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To María Elena Valenzuela

Preface

This book expresses personal and collective apprehension over the devastating consequences of militarization and the arms race in Latin America and throughout the world.

After the military coup that overthrew the constitutional government of President Salvador Allende and the Popular Unity coalition, concern over the causes of this dramatic change in Chilean politics motivated all my intellectual endeavors. Starting in 1975, I undertook a series of research projects to explore and understand the surprising appearance of the military in local politics. Like most Chilean citizens, I have been amazed by the brutality of the coup and by the close alliance between the armed forces and groups such as the financial community. I began to work, with colleagues and friends, at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) on the ideological, political, and institutional development of the Chilean armed forces. From these efforts emerged several published articles and books, authored by me or in collaboration with others, particularly Felipe Agüero, Fernando Bustamante, Hugo Frühling, and Carlos Portales. I wish to thank all of them for the experience of that challenging, creative process.

The general intellectual milieu at FLACSO in Santiago was extremely stimulating. I was able to benefit from a variety of collective projects, particularly the analysis of Latin American geopolitical military theory as formulated by Jorge Chateau, the analysis of the national security doctrine carried out by Manuel Antonio Garretón, and several analyses of Latin American and Chilean authoritarianism conducted by José Joaquin Brunner, Enzo Faletto, Angel Flisfisch, Norbert Lechner, and Tomás Moulian.

In order to understand the causes and antecedents of local militarization, I had to analyze the regional and international relations of the Chilean and Latin American armed forces. In this effort my work was enriched by the insights of scholars such as Genaro Arriagada in Chile; José Antonio Viera Gallo, exiled in Italy; Raimo Väyrynen in Finland; Peter Lock, Dieter Senghaas, and Ulrich Albrecht in Germany; Alain Joxe and Alain Rouquie in France; Mary Kaldor and Robin Luckham in England; Giri Dashinkar in India; Michael Klare, John Child, Alfred

Stepan, and Abraham Lowenthal in the United States; Liisa North and Peter Landstreet in Canada; Johan Galtung and Asbjørn Eide in Norway; Clovis Brigagão and Alexandre Barros in Brazil; Victor Millán; and Antonio Cavalla in Mexico. I had the opportunity to share our common concerns over global militarization through seminars, conferences, and workshops.

In addition to the intellectual support of these friends, I am grateful for the institutional and financial assistance of the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC), the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation and Development (NOVIB) in Holland, the Ford Foundation and the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., the International University Exchange Fund in Switzerland, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, and the International Peace Research Association and the Center of Latin American Studies at Duke University, all of which supported some part of this long-term endeavor. Joseph Theunis and Rodrigo Egaña in Holland, David Stephen in England, and Stephen Marks in UNESCO understood the importance of my research and contributed to its progress through their support.

All of these institutional and personal relationships contributed in 1981 to the creation of the Chilean Peace Research Association (ACHIP), of which I was the first secretary general. There I benefited from stimulating discussions with Gustavo Lagos, Alberto van Klaveren, and Heraldo Muñoz, among others.

In the present volume I have incorporated and summarized several of my previously published articles and added new chapters as well. My intent is to enhance our understanding of the international economic factors and the regional political pressures fueling the tragic arms race in Latin America.

I would like to thank Nita Rous Manitzas and Frank Manitzas for their refreshing comments on the manuscript, Pamela Quick for translating the original copy, and especially Anne-Marie Smith for editing the text and suggesting important changes and corrections. Linda Powers and Enrique Hermosilla at the Wilson Center were responsible for the material production of the manuscript, Isaac Caro in Chile collected and updated the statistical information, and Rebeca Toledo typed the final manuscript.

To all these friends, colleagues, and institutions, I offer my grateful thanks.

Augusto Varas
Santiago, Chile

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Introduction

The arms race in Latin America cannot be analyzed independently of the historical structural relationship between the armed forces and the state, the nature of civilian domination of the military. It is within this framework of civilian-military relations that we must analyze the international influences and pressures to convert the Latin American armed forces into major consumers of international war technology and products manufactured in developed countries. The increasing militarization of Latin American societies needs to be understood not only in terms of contemporary regional politics but also against the background of the historic role of the military in the original creation and early years of development of the nations of Latin America.

The Latin American states were born and consolidated within a political vacuum. Until the advent of bourgeois authoritarianism in the nineteenth century, there was no basis or foundation for the Latin American nation as such other than military power, and the republics of the region lacked an autonomous structure beyond the vague and fluid identity of armed factions and caudillos. Without an autonomous civilian profile of its own, the nation could only be identified in its earliest history with the military power that had brought it to birth. The root of bellicose patriotic ideology can be found in this substitution of armed factions for nations.

This phenomenon has been more pronounced in some countries than in others. The interregional struggles that destroyed Argentina, Mexico, Great Colombia, and even Peru were not prominent in Chile because of the weakness of its regional centers and classes. Civilian power disciplined and firmly controlled the military strongmen inherited from the anti-absolutist struggle. Yet the sense of nationality remained weak in all of the countries of Spanish America.

After independence, the defense of national sovereignty was subordinated to a domestic political role for the Latin American armed forces. Indeed, there was little need to defend the nation from outside aggressors, as potential enemies were often incapacitated by their own internal instability. Argentina bled to death in its perpetual civil war. Peru was severely weakened by its military losses to Chile and also by the

permanent struggle among the caudillo elite. The professional functions of the Latin American armies were gradually reduced to combating bandits and Indians or confronting each other repeatedly in political or regional disputes. The military languished in professional stagnation under the questionable tutelage of civilians.

