

**THE ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENT OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS
IN LATIN AMERICA: THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE**

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INTRODUCTION

In 1995 at the first Defense Ministerial of the Americas held in Williamsburg, Virginia, a number of Ministers of Defense from Latin America told US Secretary of Defense, William Perry, that their greatest problem in gaining control of their ministries and the armed forces was the dearth of qualified civilian defense specialists. As a result of that generalized complaint Secretary Perry promised at the next Defense Ministerial in Bariloche, Argentina the following year that the United States would create a center for defense studies in the hemisphere to support the development of such a civilian cadre. Thus, in 1997 the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies was founded in Washington, DC with the mission to educate civilians for positions in the defense establishments of the region.¹

The assumption underlying the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS) is that the existence of a corps of civilian defense specialists both within and without government, but especially inside the defense ministry, will contribute significantly to healthy, democratic civil-military relations. Moreover, based on the reports of the first Defense Ministerial, it was assumed that such a corps did not exist and would have to be created. How accurate are these assumptions? Is it true that there are no significant groups of civilian defense professionals at work in the countries of Latin America? Perhaps, even more significant, is it true that a corps of civilian defense specialists is likely to contribute to the kind of civilian control of the military that we posit as the basis of democratic civil-military relations?

This paper is designed to begin to address these questions. First, it considers the theory of democratic civil-military relations in general terms, drawing heavily on the work of Douglas Bland.² After looking at a generic theory, the paper posits two exemplar models, the Anglo-parliamentary model and the US model, comparing their similarities and differences in terms of the generic theory. Following this look into theory, the paper discusses the data: how it was collected, its strengths and limitations. Then the data are analyzed and findings reported and discussed. In this section the paper suggests preliminary answers to the questions asked in this introduction.

THEORY

Civil-military relations represent a simple concept: that of the relations existing between civilians and their institutions and the military and their institutions. This statement, however, in no way addresses the quality of those relationships - which is, of course, what really interests us. The particular quality of interest is what has been called democratic civil-military relations. J. Samuel Fitch³ argues that democratic civil-military relations are characterized by elected civilian leaders and their duly appointed civilian subordinates directing, in broad terms, the organization, equipping, and training of the armed forces as well as determining the situations in which they will be employed. He also suggests that those same civilian leaders must exercise overall supervision of how they are employed. If these conditions are not broadly met then civil-military relations are other than democratic.

Douglas Bland concurs, "[T]he term, 'civil control,' means that the sole legitimate source for the direction and actions of the military is derived from civilians outside the

military/defense establishment. This definition says nothing about the moral or ethical base for the civilian direction - in democracies it is taken to mean civilians elected to legislatures - but it implies that the military has no legitimate right to act on its own."⁴ This paper follows a similar line suggesting, in a minor modification of Bland, that in "presidential" democracies the required civilian political direction may be found in the presidentially appointed defense minister and his politically appointed subordinates. "*The Theory of Shared Responsibility*"

Bland argues that, "Even in mature liberal democracies, there is an expectation that military leaders will share in decision-making regarding national defense and the employment of the armed forces with their civilian superiors."⁵ He suggests that four types of decisions form the locus of democratic civil-military relations. These are decisions relating to the ends and ways of defense, those relating to the means or resources, those relating to relations with society at large, and those about the employment of forces.⁶ The focal point of these decisions in democratic governments is in the defense ministry.⁷

David Pion-Berlin, coming at the issue of civil-military relations through his comparative study of Argentina, reaches similar conclusions. He states, " It is within the realm of courts, ministries, and legislative halls that key aspects of civil-military relations unfurl."⁸ Although he notes that institutionalists and rational choice theorists are usually seen as being in conflict, he argues that the two approaches are complementary.⁹ Citing March and Olsen, he argues that behavior can be explained in part as a response to duties and obligations.¹⁰

In a different sense this argument is informed by Graham Allison's three models in his seminal work, *Essence of Decision*.¹¹ Democratic civil-military relations will be dependent on the national interest as interpreted by individuals operating within the context of institutional methods, standard operating procedures, routines, and repertoires. Thus, one might well conclude that the personnel make-up of the institutions where decisions are made is important.

Bland also makes use of regime theory in his approach to civil-military relations. He sees a regime as the "rules of the game" mediating between basic causal factors and behavioral outcomes.

In nations, ministries of defense act as a type of regime-based institution for managing civil-military relations; that is, for managing relations within a system where the expectations of more or less independent actors converge. Indeed, the examination of ministries of defense can provide an indirect view of national civil-military relations...¹²

Thus, in a democratic system, the ministry of defense will be a principal arena in which the "game" of civil-military relations is played. In its ideal type the defense ministry will have both military and civilian actors. These will interact according to a set of rules that all the players understand and abide by. In some cases the uniformed players will win; in others the civilians. In still others both the winning and losing "teams" will be composed of civilian and military players. How those teams are structured will vary widely; nevertheless, we can, perhaps, discern two generic models of democratic defense ministries. One might be called the Anglo-parliamentary Model while the other would be

known simply as the US Model. Both models represent ideal types, however, a number of states' defense ministries rather closely resemble the Anglo-parliamentary Model while only the US is actually represented by the model that bears its name. Still, a number of countries have important elements of the US model in their defense structures.

