



# NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT REPORT:

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

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PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

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## I. SUMMARY

Establishing and institutionalizing civilian authority over the military is a high priority problem in all transitions to democracy. Drawing on the lessons learned from successful transitions, NDI can make a contribution in a number of ways.

Recommendation: NDI should develop programs in this area in stages, beginning with a survey trip to Argentina and Uruguay in June 1988 to assess feasibility of a seminar on civil-military relations in Buenos Aires in Fall, 1988.

## II. BACKGROUND

### A. THE MILITARY & DEMOCRACY: CLARIFYING THE PROBLEM

Back to the barracks -- but for how long?

In democratic transitions, civilians never assume power without military acquiescence. Transitions occur when military officers decide that direct military rule is not in their best interest. This decision is usually based on situational factors -- a loss of confidence and popular support following a military defeat, economic decline, or a general governance crisis, combined with international pressure.

Before returning to the barracks, the generals often reach an accommodation with civilian leaders, ceding certain powers in exchange for concessions to protect their prerogatives. The initial outcome is rarely full civilian supremacy, but some form of power sharing. Military power may vary from that of an interest group which exerts influence primarily within its own domain (e.g. Venezuela), to broad influence (e.g. Brazil) or military dominance (e.g. Guatemala), to total military dominance, where the president is little more than a figurehead (e.g. Panama).

New civilian leaders face a thorny dilemma: How can they consolidate, expand and institutionalize civilian control while their own authority is still sharply circumscribed? If civilians push too hard, they risk provoking a coup. While the immediate likelihood of military coups in Latin America is small, fundamental relationships generally remain unchanged. Should the situational factors which led to the withdrawal of the militaries shift, the danger of a new round of coups could increase.

Heavy military influence over governments nominally led by elected civilians poses a greater immediate threat to democracy in Latin America than military coups. Constrained politicians hope to gradually assume more of their constitutional powers, while gradually easing the military out of politics. But there is no guarantee that this evolution will occur.

### A universal problem

Every society -- including the United States -- wrestles with the problem of controlling those who have been granted a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force; i.e. the police, the military, and the investigatory agencies. Throughout the developing world,

military regimes remain more the rule than the exception.

At every stage of transition -- from opposition to authoritarian regimes, through negotiation of the transition, to consolidation of civilian democracy -- the problem of "what to do about the army" is at the top of the democratic agenda. This question arises in almost every country in which NDI works. Last December, one Panamanian politician told NDI staff "We can figure out how to run a fair election. What we really need help with is 'what to do with the PDF [Panama Defense Forces].'"

#### A two-sided transition

A successful transition requires changes on both sides of the civil-military equation. The military must be persuaded -- with a mix of incentives and disincentives -- that it is in their interest to exchange their traditional roles, privileges and attitudes for the benefits of a modern and professional force, a new set of rewards, and a new vision of their role in society.

At the same time, civilians must reach a consensus on military policy, resolve the delicate questions of amnesty and the military budget, grant certain concessions to the military within their new role, develop or reform many civilian institutions, assume responsibility for defining security policy, and reintegrate the soldiers into government and society.

#### Obstacles to Changing the Role of the Military

The obstacles to making this transformation are deep, old and many:

1. Ideology. Military ideology, known in Latin America as the national security doctrine, lies at the center of the problem. When no external enemy threatens, the military focuses on internal subversion. They see the "fatherland" under attack by "germ-like" subversives who must be destroyed before they "infect the entire body." Meanwhile, weak, fragmented and personalistic political parties appear incapable of governing. If the choice is not "Us or Communism," it is "Us or Chaos." Duty and honor require the military to intervene.
2. Isolation. Military families in many transitional countries live apart as a privileged but ostracized caste. They intermarry, live in separate neighborhoods, attend separate schools, use military health/business/recreational facilities, socialize separately, and bury their dead in military cemeteries. Their isolation from civilian society perpetuates mistrust and misunderstanding.
3. Civilian attitudes. Military coups rarely occur without encouragement from important civilian sectors. In 1964 in Brazil, and in 1973 in Chile, influential civilians, including the Church, "knocked on the military's door."

As soon as the military returns to the barracks, civilians demand retribution for human rights violations. This understandable response makes the military understandably fearful of ceding further power and can provoke a dangerous reaction.

