is allowed to define foreign policy, to direct international relations, to celebrate and to ratify treaties and international treaties, previous approval of the National Congress, when the Constitution demands it. His duty is to protect Ecuador’s national sovereignty by defending the integrity and independence of the State.¹⁴⁴ He is committed to send, to modify, or to countermand some laws.¹⁴⁵ Most importantly, Article 162 clarifies that the approval of treaties and agreements, will occur in a single debate in Congress and the agreement must be approved by a majority of Congress.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, Article 161, Number 2 plainly

¹⁴² Paladines Comacho, Carlos, Eduardo, “Civil Military Operations in Ecuador” (Master’s Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2003), 39.

¹⁴³ Paladines Comacho, Carlos, Eduardo, “Civil Military Operations in Ecuador” (Master’s Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2003), 39.

¹⁴⁴ *Constitucion Politica de Ecuador*, 1998. Article 171, Number 13. Available at: <http://georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Ecuador.ecuador.html>; accessed on 19 June 2003.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

states that Congress is entrusted with the approval of or withdrawal from international treaties and agreements.¹⁴⁷

Previously, with respect to the conformity of the Constitution a treaty or agreement required the opinion of the Constitutional Court. Also, since Congress did not review the agreement initially some opposers argued that the Constitutional Court should intervene. A treaty or agreement that demands a constitutional reform must be sent to the Constitutional Court prior to approval.¹⁴⁸ Heinz Moeller, former Chairman of the Ecuadorian Foreign Affairs Committee, stated that the agreement did fall under Article 161 of the Ecuadorian Constitution because the article refers to matters of national territory or borders.¹⁴⁹ Since this agreement did not compromise either of those, the agreement did not require Congress' approval.

At the same time, Nina Pacari, who led the indigenous political party Pachakutik was selected as the second vice president of the 1998 Congress.¹⁵⁰ Described as one the main opponents to the US military presence, her appointment demonstrated that the indigenous population was beginning to establish a significant force in politics. Consequently, this would lead to more problems in attaining Congress' approval for the agreement.

Moreover, Article 163 ensures that the norms contained in treaties and international treaties, once promulgated in the Official Registry, will comprise the legal ordering of the Republic and will prevail over laws and other norms of smaller hierarchy.¹⁵¹ Congress believed the international agreement required Congressional approval even though President Mahuad did not treat this international agreement as a law. Congress believed he had violated this rule, which caused further dissension

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ "Ecuador Press Highlights 11 November," *FBIS*, 11 November 1999. Document ID: FTS19991111001192, [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov>; accessed on 15 September 2003.

¹⁵⁰ *Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs*, August 2002. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2906.htm>; accessed on 3 July 2003.

¹⁵¹ *Constitucion Politica de Ecuador*, 1998. Article 163, Number 13. Available at: <http://georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Ecuador.ecuador.html>; accessed on 19 June 2003.

amongst the public. Religious leader Elsie Monge, president of the Ecumenical Commission on Human Rights, argued that the need for Congressional approval applied to those agreements that “establish political or military alliances, which occurs in this case.”¹⁵² Therefore, although the President is one of the main actors involved, Congress’ approval must also be present.

Historically, opposition forces in Congress have been loosely organized and they often unite to block the administration’s initiatives and remove cabinet members.¹⁵³ The constitution of 1998 strengthened the executive branch by eliminating mid-term congressional elections, but sustained Congress’ power to challenge cabinet ministers.¹⁵⁴ By drawing up a convenio, instead of a treaty, the President and the Executive branch sought to remain in control and avoid the need for Congressional approval. The President knew the difficulty and opposition he would face from Congress if he had attempted to ratify a treaty. A treaty entails a more complex and intertwined process, which requires Congress’ final approval and less authority to the President and the Executive Branch. Thus, ratifying a convenio appeared to be a simpler process for the President to undertake.

D. POLICY OUTCOMES

President Mahuad and current foreign minister Heinz Moeller, then president of the International Affairs Committee in the Ecuadorian Congress, signed the agreement despite the controversial debate surrounding this issue.¹⁵⁵ Congress had no control or participation in the negotiation process of the agreement. This document granted the use of the base to the US armed forces. Although it was not brought before the full Congress or public opinion until after it was signed, the Noboa government has upheld the

¹⁵² Lucas, Kintto, “POLITICS-ECUADOR: Military Base Feeds Threat of Involvement in War.” Available at: http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/nov00/19_39_063.htm; accessed on 17 June 2003.

¹⁵³ *Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs*, August 2002. Available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2906.htm>; accessed on 3 July 2003.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Lucas, Kintto, “POLITICS-ECUADOR: Military Base Feeds Threat of Involvement in War.” Available at: http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/nov00/19_39_063.htm; accessed on 4 June 2003.

document's validity. The establishment of Manta FOL has significantly increased the potential for counternarcotics cooperation between the US and Ecuador.¹⁵⁶

Since the Presidency considered the document between the two governments an agreement and not a treaty, the government thought viable to go forward with the project without a vote in Congress.¹⁵⁷ At the time, Mahuad's popularity had decreased to 14 percent of voter support, the lowest in the country's history.¹⁵⁸ He felt he needed to seize any opportunity for US aid to improve the economy, even in the form of the controversial Manta agreement.¹⁵⁹ However, some Congress members believed the agreement needed further review. The approval was contingent upon whether or not Congress considered the conditions to be beneficial to the Ecuadorian nation.¹⁶⁰ Until then, the agreement was regarded as unconstitutional. Nevertheless, Congress had not approved the bilateral agreement concerning Manta before President Mahuad ratified the agreement. After the agreement was signed both by Ecuador and the US, the Ecuadorian Congress conducted another review of the document. After the coup, Congress reviewed the agreement and deemed it more economically beneficial for Ecuador therefore it deemed the agreement constitutional.