The Anglo-parliamentary Model

This model is abstracted from the structure of several defense ministries, most of which are based on the British experience.¹³ In its classic form, as exemplified by the UK, the model gives the Minister of Defense (officially called the Secretary of State for Defence) responsibility for formulating and implementing defense policy under the Prime Minister within the Cabinet. In other words, the Minister is clearly at the apex of the chain of command. The chain runs from the Minister to the Chief of Defence Staff to the individual service chiefs and other operational commanders.¹⁴

Within the Ministry of Defense the Minister is assisted by the Minister of State of the Armed Forces, the Minister of State for Defence Procurement, and the Permanent Under-Secretary of State. Both of the Ministers of State as well as the Minister of Defense are elected members of parliament while the Chief of Defence Staff is a commissioned military or naval officer of flag rank and the Permanent Under-Secretary of State is a civil servant. The Chief of Defence Staff and the Permanent Under-Secretary are the Minister of Defense's principal advisors. The latter runs the Ministry on a daily basis.¹⁵

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces is responsible for strategy, budget and finance, the structure of the armed forces, operational matters, overseas commitments, disarmament and arms control, intelligence and security, among other duties. "The Minister of State for Defence Procurement is responsible... for all aspects of defence procurement."¹⁶

Policy decisions are made by a defense council which includes the Minister of Defense, the two subordinate ministers, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (an outsider), the Chief of Defence Staff, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, the individual service chiefs, the Vice-Chief of Defence Staff, and three senior civil servants, one each for procurement, science, and the Permanent Under-Secretary's deputy.¹⁷ In other words, this committee includes all the top military officers, civil servants, and political leaders of the defense ministry.

Although there are overlapping responsibilities between the civilians and the military personnel in this model, the interesting feature is that the civilians and military are organizationally separate. Civilians work in the ministry proper while the military serve on the Defence Staff or in the services. They come together regularly in the defense council which serves as the collective decision-making body. Similarly, the chain of command is pretty clean. The Minister of Defense commands on behalf of the Government providing direction to the Chief of Defence Staff who directs the service chiefs and other operational commanders. In the UK version, the service chiefs retain the right of direct access to the Minister of Defense and the Prime Minister, something that does not necessarily hold in other versions of the model. In the event that the Minister of Defense is incapacitated or otherwise unavailable the Prime Minister would appoint a new defense minister or the senior of the junior ministers would become the acting

minister. In short, contact between military and civilian members of the defense ministry is somewhat restricted both vertically and horizontally to the highest levels and the formal venue of the defense council. Prior coordination between civilian and military staffs appears to be relatively ad hoc.

The US Model

The US Model differs from the Anglo-parliamentary Model in several ways. First, political appointments are more extensive in the Department of Defense and none are members of the legislative branch. Second, civil servants are mixed with serving military and naval officers throughout the department. Third, a handful of civilians also serve in positions on the Joint Staff, the service staffs, and the staffs of the unified commands. Thus, there is a significant amount of horizontal integration of military and civilians throughout the defense sector. Gibson and Snider describe this kind of integration as an "issue network."

The issue network consists of three levels: "Level I: The Secretary of Defense and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Level II: The Civilian [service] Secretaries and the Uniformed Service Chiefs; Level III: The Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretaries for Policy, Personnel and Readiness and the Assistant Secretary for Program Analysis & Evaluation (PA&E) and key members of the Joint Staff: the J3 and J5...and...the Vice Chairman, JCS, the J7 and J8..."¹⁸ To this can be added a Level IV consisting of various Deputy Assistant Secretaries and action officers who will sit on the interagency working groups (IWG) discussed below.

The chain of command in the US Model runs from the President through the Secretary of Defense to the unified command Commanders-in-Chief (CINCs) for operational matters. For administrative matters it runs from the President through the Secretary of Defense, Service Secretaries, to the Uniformed Service Chiefs. The Chairman is the principal military advisor to the President and the Secretary and is in the chain of communication but not the chain of command. The Service Chiefs retain the right of access to the Secretary and the President as advisors but not as a corporate body.

National security business is done in the United States through the National Security Council (NSC) interagency system. This is a tiered series of working groups advisory to the President that begins with the NSC at the top and descends through the Principals Committee, the Deputies Committee, to a variety of interagency working groups. What is significant about this interagency system is that Defense always has two voices (and, from the IWG to the Principals Committee, two votes). Thus if Defense coordinates its military (Joint Staff) and civilian (Office of the Secretary of Defense) positions in advance, it can exercise a great deal of influence in the interagency system. Gibson and Snider comment on the process, "Although institutional position is very important, decision-making at this level is done on an inter-personal level among professionals who build trust and confidence in each other, allowing necessary compromise and closure on decisions."¹⁹

Commonalities Between the Models

Although there are significant differences between the models in the source of the political leadership of the defense sector and the role of the Joint or Defence staff in the chain of command, there are important similarities as well. First, military and civilian professionals deal with each other regularly in committees. Second, civil servants and uniformed officers are both well educated on defense issues. Third, the political leadership of the defense sector tends to be nearly as well educated on defense matters as both the military and the civil servants. Indeed, both models of democratic civil-military relations have more in common with each other than differences on critical matters.

