

Copyright  
by  
Ian Bradley Lyles  
2016

**The Dissertation Committee for Ian Bradley Lyles Certifies that this is the approved  
version of the following dissertation:**

**Demystifying Counterinsurgency: U.S. Army Internal Security Training  
and South American Responses in the 1960s**

**Committee:**

---

Jonathan C. Brown, Supervisor

---

Ann Twinam

---

Seth W. Garfield

---

Raul L. Madrid

---

Susan Deans-Smith

**Demystifying Counterinsurgency: U.S. Army Internal Security Training  
and South American Responses in the 1960s**

**by**

**Ian Bradley Lyles, B.B.A., M.A., M.M.A.S., M.S.S.**

**Dissertation**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**December 2016**

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to Cheryl, Audrey and Ashley.

## Acknowledgements

I begin by thanking the Latin Americanists on the faculty of the History and Government Departments at the University of Texas at Austin. Jonathan Brown, Raúl Madrid, Henry Dietz and Zoltan Barany gave me my first introduction as a graduate student to the richness and complexity of Latin America and enabled much of my subsequent professional success. It was my singular good fortune to have the opportunity to return to the University of Texas at Austin many years later to build on that earlier work and pursue a doctoral degree.

During my second tenure as a student I renewed old acquaintances and forged new ones. Ann Twinam and Susan Deans-Smith expanded my knowledge into the realm of colonial Latin America. They also sharpened my perceptions related to understanding and interpreting archival documents and enhanced my ability to recognize the broader context of the purpose, place and time in which those documents were created. Seth Garfield opened my eyes to a deeper understanding of Brazilian history. He also challenged me to improve the coherence of my arguments and the conciseness of my writing. The skills and knowledge mentioned above aided me immensely in writing this dissertation.

I owe the greatest debt of gratitude to my advisor, mentor and friend Jonathan Brown. Although many people contributed to my success in preparing me to undertake a research and writing project of this magnitude, his contribution was paramount. Like all the best historians, Jonathan is committed to teaching the craft of history to his students. However, he is equally dedicated to coaching his protégés the art of writing and for that I am doubly thankful.

I also thank Ward Ferguson. He has been font of good advice throughout this process. He also provided levity and motivation when my stamina and enthusiasm were flagging - which occurred more often than I am now willing to admit.

# **Demystifying Counterinsurgency: U.S. Army Internal Security Training and South American Responses in the 1960s**

Ian Bradley Lyles, PhD

The University of Texas at Austin, 2016

Supervisor: Jonathan C. Brown

United States' counterinsurgency activities in the Western Hemisphere provide a new lens with which to investigate Latin America's Cold War experience. This dissertation contributes to the debate over the impact of American foreign policy in the region by reconstructing a key component of Washington's strategy: the U. S. Army's counterinsurgency training of South American military forces during the 1960s and 1970s. Counterinsurgency casts a long shadow over U. S. foreign relations with Latin America but few authors explain what that doctrine entailed and how Washington sought to disseminate it among its regional allies.

This dissertation contributes to the new Cold War literature on Latin America by using previously unpublished and declassified materials to demystify the term "counterinsurgency." It examines American training of South American militaries and explains the doctrine and tactics the U.S. Army sought to transmit to its counterparts under the rubric of counterinsurgency. After reconstructing the U.S. Army's institutional apparatus for teaching internal security, this dissertation investigates the impact of American counterinsurgency efforts. In doing so it seeks to solve an enduring enigma. If the regional hegemon, the United States, exported one consistent counterinsurgency

doctrine throughout the Western Hemisphere, why did South American countries experience such widely divergent internal security outcomes during the Cold War?

A comparative analysis of six South American nations' responses to American counterinsurgency yields new insights into Latin America's Cold War experience. This dissertation argues that U.S. Army counterinsurgency training was more complex, nuanced and perishable than previously understood. Numerous obstacles impeded the U.S. Army's ability to disseminate its training. Moreover, South American political and military leaders chose whether to accept or reject U.S. counterinsurgency. Washington did not dictate or decree its internal security training. Venezuela, Colombia and Bolivia embraced American counterinsurgency and sought U.S. Army assistance in confronting internal insecurity. Brazil, Argentina, and Chile shunned the American "model." Military regimes in those nations developed their own internal security doctrine and tactics and conducted "dirty wars" against their populations a result of their own choices, not because of their slight exposure to American counterinsurgency concepts.



## Table of Contents

<b>List of Tables</b> .....	xii
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	xiv
Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
<b>PART I: THE INSTITUTIONS OF U. S. ARMY COUNTERINSURGENCY</b>	<b>22</b>
Chapter Two: U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Schools in the United States .....	22
The Origins of U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Instruction.....	24
Student Attendance at the Special Warfare School.....	36
Challenges Related to Foreign Military Education .....	41
Barriers to Implementing U.S. Counterinsurgency Training .....	44
Conclusion .....	58
Chapter Three: U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Schools in Panama .....	61
The U.S. Army Caribbean School.....	64
Student Attendance at the School of the Americas .....	74
Obstacles to U.S. Schools Attendance.....	76
Conventional Training Versus Counterinsurgency .....	78
Resistance to Change .....	79
Political Challenges .....	80
Language, Conscription, and Illiteracy.....	81
Acceptance of U.S. Counterinsurgency.....	84
Rejection of U.S. Counterinsurgency .....	87
Other Canal Zone Schools .....	90
The School of the Americas' Contested Later History.....	94
Conclusion .....	100
Chapter Four: U.S. Army Mobile Training Teams in South America .....	103
The Origin of the Special Forces.....	105
The Special Action Force for Latin America.....	116
Counterinsurgency or Civic Action? .....	124

The Management of Mobile Training Team Missions .....	132
Challenges Faced by Mobile Training Teams .....	137
Conclusion .....	157
<b>PART II: COUNTERINSURGENCY IN THE ANDEAN RIDGE</b>	<b>161</b>
Chapter Five: Counterinsurgency in Venezuela .....	165
Castro Versus Betancourt .....	166
Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Venezuela .....	169
Conclusion .....	196
Chapter Six: Counterinsurgency in Colombia .....	199
Colombia's Lingering Civil War.....	202
U.S. Internal Security Assistance to Colombia .....	209
Plan Lazo.....	216
U.S. Counterinsurgency Training in Colombia.....	219
Applying Counterinsurgency .....	229
Conclusion .....	236
Chapter Seven: Counterinsurgency in Bolivia.....	240
Bolivia's Incomplete Revolution.....	242
U.S. Counterinsurgency Training in Bolivia .....	245
Countering Che Guevara's Insurgency.....	263
Conclusion .....	286
Counterinsurgency in the Andean Ridge: Conclusion.....	289
<b>PART III: COUNTER REVOLUTION IN BRAZIL AND THE SOUTHERN CONE</b>	<b>294</b>
Chapter Eight: Contra Revolucionario in Brazil.....	298
The Origins of Brazilian Development and Internal Security Doctrine .....	301
The Origins of the Brazilian National Security Doctrine .....	306
Barriers to U.S. Counterinsurgency Training in Brazil .....	314
Contra Revolucionario in Brazil: Rural <i>Foco</i> Attempts in the 1960s .....	324
Contra Revolucionario in Brazil: Confronting the Urban Terrorists.....	339

Contra Revolucionario in Brazil: Rural Guerrillas in the 1970s.....	352
Conclusion .....	364
Chapter Nine: Counter Revolution in Chile .....	368
Chile’s Slow Drift to the Left in the 1960s.....	371
The Chilean Road to Socialism: the Allende Government .....	381
Counter Revolutionary War in Chile: the Pinochet Regime.....	396
Conclusion .....	408
Chapter Ten: Counter Revolutions in Argentina .....	412
The Origins of Counter Revolutionary Doctrine in Argentina .....	416
Preemptive Counter Revolution in Argentina: the Onganía Regime .....	433
Counter Revolutionary War Unleashed: the Videla Regime .....	440
Conclusion .....	457
Chapter Eleven: Conclusion .....	461
Appendix: Types of Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions.....	469
Bibliography .....	473

## List of Tables

Table 2.1: Special Warfare School Attendance 1961-1963.....	37
Table 2.2: Special Warfare Center Foreign Student Course Attendance 1963. ...	38
Table 3.1: School of the Americas Counterinsurgency Course Content 1964. ....	70
Table 3.2: School of the Americas Counterinsurgency Course Content 1971. ....	73
Table 3.3: School of the Americas Counterinsurgency Course Attendance 1961-1964. .....	75
Table 3.4: School of the Americas Number of Students Trained 1958-1965.....	76
Table 3.5: U.S. Army Jungle Training 1960-1967.....	93
Table 4.1: Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions by Type. ....	129
Table 4.2: Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions in South America by Country 1962 – 1973.....	131
Table 4.3: Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions in South America 1962-1973.....	132
Table 4.4: Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions in Latin America by Year.....	151
Table 4.5: Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions in South America 1962 – 1973 by Government Type. ....	155
Table 6.1: Internal Violence in Colombia 1957-1964.....	234
Table 9.1: United States Economic and Military Aid to Chile 1962-1974. ....	392
Table 9.2: Victims of Human Rights Abuses and Political Violence in Chile by Occupation, 1973-1990. ....	405
Table 10.1: Indicators of Social Protest in Argentina, 1966-1972.....	442
Table 10.2: The Disappeared in Argentina, 1973 to 1983.....	450

Table 10.3: Victims of Repression in Argentina by Occupation. ....453

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Panama Canal Zone and U.S. Military Locations Map.....	119
Figure 2: Venezuela Political Boundaries Map. ....	174
Figure 3: Colombia Political Boundaries Map. ....	224
Figure 4: Bolivia Political Boundaries Map. ....	255
Figure 5: Brazil Political Boundaries and Guerrilla Locations Map.....	337

## Chapter One: Introduction

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 sent shockwaves across the Western Hemisphere from Washington, D.C. in the north to Santiago and Buenos Aires in the south. Fidel Castro's guerrilla army not only defeated the U.S.-backed Batista regime and seized the reins of government in Havana; it also fired the imagination of leftists throughout Latin America and beyond. After consolidating their revolution at home, Fidel Castro and his lieutenants sought to "export" their revolution to other Latin American countries in order to force long overdue social change and create regional allies. Castro's chief lieutenant and revolutionary theorist, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, published a manual on how to conduct revolution in 1960. *Guerrilla Warfare* quickly earned a wide audience in Latin America. Over the next two decades, Cuban efforts spawned or supported guerrilla movements in Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Nicaragua and Guatemala. Washington quickly moved to counter Havana's efforts.

Troubles in the Caribbean compounded the greater international Cold War challenges faced by the United States. As the 1960s began, insurgencies raged in multiple countries, guerrillas had toppled the government in Cuba and in 1961 Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev proclaimed his nation's support for "wars of national liberation." The Cuban revolution weighed heavily on the minds of the new John F. Kennedy administration. In May 1961, the Department of Defense prepared a draft paper titled "U.S. Policy for the Security of Latin America in the Sixties." "The Cuban experience makes it plain that the fall of additional Latin American nations to the Sino-Soviet Bloc would jeopardize the entire Inter-American system," the policy proposal noted, "and the

establishment of a military foothold in Latin America by Bloc powers would pose a direct threat to security of the United States.” The paper concluded that although the Western Hemisphere military forces were prepared against an armed external attack (which it deemed unlikely), those forces had “an ineffective strategy and insufficient capability to guard against the most likely threat—the threat to internal security.” Finally, the document recommended encouraging Latin American nations to deemphasize the role of defense against external attack – the United States would assume primary responsibility for this mission – while emphasizing their role in the “internal security mission.”<sup>1</sup> In October of 1961, the Department of State circulated a draft of another document entitled “Guidance for Policy and Operations in Latin America.” The State Department argued that Latin American militaries should accept internal security as their new role, participate in inter-American police or naval patrol forces, and form dual-purpose units with civic action as well as military capabilities. Kennedy approved the guidance in May 1962, establishing the first step in the development of the United States’ counterinsurgency policy for Latin America.<sup>2</sup>

Additional guidance soon followed. In August President Kennedy formalized American policy in National Security Action Memorandum 182, which promulgated U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and directed all government departments and agencies to “initiate the formulation of internal doctrine, tactics and techniques appropriate to their own department or agency” for conducting counterinsurgency.<sup>3</sup> This classified directive

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense, “Draft paper prepared in the Department of Defense,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XII American Republics*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), 173-175.

<sup>2</sup> Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1961-1964* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), 227.

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum for Mr. Komer, “Subject: CI Effort in Washington,” dated 22 June 1965, National Security Files (hereafter NSF), Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 15, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, Texas (hereafter LBJPL).



put the U.S. government to work implementing the administration's new guidance for preventing revolutions. Kennedy unveiled his policy to the world in a speech in Miami, Florida on 18 November 1963, when he proclaimed that, "We in this hemisphere must also use every resource at our command to prevent the establishment of another Cuba in this hemisphere."<sup>4</sup> Although Kennedy died just four days later, his words in Miami gained renown as the "No more Cubas" speech and helped cement United States regional policy for subsequent presidential administrations. Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon each applied American power to prevent revolutions and check communist expansion in Latin America throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The United States applied its military power primarily through internal security training for Latin American armies, and the U.S. Army shouldered most of the load.

United States' counterinsurgency activities in Latin America provide a new lens with which to investigate Latin America's Cold War experience. This dissertation contributes to the debate over the impact of American foreign policy in the region by reconstructing a key component of Washington's strategy: the U. S. Army's counterinsurgency training of South American military forces during the 1960s and 1970s. Building on that base, this dissertation then undertakes to explore regional responses to American counterinsurgency and Cuba's export of revolution. It also investigates the emergence and impact of home-grown internal security doctrines and French counter revolutionary war tactics. This dissertation rediscovers the power of Latin American agency and demonstrates the limits of American hegemony.

---

<sup>4</sup> John F. Kennedy, "Address in Miami before the Inter-American Press Association," 18 November 1963. Accessed 26 November 2012 online at <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/polsciwb/brian/docs/1963KennedyDoctrine.pdf>

Historians have long remarked on the transformative effects that the Kennedy administration's "shift to internal security" had on Latin American militaries. That shift was considerably less of a watershed than American policymakers and observers perceived at the time. Historians too have overemphasized its impact. A deeper understanding of the region's history reveals that President Eisenhower's "Hemispheric Defense" was much more of a foreign concept to Latin American military forces than internal security. The Viceroyalty of Peru confronted its first insurrection just a few short years after the conquest in 1543. Many other insurrections and rebellions in the Spanish Americas followed in the centuries before independence. The new nations of Latin America did not disregard internal security as a mission of their armed forces after independence, they merely added defense of their borders (based on fears of encroachment or domination by their neighbors) to the list of military duties. Washington's encouragement of hemispheric military cooperation between historic rivals represented a transformational change for Latin American military forces. Defending their nations from internal threats did not. Regional forces were long accustomed to worrying about threats to the status quo emanating from within their own borders.<sup>5</sup>

The Cuban revolution also contributed to the increased emphasis on internal security among Latin American militaries, albeit unintentionally. Military officers throughout the region clearly discerned the threat Guevara's revolutionary guerrilla warfare model held for their institutions. Fidel Castro and his followers disbanded the Cuban Army shortly after their triumphant seizure of power in 1959. Fidel vehemently advocated that other revolutionaries adopt that policy as well.<sup>6</sup> Yet for Latin American

---

<sup>5</sup> See for example, Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 61-66, 80, 90.

<sup>6</sup> Robert E. Quirk, *Fidel Castro* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993), 226.

military officers the revolutionary threat held even more menace than the dissolution of their institutions, it also put their very lives at risk. Guevara, acting under Castro's orders, conducted tribunals after the revolution and executed hundreds of former Cuban Army officers.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Castro's embrace of Communism tarred future revolutionary efforts in the region with the same brush, whether those movements were nationalistic or not. Guerrilla movements and revolutionary rhetoric also rekindled fears of Communism among some regional militaries, like the Brazilian Army, which had confronted and suppressed Communist movements in prior decades.

Counterinsurgency casts a long shadow over U. S. foreign relations with Latin America but few authors explain what counterinsurgency entailed and how Washington sought to inculcate this doctrine among its regional Cold War allies. In support of counterinsurgency, the United States conducted civic action (nation building) under Kennedy's Alliance for Progress and trained Latin American militaries in counterinsurgency tactics and doctrine through U.S. Army schools and mobile training team missions (small teams of U.S. military experts instructing regional forces in their own countries). Washington also provided aid to regional armed forces under the Military Assistance Program. However, in much of the Latin American historiography of the Cold War, these three distinct efforts are often lumped together under the rubric of "counterinsurgency training." Despite this indistinct factual foundation, some authors go on to blame American counterinsurgency policies and training for fostering military authoritarian rule and human rights violations in Latin America.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Rex A Hudson, ed., *Cuba: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2001). 288.

<sup>8</sup> See for example: Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006); Clara Nieto, *Masters of War; Latin America and United States Aggression from the Cuban Revolution through the Clinton Years* (New York:

The historiography of the Cold War in Latin Americas is replete with discussions of the ill-effects of U.S. counterinsurgency policies. Nevertheless, counterinsurgency is not well defined or well understood. In military parlance counter guerrilla, counterinsurgency, unconventional warfare, civic action and subversive warfare are all distinct terms. Yet many authors apply these terms interchangeably. Military experts might debate the nuance of the terms. Their interpretations might vary slightly across countries, but for military professionals the terms were not fungible. U.S. officials and military officers defined counter guerrilla and counter bandit operations as activities undertaken by military, paramilitary and police forces against guerrillas or bandits (armed criminal groups operating in the countryside). In a sense these operations were remedial. The presence of an armed guerrilla threat necessitated an armed governmental response. Counterinsurgency, on the other hand, was a much broader concept. It comprised “those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civic actions taken by a government to defeat subversive insurgency.”<sup>9</sup> Counterinsurgency efforts could be remedial, if the country already faced an insurgency, or preemptive if the intent of the local government was to ameliorate the conditions in the country that made it susceptible to revolution. Civic action comprised military works or “nation building” activities such as constructing schools, clinics, and roads, or improving education, sanitation, agriculture or public health. Civic action could be a remedial component of ongoing counterinsurgency efforts or a preventative effort designed to inoculate a country from future outbreaks of insurgency by remedying the causes of public dissatisfaction.

---

Seven Stories Press, 2003); Stephen C. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Donald C. Hodges, *Argentina's "Dirty War:" an Intellectual Biography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> Special Group (Counterinsurgency), “Glossary of Counterinsurgency Terms,” 17 May, 1962, Historical Reference Collection, Box 370.64, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

Just as the historiography lacks precision in the terms and concepts associated with counterinsurgency, it also lacks detail about the methods employed by the United States to assist its allies in developing their internal security capabilities. No detailed listing of what countries received counterinsurgency training and by what method (attendance at U.S. Army schools or participation in U.S. Army mobile training team instruction in the host country) currently exists. Likewise, few works describe or analyze the development and composition of American counterinsurgency doctrine.

How the United States attempted to transmit its internal security doctrine and tactics to its Latin American allies has gone largely unexplored. One notable exception is Willard F. Barber and C. Neale Ronning's *Internal Security and Military Power* (1966). The authors provide an overview of U.S. counterinsurgency schools and a discussion of mobile training team missions. Although published during the counterinsurgency era in the 1960s, some modern Latin American historians still cite *Internal Security*. It stands as one of the few works detailing how the U.S. government promoted and implemented counterinsurgency in the region.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the work is long out of date and was incomplete when written. U.S. counterinsurgency efforts were ongoing at the time of publication and continued into the early 1970s and beyond. Moreover, the U.S. Army classified most of its records and correspondence detailing its counterinsurgency efforts due to the security concerns of the times, thus making them long unavailable to historians and political scientists.

---

<sup>10</sup> Willard F. Barber and C. Neale Ronning, *Internal Security and Military Power; Counterinsurgency and Civic Action in Latin America* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1966); for authors citing Barber and Ronning's *Internal Security and Military Power* see for example: Brian Loveman, *For la Patria: Politics and the Armed Forces in Latin America* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999); Stephen C Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 2006).

Another notable exception is Andrew J. Birtle's *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (2006). Birtle charts the development, evolution and implementation of U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine after World War II. He provides great detail about the Kennedy administration's fixation on counterinsurgency. That emphasis created tremendous pressure for executive branch agencies, especially the Department of Defense, to develop new doctrine and tactics to meet the threat of guerrilla warfare. The work is rich in detail regarding U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine, almost all of which applies to the Latin American experience. Yet the book is thin on the Army's effort to implement that doctrine in the region. The author – like many historians and the U.S. Army itself – spent most of his toil and effort on Vietnam. Birtle discusses the U.S. Army intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 as a Cold War contingency operation. He also provides an overview of U.S. Army counterinsurgency schools as a means of disseminating its doctrine. However, Birtle only briefly mentions the army's extensive mobile training team efforts and devotes a scant nine pages to the U.S. Army's advisory experience in Latin America from 1959 to 1979.<sup>11</sup>

American military training provided to friendly governments' security forces has often seemed confusing and shrouded in mystery for civilian researchers. “[F]oreign military training,” one researcher lamented, “is largely a black box offering the civilian scholar little opportunity to peek inside.”<sup>12</sup> Because of that challenge – and the lack of documents due to security classification – many assessments of the impact of American military training rely on conjecture rather than factual analysis. “Amid the plethora of

---

<sup>11</sup> Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Doctrine*, 291-304.

<sup>12</sup> Katherine McCoy, “Trained to Torture? The Human Rights Effects of Military Training at the School of the Americas” *Latin American Perspectives*, issue 145, vol. 32, no. 6, (Nov 2005), 47-64.

condemnations of U.S. policy in Latin America,” another researcher judges, “perhaps no single issue has been as devoid of empirical analysis as the effects of military assistance.”<sup>13</sup> The purpose of this research project is to pry open that black box and shine a bright light inside. It provides a new fact-based assessment of the impact and limitations of U.S. counterinsurgency training.

This dissertation contributes to the new Cold War literature on Latin America by using previously unpublished and declassified materials to demystify the term “counterinsurgency training.” It also provides new insights into U.S. Army training of South American militaries. This dissertation explains the doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures the U.S. Army attempted to transmit to its Latin American counterparts under the rubric of counterinsurgency. Additionally, it details what countries received counterinsurgency training and by what instructional method (U.S. Army schools in the United States or the Panama Canal Zone or via mobile training team missions to the host country).

In implementing its foreign policy, the United States government relied heavily on the U.S. Army to provide the doctrine and training to deter or defeat Cuban-inspired and supported insurgencies in the Western Hemisphere. Anti-communist governments in Latin America and U.S. policymakers naturally looked to the armies of the region to counter the revolutionary threat. Armies (and guerrillas) operated on the ground, where the people lived, not in the skies or on the waters. Armies also boasted the preponderance of military manpower in most countries and, at least in theory, were capable of operating in the rural terrain favored by insurgents. Latin American armies quickly assumed the

---

<sup>13</sup> David L. Feldman, “Argentina, 1945-1971: Military Assistance, Military Spending, and the Political Activity of the Armed Forces” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, vol. 24, no. 3 (Aug 1982), 323.

leading role in resisting Cuban-inspired revolutions, and the U.S. Army took lead in training them.

The foundation of this dissertation rests on sources seldom utilized by historians. Research conducted in the National Archives, the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, United States Army South, and the U.S. Army Center of Military History yielded a wealth of documents that helped define the focus of this research effort. I uncovered previously unpublished archival and declassified U.S. Army historical reports, unit records, correspondence, memorandums, and school catalogs detailing the planning, management, execution, and evaluation of counterinsurgency training. In addition, I utilized my position as an active duty military officer holding a security clearance to browse multiple boxes of classified materials at the National Archives and the U.S. Army Center of Military History. As a result, I submitted a large number of documents related to this research effort for Mandatory Review (the U.S. Government's internal version of a Freedom of Information Act request) and potential declassification. Archival authorities approved several of those documents for release, and I have incorporated these new materials into my research. Together these disparate documents comprise a mosaic that allowed me to reconstruct a key element of American foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere during the Cold War: the U.S. Army's institutional apparatus for disseminating counterinsurgency.

The Army utilized multiple organizations and units to conduct its counterinsurgency mission in Latin America. First it relied on its schools. The U.S. Army Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina developed counterinsurgency, unconventional warfare and psychological warfare doctrines for the army. In January 1961, the Center's Special Warfare School implemented a new counter guerrilla course



for American and allied personnel. That course soon grew into several counterinsurgency courses aimed at different audiences. Nevertheless, the central mission of the Special Warfare School remained the training of American Special Forces soldiers. In 1963, it added a secondary mission of training American military advisors for duty in Vietnam. Counterinsurgency instruction did not cease, but it fell to third place in the school's priorities.

The U.S. Army redoubled its counterinsurgency training efforts in late 1961 when it transplanted the Special Warfare School's new curriculum to the Panama Canal Zone. The U.S. Army Caribbean School (later renamed the School of the Americas) took up the challenge of teaching counterinsurgency courses to Latin American personnel. It had an advantage over Fort Bragg because it conducted all of its courses in Spanish, but attendance was sparse. The Kennedy administration wanted a broader dissemination of its new antidote to counterinsurgency. Robert Kennedy, the President's brother, visited the school in late 1962 and directed an increased emphasis on counterinsurgency. Immediately following his visit the school revamped its course catalog and expanded its internal security curriculum.

Meanwhile, the Army reinforced its efforts to disseminate counterinsurgency through its schools system by creating a new unit capable of providing that instruction to Latin American forces in their home countries and in Spanish. The Army established the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Gulick, Panama in early 1963. It also assigned other specialized organizations such as military police and engineers to the new group to broaden its teaching capabilities. Together those units made up the Special Action Force for Latin America. The Army assigned its new Panama-based Green Berets the primary responsibility for conducting counterinsurgency Mobile Training Team

(MTT) missions, although the unit also undertook civic action and conventional military skills instruction missions as well. The Special Action Force executed nearly six hundred MTTs across Latin America during its lifespan from 1962 to 1973. The United States Army Caribbean (later U.S. Army Forces Southern Command and U.S. Army South) and the U.S. Caribbean Command (later U.S. Southern Command), comprised the higher Army and Joint headquarters respectively of the Special Action Force for Latin America and the School of the Americas. Those organizations provided guidance, funding and oversight of regional counterinsurgency activities.

The U.S. Military Assistance and Advisory Groups (MAAGs) and U.S. Military Groups (MILGROUPs) throughout Latin America comprised the forward element of America's military assistance and internal security training apparatus. These offices, manned by American military officers, operated as part of the United States' overseas diplomatic missions in regional capital cities. They bore responsibility for the planning and evaluation of partner nation training and conducted direct liaison with regional armies. The correspondence and reports of these offices unveil a unique window into America's military relations with its regional allies. They also chronicle the difficulties of imparting military training to foreign armies.

This dissertation employs quantitative and comparative methodologies to make a unique contribution to the study of the Cold War. Archival research and quantitative analysis have yielded a detailed empirical record set for the Mobile Training Team missions of the U.S. Army's Special Action Force for Latin America, detailing the courses taught, course content, training audience, country and dates of training. Where applicable data exists, I have also chronicled contemporary evaluations of the effectiveness of the training imparted from regional Military Group reports. A second

data set details the curriculum of the Special Warfare Center and the School of the Americas highlighting counterinsurgency course content, attendance by country, by year and an assessment of the benefits and detriments of this method of training. I also employed comparative analysis to contrast these data sets and determine how they varied by content, audience and effectiveness.

Building on that new knowledge, this work then seeks to go further. I have woven this data together to construct a comparative analysis of six South American nations' responses to American counterinsurgency. This investigation of the trajectory and scope of counterinsurgency training provided by the U.S. Army against selected countries' historical progression through the 1960s and 1970s provides new insights into Latin America's Cold War experience. In doing so it seeks to solve an enduring enigma. If the United States, the regional hegemon, exported one consistent counterinsurgency doctrine throughout the Western Hemisphere, why did South American countries experience such widely divergent internal security outcomes during the Cold War?

This dissertation argues that U.S. Army counterinsurgency training was more complex, nuanced and perishable than currently depicted in the Cold War historical narrative. Numerous obstacles impeded the U.S. Army's ability to disseminate internal security training. The first barrier was acceptance. Washington did not dictate or decree counterinsurgency training. Only when the United States and its allies agreed on the terms, duration, audience and subject matter did counterinsurgency training take place. Some regional governments embraced counterinsurgency training. Venezuela hosted fourteen counterinsurgency Mobile Training Team missions between 1962 and 1966. Others did not. Chile reluctantly accepted a counterinsurgency survey mission in 1963 (to assess the country's internal situation) but then rejected any future counterinsurgency

training.<sup>14</sup> Pride and nationalism also proved formidable barriers. “[T]here is a strong feeling among many influential [Chilean] officers,” American officers in Santiago reported to their superiors in Panama in 1962, “that they are perfectly capable of running their own army and do not need advice or assistance from the U.S. Army Mission.”<sup>15</sup>

Many other factors outside the United States’ control also affected its ability to transmit internal security training to its regional partners. Some armies could not afford to send students abroad to attend American courses due to budget constraints. Political and economic crises disrupted planned military training in several regional countries. Conscription and illiteracy complicated training in almost every country. Student militants read revolutionary treatises by Che Guevara and Carlos Marighella and guerrilla leaders extolled and commanded their forces via communiques. Meanwhile, few of the poor rural conscripts that made up the bulk of regional armies could read even the simplest of military manuals. In some countries many indigenous recruits did not even speak Spanish. Conscription also caused a second dilemma. A one year term of service created what one American diplomat termed “a frustrating treadmill” of military training. Almost as soon as a regional army (or an American instructor team) trained a conscript soldier he left the service and a new untrained *campesino* took his place. To be effective, counterinsurgency units needed recurrent training to overcome the problems of personnel turnover due to conscription.

---

<sup>14</sup> The archival record is incomplete, but the U.S. Army’s Special Action Force for Latin America, the Army organization assigned the task of training regional armies in counterinsurgency, conducted no additional counterinsurgency MTT missions in Chile through 1973 according to the unit’s annual historical reports.

<sup>15</sup> United States Army Mission to Chile, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 July 1962, National Archives and Records Administrations, Archives II, College Park, MD, Records Group 548: US Army Forces Caribbean 1946-1964.

In the majority of South American cases a country's internal social and political context proved the decisive factor in whether it experienced democracy, revolution, or repression - not American counterinsurgency efforts. U.S. Army training did not foster military authoritarian regimes. Countries that eschewed American internal security training and developed their own methods (Brazil, Chile and Argentina) suffered ruthless military dictatorships while other countries that received much greater doses of U.S. counterinsurgency training (Colombia and Venezuela) did not suffer a "dirty war" and avoided military dictatorships.

Attendance at U.S. counterinsurgency schools and American mobile training team activities provide a window into this phenomenon. Between 1961 and 1964 Chile sent fifteen students to attend counterinsurgency courses at U.S. Army schools. Over the same time period Venezuela sent ninety. Venezuela led the hemisphere with fourteen counterinsurgency MTTs. Chile approved only two - neither of which taught tactics.<sup>16</sup> Venezuela eventually defeated its nearly decade-long Cuban-sponsored insurgency and retained its democratic government. Chile had no insurgency in the 1960s, but suffered increasingly bitter social polarization in the early 1970s. The Chilean military, led by General Augusto Pinochet, overthrew socialist President Salvador Allende in 1973 and murdered some 3,200 citizen while torturing tens of thousands more. American counterinsurgency training helped Venezuelan forces defeat a communist-inspired insurgency, but it did not lead to the Chilean coup of 1973. In other words, U.S. Army

---

<sup>16</sup> Chile accepted two counterinsurgency related MTTs from the Special Action Force. The first was a survey mission to assess the country's internal security capabilities and coordinate future training. The second mission provided instruction on psychological operations. Both visits took place in 1963. Special Action Force for Latin America, "Historical Report 1965" (hereafter cited as SAF 65), U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (hereafter cited as USAHEC), n. pag.

training assisted Venezuela's democracy to survive while having little influence in the establishment of Chile's military government.