Though finalized under unusual circumstances, the agreement was considered valid by the President, Executive branch, Foreign Ministers, and eventually the Ecuadorian Congress. Despite the relative strength of some actors who could have overturned the decision, this was not the case. Exceptions to the rules within the institution delegated by the Constitution allowed the agreement between the US and

¹⁵⁶ "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 1999," [Released by the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, US Department of State, Washington, DC, March 2000].

¹⁵⁷ Rohter, Larry, "As US Military Settles In, Some in Ecuador Have Doubts," *New York Times*, 31 December 2000 [database on-line]; Available at www.tni.org/drugs/document/nyt3112000.htm; accessed on 7 June 2003.

¹⁵⁸ "Special Report: Border Situation with Ecuador," *FBIS*, FTS19991001001777. 27 September 1999, [database on-line]; Available at https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet/Resposiory?encoded=legacy_products:FTS19991001001777; accessed on 9 June 2003.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Rohter, Larry, "As US Military Settles In, Some in Ecuador Have Doubts," *New York Times*, 31 December 2000 [database on-line]; Available at www.tni.org/drugs/document/nyt3112000.htm; accessed on 7 June 2003.

Ecuador to be legally approved. When Gustavo Noboa assumed the presidency after Mahuad's removal from office, the country's economic and political instability was evident. A US proposal to boost its \$70 million in aid to offset the dangers caused by Plan Colombia greatly facilitated President Noboa's efforts to implement the Manta agreement.¹⁶¹ Congress could have demonstrated a more stubborn opposition and refused to allow the US to establish the FOL. However, this would have also been potentially detrimental for Ecuador's economy. This would have forced the US to rely on operations from the three other existing FOLs to compensate for missions from Manta. Although this would not have been in the US' best interests, the US would continue to maintain its focus on its counterdrug policy to combat narcotraffickers. While maintaining strong bilateral relationships throughout the AOR, we promote regional cooperation and transparent operations among all our regional partners.¹⁶²

In sum, some political bargaining made it possible to approve the agreement and declare it constitutional. Nevertheless the ambiguity of the interpretations regarding the legal framework opened the door for Mahuad's opposition to capitalize on his political miscalculations leading to the coup.

E. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the President's preferences drove the ratification of the accord forward regardless of opposition from other actors with conflicting preferences because of the institutional framework. The institutional setting constrained him because he was faced with a controversial issue, while he was in a politically weak position. The ambiguity in the institutional framework, and changing political balance were key factors that caused controversy during the negotiation process of the agreement. Nevertheless, the power shifts, the institutional changes, the changing preferences, and the distribution of power were all determinants that eventually led to ratifying the document. At the time,

¹⁶¹ Faiola, Anthony, "US Flights Sow Discord in Ecuador – Military Base Is Hub For Anti-Drug Effort" *Washington Post*, January 25, 2001: Page A01. [database on-line]; Available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A18702-2001Jan19?language=printer>; accessed on 3 June 2003.

¹⁶² General Peter Pace, United States Marine Corps Commander-in-Chief, US Southern Command, "United States Southern Command Testimony," [Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee March 27, 2001] [database on-line]; Available at <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/032701.htm>; accessed on 7 June 2003.

President Mahuad's popularity had fallen drastically to 14 percent of voter support, and he was placed in a precarious position.¹⁶³ His oppressors were determined to remove him from office due to his inability to improve the economy. Stabilizing the economy and removing the foreign debt were not feasible at the time, but he still attempted to establish this agreement to improve the situation. As a result, President Mahuad wanted to seize any aid from the US, which included the collaboration in operating Manta with the US, under the pretext of combating drug trafficking.¹⁶⁴ Although, he was aware of the opposition he would receive toward the agreement, he continued to negotiate with the US. Therefore, he proceeded through the threshold to ratify a sustainable agreement despite the potential ramifications it would have on his term of office.

In spite of the obstacles that the Republic of Ecuador and the US government were confronted with concerning the ten-year lease agreement, it still remains constitutional today. However, after examining policy foundations for military bases in the region, the US should review existing agreements for overseas bases using democratic criteria. The Congress modified its position on the US – Ecuador agreement, which allowed the document to remain constitutional.

In the case of Manta FOL, if the Ecuadorian President had initially consulted both Congress and the public prior to the agreement, this may have prevented much of the controversy during the negotiation process. The US must consider how the domestic politics of a country could affect the future of US military operations within Latin America. The Congressional decision to soften its position against Manta FOL and deem it constitutional was an exception to the Constitutional law. Therefore, in the future the US should not attempt to establish military access or employ controversial military missions through private means, such as the outsourcing of military operations, without approval from the host government and its constituents. The decision was validated

¹⁶³ "Border Situation with Ecuador," *FBIS*, FTS19991001001777, 27 September 1999. [database online]; Available at https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet/Resposiory?encoded=legacy_products:FTS19991001001777; accessed on 9 June 2003.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

according to the Ecuadorian Constitution that determined the framework, which allowed the agreement to be constitutional.

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IV. POLITICS OF THE MANTA FOL DURING THE GUTIERREZ PRESIDENCY

The 2000 coup represented a break in the democratic process in Ecuadorian politics as well as a turning point for US-Ecuador relations. Lucio Gutierrez, the ex-colonel in the Ecuadorian Armed Forces (FAE) who had led the 2000 coup d'état against President Mahuad in part out of opposition to the Manta AB agreement, was elected President of Ecuador in the 2002 elections. Surprisingly, despite Gutierrez' election and continuing tensions in US-Ecuador relations over Manta AB and other rising areas of concern, the maintenance of Manta AB does not seem to be threatened.