In terms of organizational structure the Anglo-parliamentary and US models are similar in a number of ways that many other countries are not. Both models clearly delineate defense as the responsibility of a single government ministry/department headed by a civilian minister. The minister is in the chain of command. Both models call for an immediate civilian subordinate who is likewise in the chain of command. Both models have a joint/defense staff located in the ministry and subordinate to the civilian minister. Both have significant numbers of civilian employees, a combination of political appointees and civil servants who at the higher levels share responsibility with military officers for strategic, organizational, social, and operational decisions. In other words, democratic civil-military relations can be characterized in both types of ministries as being shared responsibility as described by Bland.

METHODOLOGY

With the theory of shared responsibility as background, and the common elements of the two models as the standard against which the organizational dimension of civil-military relations can be measured, the following study design was developed. First, the study was limited to the 17 Spanish speaking countries of Latin America plus Brazil, all of which have democratically elected governments. This excluded Cuba for its lack of de jure democracy and Haiti due both to its dubious democratic status and its non-Spanish or Portuguese language. These two countries were also excluded on a purely practical basis since a key informant survey methodology was chosen and no key informants were readily accessible.

Key informants were identified as graduates of the regular resident CHDS course, "Defense Planning and Resource Management" along with certain members of the CHDS staff and faculty.²⁰ Following the preliminary identification of key informants a brief questionnaire was developed and pre-tested by two CHDS graduates in Brazil. It was then modified in consultation with faculty colleagues, translated into Spanish and pre-tested again with two Chilean graduates.²¹ At this point the survey was sent by e-mail to a number of graduates from each of the 18 countries under study. Additional questionnaires were given to members of the CHDS class that graduated on February 11, 2000. The result was that two countries had three respondents, eight had two respondents, and seven had one each. The only country for which no data are reported is Ecuador which had no participants in the most recent class and a civil-military political crisis during the time that the survey was being administered.

The survey instrument itself consists of twenty questions designed to get at the role of civilians within the defense ministry. The questions are a combination of closed, short response open-ended, and a final totally open-ended question. (See Appendix for the questionnaire.)

Data analysis consists of recording the responses, coding certain responses by collapsing categories, running simple descriptive statistics as well as some analytical tests for nominal data. It further consists of qualitative interpretation of the open-ended responses.

ANALYSIS

The data collected by the questionnaire responses can be used to give an initial baseline as to the organizational dimension of civil-military relations in Latin America. In so doing, they can answer the first question posed in the introduction: whether the perceptions that the defense ministers reported to Secretary of Defense Perry in Williamsburg in 1995 are correct, e.g. that the lack of qualified civilians in the defense sector was a serious problem. The data, however, can only show this by inference since most of the respondents were not able to give either accurate numbers or percentages of civilians in the defense ministries. Inferences can be drawn in this regard by looking at the roles of civilians within those ministries and determining if they represent real decision-making responsibility or merely administrative and advisory positions. Secondly, the data can be analyzed to show if there is a relationship between responsible civilian leadership throughout the ministry and any specific independent variable.

The Structure of Defense in Latin America

The survey attempted to determine, first, if there was a single ministry responsible for defense, regardless of what it was called. Second, it sought to determine if the minister was in the operational chain of command, and if that minister was, by law, civilian. It also sought to find out what the minister was de facto even if he was not designated a by law as a soldier or civilian. It then looked at the second position, normally the vice minister. Again, the issues were in the chain of command and civilian by law. Unfortunately, the survey did not determine the de facto case where it was not specified in the law. The next issue was the existence of a Joint Staff, its location inside or external to the defense ministry, and its subordination to the Minister of Defense. Finally, the survey looked at civilians subordinate to the defense minister and sought to understand the degree to which they have policy responsibility. This was done by looking at positions and the respondents' assessment of the roles played by those civilians. Generally, civilians with responsibility for major functional areas or activities within those functional areas were considered as being decision-makers. Those who were in administrative positions, professional/technical positions (lawyers, etc.), or advisors were considered not to be decision-makers.

Table 1 shows the structure of defense ministries in Latin America in the terms discussed.