4. Civilian incapacibilities In most developing countries, military organizational capacity far exceeds that of civilians. The relative weakness of civilian institutions -- for determining security policy, providing orderly political change, and governing in general -- perpetuates military rule.

In particular, the lack of strong civil-military mediating institutions -- civilian-run defense ministries, security councils, oversight and budget committees, civilian defense analysts, and academic curricula in strategic studies -- cripples efforts to exert civilian authority.

5. Privileges associated with the traditional role Accustomed to power, autonomy, status, privilege and wealth, the military is reluctant to exchange these perquisites for the uncertain benefits of a limited, constitutional role.

Military involvement in corruption, drug trafficking, racketeering or private enterprise increases their resistance to change.

6. International influences. US policy may have fostered military intervention in several ways. In some instances we have encouraged or given a green (or amber) light to military coups. Our aid and training programs may have inadvertently contributed to the imbalance between military and civilian capacity. Finally, cold war rhetoric may reinforce the military's threat perception at the expense of the regional focus and more benign outlook of civilian leaders.

Regional influences also play a role. In Latin America, militarization and civilianization tend to occur in waves.

7. Political, Economic & Military Environment. Political paralysis, economic stress, labor strife, and political violence can undermine the best efforts of democrats to transform the role of the military.

8. Repression, Retribution and Amnesty. Following severe repression, psychological scars of anger, guilt and fear on the part of both victims and victimizers increase rigidity and mistrust.

#### B. PARTIAL SOLUTIONS: LESSONS FROM SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS

Appreciation of the depth and complexity of this problem breeds humility regarding solutions. Yet some lessons can be drawn from countries which have recently made successful transitions -- such as Spain, Venezuela, Portugal, Greece, and Germany -- or have strong traditions of military abstention from politics -- such as Israel, Mexico, India, and the U.S.

The examples below illustrate the variety of approaches used:

1. In the short term, political leaders sometimes must "buy" time.

e.g. reducing the military's fears of change by dealing carefully with the question of amnesty, avoiding immediate cuts in the military budget, and negotiating institutional autonomy over internal matters.

e.g. finding a new labor-intensive task aimed at an external threat to keep "idle hands" busy. (In Venezuela, the military agreed to concentrate on building border settlements.)

2. Intermediate-term institutional changes are also required.

e.g. increasing civilian capacity for defining security policy and overseeing the military by training civilian military analysts within the defense ministry, the political parties, and academia.

e.g. developing congressional oversight, budgetary controls and appointment of commanders.

e.g. diminishing military capacity for a coup by separating the police, intelligence agencies, and military branches, and rapidly rotating officers.

e.g. professionalizing the military and convincing them that involvement in daily government impedes their efforts to build a modern force and keep up with the latest technology.

3. Longer term measures are needed to break military isolation.

e.g. closing military academies and sending cadets to universities, which rewards them with higher status while exposing them to civilian society and encouraging exogamy.

e.g. joining alliances with democratic neighbors to provide new role models and peer pressures.

e.g. encouraging a second civilian career with mandatory early retirement.

Studies of the role of the military in transitions also suggest that U.S. policymakers should rethink the impact of U.S. policies.

-- Does the U.S. send consistent messages about the priority of democracy in promoting stability and security?

-- Have US training and assistance programs exacerbated the imbalance between military and civilian institutional capacity?

-- Do our training programs actually achieve the desired effect of inculcating democratic values? Does role modeling, exposure to U.S. culture, civic education, or professionalization work?

-- Does our emphasis on threats of internal communist subversion reinforce the national security doctrine, undermining efforts of civilians to moderate military ideology?

## II. PROPOSAL

### A. RANGE OF POSSIBLE PROGRAMS

NDI already contributes to civilian capacity for control of the military by strengthening civilian political institutions. But NDI could expand its assistance to young democracies struggling to establish and institutionalize civilian control by addressing the issue more directly.

Possibilities for programming span three levels:

Level 1: NDI could continue to incorporate sessions on civil-military relations into workshops and conferences currently offered.

e.g. include civil-military relations more frequently on the agenda of conferences on transitions and governance.

e.g. add sessions on building capacity for developing defense policy to NDI's party-building activities.

Level 2: NDI could cosponsor international seminars devoted solely to civil-military relations, in which political leaders and military officers from countries at different stages of democratic development share ideas and experiences.