In this chapter, I will address why Manta remains viable despite the changes in administrations, policy preferences, and alliances. First, I will analyze why Gutierrez changed his position on the Manta AB. Next, I will describe how this change has affected the alliances since the implementation of the Manta FOL agreement. The actors and institutional context remain unchanged for the presidencies of Mahuad and Gutierrez, with the exception of presidential administrations. Finally, I will discuss why Manta FOL continues to remain viable. The basic assumption during this analysis is that the changing international and domestic political influences have impacted the actors' preferences while the institutional framework remains unchanged.

A. ACTORS

In the beginning of Gutierrez's presidency, the US and the Ecuadorian Military were firm supporters of the maintenance of the US FOL at Manta AB. In contrast, the Gutierrez administration, Congress and the social organizations opposed the FOL.¹⁶⁵ Subsequently, President Gutierrez's change of heart has had a significant effect on the politics of the Manta FOL.

Prior to and in the beginning of Gutierrez's presidency, a number of leftist organizations supported the former colonel, most notably the Popular Democratic Movement (MPD), which is the electoral front of the Ecuadorian Communist Party

¹⁶⁵ Although some of the members of this group favored the US presence, they were vastly the minority.

(Marxist-Leninist). The CONAIE, the National Confederation of Peasant, and the Indigenous and Black Organizations all backed Gutierrez as well.¹⁶⁶ The CONAIE and the Social Movements Coordinating Board (CMS) are comprised of the following: ECUARUNARI (Confederation of Peoples of the Kichwa Nationality of Ecuador) which represents the indigenous communities of the Sierra region, CONAICE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities from the Ecuadorian Coast) which represents those of the coast region, and the CONFENAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities from the Ecuadorian Amazon Region) which represents the Amazon indigenous communities.¹⁶⁷

B. GUTIERREZ'S PREFERENCES

Since his inauguration, President Gutierrez has shifted towards the right, with his neoliberal economic reform policies and his support of Manta causing him to lose support from part of the indigenous movement. This loss of support altered the alliance of the government and now President Gutierrez has aligned himself with other parties. Gutierrez's supporters prior to and in the beginning of his presidency were comprised mainly of the indigenous peoples. The indigenous peoples retained their preferences and expected the administration to fulfill its promises to them, but President Gutierrez had failed to fulfill his promises, which caused them to turn against him.

In 2000, President Gutierrez led a group of disgruntled junior officers and 5,000 Indian protestors that forced out President Jamil Mahuad, a highly unpopular president suspected of corruption. Later, when the armed forces acceded to US demands to step down and allow former vice-president Gustavo Noboa to take office, the indigenous people considered those military members as betrayers and unsupportive of the coup. President Gustavo Noboa, successor to Mahuad, supported free-markets, willingly aided Plan Colombia, and allowed the US privileges at Manta FOL.¹⁶⁸ President Gutierrez and the indigenous groups were displeased with the former administration for several reasons,

¹⁶⁶ Jorquera, Jorge, "ECUADOR: Is Gutierrez another Chavez?" *Green Left Weekly*, 4 December 2002. Available at: <http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/2002/519/519p17.htm>; accessed on 28 August 2003.

¹⁶⁷ "Ecuadorian President: Pachakutik Must Vote for SP in Congress or 'Leave Alliance.'" *FBIS*, 6 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030806000029. Available at: <https://portal.rcrb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

¹⁶⁸ Smith, Ron, "Ecuador's Lucio Era Begins – Drug War, Plan Colombia, and US Air Base At Manta, Test the New President," *Narco News Bulletin*, 21 January 2003. [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.narconews.com.html>; accessed 28 August 2003.

including the unilateral decision of both the armed forces and the Mahuad administration to comply with US demands on occupying Manta AB. But once in office, President Gutierrez, one of the main actors, changed his preferences on several fronts, which have affected the configuration of the alliance. The coup demonstrated the frailty of Ecuador's fragile government. The indigenous peoples and those who supported his election are concerned that their goals are not given any priority during his presidential term. These political changes can also potentially affect the future of the Manta accord and even the presidency itself.

1. Prior to and the Beginning of Gutierrez' Presidency

During his electoral campaign, Lucio Gutierrez offered a left of center political platform that advocated using the armed forces for public works, renegotiating the Manta Base accord, and taking radical action against corruption.¹⁶⁹ Gutierrez and his supporters believed that US operations from Manta AB negatively affected the country's sovereignty and autonomy. President Gutierrez and his supporters in civil society, such as the CONAIE, and more specifically, the Pachakutik, the political arm of the national indigenous federation, and the Church joined together and opposed the US – Ecuador convenio. In 2001, the Patriotic Socialists' Party (SP) and indigenous groups, in particular the Pachakutik, played a significant role in Gutierrez's win during the first round of elections. They declared President Gutierrez as their presidential candidate and saw Gutierrez as a legitimate representative of their interests. They considered themselves direct partners in his bid for the leadership of the country. Furthermore, the social organizations assumed that Gutierrez supported their aspirations of a growing presence in the political realm and a new role in the societal hierarchy. He named two indigenous members as part of his cabinet, which demonstrated his support for the indigenous groups. Luis Macas became the new minister of agriculture, while Nina Pacari was appointed as the new Foreign Relations minister. Both were members of

¹⁶⁹ Program Summary: Quito Radio Quito Spanish 2200 GMT 14 Jul 03. FBIS, 14 July 2003. Document ID: LAP20030714000098. Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

CONAIE, the indigenous organization that participated in the protests of 2001.¹⁷⁰ However, he also appointed Ivonne Baki to his cabinet, who has been referred to as a friend of former President Bill Clinton and was an advisor to former President Jamil Mahuad.¹⁷¹