This disparity in countries' experiences points to an often overlooked factor of Latin America's Cold War: other internal security doctrines were at work in the region. Venezuela and Colombia adopted American counterinsurgency concepts. Other nations rejected Washington's policies in favor of their own policies. Many authors have written about the National Security Doctrine in Latin America and most attribute it to the United States. That assessment is incorrect. The confusion stems in part from the similar objectives each doctrine pursued: internal security and economic development. However, each model advocated starkly different methods for achieving those goals.

Understanding the framework of Washington's internal security policy in Latin America helps to differentiate its purpose, objectives and methods. American counterinsurgency operated on two levels. Counterinsurgency doctrine, focused at the strategic level, represented a comprehensive national program intended to assist friendly democratic governments in resisting Communist subversion. Its purpose was to strengthen democracy, not replace it. The doctrine contained two central elements. Internal economic development sought to alleviate poverty and inequality as causes of discontent which made governments vulnerable to revolution. Meanwhile, internal security worked to protect local populations and weak governments from guerrilla movements, allowing time for economic growth to generate beneficial results. Counterinsurgency tactics, on the other hand, operated at the level of military operations aimed at locating, confronting, and defeating rural guerrillas through the development of elite counter guerrilla units. Military combat operations strove to protect the rural population while targeting only the armed insurgents. Military civic action, a

complimentary endeavor, sought to win the allegiance of the populace to the government's side and away from supporting the guerrillas.

The Andean Ridge countries of Venezuela, Colombia and Bolivia each adopted American counterinsurgency doctrine and tactics. Washington's concepts proved well suited for the situations these nations encountered. Each country faced rural insurgency during the 1960s. Each also experienced a popular rejection of violence and a return to democracy. These countries undertook military civic action efforts to gain the support of rural campesinos. They also raised specialized counter guerrilla battalions to confront the armed guerrilla threat. Venezuela, Colombia and Bolivia embraced American internal security tenets and training because those concepts meshed well with each country's situation and the goals of its elected leaders.

The large nations of the Southern Cone - Brazil, Chile and Argentina -- encountered a remarkably different set of challenges in the 1960s and 1970s. Brazil and Argentina both faced several Cuban-supported rural insurgencies, but most were short-lived. All three nations confronted the challenge of an elected Leftist president seeking radical social and political change. Each also endured the rise of urban terrorism. American counterinsurgency, with its focus on democracy and rural insurgency, proved a poor fit in the Southern Cone.

Brazil's generals, facing different problems, developed different solutions. They viewed democracy as weak and unsuited to withstand the challenge of Communism. Brazilian officers also considered civilian politicians as incapable of ensuring either internal security or economic development. In 1964 they replaced Brazilian democracy with an authoritarian regime based on the National Security Doctrine they had developed in the Escola Superior de Guerra several years before. The National Security Doctrine

promised a remedy for both of Brazil's intractable problems. It proposed state direction of Brazil's economy to increase industrialization. It also advocated military dictatorship as a means to end political bickering, provide direction for the nation and impose internal security.

Brazil faced a new threat in the late 1960s. Carlos Marighella, a lifelong Communist, recrafted Che Guevara's rural *foco* strategy into an urban guerrilla warfare model based in the cities. Brazilian security forces also detected an active guerrilla *foco* in the remote Araguaia jungle region in 1972. Brazil's generals responded to both of these threats by employing the counter revolutionary war tactics developed by the French Army during the "Battle of Algiers" in 1957. Those tactics included the development of specialized intelligence organizations employing torture and executions to break the guerrilla movements. Meanwhile, the regime's economic policies generated a sustained period of impressive growth known as the "Brazilian Miracle." The combination of internal security "success" and economic progress made the National Security Doctrine an appealing option for Brazil's neighbors.

Generals in Argentina were the first to emulate their Brazilian counterparts. General Juan Carlos Onganía overthrew a civilian president in 1966 and installed the "Argentine Revolution," modeled on Brazil. Argentina's challenge was how to end the cycle of recurrent political and economic crises stemming from the legacies of Peronism and the restlessness of the country's large urban working class. The National Security Doctrine seemed to offer a solution. Onganía's government restricted political competition, clamped down hard on students and workers, and implemented an economic program designed to impose stability. President Onganía and his generals sought to preempt a subversive war, as had their Brazilian colleagues, by outlawing a wide range of



subversive activities and imprisoning Leftists and guerrillas. However, like in Brazil, the regime's policies created increasing resentment, which led to the rise of urban terrorism and the armed insurgency that it sought to prevent.

Chile avoided rural insurgency during the 1960s. However, the nation experienced an ongoing shift to the Left in its national politics across the decade. That phenomenon led to the election of Marxist Salvador Allende to the presidency in 1970. At first, Chile's apolitical military acquiesced to Allende's "Chilean Road to Socialism." But as the economic and social crisis worsened in 1973, and threats to the military as an institution accumulated, the bonds of subordination to civilian rule frayed. Those bonds broke in September 1973. The Chilean military unleashed an assault that toppled Allende's government and led to his death. Because of Chile's history of effective democracy, military officers had perceived no need to develop their own doctrines for internal security or economic development. The day after the coup d'état Chilean generals found themselves in need of just such a blueprint for running the country. The National Security Doctrine was a ready alternative and General Augusto Pinochet – who became de facto leader shortly after the coup – implemented it in Chile.

Pinochet, and his architect of repression Colonel Manuel Contreras, also adopted French counter revolutionary war tactics as they fought a self-declared internal war against Marxism. However, they adapted the Brazilian NSD model and French tactics to suit their national circumstances. Chile lacked the multiple large cities of Brazil so Contreras formed a single intelligence agency, the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA), with national and international reach. Pinochet and Contreras also greatly expanded the scope of whom they considered their enemies. Brazilian authorities had focused on killing only the armed guerrillas, although they detained and tortured guerrilla

supporters and sympathizers in later campaigns. Chile had few armed guerrillas, but it did have large Socialist and Communist parties and an extensive number of Marxist supporters of the former government. Pinochet and Contreras deemed all of them a “Marxist cancer” that they attempted to eradicate by murder, torture and disappearances. Pinochet also modified Brazil’s economic policy. Rather than pursuing industrial development, Chilean economists implemented neoliberal reforms that led to de-industrialization and punished the urban working class.

Argentina was embroiled in a near civil war by the mid-1970s. The country faced unchecked urban terrorism, a new outbreak of rural insurgency, and yet another economic crisis. General Jorge Videla seized power in March 1976 and installed the most ruthless National Security Doctrine regime in the Southern Cone. Videla and his accomplices unleashed brutal French counter revolutionary war tactics on their enemies – whom they declared “non-Argentines” – as part of their internal war. Videla took lessons from Onganía’s 1966 failure; he rejected the legal methods of his predecessor and took no prisoners who might later enjoy amnesty at the hands of sympathetic politicians. Videla also learned from the human rights outcry against the Brazilian and Chilean military regimes. Rather than develop officially recognized special intelligence units, he decentralized the repression and sought to obscure any official responsibility for the internal “dirty war” his regime conducted. Videla’s economist, José Martínez de Hoz, also implemented neoliberal policies. But even more so than his Chilean colleagues, he attempted to use the economy as a weapon to break the power of Peronism and the working class in Argentina.

Local agency played a decisive role in the Latin America’s Cold War. Generals in Brazil, Chile and Argentina rejected American counterinsurgency in favor of their own

variants of the National Security Doctrine. Each country's history and internal situation shaped the way they implemented the NSD and the tactics they employed. The internal security experiences of their neighbors also influenced these armies' policies. The tenets of American counterinsurgency, which focused on rural threats, made little impression on military officers of the Southern Cone. Washington's internal security concepts also seemed discredited in the aftermath of Vietnam. Southern Cone armies attended few American internal security courses, accepted only a small number of Special Action Force counterinsurgency mobile training team visits, and eschewed internal security assistance from Washington. Military regimes in Brazil, Chile and Argentina determined the internal security doctrines they implemented during the Cold War. Those armies chose the National Security Doctrine and French counter revolutionary war tactics. That combination led to the "dirty wars" those nations endured. American counterinsurgency did not.

Venezuela, Colombia and Bolivia embraced Washington's internal security doctrine and tactics. Each successfully defeated rural guerrilla insurgencies on the 1960s. However, despite all accepting the same U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and training (albeit in varying degrees), each nation developed and applied American doctrine in its own way and each experienced its own unique outcome. Colombia and Venezuela consolidated lasting democracies with their military forces subordinated to civilian rule. Bolivia failed to establish an enduring democracy. The country experienced military coups d'état before, during, and after the 1960s. Nevertheless, none of these Andean Ridge countries embarked on a Southern Cone-style "dirty war."

## **PART I: THE INSTITUTIONS OF U. S. ARMY COUNTERINSURGENCY**

### **Chapter Two: U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Schools in the United States**

World events in the late 1950s drove U.S. policymakers to develop the means to respond to the challenge of Communist inspired insurgencies. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's early concerns centered on Chinese Communist efforts in Laos and Vietnam, not Latin America. The U.S. Army responded to these policies. While Fidel Castro's bearded guerrillas were still skirmishing against the Cuban army in the Sierra Maestra Mountains, the United States had already deployed Army Special Forces advisors to Vietnam. In January 1959, Fidel's guerrilla army routed the Cuban government forces and seized power. Later that same year the United States deployed Special Forces troops to Laos (in civilian clothes to disguise their nationality and military affiliation) and began advising and training the Laotian armed forces.<sup>17</sup> Even as late as mid-1960 it seemed as though the United States might reach an accommodation with the new leftist—but not yet Communist—Cuban regime.

Those prospects dimmed with the Army's receipt and translation of Ernesto "Che" Guevara's treatise on revolution, *La Guerra de Guerrillas*. Army Intelligence received a copy of Guerrilla Warfare sometime in mid-1960 and ordered its immediate translation into English. Lieutenant Colonel Warren, one Army intelligence officer assigned to analyze the book, wrote that Guerrilla Warfare "offers nothing new in the field of guerrilla warfare tactics and techniques." However, he hastened to add that the

---

<sup>17</sup> Captain Harry G. Cramer was the first U.S. Special Forces soldier killed in action Vietnam. He died on October 21, 1957. Special Forces Association, *Special Forces; the First Fifty Years* (n.p., Faircount LLC, 2002), 73.

book “actually constitutes a typical and well tested Communist blueprint for the seizure of power. In short, it is a formula for revolution.” Warren also observed that “Che” Guevara “appears to have assumed or been given the task of exporting the Castro revolution throughout the hemisphere.” In support of that effort “wide use is being made by Cuban agents of the Guevara book.”<sup>18</sup> Warren closed his summary and analysis with a blunt warning:

The Cuban Revolution has become a symbol for discontented and disaffected elements in other Latin American countries, who by example can now expect to achieve success in their own revolutionary enterprises. Herein lies the danger of Guevara’s book. It is also a brazen warning of Communist intentions and possibly capabilities to foment revolutions in the Western Hemisphere. As such, it should compel attention to actions necessary to forestall and counter Communist inspired or directed insurgencies or revolutions.<sup>19</sup>

Army Intelligence disseminated the translation and warning to all Army commands in November 1960. As Castro and Guevara sought to promote revolution in the Americas, U.S. policymakers and Army instructors laid plans to dispense an antidote: counterinsurgency training.

However, developing doctrine and publishing manuals did not result in men and units capable of implementing the Army’s new counterinsurgency guidance. For that purpose the Army needed schools. The Army had long employed its extensive systems of general and technical schools to disseminate doctrine and convert theory into a capability for action. By the 1960s, the Army had perfected its method. It imparted doctrine through a combination of formal class room instruction, hands on training, and exercises. The

---

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, “Intelligence Translation Number H6317: ‘La Guerra de Guerrillas,’” September 22, 1960, Historical Reference Collection, Box 370.64, U.S. Army Center of Military History (hereafter cited as CMH).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. The document does not list LTC Warren’s first name.

Army decided against creating separate counter-guerrilla and counterinsurgency schools. Instead, it added these subjects to the curriculum of its existing educational institutions. Over time, counterinsurgency spread across many of these schools and a multitude of courses eventually addressed the subject, from executive courses for general officers to basic training for new recruits.<sup>20</sup>

The Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and the School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone trained the majority of Latin American military personnel receiving classroom instruction in the doctrine and tactics of counterinsurgency from the U.S. Army. Each of these schools developed and maintained its own curriculum. Each took a slightly different approach in their instruction and each had its own benefits and limitations. Nevertheless, the story of U.S. Army counterinsurgency training begins at the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg. An analysis of this institution reveals what the school taught under the rubric of “counterinsurgency” and the demographics of who received its training. Although Cuba actively sought to create revolution in multiple Latin American nations during the early 1960s, instructing Western Hemisphere forces in counterinsurgency never became the Special Warfare School’s primary focus. Training U.S. Army personnel remained its central mission.

#### **THE ORIGINS OF U.S. ARMY COUNTERINSURGENCY INSTRUCTION**

Before the Army could teach its first counterinsurgency course, it first needed to assign that function to one of its subordinate commands. In the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. Continental Army Command (USCONARC), headquartered at Fort Monroe, Virginia,

---

<sup>20</sup> “U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare (Airborne) Ft. Bragg, N.C.,” 1964 (hereafter cited as USAJFKCSW 1964), U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA., (hereafter cited as USAHEC), 10; U.S. Continental Army Command, “Counterinsurgency Operations,” pamphlet No. 516-2, (hereafter cited as USCONARC), February 1963, Historical Reference Collection, Box 370.64, CMH.

held responsibility for all Army units, training schools and installations in the United States. The Pentagon alerted the Commanding General of USCONARC of the forthcoming requirement to establish a counter-guerrilla warfare operations course in October 1960. This message from Army Headquarters directed that the purpose of the course would be “to provide working knowledge to selected United States and foreign officers in the nature and conduct of counter resistance operations and to provide a general knowledge of the various aspects of non-military programs to cope with resistance and insurgency.”<sup>21</sup> Historians have long recognized John F. Kennedy’s fascination with counterinsurgency. His administration (1961-1963) made counterinsurgency a key element of U.S. foreign policy. However, this Pentagon memorandum (and the deployment of Special Forces advisors to Laos and Vietnam) demonstrates that Army efforts to counter emerging insurgencies predated Kennedy. The 1960 directive also established the curriculum for the new counter-guerrilla warfare course. It mandated “integrated instruction in psychological warfare, intelligence, counter intelligence and civil affairs operations.” This detailed guidance dictated four courses per year lasting six weeks each and set the class size at 100 “of which approximately 70% will be foreign students.”<sup>22</sup> Army Headquarters made no mention of a location for the new course in its first message.

The Army leadership soon corrected their oversight. A second message in late October directed the Continental Army Command to establish the course at the U.S.

---

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Continental Army Command, “Summary of Major Events and Problems, FY 1961, Vol. IV,” (hereafter cited as USCONARC, FY1961, Vol. IV), Historical Manuscript Collection, Box 60-1 AA, CMH, 16.

<sup>22</sup> See for example: Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 124, 140; Hal Brands, *Latin America’s Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 47-9, 59-60; Greg Grandin, *Empire’s Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 47; USCONARC FY1961, Vol. IV, 16.

Army Special Warfare Center located on Fort Bragg, North Carolina. This second message also set the target date for the first course to commence not later than 1 February 1961.<sup>23</sup> The Continental Army Command and the Special Warfare Center met the ambitious timeline set by Army leaders. The “Counter Guerrilla Operations Course” commenced instruction on 27 January 1961.<sup>24</sup> The Army’s first ever course of instruction on the topic of counterinsurgency began with four American and thirty-five foreign students. The second course commenced in May with seventy-eight students, of which sixty-five were foreigners.<sup>25</sup> The Special Warfare School, the Special Warfare Center’s educational arm, conducted these and subsequent courses in English and foreign students from around the world attended alongside their U.S. counterparts. Four American officers from the U.S. Army Caribbean School, located on Fort Gulick in the Panama Canal Zone, attended the first course. After graduating, these officers returned to Panama and began planning and preparations to establish a similar course of their own.<sup>26</sup>

Many policymakers in the early 1960s were unfamiliar with the military terminology related to special warfare. In an apparent effort to prevent misunderstandings and avoid confusion, Kennedy’s Special Group (Counter Insurgency), the high-level policy committee guiding the administration’s efforts to thwart Communist subversion, developed and promulgated a glossary of counterinsurgency terms in 1962. The Special Group (CI) defined counter-guerrilla warfare as “[o]perations and activities conducted by armed forces, paramilitary forces, or non-military agencies of a government against

---

<sup>23</sup> USCONARC FY1961, Vol. IV, 16. In U.S. Army vernacular a Center is a headquarters that commands both schools and operational units. During this era the Special Warfare Center oversaw the Special Warfare School as well as Special Forces and Psychological Operations units.

<sup>24</sup> Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 2006), 161.

<sup>25</sup> USCONARC, FY1961, Vol. IV, 17.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.



guerrillas.” Subversion denoted “[a]ction designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, moral or political strength of a regime.”<sup>27</sup>

The Special Warfare Center’s own publications provided the best source for definitions of special warfare terms as employed in the 1960s. In its 1964 brochure, the Center defined special warfare as “the application of three related activities carried out by specially trained military men capable of realizing their nation’s objectives in cold, limited or general war.”<sup>28</sup> The Center’s precise definition of these “three related activities” warrants quoting in their entirety.

Counterinsurgency Operations include all military, political, economic, psychological, and sociological actions taken by or in conjunction with a legal government to prevent or, if necessary eliminate subversive insurgency. Subversive insurgency (wars of liberation) has received increased emphasis by the Communists as a primary course of action to extend communist control. Military operations in counterinsurgency must maintain or restore internal order so that the other elements of the counterinsurgency program can achieve their goals. Comprehensive counterinsurgency plans are required to integrate and coordinate the use of all military and non-military resources in the three programs of counter guerrilla operations, environmental improvement, and population and resources control.

Psychological Operations include psychological warfare and encompasses those political, military, economic and ideological actions planned and conducted to create in enemy, neutral or friendly foreign groups the emotions, attitudes or behavior to support the achievement of national objectives.

Unconventional Warfare includes guerrilla warfare, evasion and escape, and subversion against hostile states. Unconventional warfare operations are conducted within enemy or enemy controlled territory by

---

<sup>27</sup> Special Group (Counterinsurgency), “Glossary of Counterinsurgency Terms,” May 17, 1962, Historical Reference Collection, Box 370.64, CMH.

<sup>28</sup> USAJFKCSW 1964, 3.

predominantly indigenous personnel usually supported and directed in varying degrees by an external agency.<sup>29</sup>

Although counterinsurgency concepts and doctrine evolved slightly throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the definitions of the terms remained relatively static.

The selection of the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg for the site of the Army's first counterinsurgency course was not happenstance. By 1961, the Center's experience with special warfare already spanned a decade. The roots of the Special Warfare Center germinated in the Army General School at Fort Riley, Kansas. In 1950, the General School established a Psychological Warfare Division "to develop psychological operations as a specialized area of military instruction."<sup>30</sup> The Army transferred the Psychological Warfare School to Fort Bragg in 1952 and renamed it the Psychological Warfare Center. The Center also incorporated the existing psychological warfare elements at Fort Bragg, and the Army established its new Special Forces units there that same year.<sup>31</sup> The organization changed names again in 1956. It became the Special Warfare Center and assumed responsibilities for developing doctrine in addition to training soldiers for Special Forces and psychological warfare assignments. By 1961, the Center's Special Warfare School included trained instructors and doctrine writers well versed in unconventional warfare and psychological operations and familiar with the related disciplines of counter-guerrilla and counterinsurgency operations. It made sense to add counterinsurgency doctrine and training to the Center's mandate.

---

<sup>29</sup> USAJFKCSW 1964, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>31</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, "Historical Report 1965" (hereafter cited as SAF 1965), USAHEC, 9; The U.S. Army activated its first Special Forces unit, the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne), at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina in June 1952, Ibid.

The new administration of John F. Kennedy sought to regain the initiative in the fight against global Communism.<sup>32</sup> Yet the battleground in this fight spanned the globe, not just the Western Hemisphere. Events soon taught the young president that declaring a policy was much simpler than implementing it.

Kennedy's first attempt to roll back the tide of Communism occurred in Cuba, just months after he took office. The plan to overthrow Fidel Castro using Cuban exiles trained and equipped by the United States failed spectacularly. The botched Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 embarrassed the new president and damaged the nation's prestige. Still stinging from the setback, Kennedy met with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev at conference in Vienna that summer. The conference did not go well for Kennedy. As he left the meeting, his thoughts again turned to regaining the initiative against Communism. But he chose to do so in Southeast Asia, not Latin America. After the meeting with Khrushchev Kennedy told an aide, "Now we have a problem in making our power credible, and Vietnam is the place."<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, events in Cuba continued to test the young president.

Kennedy prevailed in the next confrontation in the Americas, forcing Khrushchev to back down during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962. But taking the nation to brink of nuclear war with the Soviet Union left Kennedy (and the American public) shaken; it was not something anyone wanted to see repeated. Afterwards, Kennedy preferred to confront Communism with counterinsurgency, a non-nuclear, less dangerous option. "We in this hemisphere must also use every resource at our command to prevent the establishment of another Cuba in this hemisphere," Kennedy announced in Miami on

---

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Ambrose and Douglas Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 172.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

18 November 1963, just four days before his assassination.<sup>34</sup> “For if there is one principle which has run through the long history of this hemisphere it is our common determination to prevent the rule of foreign systems or nations in the Americas.”<sup>35</sup> “No more Cubas” became the guiding U.S. regional policy for his own and subsequent presidential administrations. Yet throughout his term of office, Kennedy also grappled with a growing insurgency in Vietnam. He sought to contain that threat by dispatching an ever increasing number of U.S. military advisors.

In the Americas, Kennedy relied on counterinsurgency training to strengthen regional armies for internal security and the Alliance for Progress to ease the discontent that engendered insurgency. Kennedy supported both efforts when he expanded Special Forces strength from 1,800 in January 1961 to some 8,000 by January 1963.<sup>36</sup> In implementing Kennedy’s policies, the Army organized its Special Forces soldiers into regionally-focused Special Forces Groups, and assigned one of them to Latin America.<sup>37</sup> The U.S. Army’s Special Warfare School was critical to these efforts. It trained the Army’s Special Forces troops and taught allied officers the theory and tactics of counterinsurgency.

The Special Warfare School adapted its organizational structure and course offerings to meet the evolving Communist threat, a new policy emphasis on counterinsurgency, and a rapidly expanding number of students. In 1962, the Special Warfare School organized its academic elements into three departments: psychological

---

<sup>34</sup> John F. Kennedy, Address in Miami Before the Inter-American Press Association, 18 November 1963, accessed 26 November 2012 at <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/polsciwb/brian/docs/1963KennedyDoctrine.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1961-1964* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), 23, 26.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 26; SAF 1965.

operations, unconventional warfare, and counter-guerrilla operations. The six-week Counter Guerrilla Course focused its efforts on American and allied officers “with an actual or anticipated requirement for a knowledge of counter guerrilla operations.”<sup>38</sup> The Psychological Operations Course “initiated” students into “all aspects” of propaganda. It emphasized intelligence and target and propaganda analysis. Instruction focused on “techniques and employment of propaganda as elements of mass communications.” The Unconventional Warfare (UW) Course covered the U.S. Army’s organization for UW as well as its specialized UW units and their missions. Particular attention was devoted to Special Forces Operational Detachments, the twelve-man “A Teams,” consisting of two officers and ten men each. The Special Warfare Center’s 1962 brochure explained that these detachments “organize indigenous resistance forces and coordinate with the military plans and objectives of the theater commander.”<sup>39</sup>

As part of its efforts to adapt to an era of rapid change, the Continental Army Command conducted a full review of its special warfare activities from late 1961 and into early 1962.<sup>40</sup> One of the primary areas of the study was “the adequacy of the training base for special warfare,” which naturally centered on the Special Warfare School.<sup>41</sup> In reviewing the school’s “facilities, instruction, funds, and courses,” the review board determined that, “[m]any of the deficiencies in these areas resulted from the spectacular increase in enrollment at the School.” The number of students had grown from 300 to over 1,200 in the space of one year, “and this high level was expected to continue in the

---

<sup>38</sup> “United States Army Special Warfare Center, Ft. Bragg, N.C.” 1962 (hereafter cited as USASWC 1962), USAHEC, 4, 11.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 8.

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Continental Army Command, “Summary of Major Events and Problems, Headquarters, U.S. Continental Army Command, FY 1962, Chapter V: Special Warfare Activities,” Vol. IV, (hereafter cited as USCONARC, FY1962, Vol. IV., Chap. V.), Historical Manuscript Collection, Box 60-1 AA, CMH, 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

future,” the report’s authors noted. The Army responded to the board’s findings. It approved additional faculty, allocated funds for new construction, and revamped the curriculum.<sup>42</sup>

The Special Warfare School had implemented most of the changes directed by its higher headquarters by early 1963. It reorganized its academic departments into four sections: counterinsurgency, psychological operations, unconventional warfare, and non-resident instruction.<sup>43</sup> The evolution from counter-guerrilla to counterinsurgency (reflected in the title of both the academic department and its courses) mirrored the Army’s doctrinal evolution as it expanded its focus from the narrow, purely military aspects of countering armed guerrillas to a broader study of the political, economic and social aspects of countering insurgent movements.

During this period the Counterinsurgency Operations Course grew from six to eight weeks. The course now aligned more closely with the Special Forces Officer and Psychological Operations Courses, which likewise lasted eight weeks. Instructors also rearranged the focus of the counterinsurgency course and expanded its scope. The earlier emphasis on executing counter-guerrilla operations receded as the course encompassed the much broader challenge of countering an insurgency. The Center’s 1962 brochure described the counter-guerrilla course in detail:

The purpose of the course is to train U.S. and allied officers in the nature and conduct of counter guerrilla operations and to acquaint them with the various aspects of non-military programs to cope with resistance and insurgency. The scope of the course includes a comprehensive study of guerrilla type movements to include analysis of causative factors underlying those movements, and the doctrinal principles, theories, and

---

<sup>42</sup> USCONARC, FY1962, Vol. IV., Chap. V., 4, 5.

<sup>43</sup> USAJFKCSW 1964, 25.

techniques applicable to military actions in countering or nullifying the development and spread of insurgency.<sup>44</sup>

The sequencing of issues provides an insight into the state of the doctrine in 1962 and the relative emphasis on the various subjects covered. The core purpose of the early course was to train students in the conduct of counter-guerrilla operations while only acquainting them with non-military issues. The causative factors underlying an insurgency, and military actions related to countering it appears only in the last sentence.

By 1963 an expanded focus and a shift in emphasis became evident. The précis of the new counterinsurgency course explained that, “[T]his specialized course directs major emphasis toward the causative factors underlying insurgency and includes the development of doctrine, tactics and techniques applicable of military operations as part of civic action aimed at preventing and coping with such movements.”<sup>45</sup> The Center now placed examining the causative factors of insurgency first in the course description while reducing the emphasis on military operations and linking them to a larger civic action effort. The précis also included a summary of the program of instruction which further illustrates the change in priorities from solely military action against guerrillas to an overall government effort designed to solve the causes of an insurgency as well as to thwart its adherents. The Center now listed counter-guerrilla tactics last on its list of topic areas.<sup>46</sup> This revision of the curriculum made counterinsurgency training applicable to far

---

<sup>44</sup> USASWC 1962, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Willard F. Barber and C. Neale Ronning, *Internal Security and Military Power; Counterinsurgency and Civic Action in Latin America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966), 299.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 300; The program of instruction contained six elements: 1. The nature and causes of irregular movements. 2. The strategy and tactics of international communism in gaining control of and exploiting irregular movements. 3. The free world’s concept and rationale of evolutionary change based on freedom, individual rights, the dignity of man, and social responsibilities. 4. The programs of free governments for meeting legitimate popular needs and aspirations to eliminate the causes of rebellion. 5. The contributions which armed forces can make to the nation-building programs in support of civil governments. 6. The tactics of armed forces in combating guerrilla forces attempting to overthrow duly constituted governments.

wider audience. No longer was the course just for those armies confronting an armed guerrilla threat; now it offered a recipe for the prevention of future insurgency.

However, the 1963 and 1964 counterinsurgency course descriptions also cautioned their potential students. The 1963 course précis included a caveat stressing that the host nations carried the burden of any counterinsurgency effort—not the U.S. military. “The course emphasizes self-help techniques on the part of host countries,” the Center’s cadre wrote, “and does not envision the large-scale employment of U.S. forces in direct support of foreign national programs.”<sup>47</sup> Although the provision and scope of U.S. military support to any foreign nation remained a policy decision, it is interesting that the Special Warfare Center chose to emphasize this point. It reflected Lieutenant Colonel Russell Volckman’s earlier writing in Army Field Manual 31-20 *Operations Against Guerilla Forces* (February 1951) when the 1964 brochure warned “that suppressive action alone will not eliminate an insurgent movement. Rather, any program for countering an insurgency must be coupled with positive efforts to remove the basic causes of discontent and to facilitate social and economic progress through peaceful means. Finally, the absolute necessity for popular support is shown.”<sup>48</sup> Volckmann himself stressed this point. “The best solution to prevent, minimize and combat guerilla warfare,” he wrote in 1951, was “political, administrative, economic, and military policies, intelligently conceived, wisely executed, and supported by appropriate propaganda, [that] will minimize the possibility of a massive resistance movement.”<sup>49</sup> These passages convey one of the enduring themes of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine: repression alone could not prevent or remedy an insurgency. Only a holistic government

---

<sup>47</sup> Barber and Ronning, *Internal Security*, 300.

<sup>48</sup> USAJFKCSW 1964, 13.

<sup>49</sup> Birtle, *Counterinsurgency*, 135.



program combining political, social, economic and military efforts could achieve long-term success. Pundits later reduced this concept to the oversimplified cliché “winning hearts and minds.”

The School’s broadened curriculum now offered American and allied students comprehensive courses in each of the three special warfare disciplines. The Psychological Operations Course gave students a “basic understanding of the principles of propaganda and of the behavioral patterns of individuals and national groups.” Trainees learned how to use propaganda, plan psychological operations and received instruction on the “use of all communications media” to disseminate their messages.<sup>50</sup> The Special Forces Officer Course remained focused on unconventional warfare. Instructors taught “the concepts and principles of guerrilla warfare and the techniques of Special Forces operations in cold, limited or general war, with study in the application of these principles and techniques in counterinsurgency and psychological operations.”<sup>51</sup>

The Special Warfare School also added other courses in 1963. The Senior Officer Counterinsurgency and Special Warfare Orientation Course was a one-week executive seminar open only to American personnel. The Center’s 1964 brochure explained that the course provided “general officers, selected senior commissioned officers of the Armed Forces, and high grade civilian personnel of the United States Government” with “knowledge of the latest doctrine and concepts of special warfare with emphasis on counterinsurgency operations.”<sup>52</sup> Compounding its workload, the Center also taught two four-week Military Assistance Training Advisor courses, one for officers and one for enlisted personnel. Although burdened with the unfortunate acronym “MATA” – which

---

<sup>50</sup> USAJFKCSW 1964, 11.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

means “to kill” in Spanish -- these courses were restricted to Americans. They trained U.S. military members detailed for duty with the Military Assistance Command – Vietnam in the skills needed to serve as military advisors and included Vietnamese language training. Almost 2,000 personnel graduated from MATA courses in 1963 alone, 50 percent of the total Special Warfare School graduates for that year.<sup>53</sup> Therefore as early as 1963, the U.S. Army’s growing commitment in Southeast Asia had begun exerting a strong pull on resources and manpower. That pull increased dramatically throughout the 1960s. The School now offered a robust curriculum including a one-week executive overview, a four-week integrated special warfare and counterinsurgency common course, and eight-week specialized courses in each of the three special warfare disciplines. But who took these courses?

#### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE AT THE SPECIAL WARFARE SCHOOL**

An analysis of attendance at the Special Warfare School in the early 1960s yields some surprising insights. First, the Army’s initial single counterinsurgency course had now grown to three courses. The school also added two U.S. military advisor courses with heavy counterinsurgency content. But the Center was far from achieving the Army’s mandate of seventy percent foreign-to-U.S. student ratio for counterinsurgency courses. Approximately 570 foreign students attended the Special Warfare Center in 1963 and some 400 of them took counterinsurgency courses.<sup>54</sup> In contrast, 1,030 U.S. students attended counterinsurgency courses in 1963, yielding only a twenty-eight percent foreign student attendance rate. Between 1961 and 1963, 1,135 Allied students attended the

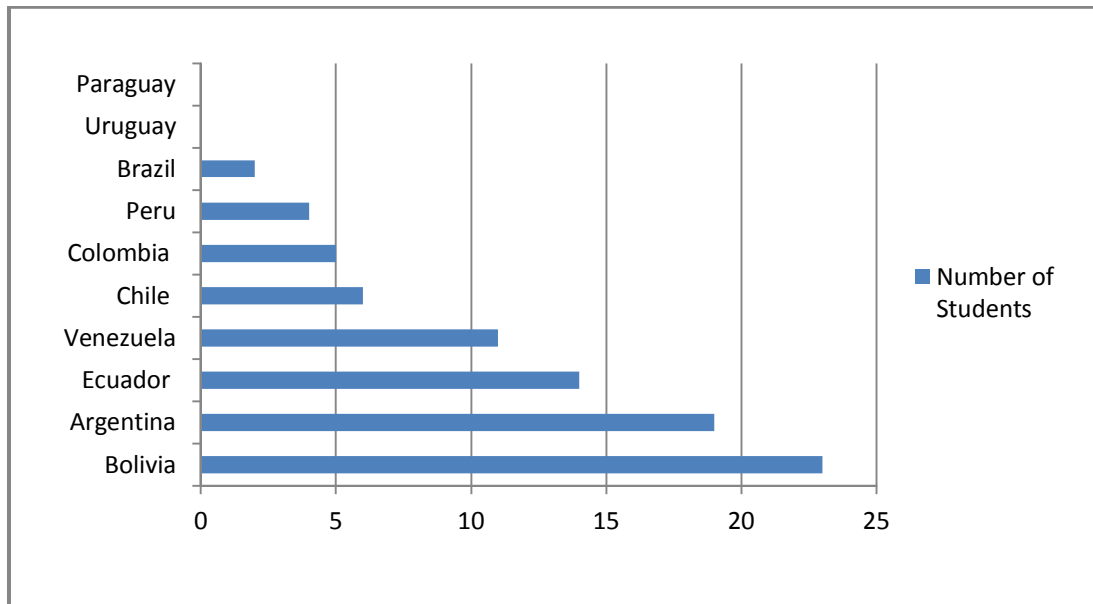
---

<sup>53</sup> “Special Warfare Center Historical Report 1963” (hereafter cited as SWC 63), Historical Reference Collection, Box 370.64, CMH, 26.

<sup>54</sup> Another approximately 165 Allied students attended the Special Forces Officer and Psychological Operations courses; SWC 63, 26.

Special Warfare School.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, only 112 of those students hailed from Latin America and the Caribbean, representing slightly fewer than ten percent of international attendees (see Table 2.1).<sup>56</sup>

Table 2.1: Special Warfare School Attendance 1961-1963.



Among Allied students the four-week Counterinsurgency and Special Warfare Staff Officer Course appears to have been the most popular. Approximately two-hundred and eighty foreign officers graduated from this course in 1963 (attendance data for other years is not available). Another one hundred twenty-five or so international officers graduated from the eight-week Counterinsurgency Course that same year (see Table 2.2).<sup>57</sup>

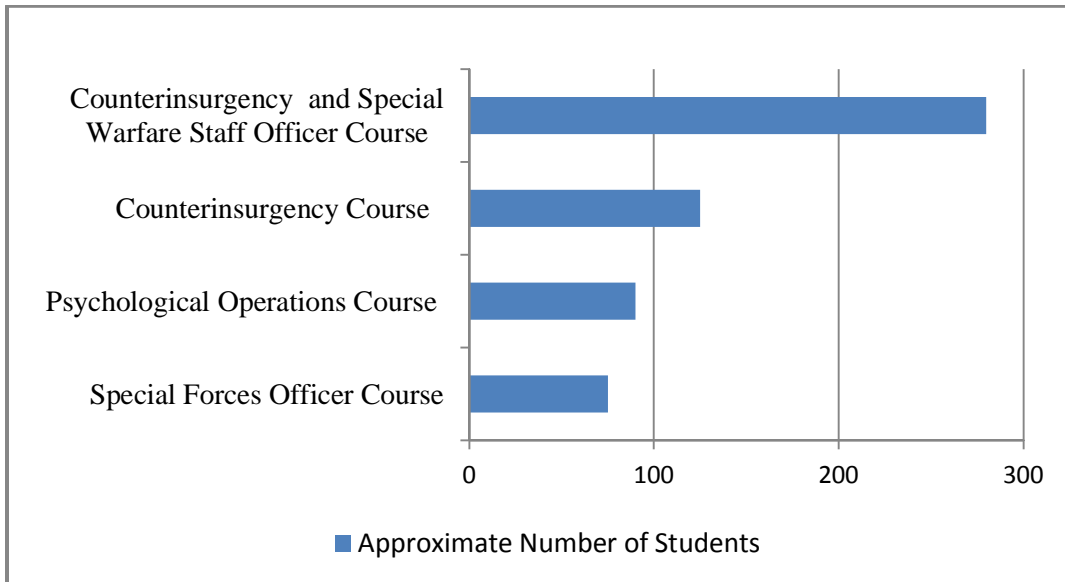
---

<sup>55</sup> SWC 63, 26.

<sup>56</sup> Barber and Ronning's *Internal Security* (1966) presents the data for Latin American students attendance at the Special Warfare School from 1961-1963, presumably extracted from the Special Warfare Center's 1963 Historical Report. However, the authors do not present data for countries outside Latin America making an overall analysis of international student attendance previously unavailable. Paraguay and Uruguay sent no students to the Special Warfare Center as of 1963. Table data extracted from SWC 63.

<sup>57</sup> SWC 63, 26.

Table 2.2: Special Warfare Center Foreign Student Course Attendance 1963.



Looking deeper here also highlights the Army's growing preoccupation with Southeast Asia. Just four countries, Vietnam, Thailand, South Korea and Taiwan, sent some 560 students over this time period—five times as many graduates as the fifteen participating nations of Latin America combined.<sup>58</sup> Argentina and Bolivia sent the highest number of students within Latin America, but these figures represent all Special Warfare School courses, not just counterinsurgency. Nevertheless, The Special Warfare School's *raison d'être* remained the training of U.S. Army soldiers for its Special Forces and Psychological Operations formations. Training U.S. advisors for duty in Southeast Asia became its second priority. Training foreign students in counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare was a tertiary responsibility.

In late 1965, the Special Warfare Center conducted a second detailed appraisal of its counterinsurgency training. The report provides unique insights into the Special Warfare School's doctrine, faculty, and student instruction during the mid-1960s. The

---

<sup>58</sup> SWC 63, 27.

Center conducted this counterinsurgency training assessment to meet the requirements of a presidentially directed interagency review undertaken by Committee II (Training). Major General William R. Peers, U.S. Army, chaired the committee, which included senior executives from the Department of State, Central Intelligence Agency, U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Information Agency and senior officers of the Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.<sup>59</sup> The report considered four main subject areas of counterinsurgency training of interest to the committee: doctrine, training of U.S. personnel, training of foreign personnel, and career development of Psychological Operations officers. The Counterinsurgency Training Review began by reiterating the school's mission to conduct resident and non-resident instruction of psychological warfare, unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency operations for U.S. military, U.S. government and foreign personnel. The report then listed the school's 24 functions, the first being to "Initiate, revise, and develop doctrinal techniques, organizations, procedures, tactics and techniques related to: a. psychological operations, b. Special Forces units, and c. counterinsurgency operations."<sup>60</sup>

The Counterinsurgency Training Review's first section entailed a thorough assessment of doctrine. After finding the current precepts for counterinsurgency adequate, the report further observed that these principles were subject to continual evaluation and revision. The review emphasized the school's focus on "doctrine immediately applicable to military activities." Yet the report's authors also noted that, "[c]ounterinsurgency activities...embrace the responsibilities of several agencies of the

---

<sup>59</sup> John B. Holt, "U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare Counterinsurgency Training Review" (hereafter cited as CTR), Fort Bragg, N.C., October 1965, n. pag., USAHEC.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

[U.S.] Government.”<sup>61</sup> A later passage identified the lack of published inter-agency or policy guidance for non-military activities related to counterinsurgency such as “population and resource control.” The faculty struggled with how to include these non-military aspects of counterinsurgency. To overcome the lack of existing doctrine they “devised concepts upon which to base instruction.” Despite frustrations over the lack of published doctrine, the faculty’s ability to conduct interagency coordination appears to have been good. “Direct contact is maintained with the State Department, Agency for International Development, U.S. Information Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency through their representatives who are attached to the [Special Warfare Center],” the review noted.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless, this section of the report highlighted the fact that it was much easier to write and lecture about the need for a coordinated government program incorporating “all political, social, economic and military actions” than it was to achieve it.<sup>63</sup> Some Latin American armies later overcame the challenge of coordinating counterinsurgency efforts across governmental departments by seizing power themselves and subordinating civil functions to military control.

The Special Warfare School’s faculty received detailed consideration in the training review. In 1965, the school’s forty-nine instructors included sixteen members who had undertaken graduate level study at civilian universities and seventeen graduates of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Thirty boasted operational counterinsurgency experience, “primarily in Laos and Vietnam.”<sup>64</sup> But all was not well regarding the school’s workforce. “[A]n acute shortage of personnel,” the review noted,

---

<sup>61</sup> Holt, CTR.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> USAJFKCSW 1964, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Holt, CTR.

“has on several occasions resulted in less than adequate training during Special Forces counterinsurgency field training exercises.”<sup>65</sup> The Army authorized the school a staff and faculty of 436 officers and enlisted members, but the school counted only 287 personnel assigned as of October 8, 1965. Operating with 149 fewer people than its authorization caused serious problems. “This acute shortage places a particularly heavy burden on assigned personnel,” the review stated, “and adversely affects instruction in counterinsurgency.”<sup>66</sup> The report also cited the increasing burden of supporting the previously mentioned Military Assistance Training Advisor (MATA) program (two four-week courses preparing U.S. forces for service in Vietnam) as an additional source of strain on its personnel. In 1960 only 900 U.S. military advisors served in Vietnam. In 1961 Kennedy tripled the number to nearly 3,000. By 1963, that number had soared to some 16,000.<sup>67</sup> The school’s understrength faculty struggled to train them all. Administrators determined the need for an additional 109 personnel to support the increased workload for the MATA program. The Army approved an increase of only 84 positions.<sup>68</sup> It is not known if Committee II was able to help remedy the personnel shortages at the Special Warfare School, yet training did continue.

#### **CHALLENGES RELATED TO FOREIGN MILITARY EDUCATION**

Latin American students faced numerous challenges in attending the Special Warfare School. Foremost among them was the necessity for fluency in English (speaking, reading and writing).<sup>69</sup> The school’s language requirement would have

---

<sup>65</sup> Holt, CTR.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Birtle, *Counterinsurgency*, 315.

<sup>68</sup> Holt, CTR.

<sup>69</sup> Kenneth H. Barber, “U.S. Military Schools for Latin America: a Unique Plus for Uncle Sam” Student Essay (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, April 22, 1966), 5.

precluded many Latin American officers from attending, especially those from the smaller nations. Unless a particular officer had a true mastery of English, it is probable that at least some of the nuanced meanings of the unfamiliar terms and concepts imparted during counterinsurgency training were lost. Although foreign students almost certainly struggled during the first years of counterinsurgency training, by 1965 the school had addressed many of these challenges. For example, although the U.S. military mission in each country was responsible for ensuring foreign students passed a comprehensive basic English test, the 1965 training review observed that the school also offered “simultaneous interpretation in French and Spanish for all resident instruction received by foreign officers.” “Most all Portuguese speaking officers also use the Spanish translation,” the report noted.<sup>70</sup>

The Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg expended great effort to ease the challenges faced by foreign students. The school’s Foreign Liaison Division had implemented a two-week introductory course for foreign officers in 1965 “designed to prepare the foreign student to better assimilate subsequent instruction at the School.” The training review explained that the program “stresses special warfare terminology” but went on to note that, “the preparatory course [also] includes an orientation on American democratic principles and the American way of life, customs and mores.”<sup>71</sup> The school reinforced its language training and translation efforts with a robust sponsorship program. American officers assigned each foreign student not one, but four sponsors. An official military sponsor “assists the foreign officer on arrival in settling down at Fort Bragg and provides hospitality.” The faculty advisor “monitors the academic progress of the foreign

---

<sup>70</sup> Holt, CTR.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.



student and assists when necessary.” “A volunteer from the local community,” serves as a civilian sponsor, and “entertains the foreign officer in the civilian environment.” Lastly, each foreign student also found himself assigned an in-class U.S. student sponsor, “who is seated next to the foreign officer in class and assists with academic matters and classroom activities.”<sup>72</sup> Although well intentioned, such heavy attention must have overwhelmed many international students. On the other hand, it may have made them feel special.

The school’s global focus presented another academic challenge for Latin American attendees. The preponderance of international students from other regions precluded a focus solely on Latin America. Given the disproportionate number of students from Southeast Asia and the U.S. Army’s growing commitment in that region, it is plausible to expect that much of the curriculum focused on the unique social, political and economic complexities of Southeast Asia – and the counterinsurgency lessons drawn from that area -- not Latin America. Although Western Hemisphere security remained a vital national interest of the United States, few if any Army instructors at the Special Warfare School would have had personal counterinsurgency experience in the region. Instead, as mentioned above, the school relied on the operational experience of its instructors who acquired their counterinsurgency knowledge “primarily in Laos and Vietnam.”<sup>73</sup> Reading a translation of “Che” Guevara’s *Guerrilla Warfare* may have given these instructors insights into Latin America, but they probably relied on their own personal experiences gained in Southeast Asia.

---

<sup>72</sup> Holt, CTR.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

## **BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING U.S. COUNTERINSURGENCY TRAINING**

Some historians have erroneously equated U.S. training with an unquestioning acceptance and eager implementation by Latin American militaries. In fact, imparting U.S. doctrine and techniques to regional armies faced numerous obstacles. Only in the rare case when their army's most senior leadership fully embraced counterinsurgency and wholeheartedly supported their efforts to spread their new knowledge would these junior or mid-grade officers have experienced a general acceptance of the new doctrine. In most cases, it is much more probable that they faced widespread resistance to any efforts to introduce their newly acquired "foreign doctrine." Latin American armies are proud and nationalistic institutions, but they are also very resistant to change – especially if an outside force directed that change.<sup>74</sup> Chile provides an example. "Within the Chilean Army, there is resistance in many areas to changes in training methods and procedures," U.S. Army Mission officers wrote to their headquarters in 1962. Chilean Army "[t]raining methods and procedures are prescribed by regulations which must be followed and cannot be altered or changed without specific authority. This is often very frustrating to [Chilean] officers returning to Chile from schools in Panama and the U.S."<sup>75</sup>

Whatever the level of cultural resistance experienced by counterinsurgency course graduates in attempting to impart their training to their fellow soldiers, the impact of sending students to counterinsurgency courses would have been unique to that army. "Latin American officers accepted training, weapons, equipment, and other resources to

---

<sup>74</sup> I base this conclusion on my more than sixteen years' experience studying and working with Latin American armies. See also Brian Loveman, *For la Patria: Politics and the Armed Forces in Latin America*, (Wilmington, DE, Scholarly Resources, 1999), which provides numerous examples of this common regional trait.

<sup>75</sup> United States Army Mission (hereafter cited as USARMIS) to Chile, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 17 July 1962, National Archives and Records Administrations, Archives II, College Park, MD, Records Group 548, Records of U.S. Army Forces in the Caribbean (hereafter cited as NAAFC), n.pag.

wage their own wars against subversion,” Brian Loveman concludes. “Even with U.S. training, ideological indoctrination, and new equipment, the Latin American armed forces retained their national idiosyncrasies and their own versions of patriotism.”<sup>76</sup> Nations facing extant or nascent insurgency likely proved more receptive to adopting external doctrine and receiving foreign training and assistance. For armies not fighting an insurgency, the natural tendency of all large bureaucracies to resist change likely held sway. But in every case, the impact of counterinsurgency training would have been dependent on a process of distillation in which that army accepted, rejected or modified the concepts, doctrine and tactics espoused by the United States. Each army’s values, culture and unique national circumstance affected this process.

The U.S. Army faced numerous challenges in seeking to impart counterinsurgency training to regional armies. The historical record of how counterinsurgency students applied their new skills (if they put them to use at all) upon their return home is an obscure one. Nevertheless, U.S. Army missions, liaison and advisory offices in the host nation, submitted reports to the Army Caribbean Command in 1962 and 1963 offering a glimpse of how regional armies employed returning students. These records also highlight the wide variety of issues and circumstances that affected counterinsurgency (and other military) training and support. These reports also reveal a high level of cultural misunderstandings.

Venezuela embraced U.S. counterinsurgency training to a far greater degree than other regional armies, but acceptance of U.S. training did not always ensure the productive utilization of U.S. trained personnel upon their return. For example, the Army Mission in Venezuela noted in its 1963 semi-annual report that of twenty officers

---

<sup>76</sup> Loveman, *For la Patria*, 169-170.

returning from Army schools in the continental United States, four were assigned as instructors, four were assigned to the General Staff (Venezuelan Army headquarters) and eight were assigned to military units. Another four recently returned officers were still awaiting assignment.<sup>77</sup> Employment of returning students as instructors would, in most cases, represent an ideal utilization of U.S. training. The assumption being that they would be in a position to impart their knowledge to fellow soldiers through the courses they taught. Assignment to army headquarters to serve on the General Staff also represented a potential opportunity for that officer to apply his new skills and enhance the capability and knowledge of the host nation army through planning and or decision making. Assignment to a tactical unit, while very prestigious, would likely not have been an ideal utilization of counterinsurgency training unless the host nation army assigned them to units with counterinsurgency or counter-guerrilla missions. Unfortunately the available reporting does not distinguish the courses undertaken or link course attendance to subsequent assignments. However, the Army Mission in Venezuela report for July through December 1963 noted an improvement. Five officers returned from U.S Army schools in the United States. Two of them received instructor assignments while the remaining three assumed new duties on the General Staff. Yet the same report also lamented the “failure to aggressively execute training programs.”<sup>78</sup> These records are for limited time periods and therefore incomplete. But they do yield insights into the inherent difficulties of imparting military training from one national army to another. Other examples follow.

---

<sup>77</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 July 1963, NAAFC.

<sup>78</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 16 January 1964, NAAFC.

Chile and Brazil presented the Army with different challenges. American efforts to impart counterinsurgency training to these forces ran into obstacles of pride and nationalism. The U.S. Army element of the Joint Brazil-United States Military Commission reported to the Caribbean Command in January 1963 that the Brazilian Army declined to send its soldiers to U.S. Army military intelligence courses in the Canal Zone during the preceding three-month reporting period.<sup>79</sup> What was the rationale? “These courses have been repeatedly offered to the Brazilian Army,” the American Army officers wrote, “[b]ut have been turned down based on the host country evaluation that local training parallels or exceeds training offered at the [U.S. Army Caribbean School] course.”<sup>80</sup> The same report cited two Brazilian students returning from the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg. One attended the Special Warfare Officer Course, while the other attended the Psychological Operations Course. Both officers received assignment to the Directorate of Military Education, presumably an excellent utilization of their training. However, these two officers represented the only Brazilian students to attend Special Warfare School courses between 1961 and 1963. Neither took a counterinsurgency course.<sup>81</sup> Despite this fact, the October to December 1962 U.S. Army mission report noted that, “there has been a marked increase in training in counterinsurgency matters extending from troop information through field exercises.”<sup>82</sup> If U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and training dominated Latin American armies during the Cold War, how did the Brazilian Army conduct its own counterinsurgency training largely absent of U.S. support? The Brazilian Army relied on its own resources.

---

<sup>79</sup> U.S. Army Element, Joint Brazil-U.S. Military Commission (hereafter cited as USARELM Brazil), “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 January 1963, NAAFC.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> SWC 63.

<sup>82</sup> USARELM Brazil, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 January 1963, NAAFC.

U.S. officers noted that the Brazilian Army had developed its own “all-inclusive term for counterinsurgency” – “Contra-Revolucionario.”<sup>83</sup> After developing its own concepts and doctrine, the Brazilian Army conducted its own counter-revolutionary training:

All MAP [U.S. Military Assistance Program] units, and infantry, engineer and cavalry units not on frontier locations conducted small unit and larger unit...exercises [in the] “Contra-Revolucionario” role. Troop information [training] on insurgency and Communism conducted in all formations. General Staff College conducted additional 150-hour seminar. General Staff conducted 50-hour orientation course for 150 senior field grade and general officers. ...[The]1963-64 [Brazilian Army] Training Directive requires from 100 to 200 mandatory hours [of counter-revolutionary training] and that all tactical training be oriented to include this element of training.<sup>84</sup>

Thus as early as the latter months of 1962, the Brazilian Army boasted robust counterinsurgency training for individuals (from privates through senior officers) and units (from small units through large formations). While American officers could claim that, “95% of training references being used for the calendar 1963-64 school and troop training programs are those of the U.S. Army, or [the] Brazilian Army based on those of the U.S. Army,” a closer reading of this report reveals that counterinsurgency was one of the exceptions.<sup>85</sup> Among their major accomplishments of the period October to December 1962, U.S. Army officers in Brazil listed the following events:

Groups of Schools Units (MAP supported) conducted a combined arms exercise of 5 days’ duration which included utilization of close air support, aerial resupply, [and] defense of rear areas against guerrilla operations. This was preceded by a 4-day exercise in which officer-students of the Career Branch schools manned the staff and command of units up through battalion level. This exercise involved the reduction of elements of an

---

<sup>83</sup> USARELM Brazil, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 January 1963, NAAFC.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

insurrection army, counter-guerrilla clean-up and restoration of [the] properly constituted government.<sup>86</sup>

Therefore, at a time when the U.S. Army Special Warfare School's curriculum offered only a narrowly focused counter-guerrilla course, the Brazilian Army not only trained for but also successfully conducted complex exercises and plans to "first, prevent insurrection; second; put down insurrection; and third, restore and rehabilitate the [affected] area."<sup>87</sup> Brazil did not need American counterinsurgency doctrine. By late 1962 the Brazilian Army was in fact several steps ahead of the U.S. Army in the development and application of its holistic "Contra-Revolucionario" concepts and doctrine.

The same January 1963 report from Brazil also mentioned that spaces in U.S. Army military intelligence courses were "placed in lower priority in [the] Brazilian Army Training budget in favor of maintenance training requirements."<sup>88</sup> Maintenance training in the United States made sense, especially for U.S. provided or purchased military equipment. However, this passage also demonstrates that the Brazilian Army based its acceptance and prioritization of U.S. training on its own internal assessment of requirements, not on external U.S. advice.

American Army officers in Chile apparently faced even more overt resistance to U.S. counterinsurgency initiatives. The Army mission in Chile noted in their January to June 1962 Mission Program Report to the Caribbean Command that,

There is a strong feeling among many influential officers of the Chilean Army that they are perfectly capable of running their own Army and do not need advice or assistance from the U.S. Army Mission. The Mission is seldom consulted or their assistance requested on any matter of

---

<sup>86</sup> USARELM Brazil, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 18 January 1963, NAAF.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

importance. This places the mission in the position of almost [strikethrough in original text] always being the aggressor in seeking improvements. Many times these unsolicited mission approaches or recommendations are ignored. This imposes a very definite restriction on how much pushing can be done without alienating the Chilean officers against the mission and destroying any possibility of obtaining results.<sup>89</sup>

Beyond nationalism and independence, the U.S. Army mission's October 1962 report provided additional explanations for the Chilean Army's reticence. The Army mission report began by advising its headquarters they had "failed to secure Chilean Army approval for a Counter-Insurgency Survey Team" visit. Survey missions assessed the training level of local forces and coordinated future training.<sup>90</sup> The mission then notified its headquarters that the counterinsurgency training course planned for January 1963 had been cancelled. In explaining these setbacks the American Army officers wrote:

[I]n addition to budgetary problems which strongly influenced these decisions, political considerations also played a part. There is no insurgency threat in Chile; however, there is a legal Communist Party here. All government agencies carefully consider their actions in this context to avoid providing [a] propaganda opening for the Communist Party. The Army, too, feels it must proceed careful [sic] for even the name Counter-Insurgency is subject to misinterpretation and distortion.<sup>91</sup>

Two Chilean Army officers did graduate from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth during this reporting period, but this course contained little or no counterinsurgency content.<sup>92</sup> In another blow to U.S. internal security efforts, the Chilean Army declined two counterinsurgency course spaces at the Special Warfare School for 1963.

---

<sup>89</sup> USARMIS to Chile, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 17 July 1962, NAAFC.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Barber and Ronning, *Internal Security*, 173.



U.S. officers had to content themselves with the one course the Chilean Army accepted; a “Commando Course” taught by a two-man Mobile Training Team from Panama. This two-month course taught Ranger type skills (likely focusing on light infantry tactics such as patrolling, ambush and counter ambush, marksmanship techniques, field craft, dismounted navigation, etc...). U.S. officers only managed to inject four hours of counterinsurgency training into the two-month course. “Concepts of Guerrilla Warfare” consumed two hours, while “Conduct of units against Irregular Forces” accounted for the other two hours of instruction. In a rare bit of positive news, the U.S. Army mission proudly reported that Captain Raúl Martínez, a Chilean Army graduate of the counterinsurgency course at Fort Bragg, was “scheduled to present the instruction.”<sup>93</sup>

In its final report for 1962, the U.S. Army mission hailed the Commando Course as “an outstanding success” and lauded the efforts of the three American trainers, an Army captain and sergeant from the Canal Zone and an Army captain assigned to the U.S. mission in Chile. The report cited a second Commando Course planned for April 1963 and declared the American trainers’ intention to increase counterinsurgency content from four hours (during the first course) to three days. In closing, the U.S. officers again mentioned Captain Raúl Martínez, informing their headquarters that he “has prepared a two hour class on Counter-Insurgency warfare and it is anticipated that he will present this class to various elements of the Chilean Army.”<sup>94</sup> It is not known if Captain Martínez succeeded in efforts to disseminate his U.S. acquired counterinsurgency knowledge, but the American officers’ efforts continued into 1963.

---

<sup>93</sup> USARMIS to Chile, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 October 1962, NAAFC.

<sup>94</sup> USARMIS to Chile, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 January 1963, NAAFC.

Other armies that desired U.S. counterinsurgency training faced external obstacles. Economic difficulties may not have been as persistent an impediment as nationalism and independence, but they were just as effective at blocking training. In July 1962, the Army Mission in Colombia cited the “insufficiency of dollars to enable Colombia to send an adequate number of officers to U.S. CONUS [Continental United States] and overseas schools” as number three of the four “Obstacles and Problems” facing the mission.<sup>95</sup> The problem had worsened by January 1963 when the Army Mission reported that, “The recent devaluation of the peso together with an increasing uncertainty as to the adequacy of income to meet budget requirements has resulted in the suspension of all but a handful of U.S. school quotas.”<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, the same report cited six officers and four non-commissioned officers as having returned from U.S. schools and claimed that the “effectiveness of utilization continues at about 90%.”<sup>97</sup> The Army mission at least partially mitigated the budgetary problems through an increase in mobile training teams which required no additional funding on the part of the Colombians. By mid-1963 Colombia’s budget crisis had eased. The July 1963 report made no mention of funding issues but did document seven officers and four non-commissioned officers who returned from U.S. schools during the reporting period and claimed a 100% effectiveness of utilization.<sup>98</sup>

The smaller armies of the region were not the only ones that faced budgetary problems. The Army Mission in Brazil noted in its April 1963 report that U.S. Army schools slots in Panama and the United States “were cancelled by the [Brazilian]

---

<sup>95</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 July 1962, NAAFC.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 16 July 1963, NAAFC.

government as an economy measure.”<sup>99</sup> The same report also noted other budgetary impacts on the Brazilian Army. The “[r]eduction of draftee time to 8 months [from the standard 12 months] during calendar year 1963 by Presidential determination, as an economy measure,” American officers noted, “will reduce the level of training attained and the period in which units will have adequately trained strength to deal with internal security matters.”<sup>100</sup> The Army Mission to Bolivia also faced financial challenges. In their June 1962 report, American officers informed Caribbean Command that, “no appreciable obstacles were encountered except the inability of the [Bolivian] government to support economically all schools quotas made available [by the United States].”<sup>101</sup>

The curious reader may wonder why host nation financial troubles would impact training courses funded by the United States. It is a good question. In most cases, the U.S. government paid all costs associated with transportation, meals, and lodging for foreign students, as well as the cost of the course. During the 1960s the U.S. government also paid Canal Zone students \$1.50 per diem for incidental expenses, while students attending schools in the United States received \$6 per day.<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless, most Latin American countries were (and still are) legally bound to pay a fixed per diem to military officers when out of the country. The national legislatures set the requirement and amounts paid. Military commanders could not issue exemptions or modify the amounts paid. The daily amounts varied by county, but all became burdensome when multiplied by a large number of students or for courses of long duration. For example, a U.S. Army War College researcher in 1966 documented that “an Argentine officer receives \$30.00

---

<sup>99</sup> USARELM Brazil, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 2 April 1963, NAAFC.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 30 June 1962, NAAFC.

<sup>102</sup> Barber, “U.S. Military Schools for Latin America,” 24.

per day when out-of-country.”<sup>103</sup> Adjusted for inflation, that amount equated to more than \$200 in 2013 dollars.<sup>104</sup> An eight-week counterinsurgency course at the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg would therefore generate approximately \$1,600 in host nation costs in 1966 dollars (\$11,865 today). Sending an officer to the forty-week Basic Officer (Cadet) Course or Command and General Staff (senior officer) Course in the Canal Zone would incur an expense of more than \$8,000 for the host nation (equivalent to a charge of \$57,678 in today’s dollars). This would support just one student. Per diem obligations could easily become a serious obstacle to some armies’ ability to send students to foreign schools, even for courses ostensibly “fully funded” by the United States.

Determining the utilization of students once they returned to Bolivia also proved a challenge. Between January and June 1962, three Bolivian officers completed schools in the United States while thirty-two officers and twenty-six enlisted men graduated from Canal Zone schools. The U.S. Army mission could not track the follow-on duties of the students, explaining that the “assignments of these graduates are not readily available as no detailed personnel records are maintained in [Bolivian] Army Headquarters.” As if imparting counterinsurgency training was not challenge enough, the report went on to note that “[p]lanned actions by the [U.S. Army mission] should rectify this deficiency in the near future.”<sup>105</sup> In January 1963, the Army mission reported that three Bolivian officers completed counterinsurgency training in Panama. It also noted the cancellation of

---

<sup>103</sup> Barber, “U.S. Military Schools for Latin America,” 25.