TABLE 1
DEFENSE MINISTRY STRUCTURE

	MOD	COM	CIV	VM	COM	CIV	EMC	W/MOD	SUB	C.RES
AR	+	+	+	-			+	+	+	+
BL	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
BR	+	+	+	-			+	+	+	-
CH	+	-	+	-			+	+	+	+/-
CO	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
CR	+	+	+	+	+	+	-			+
DR	+	+	-	-			-			-
ES	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	-
GT	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	-
HO	+	+	+	+		-	+	+	+	-
MX	-	+	-	+	-	-	-			-
NU	+	-	+	+	-		+	-	-	+
PM	+	+	+	+	+	+	-			+
PE	+	-	-	-			+	-	-	-
PY	+	-	+	+	-	-	-			+
VE	+	+	-	-			+	+	+	-
UY	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
TOT	16	13	11	11	5	4	12	9	10	7
%	94%	76%	65%	65%	29%	23%	71%	53%	59%	41%

As Table 1 shows, all but one of the 17 countries has a single ministry responsible for defense matters. This, however, is merely the culmination of a trend that began in Argentina after the end of World War II and has seen Brazil inaugurate its defense ministry in the last year. Whereas the trend toward a single ministry has nearly been fulfilled, placement of the Minister of Defense in the chain of command is somewhat more problematic. In only 13 countries is the minister in the chain of command. The defense minister is not in the chain of command in Chile, Nicaragua, Peru, and Paraguay. However, both the Secretary of National Defense and the Secretary of the Marina are in the chain of command in Mexico, the only country with two ministries charged with defense.

Eleven countries have civilian Ministers of Defense, whether de jure or de facto. The six that have military ministers are the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. In El Salvador the tradition of an active duty military defense minister was broken when General Jaime Guzman Morales retired but remained as the Minister of Defense. This was an effort to civilianize the position by having a retired officer as a transition figure and was strongly supported by the US government.²² It was a possible approach because there was no law preventing either a retired officer or a civilian from occupying the position. Nevertheless, it failed to achieve its intended purpose because when Guzman resigned as a result of a policy disagreement with the president, he was replaced by an active duty officer. That individual has since been succeeded by an active duty air force General.

Peru has given the defense ministry to retired generals since it was created in 1987 but these are viewed as military officers rather than as civilians. Venezuela,

although it has no law requiring an active duty Minister of Defense, has not had a civilian occupying the position in the modern era. Finally, Guatemala has a serving officer as Minister of Defense under the current constitution. An effort to amend the constitution to make room for a civilian minister failed in a referendum last year.

The position of Vice Minister of Defense is highly problematical existing in only 11 countries. Moreover, in only five cases is the Vice Minister in the chain of command and in only four is the occupant identified as a civilian. Colombia is a case where there is a civilian Vice Minister of Defense not in the chain of command, however, there are reports that a reform currently is under consideration.

The last major structural feature to be considered is the Joint Staff (Estado Mayor Conjunto - EMC). The existence of a Joint Staff is important in so far as it indicates a recognition that each service cannot operate alone. The placement and subordination of the Joint Staff suggest the degree to which the Ministry of Defense exercises control and supervision of the military. EMC exist in 12 of the 17 countries. The cases where there is no EMC include both Costa Rica and Panama, neither of which have formally recognized militaries and, therefore, have no need for a Joint Staff. The other three cases without a Joint Staff are the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Paraguay. Mexico has no single defense ministry and finds its ministers (Secretario de Defensa Nacional and Secretario de Marina Nacional) among the flag officers of the army and navy. Like Mexico, the Dominican Republic chooses its Minister of Defense from among the serving military officers. By contrast, Paraguay has a civilian defense minister, but he is not in the chain of command which leaves the service commanders (active duty military officers) in positions of power not mitigated by any Joint Staff.

In nine of the countries the Joint Staff is located within the Ministry of Defense. The three countries that do not locate their Joint Staffs within the defense ministry are Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru. In the Guatemalan case, however, the Joint Staff is subordinate to the Minister of Defense, while in Nicaragua and Peru no such subordination has taken place. Thus, in the latter two cases, the Joint Staff represents a vehicle that can be used to maintain the autonomy of the armed forces.

The final structural consideration is the role played by civilians in the defense ministry exclusive of the Minister of Defense. The question is whether civilians hold positions of responsibility where they can be classified as decision-makers. In coding the responses the criteria used were clearly subjective. Generally, civilians were classified as being in responsible positions if the respondent identified them as having significant functional responsibility as opposed to being merely professional/technical (i.e. lawyer or accountant, etc.), administrative, or advisory. The results, using these criteria, are only seven clear cases where civilians below the level of the minister are in responsible positions. Those cases are: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, and Uruguay.

Two additional cases are somewhat ambiguous, Brazil and Chile. In the Brazilian case, although a number of responsible positions are occupied by civilians, the defense ministry is so new that it seemed prudent to withhold crediting them until the ministry is more firmly established. If, however, the Brazilian Ministry of Defense develops along the lines in which it has been planned, then it appears likely that its civilian positions will need to be reclassified. The Chilean case is ambiguous for different reasons. Although there are positions of subsecretario for each of the three services, these are largely

administrative with only limited policy input. Thus, Chile remains classified as not having civilians in positions of responsibility.