A key advisor to Gutierrez was General Rene Vargas Pazzos, the former head of Ecuadorian forces and former professor of Gutierrez who was also involved in the coup. He described Manta AB as a scar on Ecuador and believed that it would be used for covert and gray activities by the US military and DynCorp.¹⁷² When it was reported that the US wanted to add more operational aircraft at Manta AB to augment its capabilities against drug trafficking in South America,¹⁷³ General Vargas pointed out that Manta is large enough to host the largest US troop carrier airplanes, C-5 Galaxy, C-130 and C-140 -- speculating that the base could be used as a staging area for a major invasion instead of drug interdiction. General Vargas advised Gutierrez during the bargaining process, and emphasized that the President should ensure that the base is used strictly for anti-drug surveillance operations and prevent any further base expansions.¹⁷⁴ Former military officers and former ambassador accuse the accord of violating national sovereignty and as being unconstitutional.¹⁷⁵

During his electoral campaign, Gutierrez raised concerns among some Ecuadorians, since he was supported by a small Marxist party, radical Indian groups and leftist-led unions. Gutierrez felt, “leftists support him because they share the same objectives to fight corruption, poverty, social injustice, and impunity, which will allow

¹⁷⁰ Smith, Ron, “Ecuador’s Lucio Era Begins: Drug War, Plan Colombia, and US Air Base at Manta, Test the New President,” *Narco News Bulletin*, 21 January 2003 [database on-line]; Available online at <http://www.progressiveaustin.org/ronsmith.htm>; accessed on 11 March 2003.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ “National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies, Chapter Eleven, The Western Hemisphere: Rethinking Strategic Relations?” *Strategic Assessment*, 1999. Pg. 181.

¹⁷⁴ Smith, Ron, “Ecuador’s Lucio Era Begins: Drug War, Plan Colombia, and US Air Base at Manta, Test the New President,” *Narco News Bulletin*, 21 January 2003 [database on-line]; Available online at <http://www.progressiveaustin.org/ronsmith.htm>; accessed on 11 March 2003.

¹⁷⁵ Larrea, Marcelo, “ECUADOR: THE BASE AT MANTA, A US ENCLAVE” Available at: <http://www.rprogreso.com/RPWeekly081502/neighborsLarreaEcuador091502.htm>; accessed on 28 August 2003.

the indigenous people to achieve better lives.”¹⁷⁶ In October 2002, Gutierrez signed a political pact with Pachakutik, confirming his and his party’s agreement to work together with Pachakutik toward similar goals.¹⁷⁷ The agreement included the concerns of CONAIE and Pachakutik in regards to the social costs of IMF-oriented economic policy. Pachakutik has questioned the necessity of negotiating with the IMF and insisted on the reconsideration of the US-Ecuador treaty for use of the Manta Air Base. Additionally, the Pachakutik and CONAIE platform pressured the Ecuadorian government to request the Colombian government to terminate all fumigations within a specified number of miles from the Ecuadorian border. CONAIE has taken a general stand against Plan Colombia and US policy.¹⁷⁸ Gutierrez’ preferences reflected those of the indigenous groups, and granted him the support of a diverse coalition of social movements and the Socialists Party. However, since taking office, Gutierrez toned down his rhetoric and shifted toward the center, describing himself as “center-left.”¹⁷⁹

2. During Gutierrez’ Presidency to Present Day

During his presidency, President Gutierrez demonstrated a shift in his preferences towards support for the Manta FOL, which created opposition from the indigenous groups that had initially supported him in his presidency. President Gutierrez was inexperienced in the political arena, which put him at a disadvantage when he first assumed the Presidency. He entered into agreements with local indigenous movements without realizing the international and domestic factors affecting his policies as President. Likewise, Gutierrez’s leadership became a key element for the development of Ecuador’s relationship with the U.S. government, which at this point is cautiously making positive statements regarding Gutierrez’s administration. Gutierrez also took a big risk by reaching out to the Social Christian Party (PSC) once he took office because the indigenous movements that supported him viewed this as negatively affecting their

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Edwards, Sandra, G., “Special Update: Ecuador US-Ecuadorian Relations as a New President Takes Office,” *Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)*, December 2002. Available at: http://www.wola.org/publications/ddhr_ecuador_update_3.htm; accessed on 18 July 2003.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Hayes, Monte, “Ex-Colonel Becomes Ecuador President,” *Associated Press News Service*, 25 November 2002, (2002) [database on-line]; Available at: <http://infoweb.newsbank.com>; accessed on 15 August 2003.

interests.¹⁸⁰ Gutierrez's overtures to the PSC have become more sensitive after a series of political struggles between this party and some indigenous movements.

Aside from facing domestic pressures within Ecuador, Gutierrez also faced international pressures from the US. In the beginning, the US viewed Gutierrez's surprising victory in the 2002 presidential elections with skepticism since the change in administrations could have been potentially detrimental to the continued US presence at Manta AB. After a diplomatic visit to the United States, Gutierrez began to exhibit signs of backing down on some of the policies he advocated during his campaign. This was perceived as a further betrayal to the constituents that put him in power.¹⁸¹ When he eventually approved the continued presence of America's military base in Manta, indigenous peoples believed this undermined Ecuador's sovereignty, but also implicated Ecuador as an ally in America's drug war.¹⁸² In the past, the US has been accused of diplomatic extortion by using US assistance as an incentive to change national policies or as a means of circumventing national procedures to achieve a desired outcome.¹⁸³ This external influence was illustrated when after several visits to the US, President Gutierrez softened his opposition towards the US on a number of issues, in particular the US military's use of Ecuador's Manta AB. President Gutierrez also began to distance himself from the leftist presidents who have recently come to power in Venezuela and Brazil.¹⁸⁴ Taken together, these actions by President Gutierrez reveal a significant shift in preferences towards the U.S. and its presence in Ecuador.