<sup>104</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI inflation calculator. Accessed August 16, 2013 online at: [http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)

<sup>105</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 30 June 1962, NAAFC.

fifteen spaces for other Canal Zone courses in the second half of 1963 “because of economic conditions.”<sup>106</sup>

Peru was different. The U.S. Army Mission in Lima faced political rather than financial obstacles to promoting American counterinsurgency training for Peruvian military personnel. In its October 1962 report, the mission documented sixteen students returning from schools in the United States.<sup>107</sup> However, all of the students received conventional military skills instruction (Infantry, Engineer, Signal, Armor, Finance, Supply and Hospital Administration, to name a few). No officers received instruction at the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg during this reporting period. Another eighteen students returned from U.S. courses in the Panama Canal Zone, including four officers who attended the Counterinsurgency Operations course. Two others attended the Counterinsurgency Orientation course. Nevertheless, the report also advised U.S. Army leaders in Panama that the counterinsurgency Mobile Training Team course planned to commence in April had been suspended due to the Peruvian presidential elections scheduled for June.<sup>108</sup> Overall, things seemed to be going well.

Then a crisis struck. The Army Mission in Peru suffered a major disruption to their counterinsurgency (and other military) training programs in July 1962. American officers in Lima explained to their commanders in Panama that,

As a result of the military coup d'état in July 1962 and assumption of power by a Military Junta there was a break in diplomatic relations between the U.S. government and the government of Peru. A month after the military coup, the U.S. recognized and established relations with the Military Junta but did not resume Military Aid. Accordingly the FY [Fiscal Year] 62 MAP [Military Assistance Program] Training Program

---

<sup>106</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 15 January 1963, NAAFC.

<sup>107</sup> USARMIS to Peru, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 October 1962, NAAFC. This report detailed U.S. Army Mission activities between January and June 1962.

<sup>108</sup> USARMIS to Peru, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 10 August 1962, NAAFC.

was suspended. Students already in school in CONUS [Continental United States] and Panama continued in school.<sup>109</sup>

During the period July to September 1962, two Peruvian officers attended the Counterinsurgency Operations course, nine attended the Counterinsurgency Orientation course, and another five graduated from other U.S. courses in Panama. Seven officers attended courses in the United States, but again none received instruction at the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg.<sup>110</sup> The break in relations and the suspension of military assistance also impeded planned training in Peru. After mentioning the disruption in training due to the break in U.S. military funding, the Army mission explained that,

A secondary factor that affected progress was the additional duty commitments undertaken by all levels of the Peruvian Military Forces in reorganizing and administering the Government of Peru. Numerous officers were assigned to various governmental ministries and agencies, leaving vacancies in the military structure and activities. A number of in-country military courses of instruction were cancelled due to the lack of availability of both instructors and student personnel.<sup>111</sup>

Natural disasters, elections, riots, strikes and coups d'état within Latin American nations often diverted security forces' attention from United States' sponsored training. However, this usually impacted in-country training more than student attendance at American-sponsored courses in the Panama Canal Zone or the United States. While internal crises might cause the curtailment or cancellation of enrollment for future students, U.S. Army mission reports do not mention any countries recalling students before the completion of their training.

Army mission reports from the early 1960s reveal that counterinsurgency schools largely avoided one issue that later plagued mobile training teams (small groups of U.S.

---

<sup>109</sup> USARMIS to Peru, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 17 October 1962, NAAFC.

<sup>110</sup> USARMIS to Peru, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 17 October 1962, NAAFC.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

Army instructors conducting training in Latin American countries) – illiteracy. The Special Warfare School’s counterinsurgency course, as well as later counterinsurgency courses as the School of the Americas in Panama, accepted only officer students. While the Special Warfare School required basic English skills, the School of the Americas conducted all of its courses in Spanish. In either case, teaching officer students alleviated school instructors from the challenges of attempting to impart complex counterinsurgency doctrine and tactics to the poorly-educated, largely rural conscripts that comprised the bulk of most regional armies during the 1960s and 1970s.

Other Army schools in the United States played a minimal role in providing counterinsurgency training to Latin Americans. The Army’s Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas specialized in training mid-grade officers in the skills required to serve as staff officers at the battalion and brigade level. However, Leavenworth’s one-year resident course concentrated almost exclusively on conventional military theory, operations and tactics. In their 1965 survey of counterinsurgency training, Barber and Ronning noted that, at the Command and General Staff College, “no time was allocated to civic action as a separate subject, but a new topic on the application of civic action in counterinsurgency is to be given for the first time in the last part of the year [1965].”<sup>112</sup> The authors also noted the attendance of only sixteen officers from Latin America in the 1964-65 class.<sup>113</sup> The U.S. Army War College, the Army’s strategic-level school for senior officers, did not accept foreign officers until 1977. The first Latin American officer (from Venezuela) did not attend until 1979.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Barber and Ronning, *Internal Security*, 173.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Hickey, James R., “The History and Significance of the U.S. Army War College International Fellows Program,” (Strategy Research Project, USAWC Carlisle Barracks, PA., 2001), p. iii, 23.

One final school merits brief mention. The Inter-American Defense College, which opened its doors in October 1962, served as broadening course for selected Latin American and U.S. officers in the grade of Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel. “Its purpose is to conduct courses on the Inter-American system,” the college proclaimed in its regulations, “and on the political, social, economic and military factors that constitute essential components of inter-American defense.”<sup>115</sup> Notwithstanding its Pan-American title and faculty, the United States exerted strong influence on the school. A U.S. Army general served as its director. The school was located on Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., and the U.S. government provided two-thirds of its operating budget. The college largely patterned its curriculum on the U.S. National War College, also located on Fort McNair, but it did not list counterinsurgency among its major subject areas or blocks of instruction. Instead, its focus was hemispheric defense. The Inter-American Defense College did list “problems of communist [sic] revolutionary warfare and continental defense,” and later “underdevelopment and insurgency,” among its topic areas. However, it did not devote a major segment of its courses to teaching U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine as was the case at the National War College from 1962-1966.<sup>116</sup> A total of one hundred and sixty-four Latin American officers and twenty-eight Americans graduated from the college between 1962 and 1966.<sup>117</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg had firmly established itself as the intellectual hub of the Army’s efforts to develop and disseminate counterinsurgency

---

<sup>115</sup> Barber and Ronning, *Internal Security*, 171; Douglas W. Davis, “The Inter-American Defense College: an Assessment of its Activities,” (unpublished dissertation, University of Maryland, 1967), 9, 77.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 20, 91, 103-4, 184, 107, 118, Appendix F.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix N.



doctrine by 1964. Yet training Latin American forces never became a priority mission for the school. Instead, its primary focus remained the training of U.S. soldiers for service in Special Forces and Psychological Operations units. The school assumed a new mission of training U.S. advisors for duty in Vietnam early in 1963, which quickly became its second priority. Training foreign officers in counterinsurgency ranked third in the school's priorities as measured by student attendance numbers.<sup>118</sup> Latin American forces did not take the lead in attendance of counterinsurgency courses at the school due to a combination of factors. The school's requirement to train a growing number of allied students from Southeast Asia resulted in lower quotas for Latin Americans. Moreover, the Western Hemisphere had its own specialized regional training school in Panama. Latin American students attended other U.S. schools in the early 1960s, but these courses provided conventional military skills training and generally lacked counterinsurgency content.

Regardless of how delivered (Army schools or Mobile Training Teams), counterinsurgency training of Latin American armies faced numerous challenges. Some armies could not afford the costs associated with sending students abroad for training because of budget shortfalls or economic crises. In Peru, counterinsurgency training was disrupted due to the rupture of diplomatic relations in the aftermath of a military coup d'état. Meanwhile, the armies of Chile and Brazil largely shunned U.S. efforts to export counterinsurgency training, preferring instead to develop their own theories and train their own forces. In fact, by as early as 1962, the Brazilian Army was conducting complex, multi-echelon "Contra-Revolucionario" training and exercises related to insurgency prevention, counterinsurgency operations, and the reestablishment of

---

<sup>118</sup> SWC 63.

government control in affected areas. Meanwhile, the Special Warfare School did not expand its focus from counter-guerrilla operations (centered on purely military responses to insurgency) to counterinsurgency (focusing on insurgency prevention and whole of government responses) until sometime in 1963.

One hundred and twelve Latin American officers received counterinsurgency training at the Special Warfare School from 1961 to 1963. Each of them faced obstacles of cultural and bureaucratic resistance when seeking to disseminate their new training within their parent armies. Some countries, such as Venezuela, proved more receptive to adopting external doctrine and receiving foreign training and assistance. For others, institutional pride and skepticism regarding the motives of U.S. hegemony served as barriers to American efforts to export its counterinsurgency doctrine.

While most regional armies sent at least a few officers to attend U.S. Army counterinsurgency courses, whole-heartedly adopting a foreign military doctrine – especially from the regional hegemon--was an altogether different proposition. Each army was distinct; Brazil developed its own concepts and tactics. Venezuela embraced U.S. counterinsurgency training while Chile and Brazil largely rejected it. Other regional armies fell somewhere between these two extremes.

In sum, the counterinsurgency training of Latin American forces in Army schools in the United States was more complex than depicted in the early Cold War era historiography. Regional armies did not uniformly and unquestioningly accept U.S. training. Each army's experience was unique; based on its own needs and the particular circumstances faced by its nation.

### **Chapter Three: U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Schools in Panama**

The Kennedy administration placed tremendous emphasis on counterinsurgency training in the 1960s; both within the U.S. government and for its regional allies. For the U.S. Army, that emphasis quickly radiated beyond its military schools in the United States. The Army reinforced its efforts to train foreign officers at the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina by exporting its newly developed counterinsurgency curriculum to its schools in Panama. The majority of Latin Americans receiving classroom training in counterinsurgency from the U.S. Army attended courses in the Canal Zone. The Special Warfare Center trained 111 officers from the region across its four courses (only two of which focused directly on counterinsurgency) between 1961 and 1963. During the same time period the U.S. Army Caribbean School gave instruction to 347 Latin American officers in its two counterinsurgency courses.

In the early 1950s, the U.S. Army Caribbean School at Fort Gulick, Panama shifted its role from training American troops to instructing Latin American military students. The school discontinued its English language courses in 1956 and began delivering all of its classes in Spanish.<sup>1</sup> The school underwent a second transformation in the early 1960s. It changed the focus of its instruction from hemispheric defense to courses related to internal security.<sup>2</sup> Four officers from the staff and faculty of the Caribbean School attended the Army's first counterinsurgency course at Fort Bragg in January 1961. After graduation, these men returned to the Canal Zone and developed their

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Army School of the Americas, "US Army School of the Americas," *Military Review*, vol. 50, April 1970, 89; Charles J. Bauer, "USCARIB's Biggest Little School," *Army Information Digest*, vol. 17, no. 10, October 1962, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Willard F. Barber and C. Neale Ronning, *Internal Security and Military Power; Counterinsurgency and Civic Action in Latin America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966), 146.

own counterinsurgency course which commenced its first class that July.<sup>3</sup> The President's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, visited the school in December 1962 and directed an increased emphasis on counterinsurgency.<sup>4</sup> In response, the Caribbean School issued a revised curriculum later that same fiscal year. "The [1962] supplemental course catalog expanded the school's mission," Joseph Leuer, the school's historian later wrote, "to support U.S. Army missions, attachés, military-assistance advisory groups, and commissions operating in Latin America by instructing military and para-military personnel in the U.S. military technical skills, leadership techniques, and doctrine covering military action and counterinsurgency operations during peace and war."<sup>5</sup> The school's leadership soon added an intensive ten-week counterinsurgency operations course for junior officers to complement its existing two-week orientation seminar. In July 1963, the Army renamed the school the U.S. Army School of the Americas to reflect its' new hemispheric role.<sup>6</sup>

American policymakers sought to spread their new counterinsurgency doctrine across Latin America in the early 1960s. The U.S. Army's Spanish-language school in the Panama Canal Zone was a key component for implementing that plan. However, numerous factors outside United States' control impeded the school's ability to train large

---

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Continental Army Command, "Summary of Major Events and Problems, FY 1961, Vol. IV," (hereafter cited as USCONARC, FY1961, Vol. IV), U.S. Army Center of Military History (hereafter cited as CMH), Historical Manuscript Collection, Box 60-1 AA, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas W. Davis, Jr., "Minutes of the Special Group (CI) Meeting," 4 January 1963, CIA Freedom of Information Act Reading Room online (hereafter cited as CIA FOIA). Accessed 19 April 2016 online at: [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/5829/CIA-RDP80B01676R001900150092-7.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/5829/CIA-RDP80B01676R001900150092-7.pdf); Joseph C. Leuer, "A Half Century of Professionalism: The U.S.

Army School of the Americas," in U.S. Army School of the Americas, *Adelante: U.S. Army School of the Americas 1946-2000* (Fort Benning, GA: U.S. Army School of the Americas Public Affairs, 2001), 12; "Robert Kennedy to Visit Brazil, Panama Canal," *Lakeland Ledger* [Lakeland, FL] 16 December 1962, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Leuer, "A Half Century of Professionalism," 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*; Barber and Ronning, *Internal Security*, 144.

numbers of Latin American students in counterinsurgency. National political crises, budget shortfalls and resistance to change within Latin American armies all affected student attendance at U.S. Army schools. These obstacles often made it difficult for regional armies to send students to Canal Zone courses even when they sought American training. Other armies rejected U.S. counterinsurgency and chose not to participate.

From its founding in 1949 through 1964, the school graduated 16,343 Latin American students.<sup>7</sup> However, the school's penchant for only releasing cumulative statistics has sowed confusion. Some authors have conflated the school's later counterinsurgency focus with its earlier history of training conventional military skills. "Between 1961 and 1964 the School of the Americas in the Canal Zone," one author writes, "trained over 16,000 Latin American personnel in counterinsurgency and civic action."<sup>8</sup> Clearly this is a misstatement since the author cites the school's cumulative attendance over the previous decade; the school did not undertake its first counterinsurgency course until 1961. Other interpretations are more subtle but have also opened the window to misinterpretation. "[T]he U.S. Army School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone," another author explains, "was especially important, as it eventually dedicated approximately 70 percent of its Spanish-based curriculum to counterinsurgency-related subjects."<sup>9</sup> Both authors imply that most Latin American students at the School of the Americas received training in counterinsurgency. But did they? A detailed analysis of the schools' course catalogs, attendance rosters and contemporary military reporting contradict this generally accepted view. The School of

---

<sup>7</sup> Barber and Ronning, *Internal Security*, 144-5.

<sup>8</sup> Brian Loveman, *For la Patria: Politics and the Armed Forces in Latin America* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999), 170.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 2006), 298.

the Americas also later suffered from academic misinformation by authors that claimed it taught torture and trained dictators. Most regional armies also labored under the burden of one-year conscripts which meant that some returning students soon left the military. Nevertheless, despite the Army's emphasis on counterinsurgency and pressure from the White House during the 1960s, the majority of students attending the School of the Americas in that decade did not receive training in counterinsurgency. Instead, most instruction centered on conventional military skills – as it had since 1949.

### **THE U.S. ARMY CARIBBEAN SCHOOL**

In the aftermath of World War II, American policymakers and Army leadership decided to maintain the United States' military bases and presence in the Panama Canal Zone. The Army also perpetuated its collection of local "training schools that were initially designed to train U.S. military personnel stationed in the Panama Canal Zone in the rigors of operating in a tropical environment."<sup>10</sup> From 1946 to 1948, the Latin American Ground School (and its predecessor) taught courses on communications, weapons and tactics, and basic engineering. Although still primarily intended for the training of U.S. personnel, the Ground School first opened its doors to the officers and soldiers of Latin American armies in 1948. The Army also operated a food service school for cooks, schools for medics and for mechanics. In 1949, the Army consolidated these dispersed elements into one entity, the U.S. Army Caribbean School, and located it at Fort Gulick.<sup>11</sup>

The school's academic departments reflected the emphasis it placed on the various elements of its curriculum. The school established a counterinsurgency

---

<sup>10</sup> Leuer, "A Half Century of Professionalism," 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 7; The Latin American Training Center – Ground Division (1946-1947) preceded the Latin American Ground School, which the Army established in 1948.

committee in 1961 “in recognition of the increasing Communist threat in Latin America” and tasked it with “teaching counterinsurgency operations to U.S. officers, NCOs [non-commissioned officers], and Latin American officers.”<sup>12</sup> The school also underwent reorganization “to better accomplish the new [counterinsurgency] mission.” It eliminated the existing Weapons and Mortars Department and replaced it with Internal Security. The new department included the Counterinsurgency, Military Intelligence, Military Police, Medical, and Research & Analysis Sections.<sup>13</sup> By 1965 the school had reorganized into only two academic departments: Internal Security and Technical.

Like the Special Warfare Center, the Caribbean School soon realized that one counterinsurgency course would not meet the growing demand (and political pressure) for such instruction. If the school’s cadre harbored any doubts about the importance of its new counterinsurgency role, Attorney General Robert Kennedy’s visit disabused them of those concerns. “His visit was designed to personally ensure the school was an integral part of the Army’s emerging counterinsurgency strategy to support President Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress,” the school’s historian later observed. In late 1962, the school added an expanded ten-week counterinsurgency course for “lieutenants, captains, and civilian officials.”<sup>14</sup>

The Caribbean School developed its classes in counterinsurgency for two different purposes and for two distinct audiences, as had the Special Warfare Center. Its two-week Counterinsurgency Operations Orientation Course, begun in July 1961, provided a strategic overview of counterinsurgency doctrine and operations. The school

---

<sup>12</sup> CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training at the U.S. Army School of the Americas,” unsigned memorandum dated 26 October 1965, CMH, Historic Manuscripts Collection, Box 8-2.9A AA (1963-64), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Leuer, “A Half Century of Professionalism,” 12.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

aimed this course at Latin American “Field-Grade or General Officer personnel” who might return to their home armies as planners or strategists and “who required a knowledge of counterinsurgency operations” and “the problems involved in elimination of insurgency.”<sup>15</sup> “The course covered the nature and causes of insurgency and the conduct of counterinsurgency operations,” a 1965 Army information paper explained, “also, during these two weeks mutual problems in areas of military civic action, psychological operations, intelligence and counterintelligence, and tactical operations against dissident groups were discussed.”<sup>16</sup> Thus the course focused on counterinsurgency at its broad strategic level encompassing “those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civic actions taken by a government to defeat subversive insurgency.”<sup>17</sup>

Course instruction was wide but not very deep. “Counterinsurgency Operations” comprised just eighteen of the sixty-six total hours of instruction. Lecturers devoted five hours to “Guerrilla Warfare.” “General Subjects” consumed the greatest portion of the schedule with twenty hours of course time. Instructors devoted this time to guest lectures, seminar discussions, and observing the Counterinsurgency Operations Course training. Other topic areas included “Civic Action and Psychological Operations (ten hours),” “Intelligence and Military Police Subjects (seven hours),” and “Special Air Operations (six hours).”<sup>18</sup> Course authors presented a wide-ranging syllabus for a course lasting just two-weeks, but they also designed it as a survey course for senior officers. By 1964, the

---

<sup>15</sup> Leuer, “A Half Century of Professionalism,” 12; CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training,” 1, Bauer, “USCARIB’s Biggest Little School,” 26.

<sup>16</sup> CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training,” 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> Special Group (Counterinsurgency), “Glossary of Counterinsurgency Terms,” 17 May 1962, CMH, Historical Reference Collection, Box 370.64.

<sup>18</sup> CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training,” enclosure, 1b, 1.



school had added two one-week counterinsurgency orientation courses for American personnel: one for officers, the other for enlisted. However, the curriculum lacked a mastery course in internal security during its early days.

The school's ten-week Counterinsurgency Operations Course, unveiled 1962, filled that gap. The school's cadre developed this seminar as a full immersion into counterinsurgency with the goal of instilling subject matter expertise. It focused on tactics and its audience was unit level officers. "The course provided instruction and reference material for use in counterinsurgency tactics," according to Army officials, "[i]t also covered military civic action, psychological operations, troop and public information, strategy and techniques of International Communism, and military intelligence and counterintelligence. Upon graduation from this course the students were qualified to act as commanders of companies and smaller units conducting counterinsurgency operations. They were also qualified to act as instructors for the subject in school of their respective countries."<sup>19</sup> Therefore, while the orientation course focused on counterinsurgency concepts and doctrine, the operations class centered on tactics. The operations course did familiarize students with the theoretical elements of counterinsurgency, but its primary emphasis was the "practical training that is required to conduct successful counterinsurgency operations in Latin America."<sup>20</sup> The school eventually offered both counterinsurgency courses four times per year, but restricted enrollment to officers.

Confusion over who actually received counterinsurgency instruction in the Army's Canal Zone schools likely began during this early period. In the school's 1962

---

<sup>19</sup> CMH, "Counterinsurgency Training," 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

supplemental catalog, the school's commandant Colonel Edgar Schroeder proclaimed that, "[a]ll courses have undergone major modifications during the past eighteen months in support of the counterinsurgency effort."<sup>21</sup> "Not only those courses whose title includes the term counterinsurgency," Schroeder explained, "but every course taught has definite application in the counterinsurgency field."<sup>22</sup> A closer analysis of the school's curriculum reveals the nuance of the colonel's statement.

During the 1964 academic year, the newly renamed School of the Americas offered twenty-four courses for its Latin American students. Only four contained significant counterinsurgency content.<sup>23</sup> The ten-week Counterinsurgency Operations Course boasted the highest density of counterinsurgency training with four hundred and seventy-six hours of instruction. This was a specialist course designed to instill mastery of the subject matter and tactics. As noted above, course authors intended it to prepare graduates to command specialized counterinsurgency units or serve as counterinsurgency instructors in their home country. In contrast, the authors of the Counterinsurgency Operations Orientation Course, with sixty-six hours of instruction, designed it to endow students with a broad working knowledge of counterinsurgency concepts-especially at the strategic (national) level, but not a mastery of counter-guerrilla tactics. The forty-week Command and Staff Course and the eighteen-week Infantry Officers Course also provided their attendees with a broad working knowledge of counterinsurgency concepts and some understanding of the related tactics. Neither course matched the depth of training of the ten-week course.

---

<sup>21</sup> Leuer, "A Half Century of Professionalism," 13.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.; David M. Lauderback, "The U.S. Army School of the Americas: Mission and Policy during the Cold War," (unpublished dissertation, the University of Texas at Austin, 2004), 246.

<sup>23</sup> CMH, "Counterinsurgency Training," passim.

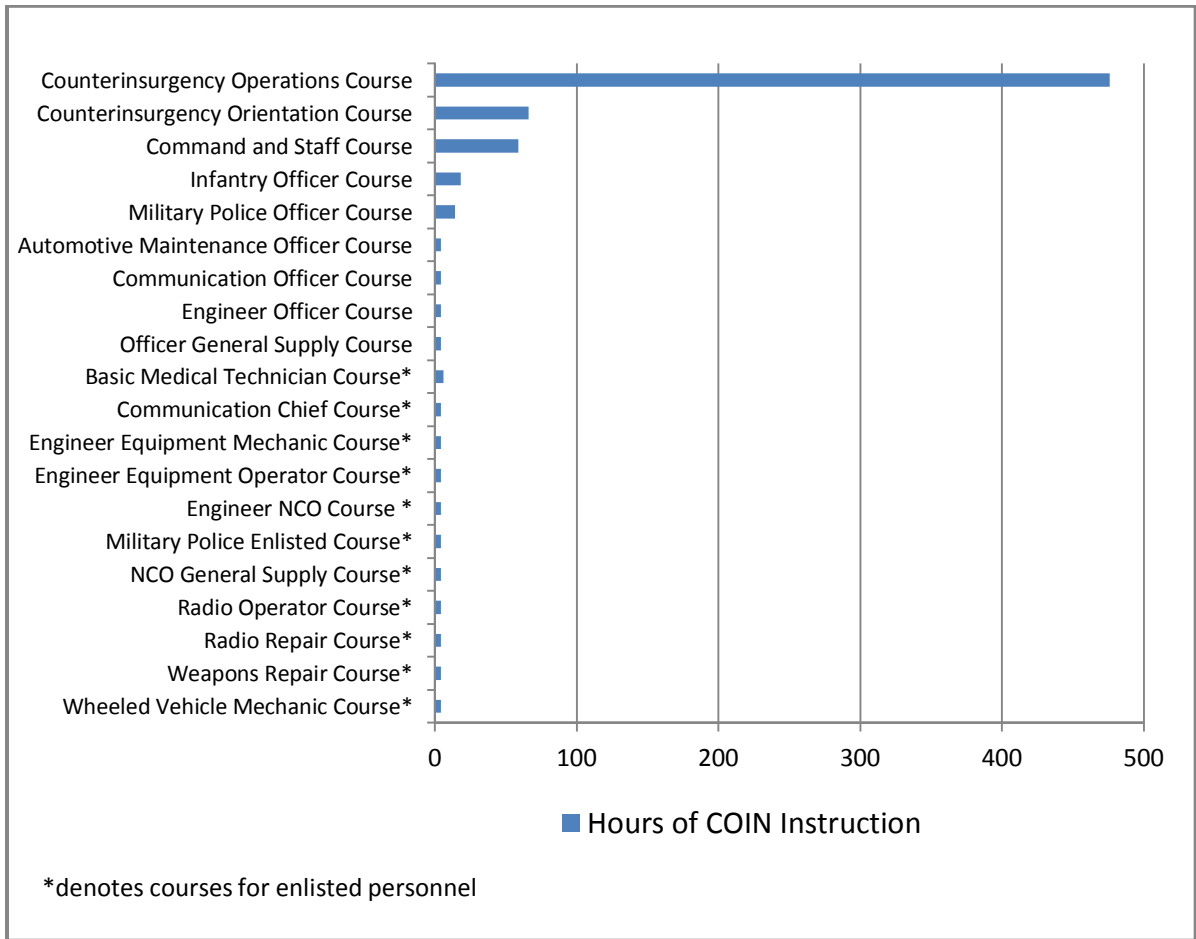
While most other course offerings did include counterinsurgency instruction, the training in these courses comprised what the Army terms “awareness training.” This level of training falls below a broad working knowledge. Limited time is devoted to the subject matter under discussion; the goal is to give students a rudimentary understanding of the concepts and a general familiarity with associated terms. The majority of the courses taught at the School of the Americas during the early 1960s included this type of counterinsurgency awareness training, most of them intended for enlisted personnel. These courses allocated a mere four hours to the topic (see Table 3.1).<sup>24</sup> Army educators clearly did not intend such limited training to produce counterinsurgency experts or practitioners. The school also offered two cadet courses in 1964, but neither had counterinsurgency content.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training,” 3.

<sup>25</sup> Barber and Ronning, *Internal Security*, 146.

Table 3.1: School of the Americas Counterinsurgency Course Content 1964.



Radio operators, vehicle mechanics, supply personnel and others who received awareness type training did not learn counterinsurgency tactics. The United States Army defined counterinsurgency in the early 1960s as “all military, political, economic, psychological, and sociological actions taken by a legal government to prevent or, if necessary eliminate subversive insurgency.”<sup>26</sup> Such an all-encompassing definition made describing any or all military training courses as being “related to” or having “definite

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Army Special Warfare Center, “Special Warfare Center Historical Report 1964” (hereafter cited as SWC 64), Historical Reference Collection, Box 370.64, CMH, 3.

application in the counterinsurgency field” technically true.<sup>27</sup> However, while this linkage allowed school administrators (and the Army) to portray an intensive effort to disseminate internal security training, it also muddied the waters for later historians and researchers. Some conventional military skills training might contribute to a nation’s counter guerrilla efforts, such as Military Police and intelligence courses. Other instruction related to constructing roads or providing medical support could contribute to a country’s civic action efforts. However, more mundane programs like supply procedures, weapons and vehicle maintenance, and radio repair primarily supported conventional military operations and the day-to-day running of an army. Such courses only tenuously related to counterinsurgency, if at all. Categorizing all students that attended the School of the Americas as having received training in internal security is misleading. Doing so obscures the historical record of how many students actually received focused instruction on the doctrine and tactics of counterinsurgency.

Counterinsurgency – later termed internal security – remained a key element of the School of the Americas’ instruction throughout the 1960s. However, the school’s 1971 course catalog reveals that while internal security had diffused through more of the curriculum, conventional military tactics and technical training remained the schools’ central focus. The school offered twenty-two courses in 1964. Five of them boasted heavy counterinsurgency content (twenty-three percent of all courses). By 1971, school administrators had almost doubled the curriculum to forty-two courses. Of these, fifteen contained counterinsurgency tactics and related instruction under the broad heading of “Irregular Warfare” or the new term “Urban Counterinsurgency” (thirty-six percent of all

---

<sup>27</sup> Leuer, “A Half Century of Professionalism,” 13.

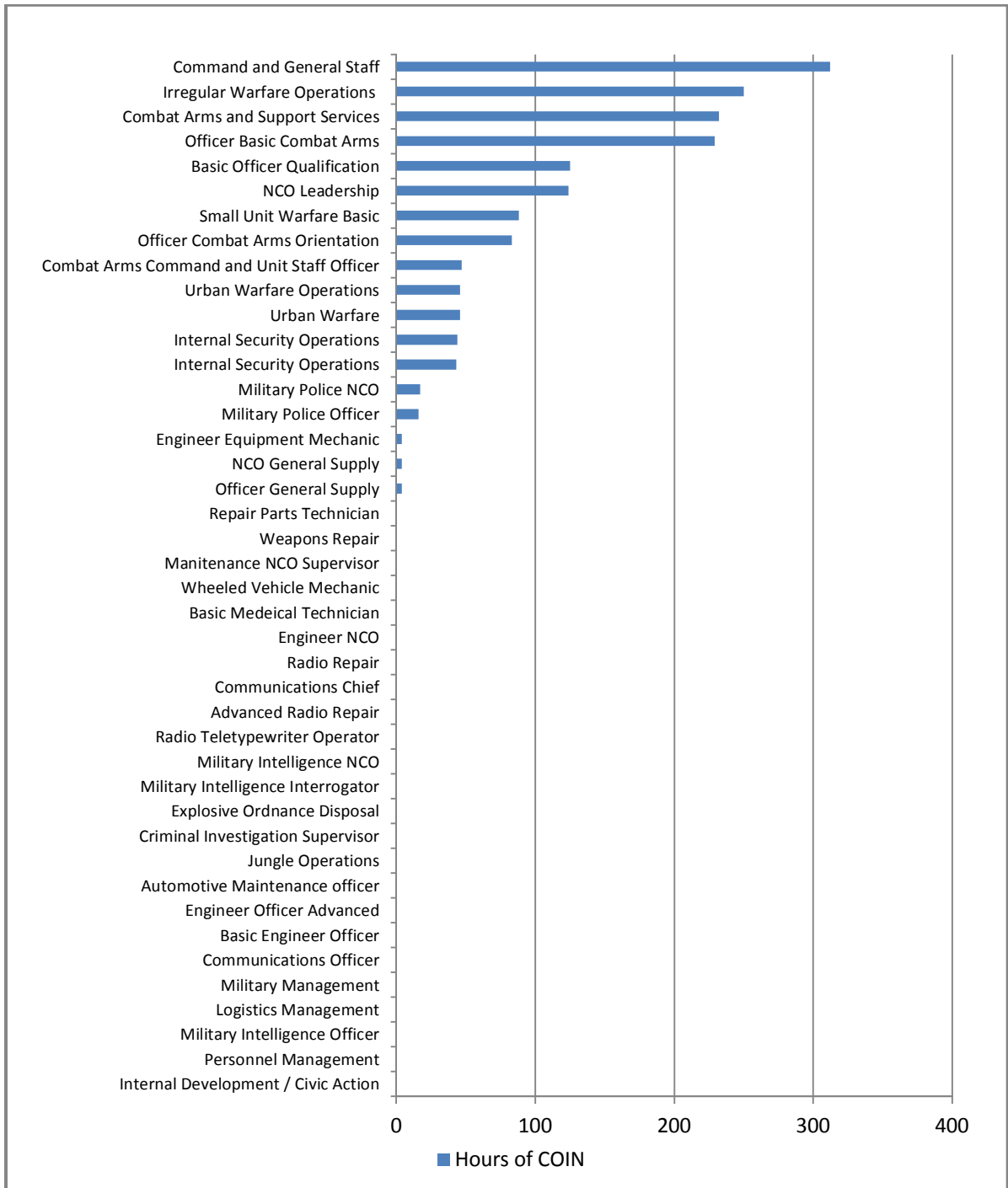
courses).<sup>28</sup> The counterinsurgency awareness training (four to six hours of treatment) present in fifteen courses in 1964 had fallen to just three by 1971. A full twenty-four courses listed zero counterinsurgency content in the 1971 catalog (see Table 3.2).<sup>29</sup> Therefore, even though the school expanded the internal security content of its curriculum between 1964 and 1971, conventional military operations and technical skills training comprised the majority of course content across the decade.