Data Interpretation

Consideration of the data reported above allows the 17 countries under study to be rank ordered with respect to the degree to which the way their defense ministries are structured conforms to the notion of democratic civil-military relations. Three of the reported characteristics are critical in creating an index of democratic civil-military relations within the defense ministry. These are: (1) a civilian minister, (2) in the chain of command, and (3) civilians in responsible positions subordinate to the minister. It is important to note here that if the minister was not a civilian, for purposes of creating this index, it made no difference if the minister was in the chain of command (e.g. the position was scored negatively. Each item was scored between 0, if negative, and 1, if positive. Item (3) was scored 0.5 in the cases of Brazil and Chile for reasons stated above. This scoring resulted in a rank order index of democratic civil-military relations within the Ministry of Defense shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
INDEX OF DEMOCRATIC CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS
INTERNAL TO THE MOD

RANK	SCORE	# OF CASES	COUNTRIES
1	3.0	5	AR,CO,CR,PM,UY
2	2.5	1	BR
3	2.0	4	BL,HO,NU,PY
4	1.5	1	CH
5	0.0	6	DR,ES,GT,MX,PE,
			VE

Table 2 shows that on the organizational dimension of civil-military relations (e.g. within the MOD) there are six ranks of countries ranging from most to least democratic. Four countries, Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Panama received the maximum score of 3.0. Interestingly, Costa Rica and Panama have no armed forces per se, which is at least partly explanatory. In other words, all positions of importance are civilian. Argentina and Colombia each have fully developed armed forces and their defense ministries are the most democratic of the 17. The nuances of this observation will be explored, with respect to Argentina, below.

The second rank is occupied by Brazil, alone, with a score of 2.5. The reason it does not fall within the first rank is, as stated above, that its defense ministry has not had time to shake down. That said, if Brazil follows its planned trajectory, it will move to the first rank in a relatively short period.

Four countries - Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Paraguay - are found in the third rank with scores of 2.0. What is especially interesting is that the four break into two distinct groups based on the reason that they lost a point. Bolivia and Honduras lost a point each because the civilians subordinate to the Minister of Defense did not have any real degree of responsibility. By contrast, Nicaragua and Paraguay each lost a point because the defense minister was not in the chain of command, even though his civilian subordinates did have significant responsibilities.

Rank four is occupied by Chile. Chile received 1 point for a civilian defense minister and 0.5 points for marginally responsible civilians subordinate to the minister. The remaining six countries - the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela - all fall into the last rank, suggesting that on the organizational dimension, their civil-military relations are decidedly undemocratic.

Two qualifying statements need to be made at this point. First, the index is a crude indicator that does not capture the nuances among countries within the same rank. Second, the index only looks at the organizational dimension within the defense ministry. It does not capture an overall societal picture of civil-military relations.

That said, is there any way to capture a causal relationship with respect to the organizational dimension of civil-military relations based on these data? One way would be to hypothesize that the position of a civilian Minister of Defense is a necessary condition for democratic civil-military relations within the defense ministry. The indicator of those democratic civil-military relations is the existence of responsible civilians subordinate to the minister. The null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between a civilian defense minister and responsible civilian subordinates. Table 3 (a contingency table) shows the test for the relationship in terms of numbers, percents, and the Fisher Exact Probability Test (for small samples).

TABLE 3
DEMOCRATIC CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS
WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

CIVILIAN MOD	RESP. CIV. YES	SUBORDINATES NO
YES	6 (35%)	4 (24%)
NO	1 (6%)	6 (35%)

N = 17 = 100% *To be revised.*

p = 0.0756 p > 0.05 < 0.10

Table 3 shows that of the ten countries with civilian defense ministers six had responsible civilian subordinates while four had only administrative, professional/technical, and advisory civilian subordinates. It further shows that in only one case (Uruguay) where the Minister of Defense was military did he have responsible civilian subordinates. In the other six cases the results were as expected. Applying the Fisher Exact Probability Test indicates that 7.56 times in 100 could this particular array of data have occurred by chance alone. This probability does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level but does allow for its rejection at the 0.10 level. In other words, it may be concluded that there is some support for the hypothesis that a civilian defense minister is a "necessary" condition for the development of a corps of responsible civilian subordinates (which is the operationalization of the organizational dimension of democratic civil-military relations). Obviously, the case of Uruguay demonstrates that there are circumstances in which a military defense minister can have responsible civilian subordinates. Nevertheless, the general relationship appears to hold that the first effective step in developing a viable organizational component of democratic civil-military relations is the appointment of a civilian as Minister of Defense.

TOWARD A MORE NUANCED INTERPRETATION: ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

Quantitative analysis can only give a macro overview of the organizational component of civil-military relations. This section of the paper seeks to look in greater depth at the qualitative data relating to several countries that can be presented as illustrative cases. The cases are taken from the several ranks of Table 2, excepting Brazil in the second rank and all the countries in the lowest rank. Brazil is excepted because it has been discussed above; the reasons for its classification will neither change when discussed in greater detail nor is there much more that can be said. The countries of the lowest rank will not be discussed since the organizational dimension of their civil-military relations is simply not democratic. This leaves cases from the first rank, third rank, and fourth. Since the last rank has only one case, Chile will be discussed. The first rank has five cases and the third rank consists of four countries so two have been chosen from the first rank. Argentina is one case to be discussed from the first rank because a great deal of material exists providing a rich context. Nicaragua represents the third rank because its data are more complete and somewhat richer than the other cases. Uruguay will also be discussed because of its subtle but important differences with Argentina.