¹⁸⁰ "Program Summary: Quito Radio Quito Spanish 2200 GMT 14 Jul 03," *FBIS*, 14 July 2003. Document ID: LAP20030714000098. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

¹⁸¹ "President Elect Colonel Lucio Gutierrez: Fleeting Symbol or True Harbinger of Social Progress?" *GoEcuador.com*, 2 December 2002 [database on-line]; Available at: http://www.goecuador.com/mindo/index_ed_122_colonel.html; accessed on 28 August 2003.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ "National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies, Chapter Eleven, The Western Hemisphere: Rethinking Strategic Relations?," *Strategic Assessment*, 1999. Pg. 178–180.

¹⁸⁴ Hayes, Monte, "Ex-Colonel Becomes Ecuador President," *The Associated Press News Service*, 25 November 2002, (2002) [database on-line]; Available at: <http://infoweb.newsbank.com>; accessed 18 August 2003.

C. ALLIANCES

Although the presidency has changed hands -- from Mahuad to Noboa and now Gutierrez -- the groupings remain largely the same over Manta. Once Lucio Gutierrez became president, his policy preference shifted into alignment with that of his two predecessors, Mahuad and Noboa. This led to growing tension between the President and his former supporters and has resulted in a breakdown of the alliance. Specifically, the civil society groups hostile to the Manta FOL are dissatisfied with the President's administration and have turned against him.

1. Turning Point: *The Tide Turns*

Members of the social and indigenous movements who were supportive of Gutierrez before and after the coup now proclaim that he has not abided by his promises to them. According to Mario Canessa, Government Minister, Ecuador has undergone an economic turnaround causing widespread dissension towards the administration. He adds that this widespread dissatisfaction with the Gutierrez administration can be accredited to the government's tough policies.¹⁸⁵ These opposing groups claim that he has betrayed them by creating a neoliberal administration.¹⁸⁶ Gutierrez continues to use the FAE for border security and other security concerns. He has also become a supporter for the Manta accord and continues to maintain close ties with the US. Additionally, the Anti-Corruption Commission said that the Gutierrez administration has failed to provide evidence to support its claims for fighting corruption.¹⁸⁷

Francisco Huerta, Noboa's former Interior Minister and advisor to the Government Minister, pointed out that the government must consult with all sectors and not only the political organizations that initially supported it because the latter are no longer the mediators between the society and the State.¹⁸⁸ He added the Government Ministry must be informed on foreign relations issues since "almost all the domestic

¹⁸⁵ "Program Summary: Quito Radio Quito Spanish 2200 GMT 14 Jul 03," *FBIS*, 14 July 2003. Document ID: LAP20030714000098. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Johnson, Tim, "Ecuador coup leaders stay free as president promises justice." *Miami Herald*, 24 January 2000. [database on-line]; Available at: <http://www.rose-hulman.edu/~deacova/ecuador/free.htm>; accessed on 28 August 2003.

agenda is external: the conflict at the border with Colombia, immigration, import tax protections...”. The adviser asserted that the Indigenous population represents only 10 percent of the total population.¹⁸⁹ He added that although their aspirations are legitimate, they cannot be imposed. Huerta warned that if oil prices fall or if Mr. Bush stops being President Lucio Gutierrez' best ally these factors could possibly destabilize the government.¹⁹⁰

2. The Breakup of the Alliance

A significant segment of the Ecuadorian indigenous community has declared President Gutierrez a “traitor” and has now decided to join the opposition to his government. They view him as a traitor to himself and to the people of Ecuador because President Gutierrez underlined that this has become a right-wing government and appointed representatives of right-wing parties to manage the economy and politics.¹⁹¹ Despite this, some indigenous groups continue to support the government.

Leonidas Iza, head of CONAIE denied that there was a division within the movement, and affirmed that since several social organizations have joined CONAIE, they are more united and stronger.¹⁹² Leonidas Iza stated on behalf of the CONAIE that they oppose privatization, increases in gas prices, taxes, and anything that goes against the economic interests of the people. In contrast, Umberto Cholango, president of the organization that represents the indigenous communities of the Sierra region, ECUARUNARI, declared that indigenous leaders supporting President Lucio Gutierrez do not belong to the CONAIE. Regardless, the representatives of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), one of the three organizations that make up CONAIE, has given its support to the government and accused the CONAIE leaders of being “elitist and oligarchs.” The president of CONAIE dismissed the incident, arguing that the group is simply concerned with employment in

¹⁸⁹ “Highlights: Ecuador Press 18 Aug 03,” *FBIS* 18 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030818000069. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Ecuador: Indigenous People See President Gutierrez as 'Traitor,' Join Opposition. *FBIS*, 15 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030816000016. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

the government.¹⁹³ Deputy Salvador Quishpe explained that in Congress, the Pachakutik bloc is divided into two groups: one of five deputies, including himself, are in favor of the administration's policies; the other group, of six deputies, thinks the alliance should be broken. Quishpe added that one of his colleague's behavior is "inconsistent." At first, Posso, the leader of the opposing group had originally pushed for the alliance with the government-aligned Socialists' Party. At the same time, however, he stressed that the movement must "fulfill our duty to the people," suggesting a position critical of the government.¹⁹⁴

D. OUTCOME

On 6 August 2003, the Indigenous leaders officially announced the breakup of the alliance with the government. After receiving criticism from several members of the Pachakutik Movement, Gutierrez himself ended the alliance with the indigenous peoples and their political arm.¹⁹⁵ President Lucio Gutierrez warned the Pachakutik deputies that if they voted against the SP in Congress, "they must leave the government."¹⁹⁶ In a speech Gutierrez said, "to Deputies Antonio Posso, Ricardo Ulcuango, Angel Garcia, and two others whose names escape me: either you vote tomorrow in Congress with the government, with this administration's policy for change, or you leave the alliance."¹⁹⁷