---

<sup>28</sup> United States Army School of the Americas (hereafter cited as USARSA), *The United States Army School of the Americas Catalog*, (Fort Gulick, Panama Canal Zone: United States Army School of the Americas, 15 October 1971), U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (hereafter cited as USAHEC), passim.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

Table 3.2: School of the Americas Counterinsurgency Course Content 1971.



## STUDENT ATTENDANCE AT THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS

Far fewer students received counterinsurgency training at the Schools of the Americas than previously understood. School administrators (and later historians) proclaimed a major shift in emphasis towards internal security and a diffusion of that training across the school's curriculum in 1962. On the surface this was true. The school added new counterinsurgency courses but attendance was sparse. For example, contemporary U.S. Army reporting indicates that slightly less than 1,300 students (Latin American and U.S.) undertook training at the School of the Americas in 1964.<sup>30</sup> Yet only one hundred and twenty-two Latin American students attended the school's two counterinsurgency courses that year. They represented just nine percent of the school's overall enrollment.<sup>31</sup>

Four hundred and sixty-seven Latin America officers attended counterinsurgency courses at the School of the Americas between 1961 and 1964 - the peak years of the U.S. counterinsurgency effort. Two hundred and eighty-six of those students hailed from South America. Venezuela and Peru, followed by Ecuador and Bolivia, sent the highest numbers of officers to receive counterinsurgency training during this period (see Table 3.3).<sup>32</sup>

---

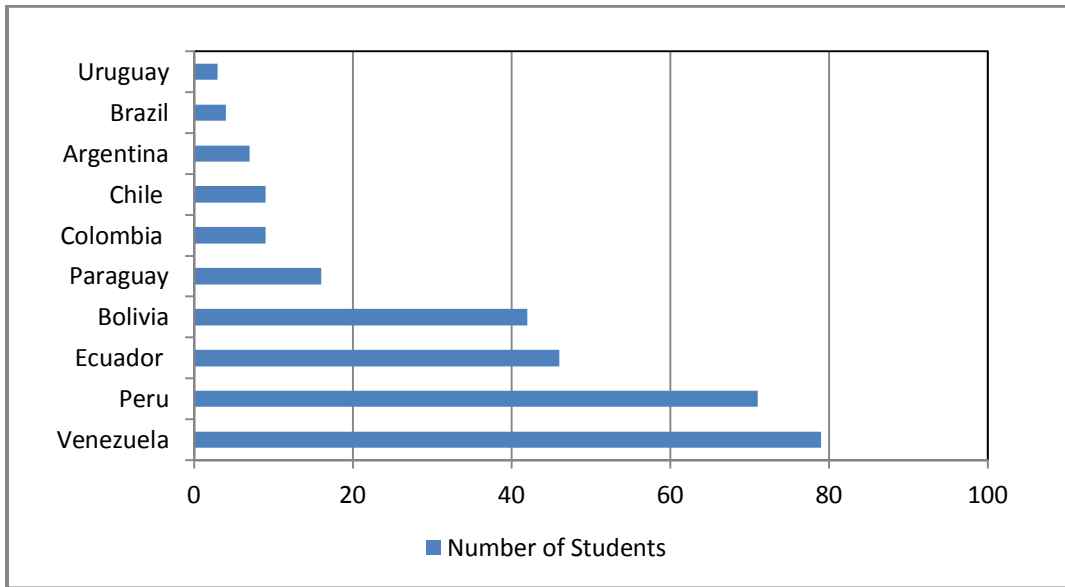
<sup>30</sup> U.S. Army Forces Southern Command, "Command Analysis," dated July 1965 (hereafter cited as Command Analysis 1965), USAHEC, 60 .

<sup>31</sup> CMH, "Counterinsurgency Training," enclosure 2.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



Table 3.3: School of the Americas Counterinsurgency Course Attendance 1961-1964.

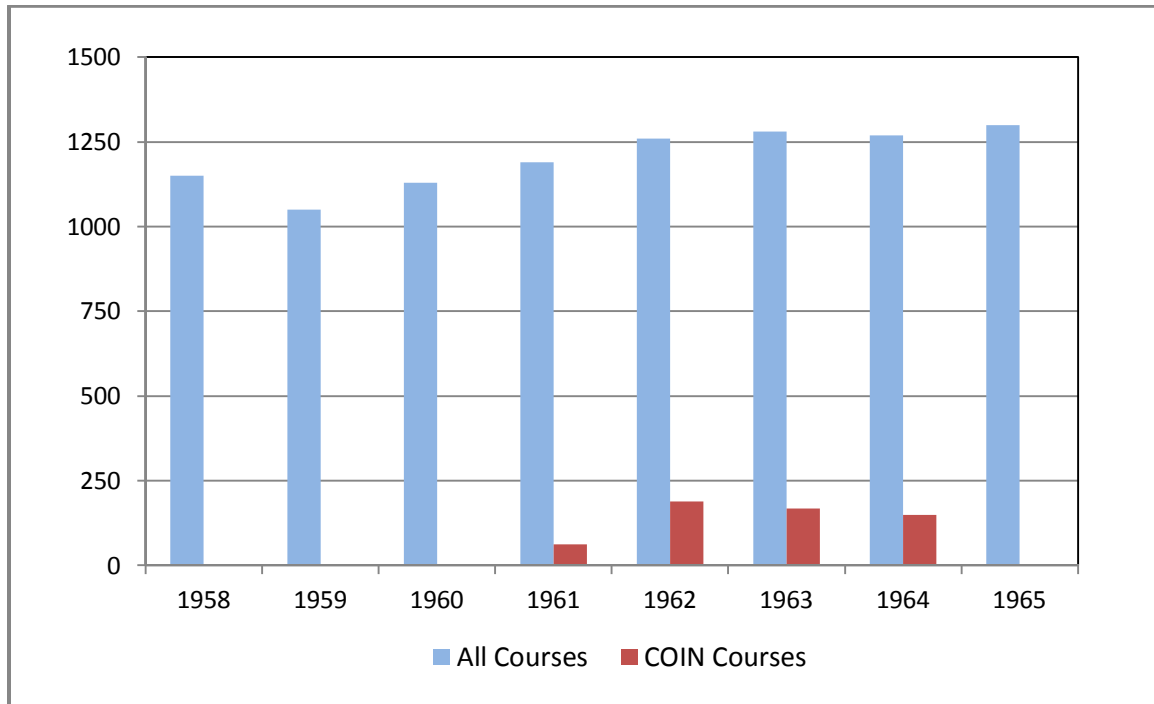


While in aggregate these numbers may appear large, few students attended these courses each year. Sixty-two students took counterinsurgency classes at the Caribbean School in the inaugural year of 1961; including twelve Americans. One hundred eighty-nine officers participated the following year. After that, attendance waned with 167 students in 1963 and 149 in 1964.<sup>33</sup> Previously unpublished U.S. Army documents provide annual student attendance figures for 1958 to 1965. Surprisingly, there was no major increase in school's overall number of students trained as a result of the new emphasis on counterinsurgency in 1962 (see Table 3.4). In fact, enrollment showed a slight increase beginning in 1960, which continued through 1963, and then tapered off.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> CMH, "Counterinsurgency Training," enclosure 2. These figures include American students as follows: 1961-12, 1962-33, 1963-26, 1964-27.

<sup>34</sup> Command Analysis 1965, 60-61. I extrapolated this data from the student attendance chart on page 60. Raw numbers were not available.

Table 3.4: School of the Americas Number of Students Trained 1958-1965.



### OBSTACLES TO U.S. SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE

The Southern Cone countries of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay largely shunned the School of the Americas' counterinsurgency training (see Table 3.3). Yet, so did Colombia, which President Kennedy designated as a country of concern for the administration's Special Group (Counter-Insurgency) in 1962, along with Venezuela, Ecuador and Guatemala.<sup>35</sup> This disconnect underscores the fact that the United States did not dictate the number of students Latin American countries sent to its Canal Zone schools nor the courses they attended. Instead, American officers had to offer courses to their host nation counterparts and try to encourage them to accept U.S. training. A variety

<sup>35</sup> Maxwell Taylor, Memorandum From the President's Military Representative to President Kennedy, "Counterinsurgency Activities of the United States Government," July 30, 1962, Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter cited as FRUS), Vol. VIII, Document 102.

of factors outside the United States' control, and unique to each country, enhanced or impeded an army's willingness and ability to send students to U.S. schools. Budgetary uncertainty, political disruptions, and resistance to change affected student enrollment in Canal Zone courses, as did some armies' rejection of U.S. counterinsurgency training and doctrine.

As was the case with Army schools in the United States, budgetary issues impeded Colombia's ability to send students to Panama. "The principal obstacle facing the Colombian Army is a lack of funds," the U.S. Army mission in Bogotá wrote in April 1963, the "[p]resent financial crisis is seriously reducing the number of students" able to attend U.S. schools.<sup>36</sup> Ecuador faced a similar predicament. "Lack of funds," American officers in Quito explained, "preclude [sic] the sending of additional personnel to US schools during [the] reporting period."<sup>37</sup> Paraguay too suffered from dire financial straits. "This mission has continued to encourage top Paraguayan military officials to take advantage of the MAP [Military Assistance Program] sponsored service schools in [the United States] and the Canal Zone," American officers in Asuncion reported in July 1962.<sup>38</sup> "The austere financial status of Paraguay," the same officers noted in October, "has caused the suspension of all U.S. Service School spaces and orientation tours until 1 January 1963."<sup>39</sup> Army mission reports from Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Bolivia also cited funding as an obstacle to sending students to U.S. courses.

---

<sup>36</sup> United States Army Mission (hereafter cited as USARMIS) to Colombia, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 24 April 1963, National Archives II, College Park, MD, Records Group 548, Records of U.S. Army Forces in the Caribbean (hereafter cited as NAAFC), n.pag.

<sup>37</sup> USARMIS to Ecuador, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 19 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>38</sup> USARMIS to Paraguay, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 12 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>39</sup> USARMIS to Paraguay, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 15 October 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

## CONVENTIONAL TRAINING VERSUS COUNTERINSURGENCY

American Army officers labored to impart counterinsurgency doctrine and tactics to their Latin American counterparts, but that was only one part of a broader struggle to modernize regional armies. In several U.S. Army missions, counterinsurgency was not the primary focus. Like their instructor counterparts at the School of the Americas, these officers focused the majority of their attention on conventional military training. “The major policy objectives of USARMIS [the U.S. Army Mission in Argentina] is to increase Argentina’s internal security capabilities by enhancing the effectiveness of its Army in all roles traditionally assigned to a ground military arm,” American officers in Buenos Aires explained to their headquarters in 1962. “Achievement of the foregoing objectives will meet the requirements of Internal Security Training.” The same officers also lamented the burden of producing the reports that contained these comments, and other paperwork; required in large part by the new emphasis on internal security. “It is estimated that under the present circumstances,” the Americans wrote, “not more than 15% of the total working hours of the officer personnel in this mission can be devoted to the primary task, advising and assisting the Argentine Army.”<sup>40</sup> U.S. Army officers in Buenos Aires may have exaggerated the amount of time they spent on paperwork. However, it is clear that they allocated more of their scarce “advising and assisting” time toward imparting conventional military skills knowledge to the Argentine Army rather than counterinsurgency training.

American officers in Uruguay also focused their efforts on conventional military training. “The physical characteristic of the country itself is an advantage to the accomplishment of the [Uruguayan] Army’s [internal security] mission,” the U.S.

---

<sup>40</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

officers explained, “there are no forests or jungles which could contribute to the building of guerrilla forces.”<sup>41</sup> “In view of the political stability of the country,” the Americans noted, “internal security in Uruguay is not a major problem.”<sup>42</sup> Southern Cone armies were not alone in their skepticism regarding the need for U.S. counterinsurgency training; at least a few U.S. Army officers serving in their capitals shared that view.

### **RESISTANCE TO CHANGE**

Some armies resisted the efforts of their U.S. counterparts to impart new concepts and procedures. “Training has a priority below housekeeping duties, repair and construction, ceremonies, fiestas, etc...,” American officers in Santiago lamented. “Thus far the Chilean Army has resisted adoption of U.S. training techniques.”<sup>43</sup> The situation was much the same east of the Andes. The Argentine Army has a “remarkably well-educated officer and NCO [non-commissioned officer] Corps, with an equally remarkable lack of appreciation of the practical jobs associated with maneuvering an army in the field,” American officers in Buenos Aires complained, “[i]n short, an excess of education and a shortage of practical training.”<sup>44</sup> Across the River Plate in Montevideo, U.S. officers complained that the “Uruguayan Army is characterized by rigid inflexibility which is imposed by law.” “Recommendations have been presented, on numerous occasions in the past, to the [Uruguayan Army Commander], to establish and place in effect a standard training program [across the army],” the Americans continued, “[t]hese recommendations have been fully accepted verbally, however, no training plans,

---

<sup>41</sup> USARMIS to Uruguay, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>42</sup> USARMIS to Uruguay, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 15 January 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>43</sup> USARMIS to Chile, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 January 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>44</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 April 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

programs, or directives have even been published.”<sup>45</sup> Resistance, indifference and lip-service might have impeded American military training efforts as much as empty coffers.

### **POLITICAL CHALLENGES**

In several countries political turmoil hampered U.S. schools attendance, and counterinsurgency training. “The instability of the National Government, with recurrent Government crises and the concurrent preoccupation of the military in dealing therewith constantly impede and delay accomplishment of US Mission objectives,” American officers in Ecuador complained in July 1962.<sup>46</sup> A year later not much had changed. “The diversion of effort of the military to politics,” the same office wrote in July 1963, “rather than to the running of an orderly and efficient military organization precludes many necessary decisions and direction which are needed.” Yet Ecuador did manage to send three officers to internal security training in Panama during the reporting period (April to June 1963); two Army officers attended the counterinsurgency operations course, while one Air Force officer took the orientation course.<sup>47</sup>

Political instability also wracked Argentina. “The major difficulty during the period [July to September 1962] has been the double changeover of the Army High Command, coupled with and as a result of the Armed Forces’ preoccupation with political, social, economic and other non-military problems,” American officers in Buenos Aires opined. “[T]he real internal security threat in Argentina has been basically non-military in character, emanating from deep-seated political and economic ills.”<sup>48</sup> Six months later things had gone from bad to worse. “On the second day of this quarterly

---

<sup>45</sup> USARMIS to Uruguay, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 July 1960, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>46</sup> USARMIS to Ecuador, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 19 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>47</sup> USARMIS to Ecuador, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 July 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>48</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 16 October 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

period [April to June 1963] a major attempt was made by the Argentine Navy to upset the government,” the U.S. Army mission wrote. “The major portion of the Army immediately reacted, and with the delayed support of the Air Force, managed to quell the revolt after several days of maneuvering and actual fighting. Many military officers are still under arrest awaiting trial. The percentage of reassignment of officers in many units has been exceedingly high, while other units have been disbanded completely.”<sup>49</sup> The following year the internal situation in Argentina had improved. “During this reporting period,” American officers wrote in July 1964, “the Argentine Army was able to resume training which was decreased during the period immediately following the elections last July.” Yet the Argentine Army remained troubled. “Some anxieties have been caused by the recent revolution in Brazil,” U.S. officers in Buenos Aires noted, “by the possibility of elections of a Communist-oriented government in Chile, as well as by the current meat shortage.”<sup>50</sup>

#### **LANGUAGE, CONSCRIPTION, AND ILLITERACY**

The Special Warfare Center and the School of the Americas faced many similar challenges in filling their student quotas, but language set them apart. The School of the Americas conducted all of its courses in Spanish. Attending Army schools in the United States required proficiency in English. This requirement posed a major obstacle in some countries. “Language requirements for attendance at CONUS [Continental United States] schools preclude attendance of 99% of Ecuadorean enlisted personnel,” American officers in Quito noted.<sup>51</sup> “[T]he lack of English speaking personnel,” American officers in Paraguay observed, “continue to reduce the acceptance of school spaces” in the United

---

<sup>49</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 July 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>50</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 14 July 1964, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>51</sup> USARMIS to Ecuador, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 19 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

States.<sup>52</sup> Teaching courses in Spanish alleviated the School of the Americas of this burden, but opening its doors to enlisted personnel raised two new challenges: illiteracy and conscription.

Rural peasants comprised the bulk of the enlisted strength in most regional armies and training them proved tough. The majority of them lacked education. Venezuela perhaps fared better than most. In the Civic Action section of its July 1963 report to the Canal Zone, U.S. officers took note of the Venezuelan Army's literacy training program for new conscripts. "This is one of the most forcefully implemented programs of the Armed Forces," the Americans explained, "and is necessary because as many as 50% of inductees have been illiterate. Several hours daily are devoted to during the first few months of service with the desired objective of a third grade level education prior to discharge."<sup>53</sup> American officers in Peru faced a similar challenge. "Soldiers inducted into the Peruvian Army serve only a two-year tour with no further training at the end of this period," American officers in Lima observed. "This tour is not of sufficient duration to adequately train these personnel, especially since the education level of the average inductee is low."<sup>54</sup> Likewise, American officers in Buenos Aires cited "major deficiencies" in their advisory and assistance efforts due to a "one-year conscript system, which results in an army that is born, flourishes and dies each year."<sup>55</sup> A Department of State assessment of internal security programs in Guatemala in 1966 found similar barriers to imparting U.S. training. "Training of two-year conscripts is always a frustrating treadmill," the report's authors wrote, "and, since all of the enlisted men in the

---

<sup>52</sup> USARMIS to Paraguay, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 12 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>53</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 18 July 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>54</sup> USARMIS to Peru, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 10 August 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>55</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 18 April 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.



Guatemalan Army are conscripts it is doubly hard and unrewarding. Before a conscript is adequately trained, he is back in civilian life.”<sup>56</sup> Most regional armies labored under the burden of one-year conscripts, not two-year as in Guatemala or Peru.

The Army’s Canal Zone educators understood these issues. “Courses presented at the U.S. School of the Americas are designed for the professional development of officers, cadets, and enlisted personnel,” school administrators explained in their course catalog. “[Commanders of U.S. Military Missions], Military Attachés, and local commanders should conduct interviews to screen all candidates. Attendance will be determined by the candidate’s educational background [and] ability to absorb the instruction.”<sup>57</sup> “Recruits... are not considered acceptable students,” the administrators concluded.<sup>58</sup> Yet despite this admonishment, the school did offer courses for junior enlisted personnel. One such listing warned that a prospective student “must have at least a fourth grade skill level and the ability to express himself verbally and in writing.”<sup>59</sup> Despite the many obstacles, some armies embraced U.S. counterinsurgency training and developed effective training programs of their own. They did so not by sending short-term enlisted soldiers to attend conventional military courses in Panama with only a brief mention of counterinsurgency, but by sending officers to take focused internal security courses and bring that training back home.

---

<sup>56</sup> United States Department of State, “U.S. Internal Security Programs in Latin America, Volume II: Guatemala,” November 30, 1966, Digital National Security Archives, accessed online 29 January 2015 at <http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/nsa/documents/GU/00318/all.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> USARSA, *School of the Americas Catalog*, 1971, 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, E15-1.

## ACCEPTANCE OF U.S. COUNTERINSURGENCY

Between 1961 and 1964, Peru and Venezuela sent more students to counterinsurgency courses at the School of the Americas than all other South American armies combined (see Table 5). In a 1962 dispatch to the Canal Zone, U.S. officers in Lima reported that four Peruvian officers completed the counterinsurgency operations course while two more officers completed the counterinsurgency orientation course. Then the American officers added a bit of self-congratulations. “A staff visit by a Mission member to the [Caribbean School] revealed that Peruvian students as a whole are doing exceptionally well,” the Americans proudly reported. “Out of the ten Peruvians who graduated in December[,] four obtained first place ranking in their respective courses.”<sup>60</sup> The next month their training efforts suffered a major setback. The Peruvian military seized control of the government on 18 July and “the United States government immediately suspended diplomatic relations... [including] the suspension of the activities of the U.S. Military Missions.”<sup>61</sup> By the end of 1962, Peru and the United States resumed diplomatic relations and U.S. military training continued.

The clearest insights into the state of U.S. Army training and assistance efforts in Peru come from the letters of Colonel Robert Ingalls, the Army Mission Chief in Lima. During his tenure Ingalls sent several letters to his superior, Major General Theodore F. Bogart, the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Caribbean in Panama, explaining the situation in Peru. “There is a definite favorable response to our emphasis on counterinsurgency,” Colonel Ingalls wrote in February 1963. He then cited the following actions: “the students now attending school in Panama and the desire to continue sending students; acceptance of our recommendation to establish counterinsurgency training here

---

<sup>60</sup> USARMIS to Peru, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 10 August 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>61</sup> USARMIS to Peru, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 October 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

in Peru which will be initiated in [multiple Peruvian Army schools]; [and] the establishment of counterinsurgency type forces in the several regions in Peru.”<sup>62</sup> “Starting on 11 March,” Colonel Ingalls explained in an April 1963 letter, “all tactical units in the Peruvian Army began a 3 month course of training in counterinsurgency. The doctrine and methods being utilized are U.S. and are compiled in a Peruvian training manual. Also the curriculum of all arms schools and the Staff College have been revised to include the subject of counterinsurgency.”<sup>63</sup>

Yet it was Venezuela that received the greatest infusion of U.S. counterinsurgency training of any Latin American nation during the 1960s. Although American officers in Caracas stated that the “U.S. Army Mission to Venezuela had no objectives in... [internal security] during the reporting period” in their July 1962 summary, the same report also mentioned a recent counter-guerrilla mobile training team visit “which trained personnel of the Venezuelan Army and National Guard.”<sup>64</sup> During Fiscal Year 1962, (which ended that June), two hundred and five Venezuelans attended schools in the United States and another one hundred and forty-one graduated from courses at Canal Zone schools.<sup>65</sup> Thirty-four of those Venezuelan officers completed counterinsurgency training at the Caribbean School in 1962 – a ten-fold increase over the previous year. Venezuela sent a total of ninety students to School of the Americas counterinsurgency courses between 1961 and 1964. This was an impressive attendance figure, and the highest of any Latin American nation, but it was paltry in terms of the size

---

<sup>62</sup> Colonel Robert C. Ingalls to Major General T. F. Bogart, dated 13 February 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>63</sup> Colonel Robert C. Ingalls to Major General T. F. Bogart, dated 30 April 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>64</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>65</sup> During the 1960s, the U.S. Government fiscal year ran from July 1 through June 30 of the following year; see “Annual Report of the Comptroller General of the United States for the Fiscal Year ended 30 June, 1966,” accessed online August 20, 2014 at: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/170/168566.pdf>

of Venezuela's security forces. The Venezuelan Army stood at 17,800 men in 1963. The Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperación (FAC), a National Guard type formation boasted 12,000 members.<sup>66</sup> Both formations sent students to U.S. Canal Zone schools for counterinsurgency training.

Peru had the next highest attendance level for these courses with seventy-five graduates during the same period. Argentina, Brazil and Chile each sent fewer than ten. Venezuela augmented its School of the Americas counterinsurgency attendance by sending eleven students to the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg between 1961 and 1963, although the available reporting does not indicate which courses they attended.<sup>67</sup>

U.S. counterinsurgency training soon permeated the Venezuelan Army and the Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperación. In mid-1963, American officers in Caracas reported that the Venezuelan Army had organized a specialized *cazadores* counter guerrilla unit.<sup>68</sup> They also described a five-day "combined exercise of FAC counter Insurgency units [sic], Air Force and [Army] Paratroop units." Most surprising was the revelation that the Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperación had developed its own traveling instructor program for internal security. "In FAC a mobile training detachment for counterinsurgency was formed," the same dispatch noted, "under [the] auspices of [the] Army Mission and [the previous] Special Forces [mobile training team]."<sup>69</sup> "Counterinsurgency training," American officers wrote in the 1963 end of year report, "is now integrated into the

---

<sup>66</sup> CMH, "Counterinsurgency Training," enclosure 2.; Central Intelligence Agency, "National Intelligence Estimate: Prospects for Political Stability in Venezuela," dated 19 February 1964, CIA FOIA, 4. Accessed 10 April 2016 online at:

[http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/89801/DOC\\_0000013611.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000013611.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> CMH "Counterinsurgency Training," enclosure 2; U.S. Army Special Warfare Center, "Special Warfare Center Historical Report 1963," CMH, Historical Reference Collection, Box 370.64, 27.

<sup>68</sup> Cazadores means "hunters" in Spanish.

<sup>69</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 18 July 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

training schedules of Venezuelan Army tactical units and National Guard Units [sic].”<sup>70</sup> “The continued use of spaces offered by the School of the Americas [has] increased the number of specialists available to the FAC and assisted in the development of FAC’s in-country training capability,” U.S. officers in Caracas explained in their December 1965 report. “FAC is working hard to improve its capability for conducting counterinsurgency operations [and all] FAC schools are emphasizing counterinsurgency training.”<sup>71</sup>

### **REJECTION OF U.S. COUNTERINSURGENCY**

Meanwhile, Brazil and Chile developed their own internal security doctrines. The Brazilian Army possessed a comprehensive “Contra-Revolucionario” doctrine and was busy training individuals from basic recruits to senior officers by the end of 1962.<sup>72</sup> It was also conducting complex multi-unit internal security exercises based on this doctrine during the same period. In contrast, the U.S. Army Special Warfare School and the School of the Americas each offered only a single narrowly focused counter-guerrilla course at that time. Therefore, it is exceedingly unlikely that the Brazilian Army based its “Contra-Revolucionario” doctrine on U.S. counterinsurgency concepts or methods. In fact, some internal security ideas may have travelled from south to north, instead of the other way around. The “Brazilian Army furnished [a] guest instructor to the [School of the Americas] Counterinsurgency Course,” American officers noted in their October to December 1962 report to the Canal Zone.<sup>73</sup> Brazil sent a mere four students to attend

---

<sup>70</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 16 January 1964, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>71</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 6 December 1965, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>72</sup> U.S. Army Element, Joint Brazil-U.S. Military Commission (hereafter cited as USARELM Brazil), “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 January 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

counterinsurgency training at the School of the Americas between 1961 and 1964, all of them in 1962 when Brazil had a parliamentary system.<sup>74</sup>

Chile also resisted U.S. counterinsurgency efforts and developed its own doctrine. After citing the “strong feeling among many influential officers of the Chilean Army that they are perfectly capable of running their own army and do not need advice or assistance from the U.S. Army Mission,” American officers in Santiago also noted “much interest in Internal Security Training during the past six months” among their Chilean counterparts. Nevertheless, the same dispatch advised of the “non-acceptance and apparent lack of interest in accepting training spaces offered in CONUS [continental United States] and USARCARIB [U.S. Army Caribbean] schools” by the Chilean Army. “The instability of the Chilean Escudo probably contributed” to the rejections, American officers added. Almost hidden in the July 1962 report was the information that the Chilean Army had promulgated its own counterinsurgency doctrine. American officers in Santiago revealed that the “Commander in Chief, Chilean Army authorized the use of the Counter Subversive Warfare Manual published by the War Academy for use in that Academy and the Chilean Army Service Schools.”<sup>75</sup> In contrast to Brazil and Chile, the U.S. Army published its first manual prescribing counterinsurgency training for American soldiers in February 1963. The Continental Army Command ordered that trainees receive a total of three hours of instruction.<sup>76</sup> The U.S. Army did not publish its first comprehensive

---

<sup>74</sup> CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training,” enclosure 2.

<sup>75</sup> USARMIS to Chile, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>76</sup> United States Continental Army Command, “Counterinsurgency Operations: Counterinsurgency – An Orientation for Basic and Advanced Trainees,” USCONARC Pamphlet 516-2, dated February 1963, CMH, Historic Manuscripts Collection, Box 370.64, 1.

internal security manual, Field Manual 31-22 *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces*, until November 1963, more than a year after the Chilean Army.<sup>77</sup>

Argentina did not embrace U.S. counterinsurgency training, but it did not wholly reject it either. “Material of US Army origin was furnished to the Center of Higher Studies,” U.S. officers in Buenos Aires reported in July 1964, “for preparation of a block of instruction in Counterinsurgency for all newly promoted colonels.” However, unlike the situation in many other Latin American nations during this era, the Americans were not the sole purveyors of military advice and assistance in Buenos Aires. “The Argentine Army sends NCO students to course at Fort Gulick,” the American officers explained. “Since the advisors from the French Army Mission teach internal security at the Escuela Superior de Guerra, officer students do not attend courses in the Canal Zone.”<sup>78</sup> Despite this declaration, other records show that the Argentine Army sent seven officers to attend School of the Americas counterinsurgency courses between 1961 and 1964. U.S. Army internal documents make no mention of the Argentine Army affording them the same opportunity to teach in its military schools as the French Army advisors enjoyed in the early 1960s. Instead, the U.S. Army mission had to content itself with one infantry officer and one artillery officer as unit advisors, both stationed in Córdoba.<sup>79</sup>

By the middle of the decade counterinsurgency was on the wane as a priority for U.S Army missions in Latin America. U.S. officers in Bogotá listed twenty-eight pages of projects related to logistics in their January 1965 report; relations earned five pages

---

<sup>77</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces*, Field Manual 31-22, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, November 12, 1963).

<sup>78</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 14 July 1964, USAHEC, n.pag. Brazil was also strongly influenced by the French Army’s “Guerra Revolutionnaire” concepts and doctrine (See Chapter Eight).

<sup>79</sup> CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training,” enclosure 2; USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 5 January 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

while internal security received a paltry three.<sup>80</sup> A Headquarters U.S Army South directive from July 1965 formalized the decline by changing mission reporting requirements. Although still mandating regular updates for activities related to personnel administration, logistics, relations and Civic Action (among other categories) the headquarters eliminated internal security as separate section of the report as it had been since 1962.<sup>81</sup>

### **OTHER CANAL ZONE SCHOOLS**

Beyond the School of the Americas, the U.S. Army also operated two other schools in the Panama Canal Zone: the Inter-American Geodetic Survey and the Jungle Warfare Training Center. The primary mission of the Inter-American Geodetic Survey was the mapping of Latin America in cooperation with other U.S. agencies and friendly nations. Located at Fort Clayton, the organization consisted of “a headquarters, a cartography school, a survey platoon and an aviation company,” according to a declassified U.S. Army Forces Southern Command report from July 1965. The command grouped the Inter-American Geodetic Survey under the Internal Security section of its annual report, although like many activities during the counterinsurgency heyday, the link was tenuous. “This organization is important in the overall internal security program,” the Canal Zone officers wrote, “since accurate maps are a prerequisite for success of military, civic action, and economic-development projects planned or in progress. Its military value was clearly demonstrated when during the Cuban [Missile] Crisis complete maps of Cuba were available as a result of IAGS efforts.”<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless,

---

<sup>80</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 13 January 1965, USAHEC, passim

<sup>81</sup> See for example USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 6 December 1965, USAHEC, 1.