Level 3: NDI could develop more sharply focused programs on building the mediating institutions necessary for civilian control of the military, such as defense ministries, security councils, congressional oversight committees, and training of civilian defense analysts.

NDI has already planning sessions at the first level. The following proposal describes a pilot project at the second level -- an international seminar.

Examples of possible programs at the third level -- institution-building -- are provided in Attachment C.

### III. DEVELOPING AN NDI PROGRAM IN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

Three phases are described below. After each phase, NDI can evaluate the program and decide whether or not to proceed further.

#### Phase I: Preparation

##### A. Conduct/observe Sessions on Civil-Military Relations Already Planned for Upcoming Conferences

This year, several conferences sponsored by NDI and other organizations include at least one session on civil-military relations. These sessions provide opportunities to evaluate alternative approaches to the topic and expand our contacts.

-- Conduct session on Civil-Military Relations at NDI's Panama Conference, March 1988

-- Observe American University conference on "Civil-Military Relations in Latin America," in May, 1988 in Washington, DC. Participants include scholars, politicians and military officers from ten Latin American states. (see Attachment A).

-- Participate in proposed session on civil-military relations at conference on "Transition to Democracy" proposed by the Philippine Ministry of Foreign Affairs for June, 1988.

-- Session on civil-military relations at NDI's Pakistan Conference scheduled for September, 1988.

##### B. Conduct Survey Trip to Argentina and Uruguay in June, 1988 .

Purpose: to evaluate the potential for a pilot project on civil-military relations in Buenos Aires in Fall, 1988.

Both Argentinian and Uruguay face serious difficulties in consolidating civilian control (although civil-military relations in Argentina are far more polarized and acute).

During the survey, NDI staff would meet with political leaders, academic specialists, and, as appropriate, military personnel to determine the feasibility of a pilot program in Fall, 1988. Staff would identify appropriate cosponsors for the project, discuss appropriate format and methods, evaluate alternative venues, and identify potential invitees.

(The survey trip would also allow staff to follow-up on previous discussions regarding other NDI programs in Uruguay and Argentina.)

Following the survey, a decision would be made whether or not to proceed with the pilot project.



## Phase II: Implementation of Pilot Project

### A. Cosponsor an International Seminar on Civil-Military Relations in Buenos Aires in Fall, 1988.

Potential cosponsors: Arturo Illia Foundation (associated with the Radical Party), Foundation for the Coordination of Growth (associated with the Peronist Party), and the CEDES Institute.

The CEDES Institute's specialist on civil-military relations, Dr. Andres Fontana, is currently developing a "Center for the Study of Security and Civil-Military Relations." Dr. Fontana has good relations with both political and military leaders. During his visit to NDI last fall, he expressed interest in cosponsoring a seminar with NDI and integrating it into a conference series.

Participants: Political leaders and military officers from both Uruguay and Argentina would be joined by pairs of officers and politicians from Spain, Venezuela and the United States.

Agenda: Possible topics include: the role of the military in democracy, military professionalism, defining strategic policy, the role of political parties in civil-military relations, development of mediating institutions, legislative oversight, military reform, international and regional influences.

The conference would allow a four-way dialogue between Latin American and international participants, and between military officers and politicians. At appropriate points, the group might divide into separate military-to-military and civilian-to-civilian discussions, or divide by region.

Anticipated outcomes: 1) sharing methods and experiences in changing the role of the military and maintaining civilian control, 2) fostering dialogue between military and civilian leaders in the host country, 3) exposing military officers undergoing transition to democratic role models, 4) raising awareness of U.S. policymakers on the impact of U.S. policies on Latin American militaries, 5) identifying institutional changes needed for civilian control, which could form the basis for follow-up projects.

### B. Evaluation of Argentina/Uruguay Pilot Project

Careful evaluation of the by staff and board would determine whether and how to proceed with further programs in civil-military relations.

Phase III: Future programs

- A. If the pilot project is successful, NDI could offer a similar program in other countries. Candidates might include, at appropriate junctures, the Philippines, Panama, Korea, Pakistan, Haiti, or Chile.
- B. The pilot project may also suggest new ideas for focused programs to help build, strengthen or reform the political institutions necessary for control of the military, emphasizing the role of political parties. (see attachment C for examples).