On 15 August 2003, the leaders of CONAIE discussed a three-point agenda: evaluating the break-up of their alliance with the government; discussing the country's current situation; and defining their position regarding the government. Of these organizations, only the Peasant Social Security has withdrawn its support for the president. The CONAIE and the Social Movements Coordinating Board (CMS) have not yet declared their position. Furthermore, CONAIE itself has also split: ECUARUNARI

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ "Ecuadorian President: Pachakutik Must Vote for SP in Congress or Leave Alliance," *FBIS*, 6 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030806000029. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

¹⁹⁵ "Ecuador: Indigenous People See President Gutierrez as 'Traitor' Join Opposition," *FBIS*, 15 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030816000016. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

¹⁹⁶ "Ecuadorian President: Pachakutik Must Vote for SP in Congress or Leave Alliance," *FBIS*, 6 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030806000029. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

(Confederation of Peoples of the Kichwa Nationality of Ecuador) representing the indigenous communities of the Sierra region, and CONAICE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities from the Ecuadorian Coast) representing those of the coast region, who want to leave the alliance while, the CONFENAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities from the Ecuadorian Amazon Region) represents the Amazon indigenous communities, who want to remain.¹⁹⁸

The Democratic People's Movement (MPD) and Popular Democracy Party (DP) have also called for a US withdrawal from Manta Base.¹⁹⁹ Since the Patriotic Society [SP] aligned with the Social Christian Party [PSC] and condemned the conspiratorial behavior of a former president, the other center-left parties want to demonize it. President Gutierrez pointed out that the center-left parties themselves voted with the PSC to elect legislative and electoral officials and the PSC has the plurality of deputies in Congress.

The indigenous groups claim that they have enough power to overturn the government if they oppose its policies and administration. Antonio Vargas, the CONAIE President said that, the toppling of the Mahuad government by a civilian-military force could be emulated in any country in Latin America if the people unite.²⁰⁰ He argues that if all social sectors united and held the majority over the political parties then the government would be unable to resist.²⁰¹ Vargas speculates in the future important steps will be taken in the fight for identity, beginning with the Chiapas, in Mexico, and in Ecuador, where the Indian people, with the backing of the rest of civil society and the military "attempted to establish a solidarity government."²⁰² He added that throughout the region the "dictatorship of the politicians" is in danger due to the lack of structural changes and the imposition of the international financial institutions that is

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ "Program Summary: Quito Radio Quito Spanish 2200 GMT 02 Jul 03," *FBIS*, 2 July 2003. Document ID: LAP20030702000105. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²⁰⁰ "Ecuador Press Highlights 20-21 Oct 01," *FBIS*, Document ID: LAP20011022000004. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

detrimental to the poor.²⁰³ On 19 August 2003, the government and PSC legislators blocked the indigenous groups' efforts to create a new center-left majority coalition in Congress. Socialist Deputy Segundo Serrano said that the government had "meddled" in the negotiations, by offering government positions to Roldosist and PRIAN deputies if they break away from the alliance with Pachakutik.²⁰⁴

President Lucio Gutierrez admitted that he is now obliged to seek agreements with the traditional political parties that he once described as corrupt to keep the country's unstable economy on track after losing the support of the indigenous movement.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, he invited the independent indigenous leaders to a march on 22 August, which was organized by the SP in support of the administration.²⁰⁶ They expressed their support for the administration and rejected statements made by CONAIE.²⁰⁷

Given his need for support, and in the light of the new political scenario, Gutierrez said he would negotiate with those parties that are beyond the left or right wing and concerned with the good of the country.²⁰⁸

E. VIABILITY OF MANTA: FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Since the government's coalition with the CONAIE and the Pachakutik has ended, it appears that the Manta FOL will continue to operate unimpeded, and Ecuador will continue to abide by the agreement. However, new issues of contention have arisen between the US and Ecuador. Recently, the US request to the Ecuadorian government to

²⁰³ "Ecuador Press Highlights, 05/28/2001," *FBIS*, Document ID: LAP20010528000011. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²⁰⁴ "Highlights: Ecuador Press 20 Aug 03," *FBIS*, 20 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030820000084. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²⁰⁵ "Highlights: Ecuador Press 20 Aug 03," *FBIS*, 20 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030820000084. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²⁰⁶ "Ecuador: Indigenous People See President Gutierrez as 'Traitor' Join Opposition," *FBIS*, 15 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030816000016. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²⁰⁷ "Ecuador's Gutierrez Invites Indigenous Leaders To Join Pro-Government March," *FBIS*, 13 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030813000048. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²⁰⁸ "Highlights: Ecuador Press 20 Aug 03," *FBIS*, 20 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030820000084. Document ID: LAP20030813000048. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

sign an agreement exempting US citizens from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has become a major locus of contention. Congress president Guillermo Landazuri disagrees with the US position with regards to the ICC.²⁰⁹ He believes that crimes affecting human life must be punished anywhere in the world, without exception.²¹⁰ Moreover, Deputy Carlos Vallejo, chairman of the International Affairs Committee, said that, “if Ecuador is offended by a unilateral US action then the Manta Base agreement should also be revised.”²¹¹ Former Foreign Minister Nina Pacari rejected such an option, saying that, “Ecuador has granted concessions to the United States by allowing it to use Manta Base, and will continue to comply with international law.”²¹²

Although the agreement has been sustained, other controversial debates between the US and Ecuador exist and will continue to exist in the future, including the issues surrounding the signing of Article 98 in reference to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Although this issue does not concern ratifying the Manta FOL, Ecuadorian opposition once again begun to raise the issue of the unconstitutionality of the Manta accord and US involvement in Ecuador. US Ambassador Kristie Kenney said the Ecuadorian and US Governments will continue to discuss US citizens’ immunity from the ICC, thereby avoiding the suspension of US military aid. The US Embassy in Quito issued a communiqué urging Ecuador to sign the agreement on the ICC issue. Former Foreign Minister Julio Prado claims that Ecuador should refuse to sign the agreement, and also renegotiate the Manta Base accord.²¹³ Additionally, Carlos Vallejo, president of the Congress International Affairs Committee, said that, “if the US withdraws its military aid from Ecuador, then it should also withdraw from Manta Base.” He considers the US’s