<sup>82</sup> Command Analysis 1965.



the cartography schools' impact was meager. "At Fort Clayton the IAGS conducts a school in mapping and geodesy for Latin American personnel, primarily civilians," an earlier report noted. "Two classes of about 100 students each are conducted each year."<sup>83</sup>

In contrast, the Jungle Warfare Training Center's mission was purely military. Although the U.S. Army traces its jungle experience in the Canal Zone to Lieutenant C. A. Dravo who "marched a detachment of Infantry across the Isthmus of Panama in 1916," formal training in jungle warfare did not commence until 1943. Training languished after World War II, but received renewed interest after the outbreak of the Korean War as the United States worried the war might spread. The Department of the Army ordered its Caribbean Command to "keep the art of jungle warfare alive within the U.S. Army" in April 1951. After studying the problem, developing doctrine and tactics, and conducting exercises, the command established a Jungle Warfare Training Center at Fort Sherman in 1953. A decade later the Army deactivated the center and assigned responsibility for jungle training to the School of the Americas. The school quickly reestablished training organizing a new Jungle Operations Committee under its Internal Security Department in 1963.<sup>84</sup>

Throughout its history U.S. Army jungle training focused on combat. A central element of the course was to overcome a soldier's "environmental fear" of the jungle which "would undoubtedly result in soldiers being completely ineffective in the jungle."<sup>85</sup> Survival training was a lesser concern. "Instruction presented by the JWTC [Jungle Warfare Training Center] was almost entirely oriented toward teaching men to

---

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Army Caribbean, "Command Analysis," dated April 1963 (hereafter cited as Command Analysis 63), USAHEC, 45.

<sup>84</sup> Hugh H. Gardner, "Jungle Warfare Training in the Canal Zone," 15 April 1968, United States Army South, Command Historian Files, 1, 3, 5, 6, 14.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

fight under jungle conditions. Subjects presented [in 1962] included escape and evasion techniques, jungle firing, communications, navigation, tactical and logistical operations,” U.S. Army South Historian Hugh Gardner explains. “Although a few basic elements of survival were taught, this phase was incidental to the combat training.”<sup>86</sup>

As a result of the 1963 reorganization, the Army reduced the duration of the course from three weeks to two, but the rigor increased dramatically. “Previously, those taking the jungle course had lived in barracks at Fort Sherman and had gone out to classes in the jungle each day,” Gardner tells us. “Actual living in the field had been limited to scheduled night time classes and a period of three days in which the final Escape and Evasion problem was conducted. Under the new POI [Program of Instruction], the men were taken out into the jungle on the first day of the cycle and taught to build shelters or palm frond thatched bohios [huts]. Thereafter for the next 12 days of the cycle the men lived in the shelters they themselves had built.” However, Latin American student cycles continued under the previous three week program of instruction and, with the exception of the final three day exercise, did not live in the jungle.<sup>87</sup>

The Army focused its jungle training efforts on its own soldiers throughout the 1960s, not Latin Americans. Between 1960 and 1963 the Jungle Warfare Training Center conducted ten training cycles per year. The Army allocated six cycles to its units stationed in the Canal Zone and another two cycles to troops from the United States. The Army reserved the remaining two cycles for Latin American personnel and conducted these courses in Spanish.<sup>88</sup> Despite these allocations overall course attendance increased throughout the decade. Latin American student participation fluctuated but remained far

---

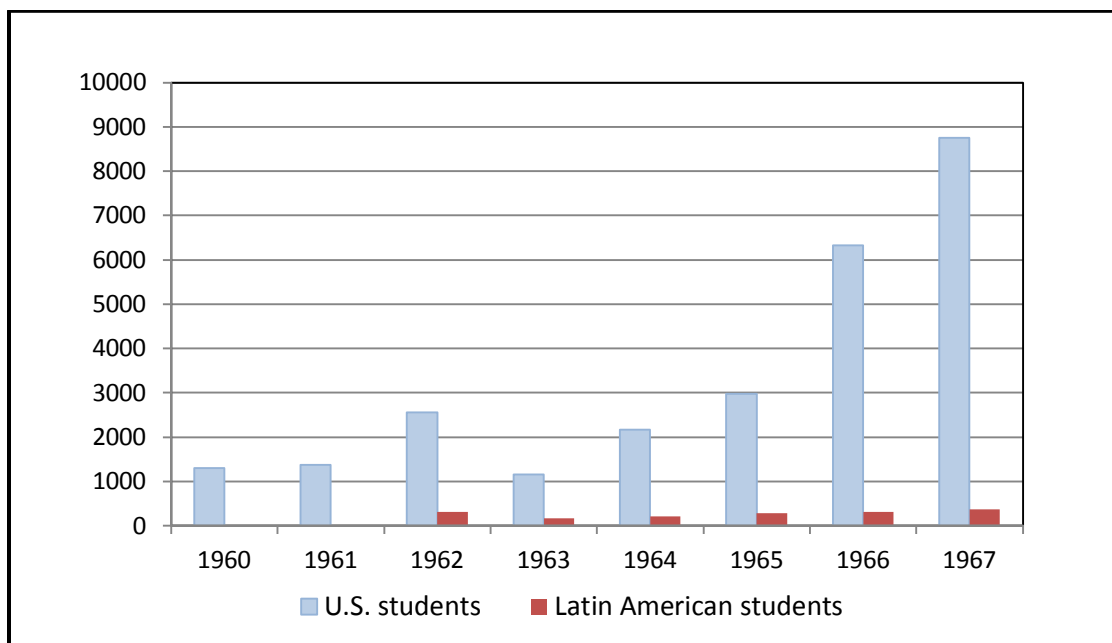
<sup>86</sup> Gardner, “Jungle Warfare Training,” 9-10.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

below U.S. numbers. Three hundred twenty Latin American students completed the course in 1962. Attendance dropped to one hundred sixty-three the following year, likely due to the 1963 reorganization of the school. Afterwards Latin American attendance rose steadily between 1964 and 1967. However, the most dramatic increase was the skyrocketing attendance of U.S. personnel bound for Vietnam beginning in 1965 (see Table 3.5). Army demands for additional course cycles and greater throughput of students to feed the growing war in Southeast Asia placed significant demands on the School of the Americas cadre, as well as other Canal Zone units.<sup>89</sup>

Table 3.5: U.S. Army Jungle Training 1960-1967.



Although U.S. Army Caribbean counted the Inter-American Geodetic Survey and the Jungle Warfare Training Center as part of its internal security efforts, neither taught

<sup>89</sup> Table data compiled from Gardner, "Jungle Warfare Training," 45. The Department of the Army levied U.S. Army South to provide 410 non-commissioned officers for immediate reassignment as instructor cadres at Fort Ord, California in January 1966. See Gardner, "Jungle Warfare Training," 28.

counterinsurgency.<sup>90</sup> Both schools' subject matter was neutral; their training could be equally advantageous for conventional or counterinsurgency military operations. A detailed summary of the jungle warfare course in 1966 lists two hundred fifty hours of instruction. Course authors devoted fifty-two hours to "Jungle Living," the largest instructional block. Patrolling, ambushes and related training comprised 30 hours of the course. The next largest, "Area Search and Destroy Operations" consumed 24 hours. Counterinsurgency training was absent. Nevertheless, the small-unit patrolling skills imparted during jungle training were undoubtedly similar to those presented as part of other counter guerrilla training courses. What was different about the jungle course in 1966 was its context. Training modules on "Area Study of Vietnam," "Area Search and Destroy Operations," and "Village Cordon and Search Operations" clearly indicated the Army's Vietnam, rather than Latin American focus.<sup>91</sup> The available documents do not specify if Latin American student cycles received these same blocks of instruction.

### **THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS' CONTESTED LATER HISTORY**

During the early 1990s critics of the School of the Americas, led, ironically, by Robert Kennedy's son, the Congressman, coalesced into a political movement to close the school. The school's critics center their opposition on two interrelated claims; that the school trained dictators and that it trained human rights abusers. Both of these charges rest on *post hoc* fallacy arguments. In order words, because some graduates later became dictators, critics contend that the one American school that they briefly attended must have trained them in how to overthrow their governments. Thus these critics take questionable correlation as proof of causality. Although it is undeniable that some

---

<sup>90</sup> Command Analysis 63; Command Analysis 65.

<sup>91</sup> Gardner, "Jungle Warfare Training," 34-37.

dictators and human rights abusers did attend the School of the Americas over the fifty-four years of its existence, that the school trained or encouraged its students to become dictators, torturers or murderers remains unproven.

Latin America had no shortage of military dictators in the one hundred thirty or so years between independence and the establishment of U.S. Army training in the Panama Canal Zone in 1946. The existence of military dictatorship in Latin American long predates U.S. training. Nevertheless, some former students of the school did become dictators, several of whom were also egregious human rights abusers. The school's opponents cite several: Hugo Banzer in Bolivia, Leopoldo Galtieri in Argentina, Augusto Pinochet in Chile, and Efraín Ríos Montt in Guatemala. Yet an investigation of these officers reveals problems regarding this linkage. For example, General Galtieri, President of Argentina from 1981 to 1982, attended an engineer course at the Caribbean School in 1949.<sup>92</sup> Galtieri's affiliation with the School of the Americas came more than a decade before counterinsurgency entered the curriculum and thirty-five years before his ascension to the presidency. "Infamously cruel Bolivian dictator Hugo Banzer attended the School of the Americas," another investigator writes, "but his class records from 1956 show that he took a short course in how to best serve as a military driver. Whatever Banzer understood about the use of torture and terror— and Bolivians understood only too well that this was a lot — he learned somewhere other than his brief stint at the School of the Americas."<sup>93</sup>

The schools' critics cite other eventual dictators among its "notorious graduates," but these too present problems of causality. General Efraín Ríos Montt, responsible for

---

<sup>92</sup> See for example, The School of the Americas Watch website, "Notorious Graduates." Accessed online 8 February 2015 at: <http://www.soaw.org/about-the-soawhinsec/soawhinsec-grads/notorious-grads>.

<sup>93</sup> Ronn Pineo, "Debating the School of the Americas," Council on Hemispheric Affairs, December 5, 2014, accessed online 8 February 2015 at <http://www.coha.org/debating-the-school-of-the-americas/>

the horrific genocide in Guatemala during his brief tenure as president from 1982 to 1983, also trained at the School of the Americas. However, like Galtieri, Ríos Montt attended the school in 1950 – again three decades before seizing the presidency and a full decade before the introduction of counterinsurgency training. Another infamous dictator, Augusto Pinochet in Chile, did not attend the School of the Americas. Undeterred by this inconvenient fact, the School of the Americas Watch still lists him among their “Notorious Graduates.” “Augusto Pinochet is not a graduate of the School of the Americas,” the page’s anonymous author concedes, “yet his influence is held in high esteem.”<sup>94</sup>

Chile presents additional problems for the school’s critics. “Graduates of the School of the Americas have comprised 1 out of every 7 members of the command staff of DINA [Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional]” the School of the Americas Watch claims on its website, “the notorious Chilean intelligence agency responsible for many of the worst human rights atrocities during the Pinochet years.”<sup>95</sup> However, Brigadier General Manuel Contreras, who designed, constructed and led the DINA, never attended the School of the Americas. Furthermore, Contreras reported only to Pinochet; also not a graduate of the school. <sup>96</sup>

The linking of the School of the Americas with training dictators is problematic. The overwhelming majority of the 60,000 plus Latin American officers, cadets and enlisted personnel who received training at the institution did not become dictators. Meanwhile, other regional dictators, such as General Augusto Pinochet in Chile, General

---

<sup>94</sup> The School of the Americas Watch website, “Notorious Graduates.”

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> See for example, Department of State, US Embassy Report, “Chile’s Government After Two Years: Political Appraisal,” October 14, 1975, Document number 8dd0.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 7; and John Dinges and Saul Landau, *Assassination on Embassy Row* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 166.

Emílio Garrastazu Médici in Brazil and General Jorge Rafael Videla in Argentina, achieved their infamy without having attended the school. Becoming a dictator in Latin America required opportunity and ruthlessness, not training at the School of the Americas.

Critics' efforts to link the school to the training of human rights abusers also warrant scrutiny. Anthropologist Leslie Gill enjoyed extensive assistance from the School of the Americas in the early 2000s, including access to the school's archives and course catalogs.<sup>97</sup> However, in her book *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in Latin America*, Gill chose to center her analysis and conclusions on personal interviews, perceptions and recollections, rather than documentary evidence. Like most other critics, Gill cites the so-called "Torture Manuals," released by the Department of Defense in 1996 in response to a Freedom of Information Act request by the School of the Americas Watch. However, again like most other critics, it appears that Gill did not read the report or the manuals in question. The Department of Defense inquiry found seven questionable manuals in use at the School of the Americas from 1989 to 1991. Army Mobile Training Teams in Latin America also employed these manuals between 1987 and 1989. These seven manuals, with a total of 1,169 pages, contained a mere twenty objectionable passages.

*Handling of Sources* stands out as the most egregious of the group with eleven derogatory segments. However, none of these passages contains instructions on the conduct of torture. This manual describes how to utilize and control intelligence sources employed by local military forces against guerrilla or insurgent forces. It does not address

---

<sup>97</sup> Lesley Gill, *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), xii, 45.

captured guerrillas, insurgent prisoners or other detainees. Although Gill and others cite these manuals as proof of U.S. training of torture, none of the manuals provides such training or even addresses torture. The *Interrogation* manual is the most logical area to look for such instruction. It is not there. The Department of Defense investigation found one questionable passage in this manual. “Page 1 refers to ‘extortion’ as a method of interrogation,” the reports’ authors noted.<sup>98</sup> The school’s critics regularly cite these so-called “torture manuals” as smoking gun evidence of U.S. torture training. However, even a casual researcher might more accurately describe this evidence as a smoldering innuendo.

Katherine McCoy employed a detailed statistical analysis of the school’s graduates in her investigation of the claims that the school trained its students to violate human rights. McCoy constructed a sample of 11,792 graduates from Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Guatemala, El Salvador and Panama who attended courses between 1960 and 2000.<sup>99</sup> She culled this data from the course records of the nearly sixty thousand graduates between 1946 and 2000.<sup>100</sup> In her research, McCoy defined “human rights abuses” as “torture, extrajudicial execution, forced disappearance, and illegal detention.” “I also include dictators,” she writes, “and persons directly involved in violent coups as

---

<sup>98</sup> DOD response to SOA Watch Freedom of Information Act request, dated 23 September 1996, The School of the Americas Watch website, “SOA Manuals Index.” Accessed online 8 July 2013 at: <http://www.soaw.org/about-the-soawhinsec/soa-manuals/98-soa-manuals-index>. SOA Watch has since removed or moved the link to this document from their website. This Department of Defense memorandum was in response to a letter from Ms. Carol P. Richardson at SOA Watch and resulted in the DOD release of the seven Spanish language manuals in question. The manuals are still accessible on the SOA Watch website, the eight page DOD Fact Sheet regarding the department’s investigation and its findings is not.

<sup>99</sup> Katherine McCoy, “Trained to Torture? The Human Rights Effects of Military Training at the School of the Americas” *Latin American Perspectives*, issue 145, vol. 32, no. 6, (Nov 2005), 53.

<sup>100</sup> The School of the Americas released this data to the School of the Americas Watch in response to a Freedom of Information Act request. These records are available on the School of the Americas Watch website.



human rights abusers.”<sup>101</sup> McCoy based her search for abuses on Truth Commission hearings and their subsequent published reports. Although her research has received some criticism, it is the most scientific investigation to date regarding the accusations that the School of the Americas trained human rights abusers.

McCoy found almost no correlation. “Looking at the sample as whole,” she concludes, “only 1.3 percent of graduates are listed as human rights abusers.”<sup>102</sup> Yet McCoy misspoke – her sample included only accusations not convictions. Ruth Blakeley takes McCoy to task for this oversight, calling her research “demonstrably false thanks to a flawed methodology.”<sup>103</sup> But Blakeley also concedes that “only nine of the 153 graduates have been convicted or 0.008% of all graduates” in McCoy’s sample.<sup>104</sup> While McCoy’s terminology was inaccurate her definition was very broad. In the end, her findings are significant. A mere 1.3 percent of School of the Americas graduates in the sampled countries have been accused of human rights violations. If the school sought to train torturers and assassins it achieved a nearly 99% failure rate.

Yet these critics miss the mark. Rather than investigating reference manuals or the aggregate statistics on human rights abusers, future researchers should seek out the POIs or Programs of Instruction for School of the Americas courses. These documents, the school’s version of a course syllabus, could reveal what was actually taught from the available reference manuals, what received emphasis and what was omitted—if they still exist. Army manuals are like not like textbooks. Few courses would have covered their contents in their entirety. Linking specific objectionable course content – as taught - with

---

<sup>101</sup> McCoy, “Trained to Torture?” 54.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>103</sup> Ruth Blakeley, “Still Training to Torture? US Training of Military Forces in Latin America” *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 8, (2006), 1447.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

alleged or convicted human rights abusers who attended that course during the same period would provide a direct link to School of the Americas training. However, causality would still be implied rather than proven.

## CONCLUSION

The Kennedy administration sought to strengthen the internal security capabilities of Latin American nations. Counterinsurgency training was its preferred method. In support of that policy, the U.S. Army transplanted its new counterinsurgency doctrine from Fort Bragg, North Carolina to Panama in 1961. Yet the majority of Latin Americans receiving classroom training in counterinsurgency from the Army attended courses in the Canal Zone, not at Fort Bragg.

The School of the Americas trained by far the most Latin American students of all Canal Zone schools. However, the school's predilection for releasing cumulative graduation statistics has created confusion. Some authors have assumed that all, or most, students attending the school received counterinsurgency training. Others have accepted the notion that the school's curriculum underwent a profound transformation in 1962 shifting its academic focus almost entirely toward counterinsurgency. Colonel Edgar Schroeder, the school's commandant at the time, claimed that "every course taught has definite application in the counterinsurgency field."<sup>105</sup> Few authors have investigated his statement. An analysis of the school's curriculum reveals that most School of the Americas graduates during the 1960s did not receive counterinsurgency training. Instead, most instruction related to conventional military skills as it always had.

Counterinsurgency operated on two levels in the 1960s. At the national (strategic) level it was a comprehensive concern encompassing all "military, paramilitary, political,

---

<sup>105</sup> Leuer, "A Half Century of Professionalism," 13, 9.

economic, psychological and civic actions taken by a government to defeat subversive insurgency.”<sup>106</sup> At the operational level it focused on counter guerrilla tactics. Throughout the decade, the School of the Americas taught courses related to both aspects of counterinsurgency. Yet the majority of courses offered in 1964 only tangentially related to internal security. These conventional military courses provided merely an “awareness” level of counterinsurgency understanding, instilled through just four hours of instruction. The fruits of such training might have “definite application in the counterinsurgency field,” but that depended on how the host nation army used it.<sup>107</sup> This minimal level of awareness training did not produce counterinsurgency experts or practitioners. However, it did allow school’s administrators to portray a robust effort to disseminate counterinsurgency training, muddying the waters for later researchers and historians.

Internal Security training spread through the school’s curriculum during the 1960s. Thirty-six percent of all courses offered in 1971 contained counterinsurgency and irregular warfare content, up from twenty-three percent in 1964. Counterinsurgency courses expanded from five in 1964 to fifteen in 1971. However, despite this increase, conventional military skills and technical training remained the predominant course content across the decade.

Unpublished U.S. Army records also demonstrate that far fewer Latin American students received internal security training than previously understood. Despite the Kennedy administration’s intense focus on counterinsurgency, the School of the Americas saw no major increase in its overall attendance levels during the 1960s.

---

<sup>106</sup> Special Group (Counterinsurgency), “Glossary of Counterinsurgency Terms.”

<sup>107</sup> Leuer, “A Half Century of Professionalism,” 13, 9.

Participation in internal security-focused courses remained low, only a meager ten percent of the school's total enrollment during the peak counterinsurgency training year of 1962. This was hardly the pervasive effort portrayed by some authors.

A number of factors outside the United States' control affected regional armies' ability and willingness to send students to U.S Army schools and help explain the low attendance figures for internal security courses. American Army officers in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Paraguay cited budgetary issues as an impediment to student attendance at Canal Zone schools. Political turmoil also hampered several countries' ability to dispatch students. Resistance to change and indifference to U.S. modernization and internal security efforts in some regional armies also stymied American efforts.

Some countries accepted U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine; others did not. The Venezuelan and Peruvian Armies sent large numbers of students to attend internal security courses at the School of the Americas and based their training manuals on U.S. doctrine. The Brazilian and Chilean Armies rebuffed American counterinsurgency training. Instead, they developed their own concepts, wrote their own manuals, and trained their own forces.

## **Chapter Four: U.S. Army Mobile Training Teams in South America**

John F. Kennedy and his administration devoted more time and attention to Latin American affairs than any other United States government in the modern era. The rationale behind this unprecedented effort was multifaceted. Fears of a “second Cuba,” the desire to get rid of Fidel Castro and the loss of U.S. prestige over the Bay of Pigs fiasco all served to elevate the importance of Latin America in the minds of the president and his advisors. These men developed an enduring U.S. policy for the region that rested on two pillars: internal security and internal development. They conceptualized economic development as the mechanism to inoculate Latin American societies from the threat of Communist subversion. The fruits of modernization and economic prosperity would, if allowed time to succeed, eliminate the poverty and inequality that plagued the region and made democracy vulnerable. Internal security, on the other hand, served as the mechanism to protect local populations and weak regional governments from the Communist threat and to buy time for economic growth to generate positive results. From this theoretical framework, Kennedy derived his primary foreign policy strategies for Latin America: counterinsurgency (internal security) and the Alliance for Progress (internal development). The U.S. Army, through the Special Action Force, conducted mobile training team missions (small teams of skilled U.S. military experts dispatched to instruct foreign military and security forces in their own countries, usually in their own language) throughout Latin America in support of these two U.S. regional objectives.

Kennedy generated intense momentum in support of counterinsurgency and internal development, and this momentum continued to shape U.S. policy even after his assassination in November 1963. Yet the Communist threat in the Americas appeared to

recede after the Brazilian military coup d'état in 1964 and the U.S. intervention into the Dominican Republic in 1965. Southeast Asia came to preoccupy President Lyndon Johnson's foreign policy agenda - not Latin America. As the United States began a hot war in Vietnam, its counterinsurgency efforts in the Americas diminished. The Special Action Force conducted its greatest number of training missions to Latin American in 1965 and thereafter they began a long decline.

The Special Action Force was a cornerstone of U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Latin America during the 1960s. It was the primary organization conducting Mobile Training Team (MTT) missions in the region, yet this organization remains a shadowy and often unrecognized instrument of U.S. Cold War foreign policy. In 1965, its most active year, the Special Action Force conducted 107 MTT missions accounting for some eighty percent of Army MTT missions and over half of all MTTs conducted by U.S. forces that year.<sup>1</sup> Up to now, historians have often exaggerated the impact of U.S. training of Latin American soldiers. This analysis finds its impact often quite limited and its training exceedingly perishable.

A detailed analysis of the historical records of the Special Action Force and other Army offices involved in the conduct and management of mobile training team efforts sheds new light on these heretofore-overlooked organizations. Some authors have interpreted any U.S. mobile training team visit to a Latin American country as transferring lasting counterinsurgency doctrine and skills.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, this dissertation

---

<sup>1</sup> "United States Southern Command Historical Report CY 1965," 29 April 1966, (hereafter cited as USSOUTHCOM CY65), U.S. Army Center of Military History (hereafter cited as CMH), XII-5; Special Action Force for Latin America, "Historical Report 1965" (hereafter cited as SAF 65), U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (hereafter cited as USAHEC), n. pag.

<sup>2</sup> See for example: Patrice J. McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2005), 17-8; Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 4, 48-9.; Clara Nieto, *Masters of War; Latin America and United States Aggression from the*

argues that most instruction did not focus on counterinsurgency and that all training was more difficult to impart, less pervasive (affected fewer personnel), and less durable (competencies degraded over time) than previously understood. If the Special Action Force represented the spear's point of military modernization, why did its activities yield few results for counterinsurgency in Latin America? Despite Cold War fears, when the United States offered Latin American governments and security forces military training missions in the 1960s, regional leaders overwhelmingly chose internal development (civic action) and technical assistance support – not internal security and counterinsurgency.

#### **THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIAL FORCES**

The U.S. Army augmented Kennedy's counterinsurgency emphasis with a robust effort to provide assistance to Latin American forces through Mobile Training Teams. These teams ranged in size from one man, to groups of fifteen or sixteen (or more), depending on the size of the force to be trained, the complexity of the subject, and the duration of the mission. All three U.S. military services dispatched MTTs to Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s. The United States Air Force undertook MTTs in counterinsurgency and conventional aviation skills for counterpart air forces, while the U.S. Navy carried out missions in conventional maritime skills for regional naval forces. However, the U.S. Army executed the majority of regional Mobile Training Team missions. The U.S. Southern Command (the joint military headquarters responsible for all U.S. military activities in Central America, South America and the Caribbean) reported a combined total of two hundred MTTs conducted in 1965. The Army implemented 131 of

---

*Cuban Revolution through the Clinton Years* (Seven Stories Press, New York, 2003), 71-2.; Stephen C. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 130-1, 140-4.

those missions (sixty-five percent) while the Air Force completed forty-seven (twenty-four percent) and the Navy accomplished twenty-two (eleven percent).<sup>3</sup>

Before the Army could conduct multiple, repetitive training missions in Latin American countries, it had to build the capability to undertake this rather unusual mission on more than just an ad hoc basis. Few soldiers could immediately serve as foreign military trainers, and the Army lacked a specialized organization to coordinate and execute its new counterinsurgency mandate. In order to be successful, these teams of experts needed more than just the right military skills; they needed to speak their students' language and understand their culture. One type of Army organization already possessed the required mix of skills and attributes: the Special Forces. The Army founded Special Forces in the early 1950s to conduct unconventional warfare in enemy controlled areas during times of war. Success in that mission required mastery of numerous advanced military skills, but it also necessitated language and cultural knowledge. This unique blend of skills and the similarities between unconventional warfare (fighting as guerrillas) and counterinsurgency (fighting against guerrillas) made the Special Forces the Army's counterinsurgency experts in the 1960s. It became the logical choice to assume the new mission of training foreign security forces in their own countries. In Latin America, Army Special Forces executed the preponderance of counterinsurgency Mobile Training Team missions.

The Army rapidly expanded its Special Forces units in the early 1960s in order to implement its new counterinsurgency efforts. In January 1961, the U.S. Army had only 1,800 Special Forces troops, "trained for guerrilla operations in communist-controlled

---

<sup>3</sup> USSOUTHCOM CY65, XII-5.



areas.”<sup>4</sup> By January 1963, the Army boasted 8,000 Special Forces soldiers reorganized into regionally-focused Special Forces Groups.<sup>5</sup> In late 1962, the Army dispatched four hundred men from the 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina to the U.S. Caribbean Command in the Panama Canal Zone. These men formed the nucleus of the new, regionally oriented 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group officially activated on April 1, 1963.<sup>6</sup> The Army reinforced the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces with psychological warfare, medical, military intelligence, military police and engineer units. Together these units comprised the Special Action Force for Latin America. Between 1962 and 1973, the Special Action Force deployed hundreds of Mobile Training Teams from its base at Fort Gulick, Panama to conduct missions from Guatemala to Chile and from the Dominican Republic to Brazil.<sup>7</sup>

In order to understand the mobile training efforts of the U.S. Army one must first understand the military organizations tasked to execute those missions. These organizations shaped the doctrine, tactics and methodology of counterinsurgency training. This analysis begins with the core element of the Special Action Force for Latin America: the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group. The U.S. Army has a long history in the conduct of unconventional warfare; however, prior to the Korean War the Army eschewed maintaining such units during peacetime. Instead, the Army preferred to organize, man and equip these formations on an ad hoc basis once hostilities had begun. The volatility and uncertainty of the Cold War convinced Army leaders to reconsider that approach.

---

<sup>4</sup> Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1961-1964* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), 23.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>6</sup> SAF 65.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*; Special Action Force for Latin America, “Historical Supplement 1972” (hereafter cited as SAF 72), USAHEC, 19.

Prior to the counterinsurgency era of the 1960s, U.S. Army unconventional warfare encompassed three distinct missions: guerrilla warfare, evasion and escape, and resistance – all viewed as wartime operations.<sup>8</sup> Each of these missions has a precise military definition and technical nuance that may be unfamiliar to many readers. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the U.S. Army defined these missions as follows:

Guerrilla warfare is the conduct of combat operations inside a country in enemy or enemy-held territory on a military or paramilitary basis by units organized from predominately indigenous forces. The aim is to weaken the established government of the target country by reducing the combat effectiveness of the military forces, the economic means, and the overall morale and will to resist.

Evasion and escape are those operations whereby friendly military personnel and other selected individuals are enabled to emerge from enemy-held or unfriendly areas to areas under friendly control.

A resistance movement is an organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power. Initially such resistance may consist of subversive political activities and other such actions designed to agitate and propagandize the population to distrust and lose confidence in the legally established government or occupying power. If not suppressed, such resistance can result in insurgency by irregular forces.<sup>9</sup>

Two of these types of missions (guerrilla warfare and evasion and escape) – conducted behind enemy lines during the Korean War – proved their value to Army planners and formed the mission set for early unconventional warfare units. “Many North Korean and Chinese units were kept from a place in the main battle line by the necessity of conducting counter guerrilla operations,” Army historians later wrote, “The U.N. guerrillas were also of inestimable aid in rescuing downed flyers and escaped

---

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Special Warfare, U.S. Army: an Army Specialty* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

prisoners.”<sup>10</sup> The success of unconventional operations in Korea soon intermingled with Army planners’ fears of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe.

Major General Robert A. McClure, the Army’s Chief of Psychological Warfare, established a Special Operations Division in mid-1951 “to create a formal unconventional warfare capability for the Army.”<sup>11</sup> McClure assembled a team of officers with varied and unique experience in guerrilla warfare that spanned World War II and Korea. Colonel Aaron Bank brought his experience fighting with the French Resistance, the *Maquis*, as a member of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Colonel Wendell Fertig led guerrillas in combat against the Japanese occupiers on the Philippine Island of Mindanao. Lieutenant Colonel Russell W. Volckmann organized five Filipino guerrilla regiments on the island of Luzon and led them during three years of operations behind enemy lines.<sup>12</sup> In the interwar years, Volckmann authored Army Field Manual 31-20 *Operations Against Guerrilla Forces* and Field Manual 31-21 *Organization and Conduct of Guerrilla Warfare*.<sup>13</sup> Yet Volckmann was no ordinary scholar. General McClure recruited him in a hospital bed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center after Volckmann’s medical evacuation from Korea, where in December 1951 Volckmann had been planning and directing “behind the lines operations in North Korea.”<sup>14</sup>

Colonel Marvin Waters and Lieutenant Colonel Melvin Blair brought their experience of guerrilla warfare in Burma. Each had served in the 5307<sup>th</sup> Composite Unit (Provisional), better known as Merrill’s Marauders. The Army ordered Blair out of the

---

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Army, *Special Warfare*, 45.

<sup>11</sup> Alfred H. Paddock Jr., *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins: Psychological and Unconventional Warfare, 1941-1952* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1982), 118.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Army, *Special Warfare*, 41.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 2006), 134, 143.

<sup>14</sup> Paddock, *Special Warfare: Its Origins*, 118.

front lines in Korea in March 1951, reassigned him to the Special Operations Division, and tasked him with drafting the training program for a new unconventional warfare unit.<sup>15</sup> However, these men all boasted experience in fighting as guerrillas – not against them, which reflected the U.S. Army’s thinking at this stage. Concerns over how to fight against guerrillas awakened only later, after the Army realized it also needed a capability to confront the guerrilla insurgencies that arose in multiple countries in the late 1950s.