## ATTACHMENT A

### OTHER GROUPS CONDUCTING PROGRAMS IN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

As a topic for either study or programming, civil-military relations is very undeveloped. This is due to the political sensitivity of the issue and the gulf between academic and military subcultures. Most Latin American countries have, at most, a few academics specializing in this field, and almost no civilian defense specialists.

Yet as the need has become more apparent, the number of conferences on the topic has grown. Examples include:

\* American University and PETIHO Institute (Montevideo) have convened a group of American and Latin American scholars to write and present papers on different aspects of the problem. Last December, NDI Consultant Tom Smerling attended their conference in Panama City titled "Civil-Military Relations in Latin America." Next May in Washington, the final papers will be presented to a broader group including scholars, political leaders and military officers from ten Latin American countries.

\* The Arturo Illia Foundation (Buenos Aires) sponsored a seminar in August 1985 titled "Defense Law in the Context of Military Reform." The conference focussed on constitutional and legal provisions redefining security policy and the role of the military. A German general and Spanish representative participated.

\* The Interamerican Dialogue (Washington) convened a "Working Group on Armed Forces and Democracy" in Lima last August. Their report concludes that "the short-run risk of a new cycle of coups is relatively low, but that the chief deterrents are situational factors subject to change over the longer term." The report makes three recommendations 1) to foster sustained civil-military dialogues, 2) to strengthen democratic institutions, and 3) to provide various forms of international support.

\* The CEDES Institute (Buenos Aires) is seeking to establish a "Center for the Study of Security Policies and Civil-Military Relations" which would provide a meeting ground for military and civilian specialists.

Andres Fontana has proposed a series of forums in 1988 and 1989 intended to facilitate communication between civilian and military leaders, and to raise awareness of the need for "civilian professionalism" in security policy to achieve subordination of the military to constitutional authority. In Washington in February, Dr. Fontana expressed interest in collaborating with NDI, perhaps incorporating an NDI seminar into his series of forums.

\* Rafael Banon of the Ortega Gasset Institute (Madrid) sponsored a conference on civil-military relations in April, 1987.

\* The Capinas Research Institute (Capinas, Brazil) has held several conferences which included active-duty military officers. Eliezer Rizzo de Oliveira organized the series.

\* The SSRC (New York) sponsored a scholars conference on "New Approaches to Civil Military Relations" in January, 1987 in Rio de Janeiro. Organizers included Alfred Stepan, Andres Fontana, and Augusto Varas.

\* Civil-military relations and the role of the military in democracy has been discussed at several military conferences sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense, including a symposium in Nov. 1986 at Fort Benning, Georgia. The 1985 Conference of American Armies, brought the chiefs of staff from nearly all countries in the Western Hemisphere together, and they discussed similar issues.

\* The Woodrow Wilson Center (Washington) held a conference on civil-military relations in Chile in 1985(?) in which specialists and representatives of all major political parties participated.

ATTACHMENT B

DISCUSSION TOPICS: CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS & NDI

1. Civil-Military Relations and Political Parties

a. Political parties are dramatically affected by this problem.

-- Military intervention in politics stifles the development of political parties. Party leaders are targeted for repression by military regimes.

-- The military acts like a political party in many countries, taking up "political space."

-- Constraints placed on civilian leaders by the military threat limit their ability to govern effectively.

b. Political parties also contribute to the problem.

-- Political parties often seek out the military as a "coalition partner."

-- Fragmented, weakly institutionalized party systems yield weak, unstable governments incapable of governing effectively. In these circumstances, even democratically-oriented citizens sometimes opt for a military regime.

-- When parties lack military analysts sufficiently trained to draft serious strategic policy, the void is filled by the military staff who propound the army's vision.

c. Political parties are an essential part of any solution.

-- As one of the few civilian institutions as geographically dispersed as the army, political parties provide a unique point of mid-level interface between civilians and military personnel.

-- To change the role of the military, the major political parties must reach consensus and not allow military policy to become a partisan issue.

-- Political parties can help "bring the public along" once leaders have struck a deal with the military. In Spain, the political parties collaborated with the army on a public relations campaign to change the military's image. Party-run educational programs for youth provide another opportunity for civic education on the role of the military in a democracy.

-- Legislatures are the most underdeveloped arm of civilian control. In parliamentary systems, the majority party leader establishes committee structures, hires staff and allocates budgets. These decisions determine legislative capacity for ongoing oversight and control.