²⁰⁹ “Highlights: Ecuador Press 4 Jul 03,” *FBIS*, 4 July 2003. Document ID: LAP20030704000052. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² “Program Summary: Quito Radio Quito Spanish 2200 GMT 11 Jul 03,” *FBIS*, 11 July 2003. Document ID: LAP20030711000131. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²¹³ “Program Summary: Quito Radio Quito Spanish 2200 GMT 02 Jul 03,” *FBIS*, 2 July 2003. Document ID: LAP20030702000105. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

ultimatum an offense to Ecuador; he believes the country should act with dignity and refuse to kneel to it. Lieutenant Colonel Leonidas Enriquez, commander of the 23rd Combat Unit, downplayed the controversy by asserting that few concessions have been made to the US at Manta. He stated that Ecuador controls all operations from the base and only authorized unarmed US airplanes are allowed to operate from it.²¹⁴

Deputy Guillermo Gutierrez, President Gutierrez's brother, said that while he is concerned about the US position, he sees no reason why it should affect the Manta Base agreement. He indicated that Ecuador sticks to its agreements.²¹⁵ Former Defense Minister, Jose Gallardo, warned that, “the withdrawal of US military aid would affect Ecuador's ability to control its Colombian border and the US Government has wrongly tried to impose its will by relating US citizens’ immunity to regional security.”²¹⁶ He believes that it is in Ecuador’s best interest to gain control of its Colombian border without US aid.²¹⁷ After these developments, some indigenous and grass roots movements have organized nationwide demonstrations to begin 21 August 2003 to protest the government's alleged move to the right and failure to fulfill campaign promises.²¹⁸

F. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the President’s failure to follow through with his campaign promises to the social organizations has caused dissension within the government. At first, President Gutierrez appeared to be in support of the indigenous groups’ priorities. However, during his presidency he has demonstrated a shift in preferences, which ended the alliance between the Gutierrez administration and a sector of the indigenous group, the Pachakutik.

²¹⁴ “Highlights: Ecuador Press 20 Aug 03,” *FBIS*, 20 August 2003. Document ID: LAP20030820000084. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²¹⁵ Program Summary: Quito Radio Quito Spanish 2200 GMT 02 Jul 03. *FBIS* 2 July 2003. Document ID: LAP20030702000105. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ “Program Summary: Quito Radio Quito Spanish 2200 GMT 11 Jul 03,” *FBIS*, 11 July 2003. Document ID: LAP20030711000131. [database on-line]; Available at: <https://portal.rccb.osis.gov/servlet>; accessed on 18 August 2003.

Furthermore, the relationship between the US and Ecuador continues to be unstable, even tense on several fronts. The appointed US ambassador to Ecuador, Kristie Kenney, will face the prospects of a more complex relationship as regional dynamics, such as Plan Colombia, the implementation of US anti-narcotic policies and regional treaties on trade, become intertwined with the newly developing global realities of the war on terrorism and troubled world markets.²¹⁹ In spite of these developments the Manta accord appears to remain viable in the future.

²¹⁹ Edwards, Sandra, G., "Special Update: Ecuador US-Ecuadorian Relations as a New President Takes Office," *Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)*, December 2002. [database on-line]; Available at: http://www.wola.org/publications/ddhr_ecuador_update_3.htm; accessed on 18 July 2003.

V. CONCLUSION

The negotiation and ratification processes to establish the Manta FOL along with ongoing concerns of U.S. military presence have already been discussed, therefore this chapter will briefly summarize the internal politics of Ecuador involved in establishing the Manta FOL and then extrapolate from them to assess the concerns with establishing future forward operating locations in Latin America. The feasibility of future FOLs in the region will be critically analyzed by considering the politics involved with the Manta FOL, which demonstrates universal concerns about the U.S. military presence in Latin America. Finally, this chapter will conclude with some conclusions and recommendations for future academic and policy work on this subject.

U.S. military missions in the new millennium continue to require a forward presence in Latin America as Chapter II pointed out. In the 1990s, the USSOUTHCOM's missions were aimed at promoting democracy, assisting in humanitarian efforts, developing military to military relations, and combating the threat of narcotrafficking. An important change in the security environment since 1999 is the escalating problem in Colombia, which encompasses previous US concerns in the region as well as the new emphasis on countering terrorism. USSOUTHCOM has adapted its missions to effectively respond to these vital interests combined with the increasing hostile situation in Colombia and the focus has recently shifted towards the "war on drugs" and the "war on terrorism" due to the changing political and security environment. Through persistent efforts towards joint military training with foreign militaries, technology assistance and other assets for counterdrug missions and surveillance, the US has continued its military presence in the region. Moreover, the closure of Howard AFB led to a more diverse presence to encompass more of Latin America and the Caribbean. The development of a "forward presence" or FOLs was the US' response to advance its counterdrug operations while seeking to improve relations with Latin America. The FOLs have improved military-to-military relations and proved to be a more cost-effective method to conduct counternarcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere than traditional basing arrangements. Furthermore, with the projected closure of Vieques,

Puerto Rico the Manta FOL will become the most vital asset for US military operations in the Western Hemisphere.

The establishment of the FOLs has proven to be valuable for the US and Latin American militaries in their “war against drugs,” but the FOLs have also stimulated opposition from constituencies within Latin America. President Mahuad’s political strategy allowed the ratification of the accord regardless of the opposition from social organizations, the indigenous groups and the Church in particular, to the US military at Manta AB, but his attempt to bypass political debate carried a risk for the stability of his government. The ambiguous institutional framework and instability in the political system were key factors that generated controversy during the negotiation process of the agreement. The opposition was determined to remove him office for several reasons, but mainly because he failed to improve the economy and signed the US-Ecuador agreement for Manta AB.