Together the men of General McClure’s Special Operations Division not only conceptualized the organizational structure of the soon-to-be Special Forces, they also strongly influenced its roles and missions. Bank and Volckmann “based their plans for the Army’s unconventional warfare capability on their World War II experiences with the Philippine guerrillas and the OSS,” Alfred H. Paddock Jr. explains in *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins: Psychological and Unconventional Warfare, 1941-1952*.<sup>16</sup> Paddock goes on to cite Bank again writing that, “Special Forces units were developed ‘in the OSS pattern of tiny units with the prime mission of developing, training, and equipping the guerrilla potential deep in enemy territory.’”<sup>17</sup> That enemy territory was Eastern Europe. Paddock’s research illustrates that,

By the end of May [1951], the thinking in G-3 [Army Operations] and OCPW [Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare – General McClure] had begun to crystalize concerning the utilization of the Eastern European recruits who would be brought into the Army via the Lodge bill [legislation expediting U.S. citizenship for Eastern European nationals in return for five years of military service]...The mission of these aliens [under the supervision and leadership of U.S. officers] would be to organize guerrilla bands in Eastern Europe after war began and attack the

---

<sup>15</sup> George Henry Perino Jr., “An Analytical Investigation of the Role of the United States Army Special Forces in National Security, 1952-1966” (unpublished thesis, Stetson University, DeLand, FL., 1970), 12-3.

<sup>16</sup> Paddock, *Special Warfare: Its Origins*, 119.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

Soviet lines of communication, their purpose being to slow, or “retard,” the Soviet advance into Western Europe.<sup>18</sup>

“Despite a ‘hot war’ in Korea,” Paddock concluded that, “the primary influence behind the Army’s interest in unconventional warfare was the desire for a guerrilla capability in Europe to help ‘retard’ a Soviet invasion, should it occur.”<sup>19</sup>

In order to implement this new capability as soon as possible the U.S. Army established its first Special Forces unit while still fighting the Korean War. After recruiting, screening, and training several hundred volunteers, the Army made plans to establish its first permanent unconventional warfare organization. The Army officially activated the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina in June 1952.<sup>20</sup> The Army relocated the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces to Bad Tolz in Southern Germany just over a year later.

When it departed from the United States, the 10<sup>th</sup> Group left behind some five hundred trained men who were excess to its authorized personnel strength. The Army utilized these men to form a second group, designated as the 77<sup>th</sup> Special Forces, in September 1953. Both of these organizations centered their operational capability on small detachments of specially trained soldiers. A 1965 historical report on Special Forces activities in Latin America observed that, “Each detachment was designed to be a self-contained unit with some 10 to 15 men able to work as far as 1000 miles behind enemy lines. Such a detachment was capable of organizing and training guerrilla regiments of up to 1500 men.” Further, the report explained that, “guerrilla warfare was the main study of

---

<sup>18</sup> Paddock, *Special Warfare: Its Origins*, 124; See also Kenneth Finlayson, “The Lodge Act and the Early Days of Special Forces,” in Special Forces Association, *Special Forces; the First Fifty Years*, (n.p.: Faircount LLC, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Paddock, *Special Warfare: Its Origins*, 157.

<sup>20</sup> SAF 1965; Perino, “Special Forces in National Security,” 14.

Special Forces at this time, while the field of counterinsurgency was mostly overlooked,” mirroring U.S. Army doctrine in the late 1950s.<sup>21</sup>

During this stage of the Cold War, the Army envisioned employing its Special Forces units primarily in an offensive role. “In a general war,” Army doctrine writers explained, “Special Forces organize guerrilla forces to support conventional military operations...Their operations are generally conducted in denied (enemy controlled) territory.”<sup>22</sup> Thus during the formative years of the Special Forces in the 1950s, two key tenets defined unconventional warfare: it consisted of wartime operations, and it was conducted in support of regular or conventional forces.<sup>23</sup> Counterinsurgency later overturned both of these tenets.

The complexion of the Cold War changed as the 1950s became the 1960s, and the Special Forces adapted to meet the challenges. The 1950s national strategy of Massive Retaliation and its reliance on nuclear weapons as a deterrent to Soviet aggression gave way to Kennedy’s Flexible Response. President Kennedy sought new capabilities to respond to conflicts and instability in the Third World, often instigated or supported by the Kremlin. By 1959, insurgencies raged in Malaysia, Cyprus, Laos and Vietnam, and Fidel Castro’s guerrillas had toppled the Batista government in Cuba. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev proclaimed his nation’s support for wars of national liberation in 1961. Castro’s success and Khrushchev’s threat gained the full attention of the Kennedy administration. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara delivered a speech in Chicago in February 1962, in which he explained that,

---

<sup>21</sup> Perino, “Special Forces in National Security,” 16.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Guerrilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations*, Field Manual 31-21 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, September 29, 1961), 11. Parentheses in original.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Army, *Special Warfare*, 15.

What Chairman Krushchev describes as wars of liberation and political uprisings, I prefer to describe as subversion and covert aggression. We have learned to recognize the pattern of this attack. It feeds on conditions of poverty and unequal opportunity, and it distorts the legitimate aspirations of peoples just beginning to realize the reach of human potential. It is particularly dangerous to those nations that have not yet formulated the essential consensus of values, which a free society requires for survival... But we shall have to deal with the problems of “wars of liberation.” These wars are often not wars at all. In these conflicts, the force of world Communism operates in the twilight zone between political subversion and quasi-military action. Their military tactics are those of the sniper, the ambush, and the raid. Their political tactics are terror, extortion, and assassination. We must help the people of threatened nations to resist these tactics by appropriate means. You cannot carry out a land reform program if the local peasant leaders are being systematically murdered.<sup>24</sup>

From the United States’ perspective, the Kremlin had taken a collection of unconventional warfare tactics and illegal methods and sought to apply them against non-Communist nations during peacetime. The Army had recognized the threat of guerrilla warfare being used against U.S. forces long before Krushchev’s speech. Recall that Lieutenant Colonel Volckmann authored an Army manual on the conduct of counter guerrilla operations in 1951 (Field Manual 31-20 *Operations Against Guerrilla Forces*). However, in Volckmann’s manual and during much of the 1950s, the Army expected to confront “irregular forces” in its own rear areas and friendly territories “as a phase of normal war.”<sup>25</sup> Confronting “wars of national liberation” conducted in times of peace rather than war was a fundamental change in the Army’s mission. This new Cold War threat compelled the Army to develop a defensive role for its Special Forces. The Army

---

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Army, *Special Warfare*, 12-13.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations Against Guerrilla Forces*, Special Text 31-20-1 (Fort Benning, GA: The Infantry School, September, 1950), 2.

added this new counterinsurgency capability to its existing unconventional warfare and psychological operations competencies under a new umbrella term, Special Warfare.<sup>26</sup>

Special Forces provided part of the new flexibility for limited wars and began to grow even before Eisenhower left office. The 77<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg and its sister unit the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces in Germany both contributed personnel to establish a new 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Group on Okinawa in 1957.<sup>27</sup> In 1960, the Army redesignated the 77<sup>th</sup> as the 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group. But 1957 was not the last time that the Army called on the 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group to surrender trained personnel to serve as the nucleus of a new Special Forces unit. The 7<sup>th</sup> Group's role as progenitor of other Special Forces units rested on several factors. The 7<sup>th</sup> Group was stationed at Fort Bragg, which meant ready access to newly trained replacements. It also operated within the Special Warfare Center, which provided the 7<sup>th</sup> with a direct link to emerging unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency concepts.<sup>28</sup>

As concepts evolved into formal doctrine, one line of thinking centered on how the Army might employ its Special Forces in a defensive role during peacetime. "Special Forces units can assist in training military personnel in combating guerrilla and terrorist activities and subversion," Army doctrine writers argued in 1961. "[T]hey may train foreign military personnel in the techniques of guerrilla warfare, thus enhancing the defense capability of the nation concerned."<sup>29</sup> Also in 1961, the 7<sup>th</sup> Group began an experimental reorganization to better meet the demands of counterinsurgency. "[It was]

---

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Army, *Special Warfare*, 8.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*; 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Group, Lineage and Honors, U.S. Army Center of Military History website, accessed online 25 July 2013 at <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/sf/001sfgp1sf.htm>

<sup>28</sup> In U.S. Army parlance a Center is a headquarters that supervises both schools and operational units.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Guerrilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations*, Field Manual 31-21 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, September 29, 1961), 12.



pioneering the formation of a Special Action Force by integrating into its organization several highly specialized detachments primarily to assist in the fields of counterinsurgency and civic action,” Army historians later observed. “These units had special capabilities in fields of advanced medical technology, communications, security analysis, engineering, military police and psychological warfare.”<sup>30</sup>

General George H. Decker, the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, eloquently summarized the new reality facing the Army in 1962. “Our splendid field armies in Europe and Korea and in reserve in the United States, combined with sea and air combat units, are designed for conventional and tactical nuclear warfare. Their purpose is to meet clearly-defined, large scale military threats,” Decker explained. “Obviously, these units are not the proper response to a band of guerrillas which in a flash will transform itself into a scattering of ‘farmers.’ Neither are they best geared to move into a weak country and help it move up the ladder by training local forces to improve the people’s health, transportation and building program...That is where Special Warfare enters the picture as a ‘must’ capability.”<sup>31</sup> By 1962 the U.S. Army’s top General envisioned employing Special Forces separate from conventional forces and during peacetime in support of “weak countries.” The Army now tasked its Special Forces to train local forces and conduct what the Army later termed Civic Action.

The Kennedy administration’s Special Group (Counter-Insurgency) defined Military Civic Action for the United States government in 1962. It is “[t]he use of preponderantly indigenous military forces on projects useful to the local population at all levels in such fields as education, training, public works, agriculture, transportation,

---

<sup>30</sup> SAF 65.

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Army, *Special Warfare*, 15-16.

communications, health, sanitation and others contributing to economic and social development, which would also serve to improve the standing of the military forces with the population.” Kennedy’s advisors also noted that, “US forces may at times advise or engage in military civic actions in overseas areas.”<sup>32</sup> President Kennedy directed formation of this top level coordinating body in January 1962, “[t]o assure unity of effort and the use of all available resources with maximum effectiveness in preventing and resisting subversive insurgency and related forms of indirect aggression in friendly countries.”<sup>33</sup> The President initially assigned the group “cognizance” for only three countries: Laos, South Vietnam, and Thailand. By July 1962, the administration had expanded the mandate of the Special Group (Counter-Insurgency) to eleven countries including Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Venezuela. Nevertheless, despite the growing concerns of President Kennedy and his advisors regarding Latin America, the region had no assigned Special Forces units until late 1962.<sup>34</sup>

### **THE SPECIAL ACTION FORCE FOR LATIN AMERICA**

The lack of Special Forces worried the commander of the U.S. Caribbean Command. To remedy the situation, General Andrew P. O’Meara requested the assignment of the entire 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group in January 1962. The Army balked at sending a full Group and instead directed the 7<sup>th</sup> to detach 310 personnel for reassignment

---

<sup>32</sup> Special Group (Counterinsurgency), “Glossary of Counterinsurgency Terms,” May 17, 1962, CMH, Historical Reference Collection, Box 370.64.

<sup>33</sup> John. F. Kennedy, “National Security Action Memorandum 124: Establishment of the Special Group (Counter-Insurgency),” January 18, 1962., Foreign Relations of the United States 1961–1963, Volume VIII, National Security Policy (hereafter cited as FRUS), Document 68.

<sup>34</sup> Kennedy, “National Security Action Memorandum 124;” Maxwell Taylor, Memorandum From the President’s Military Representative to President Kennedy, “Counterinsurgency Activities of the United States Government,” July 30, 1962, FRUS Vol. VIII, Document 102; U.S. Continental Army Command (hereafter cited as USCONARC), “Special Warfare and Civil Affairs Division,” Summary of Major Events and Problems, Headquarters, USCONARC, FY 1962, Vol. IV., CMH, Historical Manuscript Collection, Box 60-1 AA, 3.

to the Panama Canal Zone to form a new 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group.<sup>35</sup> The Army assigned an additional 85 non-Special Forces personnel to form augmentation teams and serve as the nucleus for the specialized detachments of a new Special Action Force for Latin America. However, the 8<sup>th</sup> was but one of four new regionally-aligned Special Forces Groups established during the Kennedy administration. It joined the 5<sup>th</sup> Group, activated in September, 1961 (focused on Vietnam); the 6<sup>th</sup> Group, activated in May, 1963 (oriented on Africa) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Group, activated in December, 1963 (oriented on the Middle East).<sup>36</sup> The Kennedy administration also established several new Special Forces Groups in the U.S. Army Reserve and the National Guard but there is no indication that any of these elements operated in Latin America.

The first adventure faced by the new members of the Special Action Force for Latin America was getting to Panama. The odyssey began with a survey team dispatched from Fort Bragg in January 1962 to select a location to house the new unit. The survey team visited Fort Clayton on the Pacific side of the Isthmus just outside Panama City and Coco Solo Naval Base on the Atlantic side located on the outskirts of Colón. However, the team ultimately selected Fort Gulick for its new home, not far from Coco Solo, and overlooking Gatun Lake (See Figure 1).<sup>37</sup> “This choice was perhaps the most logical because, even though it was on the Atlantic side [away from the majority of U.S. Army forces],” the unit’s historians later observed. “Fort Gulick was the home of the School of the Americas. In this choice of location, there would be a close proximity of Latin American military students to the Special Forces personnel who were primarily interested

---

<sup>35</sup> USCONARC, FY 1962, Vol. IV., 3.

<sup>36</sup> Ian D. W. Sutherland, *Special Forces of the United States Army, 1952/1982* (San Jose, CA: James A. Bender Publishing, 1990), 268, 272, 291, 295, 298.

<sup>37</sup> SAF 65.

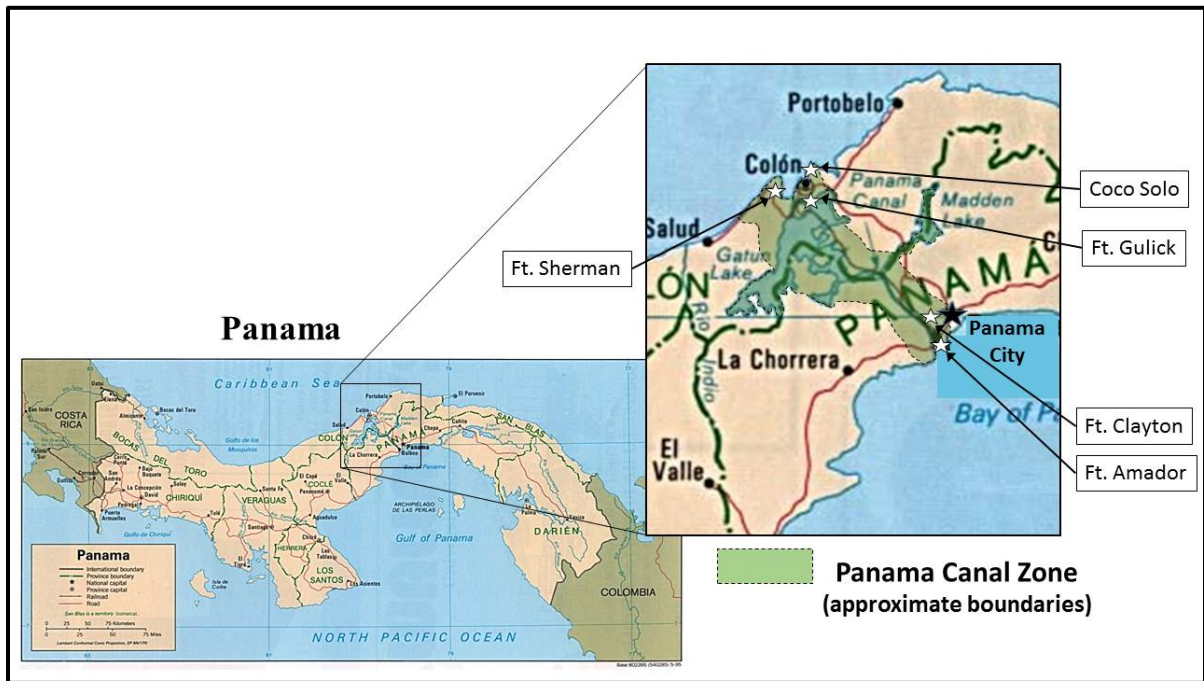
in aiding and training such people.”<sup>38</sup> After locating a prospective new base, the team returned to Fort Bragg where it quickly gained approval of the new site.

Major John H. Sawyer, having served on the survey team, went back to Fort Gulick in May 1962 to establish the unit headquarters and prepare for the arrival of the advanced party. Eleven officers and 49 enlisted men drawn from the 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group formed the advanced party and departed Fort Bragg on July 10. After a brief bus ride to nearby Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, the men boarded a flight to Panama. After arriving at Howard Air Force Base on the Pacific side, they again boarded buses for the ride across the isthmus to Fort Gulick arriving late that same night. The main body was not so lucky.

---

<sup>38</sup> SAF 65.

Figure 1: Panama Canal Zone and U.S. Military Locations Map.<sup>39</sup>



On August 2, 1962, Major Melvin J. Sowards, led his D Company and other assigned personnel to the train station at Fort Bragg to begin their journey to Panama. Sowards and some 250 men boarded the train that morning heading not south, towards Panama, but north to New York City. Eventually arriving at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the men boarded a Navy transport ship, the USNS Geiger, for their trip to Panama.<sup>40</sup> Sowards and his men endured over a week at sea, but after stops at San Juan, Puerto Rico and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, they finally docked in Colón, Panama on August 11 and wearily made their way to Fort Gulick. The Geiger returned for service in the Caribbean in 1965 in support of the U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic and later

<sup>39</sup> Panama Political Map, 1995, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, the University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 18 April 2016 online at: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/panama.jpg>. Panama Canal Zone approximate boundaries and U.S. military locations annotated by author.

<sup>40</sup> SAF 65.

transported troops for combat in Vietnam.<sup>41</sup> In 1962 Sowards and his men were probably glad to see it go.

The new unit's augmentation detachments departed last and completed the movement. These 85 or so men left Fort Bragg on 15 August bound for Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina. There they boarded a plane for the brief seven-hour flight to Panama. With the new unit finally consolidated at Fort Gulick, recently promoted Lieutenant Colonel Sawyer assumed command of the organization that would soon be the Army's first Special Action Force. The adventures and obstacles faced by the men who established the Special Action Force foreshadowed the challenges they and their descendants endured as they fanned out across the region over the next several years, journeying to both the urban centers and the remote hinterlands of Latin America to deliver their training courses.<sup>42</sup>

The U. S. Army purposely built the Special Action Force for Latin America to train foreign military personnel. The unit retained its general war Special Forces mission to conduct guerrilla warfare in support of conventional forces, although it never executed that capability. From its inception, the Special Action Force undertook a unique and expansive mission:

1. To advise, train, and assist Latin American military forces in counterinsurgency activities.
2. To develop, organize, train and direct native forces in the conduct of guerrilla warfare.
3. To support the U.S. Armed Forces Southern Command contingency plans.

---

<sup>41</sup> The USNS Gieger was named after United States Marine Corps aviator General Roy Stanley Geiger. Dictionary of American Fighting Ships, Naval History and Heritage Command, accessed online 25 July 2013 at <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/g2/geiger.htm>

<sup>42</sup> SAF 65

4. To assist Southern Command in developing plans to use the Special Action Force under varying conditions.
5. To accomplish civic action projects.<sup>43</sup>

An analysis of the Special Action Force's historical record confirms that the men of the unit devoted a large percentage of their time and energy to the first mission objective of training Latin American forces for counterinsurgency. "[T]he business of the Special Action Force," the organization's 1966 historical summary bluntly stated, "is to deploy Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) throughout Latin America."<sup>44</sup> In fact, they deployed hundreds over the unit's ten-year lifespan.

When not deployed to train regional forces, the men of the Special Action Force still needed to maintain the competencies required to execute both their training and guerrilla warfare missions. At Fort Gulick, Panama, they honed their own skills in marksmanship, demolitions, parachuting, communications, medical aid, patrolling, and planning operations, to mention but a few areas of expertise. Those who were not native Spanish speakers--and there were many--also practiced their language skills. "The necessity for proficiency in this [Spanish] language was obvious," the unit noted in its 1965 historical report, "but not all personnel were able to attend language school before arrival in the Canal Zone."

The Special Action Force lacked a facility for language training in Panama so they simply decided to establish their own. An instructor arrived from the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California in early 1963 and "presented an 80-hour seminar on methods of instruction and organization of DLI schools to the teachers

---

<sup>43</sup> SAF 65.

<sup>44</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, "Historical Report 1966" (hereafter cited as SAF 66), USAHEC, n. pag.

who were scheduled to teach the new course.”<sup>45</sup> In May 1963, the first class enrolled and began a 12-week course consisting of 400 hours of instruction in speaking, reading and writing Spanish. In 1964, the school added Portuguese language instruction to its curriculum in order to expand the cadre of Portuguese speakers maintained by the Special Action Force. These men taught the Army’s jungle warfare course to a group from the Brazilian Army with all instruction delivered in Portuguese in August 1964. “[W]hen the Brazilian contingent finished,” unit historians noted, “they were able to return home and organize their own school in the Amazon basin.”<sup>46</sup>

The men who comprised the Special Action Force for Latin America were an eclectic bunch. Those serving in the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces shared the bond that all had volunteered for airborne training (military parachuting) and all had volunteered for and completed the grueling Special Forces training course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Many of the original members were veterans of World War II and Korea with deep military experience forged through years in combat. Others were relative novices fresh from Fort Bragg. The unit also contained Latino members from the Southwestern United States and Puerto Rico. These men would have carried with them an innate cultural understanding of the region that others lacked.<sup>47</sup>

Some of the older veterans had begun executing training missions in Latin America even before 1962. As an example, the U.S. Army conducted seven MTTs in Bolivia in late 1961 and early 1962 training some 700 soldiers. Other early Company D,

---

<sup>45</sup> SAF 65.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> One such member was Master Sergeant Isabelino Vazquez-Rodriguez, a Korean War veteran from Puerto Rico, who served in the 8th Special Forces from 1964 to 1966 and again from 1968 to 1969. Isabelino Vazquez-Rodriguez, *Proud to Serve my Country* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2011).



7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces MTTs visited Venezuela and Colombia.<sup>48</sup> Many of the later arrivals had to undergo extensive training in Panama under the tutelage of these veterans before they were qualified to train foreign troops. One young private, Kenny McMullin, later recalled his own odyssey to Panama in 1964:

After a short language course and a shorter home leave, we flew to Panama, landing on the Pacific side, and boarded rail cars for the fifty mile trip across the Isthmus to the Caribbean and Fort Gulick. The rickety old train swayed as it clacked its way through the dense jungle and rain forest. As darkness fell, the conductor came through the cars lighting old oil lamps. I looked out the window half expecting Jesse James to attack.

We were the first rotation of troops to the 8th; it wasn't an even trade. Most of us were PFCs [Privates First Class] on our first trip outside the United States. The men we were supposed to replace were a truly awesome band of warriors. During a general's inspection we saw that the commander wore on his right shoulder the combat scroll of the 6th Ranger Battalion from the Pacific War, and his executive officer wore the red arrowhead patch of the First Special Service Force. We saw the patches of Merrill's Marauders, the Marine Raiders, the 82nd, 101st, and 17th Airborne Divisions of World War II. The Sergeant Major had jumped with the 101st Pathfinders at Normandy, and others had jumped with the 187th Regimental Combat Team in Korea...

Our chance to serve with these soldiers was truly fortunate. Most of us would all too soon be serving in Vietnam, and the 8th was really a Special Forces graduate school for us. Exercises and training helped refine the basic skills we had learned at Fort Bragg. The tactics, techniques, and tradecraft we practiced in the jungle of Panama under the tutelage of those veterans undoubtedly were the contributing factors in our later survival. It was no six week "shake and bake" course for us. Those old professionals went out of their way make us feel accepted and to teach us as much as we could absorb.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Robert O. Kirkland, *Observing our Hermanos de Armas: U.S. military attaches in Guatemala, Cuba, and Bolivia, 1950-1964* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 109; SAF 65.

<sup>49</sup> Kenny McMullin as quoted in Wayne A. Kirkbride, *Special Forces in Latin America: from Bull Simmons to Just Cause* (Newport News, VA: Wayne Kirkbride, 1991), vi.

Many of these men served multiple tours in the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces, accepting assignments to Vietnam, or other locations, and then returning to the Canal Zone. Those who participated in mobile training team missions undoubtedly shared their skills and experience with their counterparts in Latin America.

### **COUNTERINSURGENCY OR CIVIC ACTION?**

Mobile Training Teams varied greatly in size with each team specifically configured by size and composition of skill sets to meet the training needs of the host nation forces. The record of the Special Action Force's activities reveals a surprisingly broad repertoire of skills. These men executed conventional military skills missions such as marksmanship and infantry training, but they also taught such diverse courses as soil conservation, road construction, and water purification. In its 1966 regulation on the training of foreign nationals, Army Forces Southern Command designated the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group primary responsibility for the conduct of twenty-five types of training missions. The Special Action Force also conducted some types of training not listed in the Army Forces Southern Command regulation (see Appendix A: Types of Special Action Force for Latin America Mobile Training Team Missions).<sup>50</sup>

Several discrepancies exist between these two lists. The cursory explanation is that the first list covers missions assigned to the Special Action Force from its higher headquarters while the second is a compendium of missions conducted. However, digging deeper uncovers other issues. For example, the headquarters assigned its

---

<sup>50</sup> United States Army Forces Southern Command, "Regulation No. 551-1 Foreign Nationals," 15 November, 1966 (hereafter cited as USARSO Regulation 551-1), National Archives II, College Park, MD, Records Group 548, Records of U.S. Army Forces in the Caribbean (hereafter cited as NAAFC), 170/4/2-3, 4-5; SAF 66; Security Assistance Force, "Historical Supplement 1973" (hereafter cited as SAF 73), USAHEC, *passim*. The U.S. Army redesignated the Special Action Force for Latin America as the Security Assistance Force for Latin America in 1971. However, the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group retained its original designation. SAF 65.

subordinate as the subject matter expert for three types of environmental training: jungle, mountain and desert operations. Yet the Special Action Force makes no mention of training team missions for these operations in its very detailed 1966 historical supplement. The explanation for their absence is almost certainly related to the needs of regional forces. If a regional army did not see the need for particular type of training it simply did not request (or accept) it from its Army Mission. Countries with high altitude mountain ranges usually established specialized army units to operate in those regions. Although a few regions of South America do contain desert terrain, one would expect those country's armies to understand how to operate on that terrain since it comprised part of their national territory.

However, jungle operations training proved an interesting exception to this logic. Numerous Latin American countries include jungle terrain, or more precisely tropical or temperate rainforests. What their armies lacked was experience in conducting combat operations in that environment. The U.S. Army, on the other hand, had operated a highly regarded jungle training school in the Panama Canal Zone since the early 1950s. The school based its curriculum on the Army's hard won expertise gleaned in the course of the Pacific Islands Campaign and in the China, Burma, and India Theater during World War II. As U.S. Special Forces gained more recent experience in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Army incorporated those experiences into the course. Thus it made better sense for regional armies to send their troops to learn jungle skills from the American instructors in Panama rather than attempting to do so via mobile training teams. In fact, the Brazilian Army contingent who attended the jungle warfare course in 1964 returned home to establish their own jungle school based on what

they had learned at the American-run course.<sup>51</sup> Other discrepancies in the lists are explained by minor rearrangements in the subject matter or shifts in terminology.

Why did the Army's principal counterinsurgency trainers only offer two courses directly related to the subject (Internal Defense/ Counterinsurgency and Counter Guerrilla Warfare)? A Special Action Force officer of the 1960s might also categorize all the mobile training missions his organization conducted in Latin America as supporting counterinsurgency – and he would technically be correct. The answer to this paradox lies in the complexity of counterinsurgency doctrine, the nuanced meanings of the terminology, and the determination of whether a particular mission type directly or indirectly supported counterinsurgency. Understanding and applying the semantics related to special warfare and counterinsurgency precisely proved equally elusive in the 1960s. To help educate its soldiers and officers, the Army published, *Special Warfare, U.S. Army: an Army Specialty* in 1962. In the article entitled “Use the Right Word!,” the Army urged its members to employ the correct terminology when discussing special warfare and counterinsurgency.<sup>52</sup> Not everyone read the article.

In “Use the Right Word!,” the Army defined counterinsurgency as “all military, political, economic, psychological, and sociological activities directed toward preventing and suppressing resistance groups.”<sup>53</sup> The confusion arises in that the Special Action Force supported the overarching counterinsurgency efforts of host nation security forces in two distinct ways. First, the Special Action Force provided Latin American security forces with skills and training *directly* related to counterinsurgency. This training included doctrinal instruction (to enable them to understand and apply counterinsurgency

---

<sup>51</sup> SAF 65.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Army, *Special Warfare*, 8.

<sup>53</sup> U.S. Army, *Special Warfare*, 9.

concepts) and counterinsurgency training (to assist them in conducting military operations against guerrilla forces). Adding to the confusion, the Special Action Force often labeled both these mission types as counterinsurgency MTTs in its reporting. However, these mission types represented only a small fraction of the mobile training team activities conducted in Latin America. The unit's 1966 historical report notes that out of eighty-three MTTs conducted in 1966, only "[n]ine of these missions dealt directly with counterinsurgency matters [i.e. doctrine or counterinsurgency training] and psychological operations, while seventy-four were indirectly valuable for counterinsurgency by dealing in such matters as technical or community assistance."<sup>54</sup>

This last category encompassed the Special Action Force's second larger and *indirect* contribution to the host nation's overall counterinsurgency efforts: civic action. The Army defined civic action as, "any action performed by military forces of a country, utilizing military manpower and skills in cooperation with civil agencies, authorities, or groups, that is designed to improve the economic or social conditions of that country. Civic action programs can enhance the stature of indigenous military forces and improve their relationship with the population. Thus such programs can be a major contributing factor to the elimination of insurgency."<sup>55</sup> Therefore, while civic action missions and counterinsurgency training both supported a country's overall counterinsurgency efforts, only those labeled counterinsurgency focused their primary attention on imparting counterinsurgency concepts or counterinsurgency combat related skills to host nation security forces.

---

<sup>54</sup> SAF 66.

<sup>55</sup> U.S. Army, *Special Warfare*, 9.

Yet even this close definition of terms is not sufficient to eliminate all ambiguity from the historical record of U.S. counterinsurgency training of Latin American forces during the Cold War. How the receiving country's forces applied (or intended to apply) the skills taught by the Special Action Force is by far the most accurate determinant of where exactly the U.S. imparted counterinsurgency training. For example, some conventional military skills training missions merit categorization as counterinsurgency. In 1967, the Special Action Force dispatched a sixteen-man team to Bolivia to train a new Ranger Battalion. In its historical summary the unit lists this event as "Infantry Operations."<sup>56</sup> However, because the objective was to train a specialized counterinsurgency unit, event is most accurately classified as counterinsurgency training. The Bolivian Rangers eventually put down the insurgency led Ernesto "Che" Guevara. The Special Action Force also undertook several iterations of Ranger training for the Chilean Army in 1962 and 1963. Yet these events focused on training conventional infantry units not related to an insurgency and therefore do not merit categorization as counterinsurgency related. The tactics may have been the similar but the intended uses were different.

