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The Military and Democracy: The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America

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the early days of the crisis, the secretary of defense, the Joint Staff, and the separate services (army, navy, marine corps, and air force) in their alerting and planning actions were about forty-eight hours ahead of the actual decisions and instructions emanating from the White House—a condition that under different circumstances might have had undesirable consequences. The author has included details of the massive air lift of U.S. forces, as well as of air and naval operations in the surrounding area, during the initial deployment of U.S. forces to the Dominican Republic. He has done this especially well.

The author makes no bones about ducking the political issues surrounding the intervention, and sticks to his military knitting. Not surprisingly, then, military-diplomatic coordination and political-military interactions are only briefly addressed, while the bulk of the book focuses on the military aspects of the intervention, both operational and logistic. Nevertheless, Schoonmaker includes considerable material on such things as U.S. civil affairs and humanitarian undertakings, Special Forces operations, psychological operations, and attempts to jam rebel broadcasts, all of which have political overtones. Particularly valuable are Schoonmaker's analyses of the U.S. intelligence performance; the initial communications difficulties experienced and how they were resolved; and U.S. contingency planning. All are reminiscent of similar problems experienced years later in Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989).

This book has much to offer the civilian and military policymakers and planners in the U.S. government who are grappling with the complexities and challenges of situations short of war—so-called limited, or low intensity conflicts—that are bound to plague the United States in the future. In the Caribbean region especially, political, economic, and sociological conditions are dangerously unstable and the needs of the peoples concerned are rapidly mounting. The inescapable truth is that vital U.S. interests, sooner or later, will come in harm's way—thus guaranteeing American involvement.

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Goodman, L.W., Mendelson, J.S., and Rial, J., eds. *The Military and Democracy: The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1990. 327pp. \$24.95

Latin America is often covered by the experts as a single entity, more or less homogeneous, experiencing similar problems throughout. While this approach usually produces a well-written text that is easy to understand, the reader is often left with the impression that if only Latin Americans would read this and realize their folly, solutions would be forthcoming.

Unfortunately, this all-embracing approach fails to incorporate the perception of many Latin American countries of being different in many

ways from their neighbors. They are correct in these perceptions, since the differences are more common than the similarities. It should surprise no one, then, that these publications are mere generalizations that fit no one country in particular.

The editors of *The Military and Democracy* are well aware of this situation, and have therefore chosen a different approach in their treatment of the timely subject of civil-military relations in Latin America. They have selected seventeen articles and divided them into four groups: "The Armed Forces, Civilians, and the Transition to Democracy"; "The Armed Forces, Civilians, and the Perception of Threat to the Social and Political Order"; "Military Professionalism and the Mission of the Armed Forces"; and "Civil-Military Relations and the Future of Democracy in Latin America." The recent experiences of Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Uruguay, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and the not so recent experiences of Venezuela, Mexico, and Costa Rica are explored in detail. However, Chile's transition to a democratic government is conspicuously absent.

The authors are mostly of Latin American origin, and their work is mainly concerned with the realities of their own individual countries. The effect is an accurate testimony from someone who has lived the experience. Unfortunately the well-known tendency of "experts"—in this case Latin American experts—to show off their worldly knowledge by quoting authors of obscure ideologies

is present in a few of the articles, but in general the quality of the ideas expressed is good.

However, a country-by-country approach does have its drawbacks. The editors have tried to group articles with common themes under one heading. But this has not helped to focus the attention of the reader on one issue, and it disrupts the fluidity of the reading. Upon finishing the book, one is left not with one or two basic concepts, but rather with a collection of impressions that reveal the disparities of Latin American society.

The book is successful in describing some of the pervasive ideas common among Latin American militaries, such as: the perception that the military embodies the soul of the nation and is thus the natural guarantor of its existence; the isolation of the military within society; and the abdication of the civilian government from devising and guiding military policy, leaving the military to define its role and missions alone.

The book should prove useful to those interested in understanding the differences between the United States military and those of its southern neighbors. Given the high visibility of the military in Latin American society, the book should provide valuable insight to those responsible for charting United States policy toward that part of the world.

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