Argentina

In Argentina, both the Ministry of Defense and the EMC had been founded during the first Peron era. The reasons were to seek efficiency and effectiveness of the operation of the armed forces based on the lessons learned from the victors of World War II. Neither the MOD nor the EMC lived up to the expectations of their founders and in the 33 years between 1949 and 1983 both had become moribund. Indeed, assignment to the EMC was seen as career ending; it was referred to as the "elephant's graveyard."²³ As for the MOD, since it was not in the chain of command, it was never very important. Command ran from the President to the military commanders of the services.

With the military failure in the Falklands/Malvinas conflict in 1982, coming as it did on the heels of economic crisis and the brutality of the "Dirty War," the armed forces were in no position to resist the reorganization that the democratic administration of Raul Alfonsin imposed. That reorganization put the MOD and the EMC squarely in the chain of command and subordinated the service commanders as chiefs of staff. As Huser puts it, "[T]he scope and domain of the Ministry of Defense was expanded, at the direct expense of the individual services." In addition, "The Chief of the Joint Staff was accorded primacy of place...."²⁴ Although President Alfonsin made these changes early in his administration, it was not until 1988 with the passage of the National Defense Law that they were formally incorporated into the legal structure.

Structurally, the MOD followed the model called here Anglo-parliamentary because, as stated in the White Book, "The personnel base is civilian in its concept such that the military advice given daily is from the Armed Forces Joint Staff which assists the Ministry in different functional areas both horizontally and directly."²⁵ Nevertheless, the MOD and EMC did not immediately achieve the degree of control envisioned. Although there were many reasons for this, the single most important one was the dearth of civilian expertise on defense matters.²⁶ "Horacio Jaunarena, the first Alfonsin Secretary of

Defense who would later become Minister of Defense, lamented that there were 'very few' from the civilian side, and that it was difficult to '*armar los cargos*' (fill the jobs). There were far too few knowledgeable civilians to man the Ministry, head up such major dependencies as the *Fabricaciones Militares* and the National Defense College, not to mention advisors to the legislative commissions (committees) that were to deal with defense matters."²⁷

As noted in the preceding quotation, there are civilian positions in the MOD subordinate to the Minister with high levels of responsibility. Indeed, the Secretary of Defense (also called the Secretary for Military Affairs) is, in effect, the Vice-Minister and equal to the Chief of the Joint Staff in terms of level of authority. Theoretically at the same level is the Secretary for Planning and Reconversion. Three subsecretaries are then subordinate to the MOD as well as a number of directors with policy responsibilities.²⁸

It is now 17 years since President Alfonsín imposed his reforms on the military. The effects are finally becoming apparent. Despite Pion-Berlin's pessimistic assessment published in 1997 that, "...to this day most civilians remain in the dark about security themes,"²⁹ things have changed remarkably. Today, civilians control defense policy and while the Chief of the Joint Staff is not yet the real military leader of the armed forces, he is certainly *primus inter pares*.³⁰ Similarly, an Argentine civilian who as a national deputy (UCR) in the 1980s was one of the authors of the National Defense Law and has now returned to the MOD in an advisory role stated that he found a completely changed situation, one that had changed in positive ways.³¹ What has happened is that a significant number of the approximately 26,000 civilians who work in the MOD and services, to include the political appointees, have developed the experience needed to lead the ministry. This is hardly surprising; the significant changes in the US Department of Defense that began with the Goldwater-Nichols legislation in 1986 are still going on. Therefore, one should not wonder at either the slowness of change in Argentina or its profound significance.

Nicaragua

Nicaragua only entered the ranks of democratic countries of the hemisphere with the election in 1991 of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro as President over Sandinista candidate and outgoing president, Daniel Ortega. The unexpected freedom of the election resulted in the ouster of the Sandinistas from the Presidency and control of the legislature but did not affect their hold on the armed forces. Those were known at the time as the *Ejercito Popular Sandinista* and were the military of a political party and not of the nation. Thus, one of the critical tasks for the new democratic administration and its successors was to gain control of the army. This was done, largely, by reducing the size of the armed forces from over 100,000 to about 14,000 nine years later. It also involved bargaining and making compromises with Sandinista Defense Minister, Humberto Ortega (Daniel's brother). By 1999, Ortega was gone; his successor replaced, and the army converted to a national, as opposed to a party, force. At this time, an effort was undertaken to build a civilian Ministry of Defense.