Establishing the Manta FOL without consulting the Ecuadorian Congress was in violation of Ecuador’s Constitution, and therefore, the U.S. exacerbated opposition to its military presence. This violation raised questions about the constitutionality of the agreement, caused difficulties during the ratification process, and contributed to the removal of President Mahuad from office. The past three Ecuadorian Presidents considered the agreement to be constitutional, which permitted it to be viable thus far. However, this issue remains controversial among local constituents who insist on renegotiating the agreement, which could lead to its abandonment. Although the Ecuadorian Congress eventually ratified the agreement, this diminished but did not eliminate popular challenges to its constitutionality. As a result, Ecuador and the US government were confronted with a number of obstacles in attempting to establish the ten-year lease agreement for the Manta FOL. President Mahuad’s failure to abide by the Ecuadorian constitution by signing the Manta accord means that the Manta FOL could always be under threat of revision due to the unstable conditions of the Ecuadorian government. The local population remains afraid that the US has ulterior motives for its counternarcotics military operations from Manta AB to include the possibility of counterinsurgency efforts in Colombia. The U.S. is forced to deal with these issues of

contention because they could potentially affect the renewal of the agreement. This suggests that the US should take into account the democratic process when reviewing existing agreements for overseas bases. In the case of establishing the Manta FOL, if the Ecuadorian President had initially consulted both Congress and the public prior to the agreement, this could have eliminated much of the controversy that accompanied the negotiation process. Furthermore, the US must take into account the domestic politics of a country that could affect the future of US military operations within Latin America. The Congressional decision to mitigate its position against the Manta FOL agreement was an exception to the provisions of the Ecuadorian constitution.

President Gutierrez's behavior during his administration illustrates how US diplomacy can encourage a shift in executive preferences, which in turn can minimize dangers to US FOLs in Latin America. The indigenous movement's support was largely responsible for President Gutierrez's successful election, which could have potentially jeopardized the Manta FOL's future. Prior to his presidency President Gutierrez made an agreement with the indigenous movement to improve several concerns with Ecuador's government; the renegotiation of the Manta accord was one of these main issues. When President Gutierrez came into office he shifted his preferences on several of these issues, including becoming a supporter of the Manta accord. Although President Gutierrez's shift was positive for the US, it contributed to a weakening of his political support base. The US must be sensitive to Gutierrez's precarious position when making additional demands on his government, such as the ultimatum to sign the accord exempting US citizens from the jurisdiction from the jurisdiction of the ICC. This demand, and the threat of cutting off US aid, has newly jeopardized the future viability of the Manta FOL.

The US and the Mahuad administration used a politically exclusive decision-making process when establishing the Manta FOL. This was a risky approach for both the US and Ecuador, which almost resulted in a breakdown of the democratic process in Ecuador. To avoid issues similar to this in the future the United States must ensure that during future negotiations of FOLs, it is adequately informed about governmental procedures and abides by them. Therefore, if the US attempts to establish military access or employ controversial military missions, it must consult with the host government and

its domestic constituents for final approval as well as abiding by the host nation's constitutional law. Fragility in Latin American governments and their democracies poses a challenge for continued acceptance of US FOLs and the US must be prepared to renegotiate its military presence in the region through subsequent Presidents and continued opposition from domestic constituents in Latin America.

The case of the Manta FOL illustrates how significant the influence of local indigenous groups has proven to be in Ecuador. The indigenous groups' main opposition to the Manta accord is shaped largely by their exclusion from the political ratification process. Political representation remains and will continue to be a concern for Latin America because the local populace is afraid that they will not be involved in the debate over future U.S. presence in the region. Some Ecuadorians are concerned that by supporting U.S. military operations from Manta FOL, they will become a target for future terrorist attacks and drawn into Colombia's civil war.

This thesis has presented the international and domestic politics involved with establishing the Manta FOL and the challenges of dealing with opposition to a US military presence. A number of recommendations are in order for the US to avoid further difficulties when establishing FOL agreements in the future. First, the US should consult with the civil societies and legislatures from the host nation for approval prior to establishing a base in Latin America.²²⁰ This will ensure transparency and accountability to host countries. Next, the 10-year lease agreements should be amended to authorize the public health and environmental officials of host nations and representatives of the communities to inspect the U.S. FOLs and other similar facilities.²²¹ This will allow the host nation government and Armed Forces to maintain control and oversee that military operations are properly conducted from the FOL. Furthermore, the US should include domestic constituents of the host nation, such as representatives from the indigenous groups, in the negotiation process. This will grant the constituents political

²²⁰ Lindsay-Poland, John, "U.S. Military Bases in Latin America and the Caribbean" *Foreign Policy in Focus* (FPF), October 2001 [journal on-line]; Available at: http://www.americaspolicy.org/briefs/2001/body_v6n35milbase.html; accessed on 18 June 2003.

²²¹ Ibid.

representation on the international level and the opportunity to present their concerns regarding the US military presence.

This will all require a combined effort from both the US and Latin American governments. The US will continue efforts to ease domestic opposition and attempt to gain more domestic support within Ecuador. When the terms of the 10-year lease agreement are up for renegotiation, these will contribute to the US' intention to sustain its presence at Manta AB. Although ongoing concerns about the US military presence will exist throughout Latin America, the US must continue with its efforts to diminish this opposition and prove that its military presence is beneficial for both the US and Latin America. The US and Ecuador will continue to engage in a complex relationship as regional dynamics, such as Plan Colombia, the implementation of US counternarcotics policies, the "war on terrorism," and other regional issues all become intertwined.

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