Meanwhile, an antimilitarist ideology, shaped significantly by the writings of the intellectuals Andrés Bello, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Bartolomé Mitre, and many other fugitives from the disorder of civil wars, gained ground among the educated classes, contributing to an interpretation of the fundamental problems of young nations in terms of the role of the military. According to this antimilitarist political philosophy, armies are objective representatives of barbarism in the continuum between barbarism and civilization. One of the philosophy's chief aims is to minimize the role of force in political life. This position contrasts strongly with the Latin American glorification of military victories as the basis of nationality, which many civilians are uncomfortable with. The social elites had faltered through independence, finding it almost thrust upon them by a mixture of world events and by the vigorous action of the factions closely linked to the military liberators. Independence was not sought because of the ideological commitment of the social elite. It was founded instead on a culture of "war victories" that substituted for an ideological program. The antimilitarism that developed later rejected the civilian subordination to the military that the transition to independence had entailed.

The military establishment used its dominant role in the creation of the state to justify its own institutional autonomy and has resisted subordination to civilian government except in situations of clear hegemony by a strong power bloc. When civilian rule is identified with a stable order and a unified and unbroken state, the military will accept the situation, but as soon as civilian power exhibits contradictions and the state appears divided and torn apart by particular interests and parties, the military feels that its own institutional integrity may be threatened.

Latin American armed forces consequently avoided being subjected to a divided and contradictory civilian political power. The military was willing to submit itself formally only to a stable and balanced state. Any serious indecision or disagreement within the state appeared threatening and subversive to the military. During the nineteenth century the ruling class came to assert not only its political dominance, but also its control of both the state and the military, inspiring resentment from the armed forces. Military leaders from the 1930s to the 1950s used this anticivilian reaction as their principal source of legitimacy within their own headquarters. Later generations of military leaders have been astonished by the high degree of civilian control and intervention in military life that prevailed during the nineteenth century.

In some countries the military's resentment of civilian control was concealed as long as the civilian bloc in power was stable and secure

and as long as the military lacked the professional values that would enable it to define its institution positively vis-à-vis the rest of society. In such cases a set of corporatist values able to repel civilian "intrusion" remained undeveloped. There was no strong basis for military autonomy, nor had the unique competence of officers to direct the military been demonstrated. In other cases, the instability of civilian domination was a more than sufficient argument to propel the military into local politics as a legitimate actor.

Despite the political instability of civilian power and the catastrophic effects of confrontations between the military and other political actors, the Latin American armed forces began a slow and occasionally interrupted process of professionalization at the end of the nineteenth century. This process resulted from the relative fragmentation of the economic, political, and military domination of British imperialism, and the subsequent emergence of sustained international competition between England, Germany, and France for control of the New World.

Rivalry between the European imperial powers and their involvement in local civil wars resulted in increasing pressure on the Latin American armed forces to accept collaboration in their process of professionalization. The French and German military missions to Latin America in this period had important political and institutional consequences. Although the Latin American armed forces continued to be seen as agencies subordinated to civilian power, increased esteem for their military virtues resulted from this professionalization and the prestige they acquired by cooperating with European armed forces.

In those countries where the process of professionalization coincided with stable civilian domination—Chile and Uruguay—the armed forces came to be seen as a national force, a faithful and true expression of society. This new army inherited the original image of the armed forces as symbiotic with the nation itself—not a mere entity superimposed upon a preexistent national organism. In the rest of Latin America military professionalization was achieved relatively free of civilian domination, reinforcing the institutional autonomy of the armed forces. This was the case in Argentina, Brazil, and Peru.

Following their professionalization under the guidance of European armed forces, Latin American armies found themselves in a paradoxical and frustrating position. In countries where they submitted to firm civilian control, the armies discovered that they lacked the autonomy to pursue further development and modernization. They began to demand an accurate assessment of their professional requirements and civilian recognition of their need for autonomy. A new phase in political development began for modern Latin American armed forces once they had a corporatist base from which to launch autonomous political involvement in the state. Within this historical development, we find an increasing allocation of state financial resources for military institutions and specifically for the acquisition of ever more sophisticated and

numerous armaments, fueling an accelerating arms race throughout Latin America.

The following chapters address the primary elements that allow an explanation and understanding of the phenomenon of the arms race in Latin America. The first chapter discusses the principal historical reasons for the peculiar political role of the armed forces in Latin American societies, and enumerates the reasons for their degree of institutional autonomy. The next chapter covers the development of the military ideology known as the "national security doctrine" and its contribution to the increasing autonomy of the armed forces in the latter half of the twentieth century. The third chapter addresses the factors that have been associated lately with a noticeable increase in Latin American military expenditures and the renewed impetus this has given to the regional arms race. The fourth chapter establishes the differences between domestic factors and dynamic international elements of the arms race, and this analysis continues in the fifth chapter with a study of how military technology is transferred from industrialized countries to the principal participants in the arms race of the region. Chapter 6 analyzes the military's perception of threats to national security. Taking into consideration all the elements that explain the arms race in Latin America, Chapter 7 establishes the principal steps necessary to control the growing interregional conflicts that have been unleashed as a result of increased military autonomy and the simultaneous increase in military expenditures. The eighth chapter is dedicated to analyzing the previously studied set of variables as manifested in the case of the Chilean armed forces. I chose Chile for this case study not only because of my familiarity with the country but also because it demonstrates the principal tendencies that characterize Latin American armed forces during the 1980s. The book concludes with an analysis of the factors necessary to assure the demilitarization, disarmament, and democratization of the armed forces of Latin America.