The strength of the new MOD is in the fact that it exists and seems to have the constitutional authority to be in the chain of command. The fact is, however, that without implementing legislation (that does not yet exist) this critical step has not been and

cannot be taken. That said, the MOD is at present staffed by about 40 civilians, many of whom have policy responsibility. There is a Minister and a Vice-Minister, who in the absence of the Minister, is by law the acting minister. Subordinate to the MOD is the Secretary General for Administration, the Director of Civil-Military Relations, Director of Military Affairs, and the Director of Defense Information, although these latter three positions had not been filled as of February 11, 2000. In addition, the position of Director of the Budget has been filled with a qualified professional in financial matters who also has held a similar position in the Interior Ministry.

The focus of the budget is on accountability in the use of appropriated funds, not in determining on which programs funds are expended. Total appropriated funds for the MOD are set at not higher than 1.5% of GDP of which 6% supports the MOD itself and 94% the army. It appears that the army has neither exceeded its share of the appropriated funds nor misused any of those funds.³² Nevertheless, the problem of control lies with "off-budget" funds.

When the downsizing of the army began, the institution sold much of its Soviet made equipment to Peru (which was also equipped with Soviet hardware). The proceeds from these sales appear not to have gone into the national treasury but rather into the army's coffers where they were converted to "for profit" investments. The profits from those investments seem to have been used to satisfy the army's needs for modernization and upkeep.³³ Thus, Nicaragua is like Brazil in being at the beginning of the establishment of a civilian MOD. Unlike Brazil, it has the problem of putting the Minister effectively into the chain of command and gaining control of "off budget" funding. It also appears to have the problem of having anything remotely resembling an adequate number of educated and trained civilians to fill the required policy-making positions in the MOD.

Chile

Chile, blessed or cursed, depending on one's point of view, by the constitution established during the rule of General Augusto Pinochet in 1981 is faced with a situation in which the power of the civilian governmental leaders is severely limited. One of the reasons for this limitation was to preclude the necessity for ever again overturning an elected government by force of arms. Thus, the military was left in a stronger position with respect to the civilian government than in some other instances of democratic transition. Nevertheless, the past decade of democratic rule has seen some significant changes in the nature of civil-military relations, most of which have tended in the democratic direction.

The Ministry of National Defense has acquired a civilian Minister of Defense, however, this is not required by law. More important, the MOD is not in the chain of command. Rather, command flows from the President directly to the chiefs of the services (called commanders-in-chief). Together the service chiefs form the *Junta de Comandantes en Jefe* which advises both the MOD and the President. Military advice to the *Junta* and the MOD is provided by the Joint Staff of the Ministry of National Defense, which likewise is not in the chain of command.

The Ministry of National Defense has a civilian staff of about 800. Below the level of the MOD, the highest ranking civilian officials are the subsecretaries of each of the three services, the *Carabineros* (national police), and the investigative police.³⁴

These, however, are clearly subordinate to the uniformed service chiefs. Civilian responsibilities are primarily administrative or advisory, however, they "... do participate, although minimally, in the development and elaboration of the defense budget presented to the Parliament."³⁵ Additional important civilian positions include chiefs of political staffs to the MOD and the subsecretaries, as well as advisors to the MOD. Unfortunately, there is no real civil service career in the Ministry of National Defense since there is no organic law for the ministry that foresees a permanent civilian staff.³⁶

The same respondent, writing of the role of civilians in the ministry and the services says that it:

...historically and at present has been very small, but interest is growing among political parties and academic entities (a Masters degree from the Institute of Political Science of the *Universidad Catolica*), such that in a short time there will be a good number of civilians trained in defense matters who will be able to assume greater responsibilities. The armed forces themselves are also interested in this matter. Two good examples are the Masters of Arts in military questions, especially in Defense Policy, offered in Chile by the *Academia de Guerra del Ejercito* since the mid 90s, after the inauguration of civilian governments, and more recently the *Academia de Estudios Politicos y Estrategicos* (ANEPE), dependent on the Minister of Defense and with the participation of the three branches of the armed forces.³⁷

Uruguay

David Pion-Berlin, in his comparative study of Argentine civil-military relations argues that Uruguay represents a case of nearly total dominance by the military.³⁸ Although the data in this study do not overturn his general observation, they do raise questions about some of the details. Pion-Berlin suggests that the only civilian decision-makers in the MOD are the Minister and the subsecretary. All others are either technical/professional, advisory, or purely administrative personnel. And many of these "civilians" are what he calls "quasi-military."³⁹

Two aspects of this formulation are incorrect. First, the subsecretary is the Vice-Minister by another name, and is the highest ranking civilian in the MOD. Second, two directorates of the MOD, communications and meteorology, are headed by civilians and their directorates are staffed entirely by civilians. In all, about 3000 civilians work in the MOD.⁴⁰ The highest ranking career "civil service" positions in the MOD are *Jefe de la Asesoría Letrada* and *Jefe de la Asesoría Notarial*. The former is classified at civil service grade 14 while the latter is classified at grade 16. Both positions are *equiparados* at the rank of Colonel.⁴¹ In Pion-Berlin's terms these positions are quasi-military.