-- If civilian defense analysts within political parties developed and reached consensus on strategic and military policies, newly elected governments would be prepared to negotiate with the military from an informed and unified position.

## 2. Civil-military Relations and Institution Building

As indicated in section III, institutional change is a key element of any comprehensive program to change the role of the military. This includes reform of military institutions, strengthening of civilian political institutions, and development of new institutions to mediate between the two.

Mediating institutions provide the institutional framework for civilian control. They include defense ministries and staff, legislative oversight and budget committees, executive branch national security councils, nongovernmental forums for sustained civilian-military dialogue, academic programs for training in strategic and military policy. Some analysts view the incapacity of civilian institutions for governance, particularly in the area of security policy, as the crucial "missing link" in efforts to establish civilian control.

The structure of these mediating institutions varies widely from country to country. Countries seeking to develop these institutions have a wide range of alternatives from which to choose.

All mediating institutions require civilian specialists in military matters who can converse on equal footing with military officers. In most developing countries, there is a near total lack of civilian analysts who can fill this role. A party leader in the Brazilian legislature complained that he had funds in his budget to hire ten civilian defense analysts, but they simply could not be found. Of the ninety professional committee staffers in the legislature, not one had a background in defense.

## 3. Concerns regarding an NDI program in this field

During research for this report, commentators raised a number of concerns or potential problems NDI might encounter. Most of these points have been raised at one time or another about other NDI programs. Nevertheless, these concerns warrant consideration:

-- Mistrust. Given the high mistrust and delicacy to military-civilian dialogue, some question whether a U.S. Institute is the best cosponsor. In many countries, U.S. motives are suspect and U.S. involvement in military matters immediately conjures up fears of conspiracy.

-- Military Expertise. NDI currently has far more expertise and contacts on the civilian, political side of the equation than on the military side.

-- Need for Sustained Dialogue Everybody agrees that military-civilian dialogue must be sustained. Onetime programs may be useful, but only within the context of sustained dialogue.

-- Public vs. private dialogue In some of the most difficult cases, serious public dialogue between civilians and military officers may not be possible due to fear. In countries like Argentinian, military officers have been extremely cautious about speaking publicly in such a forum.

-- Build civilian institutions. Building the capacity of civilian institutions -- in particular, political parties -- is such an important aspect to developing civilian control of the military, that some have argued NDI's greatest contribution may be to simply keep doing what we do best.

#### 4. Unique resources which NDI brings to this issue

It has also been pointed out that NDI brings some unique resources to the tasks of fostering civil-military dialogue and building capacity for civilian control:

- experience in bringing together political leaders and technical experts from different countries.
- strong contacts in most of the countries cited for having something to offer on this topic (Spain, Venezuela, Israel, etc.).
- experience in dealing with highly sensitive political issues.
- a political, problem-solving orientation which goes beyond academic discussion. Scholars define problems; politicians must find and implement solutions.
- contacts with appropriate US policymakers to share the US experience and receive feedback on US policy.
- experience with building institutional capacity.

## ATTACHMENT C

### Ideas for future programs

A third level of possible programs (see p. 6) for NDI might be focused programs to help build, strengthen or reform the mediating institutions necessary for effective civilian control. Examples include:

- sponsor a workshop in Guatemala on "Building Legislative Capacity for Military Oversight." Analysts and members of oversight committees from other nations could help Guatemalan legislators develop capacity for budget analysis, routine oversight, military reform, strategic policy analysis, etc.
- assist in the development in the Southern Cone of an "Institute for Strategic Studies" which would train civilian defense analysts -- including analysts from political parties -- and provide a meeting ground for civilian and military defense specialists.
- sponsor a conference in Panama on "The Professional Army in Democratic Societies," focusing on the role of the armed forces within democracies, developing a shared civilian-military strategic mission, military institutional reform, the need for constitutional professionalism to allow armed forces to keep up with the latest technologies of modern defense,
- sponsor a seminar in the Philippines on "Strengthening Defense Structures in the Executive Branch," which would discuss alternative ways to organize and staff Defense Ministries and National Security Councils, and discuss how these can interface with the armed forces.
- assist in a public opinion poll and/or civic education project by political parties aimed at changing the role and image of the military in society.

More ideas will undoubtedly emerge from the pilot project.