Equiparados, however, are not military. They are civilians with civil service rank and pay, whose pay is augmented by military salary and benefits (such as medical). They do not wear uniforms, are not addressed by military rank, and, although they legally can command, do not. Moreover, for any civilian offense, they are held responsible in the civilian courts of law. In addition, for offenses relating to their work in the national

defense, they can also be held liable under the military legal code. In short, the position is a hybrid, perceived by the Uruguayans as *sui generis*.⁴²

What this means for the organizational component of civil-military relations is that Uruguay has significant elements of democratic civil-military relations. Its civilians are in a number of responsible positions. However, the informal *Junta de Comandantes* (the service chiefs meeting as a group) dominates military decision-making reducing the Joint Staff to mere advisory status as well as circumscribing the freedom of action of the MOD.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the organizational component of civil-military relations in 17 Latin American countries using both quantitative and qualitative data. Based on this data and its analysis several conclusions can be reached. First, there is a great disparity among the countries of the region in terms of the degree to which their civil-military relations, as reflected in their defense ministries, is democratic. In four countries the democratic structures are strong while in Brazil they seem to be well on their way to becoming effective. Another four countries are mid-way in their route toward effective democratic structures, however, their routes go in two different directions. Although it is difficult to tell whether having a civilian defense minister in the chain of command is more important to democratic civil-military relations than having a corps of educated and trained civilian subordinates, the quantitative analysis suggests that the key variable is the civilian MOD. A civilian as MOD will likely lead both to the chain of command and responsible civilian subordinates.

If that is the case, then the Chilean example is somewhat more promising than its low rating suggests. Nevertheless, the qualitative and quantitative analysis both imply that one should be extremely cautious in predicting the future of civil-military relations in that country. Indeed, as the experience of the arrest, detention, and return of General Pinochet makes clear, the political divisions and enmities of recent history have yet to be buried. Thus, the future for Chile remains "guarded."

Finally, the remaining six countries simply have a long way to go. In some of them, unfortunately, without the kind of structural change implied in this paper, several of them may still find themselves involved with the kind of military politics and civil-military relations that have characterized so much of the history of Latin America. Fortunately, these countries are not all the same. Thus, there is real hope that in an era when democracy has the potential to be triumphant everywhere, any and all of these six may well find solutions to their problems that will involve the creation of ministries of defense with civil-military relations based on shared responsibilities. And, in most of the six the place to begin is with the naming of a civilian as MOD.

NOTES

¹ CHDS briefing, 1997, 98, 99, and 2000.

² See Douglas L. Bland, "A Unified Theory of Civil-Military Relations, *Armed forces & Society*, Volume 26, Number 1, Fall 1999, pp. 7 - 26.

³ J. Samuel Fitch makes this argument both in personal and public discussion as well as in his writing. See his *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998.

⁴ Bland, p. 10.

⁵ Bland, p. 11.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., and Bland, personal communication, January 6, 2000.

⁸ David Pion-Berlin, *Through Corridors of Power: Institutions and Civil-Military Relations in Argentina*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA, 1997, p.3.

⁹ Pion-Berlin, p. 22.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Little, Brown, & Co., Boston, 1971.

¹² Bland, pp. 16 - 17.

¹³ DND, Canada, *A Benchmark Study of the Armed Forces of Australia, Italy, The Netherlands, Sweden, The United Kingdom and Canada*, www.dnd.ca/eng/min/reports/benchmark, 5/10/99.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Christopher P. Gibson & Dr. Don M. Snider, "Explaining Post Cold-War Civil-Military Relations: A New Institutional Approach," hdc-www.harvard.edu/cfia/olin/pubs/no8.htm, p. 11.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁰ Key informants are among those thanked in the acknowledgements.

²¹ Pre-test results were incorporated into the study data as they do not diverge in any way from those gathered using the final version of the questionnaire.

²² Interviews with members of the US Embassy, San Salvador, July 1997.

²³ Herbert C. Huser, *Argentina's Civil-Military Relations: Changing Patterns in a Democratic Society*, NDU Press, Washington, DC, forthcoming, p. 95.

²⁴ Huser, p. 89.

²⁵ Ministerio de Defensa, Republica Argentina, *Libro Blanco de la Defensa Nacional*, Buenos Aires, 1999, p. 12 - 107.

²⁶ See Huser, p. 91, and Pion-Berlin, p. 160.

²⁷ Huser, p. 92.

²⁸ *Libro Blanco*, Figure 12 -1, p. 12 - 105.

²⁹ Pion-Berlin, p. 161.

³⁰ Huser, personal communication, February 2000.

³¹ Informal interview with Argentine advisor to the MOD, 2 March 2000.

³² Informal interview with Director of the Budget for the MOD, 3 March 2000.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Republic of Chile, *Libro de la Defensa Nacional de Chile*, 1998, pp. 96 - 97.

³⁵ Notes of a Chilean respondent to the survey, Jan-Feb 2000.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Pion-Berlin, p. 184.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Personal communication and informal interview with a senior civilian in the MOD. This individual has served as both a pure civilian and as an *equiparado* (to be discussed in the text).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.