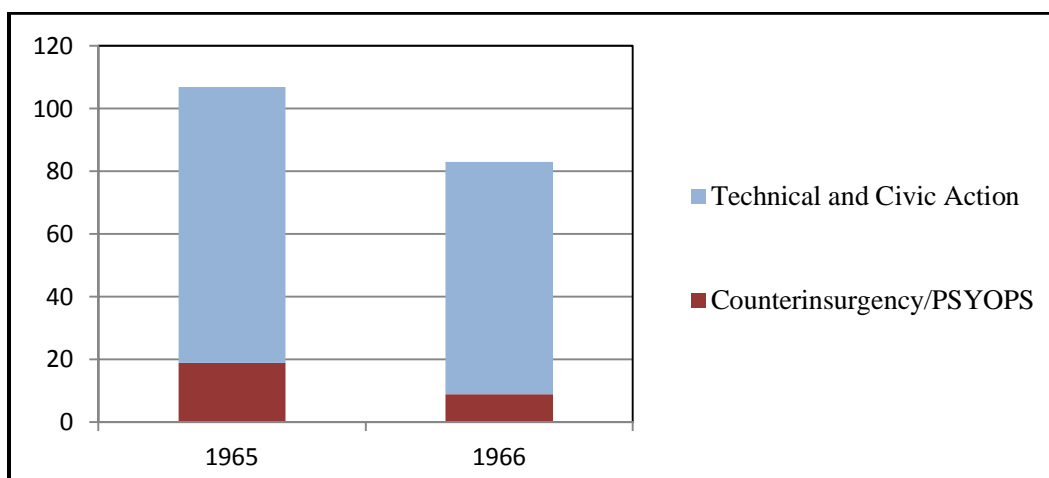
What is clear from the available records is that the Special Action Force conducted far fewer counterinsurgency (COIN) focused training missions than might be expected. By its own calculations the organization conducted a total of 107 training team missions in 1965. Of these only nineteen were categorized as counterinsurgency/psychological operations – four of which were survey deployments intended only to assess local forces and coordinate future training. The remaining eighty-eight missions supported technical assistance or civic action (including eight surveys). Therefore, during its most active year, only eighteen percent of the Special Action

---

<sup>56</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, "Historical Supplement 1967" (hereafter cited as SAF 67), USAHEC, n. pag.

Force’s training deployments related directly to counterinsurgency training. Eighty-two percent of its missions only indirectly supported counterinsurgency. In 1966 this trend continued; out of eighty-three mobile training missions conducted only nine supported counterinsurgency/ psychological operations (eleven percent) while seventy-four focused on technical assistance or civic action (eighty-nine percent)(see Table 4.1).<sup>57</sup>

Table 4.1: Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions by Type.



Latin American governments chose what training they accepted from the United States and they overwhelmingly chose technical assistance and civic action – not counterinsurgency. An analysis of mobile training team missions to South America across the ten-year lifespan of the Special Action Force illustrates the point (see Table 4.2).<sup>58</sup> Colombia and Bolivia hosted the largest numbers of training team missions: Colombia received 75 missions and Bolivia accepted 54. Yet in both cases, counterinsurgency training comprised only a fraction of the total training received from the United States. Colombia’s nine counterinsurgency events (five of which were

<sup>57</sup> This analysis is based on data from SAF 66.

<sup>58</sup> Data compiled from Special Action Force historical reports 1965-1973, USAHEC.

psychological operations) represented just twelve percent of the training missions to that country. Only eight of Bolivia's fifty-four training team deployments focused on counterinsurgency (two of which were psychological operations) equaling fifteen percent of the total. No South American country received a majority of its U.S. sponsored training in the form of counterinsurgency (see Table 4.3).<sup>59</sup> Venezuela had by far the highest density of counterinsurgency training of any country in Latin America (fourteen missions) representing forty percent of total missions conducted in that nation. Other countries received far fewer counterinsurgency focused training missions if any. Uruguay accepted the fewest U.S. training visits in South America – only seventeen – and received no counterinsurgency training.<sup>60</sup> Country focused analysis of the timing and significance of training team and counterinsurgency training team missions follow in subsequent chapters.

---

<sup>59</sup> Data compiled from Special Action Force historical reports 1965-1973, USAHEC.

<sup>60</sup> Uruguay received a Military Police riot control training team mission in 1969 and three classified training team missions in 1972. Details of the 1972 missions await declassification if the relevant documents still exist in U.S. government holdings.



Table 4.2: Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions in South America by Country 1962 – 1973.

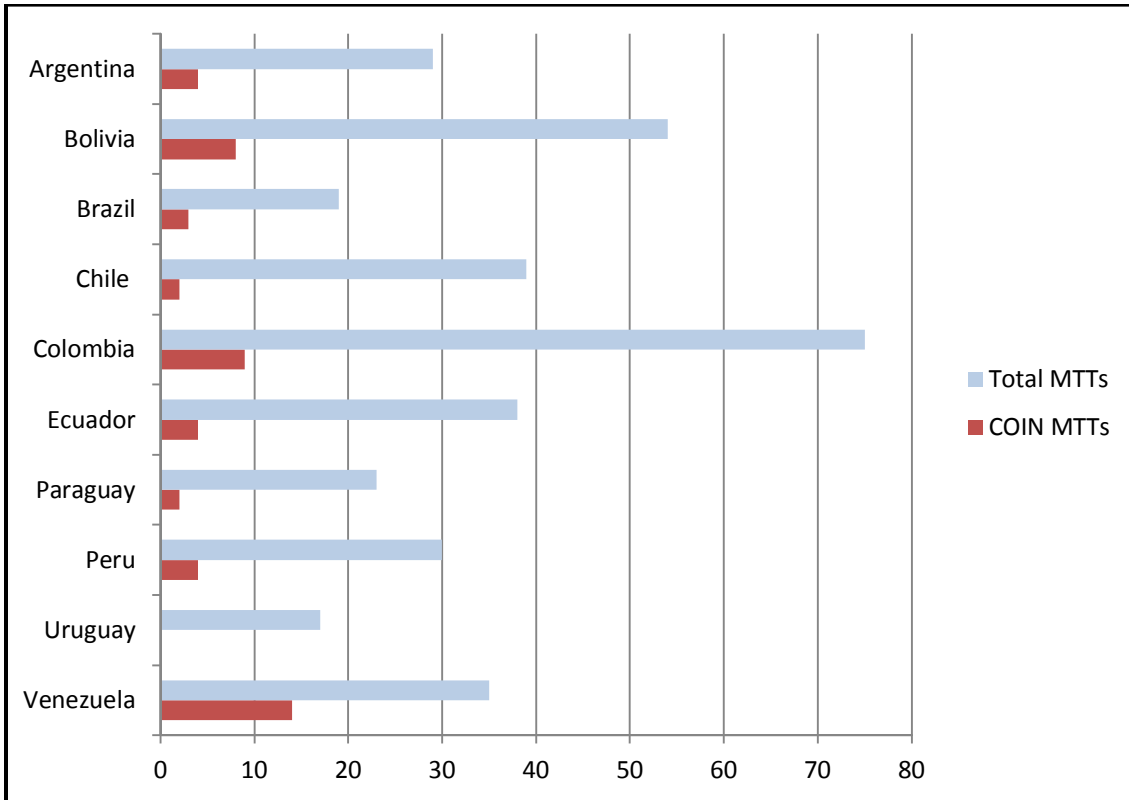


Table 4.3: Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions in South America 1962-1973.

	<b>Total MTTs Conducted</b>	<b>Total Counterinsurgency MTTs</b>	<b>% of MTTs teaching Counterinsurgency</b>
<b>Argentina</b>	29	4	14%
<b>Bolivia</b>	54	8	15%
<b>Brazil</b>	19	3	16%
<b>Chile</b>	39	2	5%
<b>Colombia</b>	75	9	12%
<b>Ecuador</b>	38	4	11%
<b>Paraguay</b>	23	2	9%
<b>Peru</b>	30	4	13%
<b>Uruguay</b>	17	0	0%
<b>Venezuela</b>	35	14	40%

#### **THE MANAGEMENT OF MOBILE TRAINING TEAM MISSIONS**

The Army managed its Mobile Training Team efforts in Latin America through the interplay of three types of organizations. No single source outlines the Army's internal procedures and protocols for managing mobile training teams. However, a careful analysis and interpretation of a wide variety of reports, records, correspondence, personal accounts and secondary sources allows this author to reconstruct this complex process. A mosaic of fragmentary data yields the follow description.

Mobile training team missions (and other counterinsurgency and conventional military assistance requests), began in the offices of the Military Advisory and Assistance

Groups (MAAGs) or Military Groups (MILGROUPs) stationed throughout the region. The names of these organizations varied by country depending on the term adopted in each country's bilateral military agreement with the United States. However, these organizations performed largely the same functions regardless of country although they often differed greatly in size. In general, a U.S. Army Colonel, or occasionally an officer of equivalent rank from another service, commanded each office; although a few General officers also led selected U.S. missions. The Department of Defense organized each office around Army, Air Force and Navy elements (usually referred to as missions) and administrative staff (almost always including local nationals hired by the United States).

Officers manning these Army Missions generated requests for mobile training team support. The U.S. Army officers based their requests on several factors. Foremost were the United States' security objectives for the country. The officers then crafted their assessments based on the needs of the host nation army and/or security forces to meet those objectives. They also had to consider the willingness of those organizations to accept U.S. training, and the local political and security situation, among other factors. Each MILGROUP or MAAG integrated its mobile training team requests into a broader program of support to host nation security forces. These support programs included various combinations of schools attendance in the U.S. or the Canal Zone; military assistance requests for equipment, arms or munitions; and the support, training and evaluation requirements of U.S.-sponsored Military Assistance Program (MAP) units (although not all countries participated in this program). These officers had broad responsibility for coordinating with, advising, assisting, and sometimes training local security forces. Counterinsurgency training was only one requirement among many.

Moreover, their job did not end when they submitted a request for mobile training team support. That was merely the first step in a long process.

Approval was the first, and most crucial, step in the process. No U.S. Army officers possessed the authority to approve the training of foreign personnel. Likewise, foreign military officers could not grant approval for the U.S. military to enter their national territories to train their soldiers, sailors or airmen. Political leaders held the final approval authority for bilateral military training; usually at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Presidential level. U.S. Air Force Colonel Immanuel Klette led a joint counterinsurgency team (including Army Special Action Force members) to Venezuela in 1963 and he recounted the approval process in a 1982 article in the journal *Conflict*. “U.S. officials in Washington, on the U.S. Country Team in Venezuela, and in the Canal Zone were acutely aware of both the explosiveness of the situation [in Venezuela in 1963] and the sensitivity of the Venezuelan government officials to assistance identified as coming from the United States,” Klette explained. “Communist propaganda would have exploited such aid with a vociferousness proportionate to their ability to identify it.”<sup>61</sup> Klette continued,

The least obvious form of U.S. government operational assistance, a U.S. joint team, was finally agreed on. High ranking Venezuelan military representatives endorsed this course of action and pressed for its acceptance. The action chosen, although low-key, represented *operational assistance* on the part of the United States and therefore required the approval of the U.S. Country Team in Venezuela, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Departments of State and Defense, and the President. On the Venezuelan side, approval came from the Minister of Defense, the Foreign Minister and the President.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Immanuel J. Klette, “U.S. Assistance to Venezuela and Chile in Combatting Insurgency 1963-1964 – Two Cases,” *Conflict*, vol. 3, no. 4, (1982), 236.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, italics in original.

In all cases, Latin American countries chose what missions they requested or accepted. The United States did not dictate the training regional military and security forces received although it did attempt to shape and influence the process. “[Special Action Force] teams are employed by direction of [the Commander, U.S. Army Caribbean] in response to country requests,” U.S. Army officers noted in an internal 1963 report. “Full use of their mobile training team capability depends upon sufficient requests being received from collaborating countries. Missions and MAAG’s have intensified efforts to stimulate countries to increase their requests for teams.”<sup>63</sup>

Each mobile training team request, if approved, then triggered a series of additional activities for the in-country Army mission. Before the training team arrived to deliver their instruction, the Chief of the U.S. Army Mission would task an officer (or perhaps a senior non-commissioned officer) to survey the training site(s) and conduct detailed coordination with the local forces receiving the training. For larger MTT missions, or those of long duration, one or two men from the Special Action Force might travel to the host country to assist in the planning and preparation. The local Army mission would also receive the MTT members as they arrived in country, brief them on local customs and conditions, advise them of any special security measures to be adhered to during their stay, and introduce them to the host nation forces they would soon be training. During the conduct of training, the Army mission bore responsibility to ensure the team received any necessary support not provided by the host nation forces and help to solve any problems the team encountered while in country. At the end of training the Army mission would likely receive a draft copy of the team’s after action report (detailing the conduct of the mission, any problems encountered, and making

---

<sup>63</sup> U.S. Army Caribbean, “Command Analysis,” dated April 1963, USAHEC, 47.

recommendations for additional training). The in-country Army officers then began the cycle anew, planning and coordinating future training for the host country forces.

The rather unique nature of the internal Army documents that form the majority of the sources for this dissertation warrants consideration. First, the men who drafted these documents were committed to the concept of defending Latin American from the threat of Communist insurgency. They were usually seasoned officers in the ranks of Colonel or Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Missions. Captains or Majors commanded long duration mobile training team training deployments or those requiring the deployment of large numbers of U.S. personnel. Senior non-commissioned officers often led two, three or four-man technical training missions. Second is the fact that these documents were written for the internal use of the U.S. Army – many of which their authors classified to prevent dissemination. What these men wrote was not intended to be seen by the public or their host nation counterparts. The assessments they proffered were candid and often blunt. These men were engaged in a serious business and, if they observed weaknesses on the part of host nation individuals or units, they did not attempt to soften them for their superiors.

One MTT to Venezuela in 1966 provided a five week counterinsurgency training course to a group of newly commissioned army lieutenants. “No major problems were encountered,” the unit’s after action report noted, but the Special Forces trainers also observed that, “the students lacked ambition, especially when they were tired.”<sup>64</sup> Although these sources are not written from the perspective of the Latin American forces the Americans trained, the perspectives of Latin Americans are not wholly absent. These men lived in the countries they supported, whether full time as in the case of those

---

<sup>64</sup> SAF 66.

assigned to the Army missions or up to six-months at a time in the case of the mobile training teams. The attitudes, points of view and distinctiveness of their host nation counterparts often seeped in to their reporting. These internal U.S. Army documents provide a unique window into the implementation of American foreign policy during the Cold War. They also constitute the foundational primary source materials for this dissertation.

### **CHALLENGES FACED BY MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS**

Student fatigue was far from the only challenge confronted by the men of the mobile training teams. Imparting military skills and concepts in a foreign country shared many of the problems of training foreign students in Army schools. However, some issues were unique to working overseas.

Master Sergeant Isabelino Vazquez-Rodriguez, the Korean War veteran from Puerto Rico, recalled his experiences on a civic action mission to a remote area of the Peruvian Andes in the mid-1960s. His Special Forces team, enhanced with the addition of engineers, a small medical team and a dentist, constructed a school, a small clinic and drilled water wells for local inhabitants. “We found lodging in the closest town to the operational area,” he recalled. “[H]otels were not available, but we manage[d] to rent rooms in private residences. They did not have the conveniences normally found in hotels, but it was a good place to sleep for a few hours.” The men made the best of their situation taking turns teaching the locals in the new schoolhouse, caring for patients in the new clinic, and even presenting “basic medical classes to a small group of volunteers.” But the conditions were austere. “The Dentist performed dental extractions using the manual instruments that he brought with him; there was no electrical power

available; we had to build fires and heat water to disinfect the medical tools,” the Master Sergeant later recollected.<sup>65</sup>

Of course different countries presented different challenges. Vazquez-Rodriguez also participated in a mobile training team mission to Chile to give instruction on the assembly, disassembly and firing of the 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles. Here the challenge was cultural. The Master Sergeant and his fellow trainers developed a training schedule for their Chilean students based on the U.S. Army’s regular ten-hour workday. In adapting to local customs, they quickly shortened the training day to only four hours. That was not the team’s only surprise. “We were forced to drink a lot of wine prior to lunch and could not refuse because they feel insulted if you decline,” Vazquez-Rodriguez later recalled. “I had to drink very slowly so as to comply with the protocols and still be able to concentrate on my training mission. I was not much of a drinker and Chile was not the place for me to get started.”<sup>66</sup>

Another group conducting counterinsurgency training in Ecuador suffered from more mundane challenges. Their issues related to the transportation provided by the Ecuadorian Armed Forces, which loaned the team a jeep and a truck for its travel to and from the training site. “However, after leaving the Quito area no provisions were made to provide gasoline or maintenance for the two vehicles,” the team leader wrote in his after action report. “This forced the MTT to buy gasoline for the vehicles and obtain maintenance parts from civilian agencies.” Another group from this same mission was training in a separate location and fared even worse. Although they also received two vehicles from the Ecuadorian forces, these too quickly broke down. “At one time it

---

<sup>65</sup> Vazquez-Rodriguez, *Proud*, 175, 176.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.



became necessary to use horses as a primary means of transportation for the MTT members due to the loss of both vehicles to maintenance problems.”<sup>67</sup>

Beyond logistical and cultural issues, U.S. team members faced serious issues of reception and retention in their efforts to impart military training to Latin American forces. Conscripts made up the bulk of the manpower in most regional armies, many of whom –especially in the poorer countries – were illiterate. U.S. Army planners were aware of this challenge; both in Latin America and throughout the Third World. In its 1963 Field Manual, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces*, the Army included an appendix titled “Guidelines for Advisors and Members of MTTs.” The appendix included advice and recommendations regarding “professional duties and interests,” “advisory techniques,” “personal attitudes and relations” and “social and military customs.” Illiteracy was but one of many challenges mentioned. “Understand that many indigenous soldiers may be illiterate, and that some do not speak even their own language well,” the authors cautioned. “Training must be repetitious and must emphasize practical work rather than lecture or conference-type instruction.”<sup>68</sup>

The historical record indicates that Special Forces trainers did take pains to understand their intended audiences and shape the training to meet the needs of their students. For example, the horse riding American instructors in Ecuador wrote of their students that they “were motivated and their enthusiasm during the course was evident in their participation in the exercises which were assigned by the instructors. Not all were literate, but the comprehension of the students was good as indicated by their actions in

---

<sup>67</sup> James L. Rougeau, 8th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Gulick, Canal Zone, “Report of Mobile Training Team to Ecuador,” 10 December 1963, NAAFC, 290/45/25, 4, 3.

<sup>68</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces*, Field Manual 31-22 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 12 November 1963), 111.

practical exercises.”<sup>69</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, Special Action Force historical reports and training mission after action reports do not specifically mention problems related to indigenous languages. Presumably, the conscripts they encountered spoke enough Spanish to understand their lessons and instructions.

Although the challenge of illiteracy varied by country and even by units within countries, literacy and education levels highlight an important difference between government forces and the revolutionaries. While national armies relied heavily on poor conscripts, usually from rural areas, the insurgent movements often drew the bulk of their membership from urban students who were literate and much better educated. Insurgent leaders could issue written training manuals and doctrinal treatises and expect their forces to comply with, or at least understand, the guidance.<sup>70</sup> Government forces did not share that luxury. While such a procedure might suffice for military officers, the troops normally required instruction by way of oral lectures and hands-on practical exercises. One example of the successful application of this method for training conscripts was the 1967 counterinsurgency mobile training team mission to Bolivia. This team trained a newly formed counter guerrilla unit of some 650 men to catch Che Guevara. It noted in its after action report that, “all personnel except the NCO’s [sic] [non-commissioned officers] and officers were fresh recruits [conscripts] with no previous military training.” American trainers also observed that, “[t]he average educational level of the personnel was 5 years.”<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Rougeau, “Report of Mobile Training Team to Ecuador,” 3.

<sup>70</sup> See for example, Ernesto Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* or Carlos Marighella, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*.

<sup>71</sup> John David Waghelstein, “A Theory of Revolutionary Warfare and its Application to the Bolivian Adventure of Che Guevara” (unpublished thesis, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 1973), 76.

Conscription presented other unique challenges. Even though some guerrilla fighters abandoned the cause and return to civilian life, and others fell victim to combat or capture in confrontations with government forces, they did not simply depart *en masse* at the end of their first year because their term of service had ended. Yet this is exactly the burden conscription placed on the armies of the region. In some cases it was even worse. In a 1962 report, the U.S. Army Mission in Bolivia lamented the problems caused by short terms of service for enlisted soldiers. “Although the term of conscription is one year,” the American officers wrote, “many conscriptees are released before completing the period due to budget limitations imposed on the Host Country [Bolivian] Army which result in a lack of funds to support conscriptees for the full year.”<sup>72</sup>

A different group of U.S. Army trainers faced the conscription problem again five years later. The 1967 mission that trained the Bolivian 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion worried about the perishability of their investment in training conscripts and attempted to negotiate a solution. “The Ranger Battalion was composed of conscripts with an initial obligation of 1 year [of] service,” the Special Forces trainers wrote, “a 2-year obligation was promised by the Bolivian Army; however, no public announcement has been made in reference to this.”<sup>73</sup> Fortunately for the trainees, they caught Che Guevara within days of their deployment. Nevertheless, one of the units most intensively trained in counterinsurgency by the U.S. Army’ Special Action Force had an operational lifespan (time available to conduct missions for its government) of slightly under six months.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> U.S. Army Mission to Bolivia, “Cold War Activities Report,” 30 June 1962, NAAFC, 290/45/25, n. pag.

<sup>73</sup> Waghelstein, “Revolutionary Warfare,” 75.

<sup>74</sup> A brief timeline analysis will serve to illustrate the problem. Let us assume that assembling the new conscripts from across the nation, receiving them into the Bolivian Army, conducting some very rudimentary initial training, issuing them uniforms and individual equipment, and transporting them to the training site required four weeks. The American trainers then spent nineteen weeks training the unit and conducting exercises to reinforce the lessons they had taught. Together this preparation would have required nearly six months for completion; representing almost one-half of a conscript’s term of service.

This represented a very low return on investment for the United States. The available records do not indicate whether the conscripts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion served an additional year. It seems unlikely that they did.

The perishability problem of training conscript units is similar to a second, larger issue. Throughout the decade and across all countries, U.S. trainers and Army mission personnel faced an early dissipation of their efforts. If the Americans only trained ad hoc groups of individuals, they diffused their efforts across the partner nation army with little to show for their time and trouble. The counterinsurgency mission to Ecuador in 1963 (mentioned above) offers a window into this phenomenon. This mission was, on face value, a resounding success. Three officers and thirteen men of the Special Action Force spent some ninety days in Ecuador teaching counterinsurgency courses at three military installations. Each course consisted of three weeks of classroom instruction followed by a week of practical exercises in a field environment. They trained a cumulative total of twenty-three officers and two-hundred and sixty-eight enlisted men. The instructors set high standards for the students. To receive a certificate of completion at the end of the course students were required to meet the minimum requirements. Twenty-four students failed to meet the course requirements and did not receive a certificate of completion. Yet despite their efforts, and apparent success, the men who conducted the training courses struck a pessimistic note regarding what they had achieved. “[O]nly in two locations are these trained personnel located in sufficient quantities to be utilized as an effective unit,” the trainers lamented. “Personnel from the other units which were represented at these courses have returned to their parent units, representing only a small fraction with no

---

Transporting the conscripts back to a Bolivian Army installation in order for them to turn in their equipment and uniforms, and be processed out of service required perhaps another two weeks. Therefore, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion had an operational lifespan of just under six months.

clearly defined plans for training other members of their units. In many cases, these returnees are of the lower grade structures who are not able to influence instruction of their units by their commanders.<sup>75</sup> The impact of U.S. training dissipated rapidly. Many individuals who received counterinsurgency instruction returned to their scattered units and never put their training to use.

In the recommendations section of their after action report, the trainers to Ecuador offered a solution to the dilemma of dissipation. They suggested that a follow-on mission focus their efforts exclusively on “two different 150-man Units which have been designated as Counter-Insurgency Units,” and that the course be extended to six weeks to give additional focus on field training. If that was not possible, the team recommended, “that a cadre consisting of at least one Captain and one Lieutenant with 12 Enlisted men be sent from three different units to Quito to attend one six week course in Counter-Insurgency. Then, with the help and supervision of MTT personnel when returned to their respective units, conduct another course of six weeks for at least 75 members of each unit.”<sup>76</sup> Rather than training a collection of individuals, the American trainers sought to focus their efforts solely on units with a designated counterinsurgency mission.

When American trainers instructed groups of individuals, that training often dissipated across the host nation army when the students returned to their units. Training groups of individuals could be effective for imparting counterinsurgency doctrine – more so when directed at mid- or senior-grade officers. It was much less effective for teaching tactics. Training complete units was an effective way of imparting tactical skills and techniques and creating competent counterinsurgency units. But that effectiveness was

---

<sup>75</sup> Rougeau, “MTT to Ecuador,” 3, 4.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

also perishable and declined as members departed the unit, especially if an annual cohort of conscripts departed en masse. The most effective (and least often achieved) method was the training of instructor cadres. Host nation army trainers had the potential to break past the issues of dissipation by teaching repetitive courses for large numbers of students across several years if necessary. Likewise, this method allowed American trainers to ameliorate the problem of perishability; rather than striving to retrain host nation counterinsurgency units every year or two, they could monitor and retrain a smaller group of local cadre on an as-required-basis. However, transferring the training role to local instructors did imply a loss of American control over course content.

Despite all its advantages, training instructor cadres also presented its own unique problems. A counter guerrilla mobile training team to Venezuela in 1963 provided follow-on training and assistance to a newly formed Instructor Group of the Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperación (National Guard). The Instructor Group delivered a series of three counter guerrilla operations courses to National Guard personnel. But the training got off to a rocky start. “The first course presented by the Instructor Group was rather poor although it did satisfy the majority of the training objectives. Instructors were lacking in knowledge of the material, there was a lack of prior planning, there was a serious deficiency in reference material and the lesson plans that were available were not uniform or complete,” the Special Action Force trainers recounted. “The second course went much better. The instructors were much better prepared and the classes were conducted in a very satisfactory[,] or in some cases[,] an excellent manner.” They ended their appraisal on an optimistic note concluding that, “[t]he Instructor Group is now well qualified to continue the Counter Guerrilla Training.” But they also recommended that, “the next few courses... be closely supervised by the [U.S.] National Guard advisor to

ensure that they are properly conducted and that Lesson Plans and Training Schedules are closely adhered to.”<sup>77</sup> The training of instructors was not a panacea for all problems.

National and international events and crises often interrupted mobile training team efforts in Latin America – as was also the case with foreign student attendance at U.S. schools. For example, in its 1963 Historical Report, U.S. Southern Command cited coups d’état in Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and Honduras, each of which triggered a suspension of military assistance of varying duration.<sup>78</sup> A Guatemalan *golpe de estado* the same year apparently did not cause an interruption of military aid. However, in Brazil, the failure of the leftist João Goulart administration to sign an “internal security note” with the United States did cause an interruption. It first prompted a suspension of military assistance in January and later a full cancellation of the program, valued at approximately US \$3 million, in June 1963. The Bolivian coup d’état of 1964 also triggered a suspension of military assistance to that country.<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless, it is important to note that these interruptions of military assistance (of which schools and mobile training teams were but one part) came as the result of diplomatic decisions by the United States. A successful military coup d’état could disrupt the work of training teams even if the United States did not choose to curtail military assistance. Host country officers might find themselves immediately reassigned to new duties within government ministries and agencies, while soldiers and units could expect

---

<sup>77</sup> Robert G. Foote, 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne), Ft. Gulick, Canal Zone, “MTT to Venezuela,” 8 July 1963, NAAFC, 290/45/25, 2, 3.

<sup>78</sup> United States Southern Command, “Historical Report Calendar Year 1963,” 25 April 1964, (hereafter USSOUTHCOM CY63), CMH, IV-3.

<sup>79</sup> USSOUTHCOM CY63, VIII-11; United States Southern Command, “Historical Report Calendar Year 1964,” April 1965, (hereafter USSOUTHCOM CY64), CMH, VIII-9.

orders to conduct security patrols or guard key installations.<sup>80</sup> An unsuccessful coup d'état could trigger purges of individuals and the disbandment of units.

Other crises also disrupted military training. Instability, natural disasters, elections, and strikes could and did obligate regional security forces to respond, making them unavailable to attend U.S. sponsored training. The Special Action Force's 1966 historical report cites the challenges faced by a training team of five officers and ten men dispatched to the Dominican Republic to teach logistics related subjects. "This team was in country during the presidential elections," the authors noted, "which caused problems with those units which were constantly on alert for operations and were not interested in training until the situation had calmed down." The same report mentions a non-commissioned officer who was conducting a four week explosive ordinance disposal course in Guatemala. "During the mission," the authors noted, "the MTT member disarmed several live bombs which were placed in a Guatemalan military museum [by Guatemalans] without knowledge of their dangerous potential."<sup>81</sup> Not all crises were political.

Instability in Latin America during the 1960s also struck closer to home for the men of the Special Action Force. Perhaps the most disruptive example was the 1964 Panama Canal Zone riots which occurred literally where these men lived. The riots began with a confrontation between U.S. and Panamanian students over the raising of their respective flags as a sign of national pride. However, this seemingly minor event touched a nerve among many Panamanians who had long resented United States' presence in the

---

<sup>80</sup> United States Army Mission to Peru, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 10 August, 1962, NAAFC, 290/45/25.

<sup>81</sup> 8th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Gulick, Canal Zone, "1966 Supplement to Historical Monograph of 8th Special Forces Group Training Activities in Latin America," 9 March 1967 (hereafter cited as SAF 66 Supplement), USAHEC, 34, 48.



Canal Zone perceiving it as an obvious infringement of their sovereignty. The riots lasted four days and caused the deaths of twenty-one Panamanians and four U.S. soldiers.<sup>82</sup> The Special Action Force 1965 historical summary called it “[p]robably the most significant event of 1964.”<sup>83</sup> The report’s authors explained the impact on the organization:

During this troubled period the Special Action Force was on constant alert and was prepared to defend the Canal Zone on order. However, they were primarily active concerning intelligence and monitoring duties, plus guarding nearby Coco Solo Hospital. Even after rioting subsided, there was always the possibility that additional outbreaks would occur, especially during the ensuing Panamanian elections and holidays. The result of these incidents was that Special Action Force activities in Panama [outside the Canal Zone with Panamanian forces] were curtailed for the greater part of the year, as well as the fact that a tense and expectant attitude was prevalent in the unit for a period of several months.<sup>84</sup>

Master Sergeant Richard “Dick” Meadows, a veteran of several mobile training team missions, faced the shock of the 1964 riots while serving in the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group. Meadows and his young wife, who was pregnant at the time, lived some four miles outside Fort Gulick in the American section of downtown Colón. Upon receiving news of the riots, Meadows immediately feared for the safety of his wife Pamela. He and a fellow Special Forces soldier requested the use of a military vehicle and their assigned weapons in order to rescue her. Unit officials denied the requests. Undeterred, Meadows and his partner grabbed their personal hunting shotguns, borrowed a car and set off for Colón. “Using back streets and grimly noting the smoke from burning buildings and listening to the increasing number of shots,” Meadows’ biographer explained, “they made it to the house. It was immediately obvious that it had been visited already. The fence was

---

<sup>82</sup> Alan McPherson, “Courts of World Opinion: Trying the Panama Flag Riots of 1964,” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 28, no. 1, (Jan, 2004), 83.

<sup>83</sup> SAF 65.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

down and windows were broken. There was no sign of Pamela or the car.” Frantically Meadows returned to the base. “When we got back I found out that Pam had made it out by the skin of her teeth,” he said. “The rioters had downed the fence and were at the back door when she got away in that little old Triumph car of ours.”<sup>85</sup>

The authors of the Special Action Force’s 1965 historical report sought to downplay the impact of the riots on the unit’s mobile training team efforts. “Particularly commendable,” they wrote, “was the fact that the training commitment at home and in Latin America continued despite the disturbances. For instance, MTTs that were already active continued without interruption. Also, the Special Action Force instituted counterinsurgency training for all personnel within a few months of the riots.”<sup>86</sup> Yet a closer reading of this passage also tells us that the 1964 Panama Riots did disrupt scheduled MTTs not underway and that the unit quickly shifted its focus from training regional forces to preparing its own personnel in case the situation worsened.

By 1966, the international situation began to intrude on the efforts of the Special Action Force to train Latin American militaries. The pull of Vietnam was increasing. The unit’s historians chronicled that, “[b]y the year’s end, the U.S. Army commitment in Vietnam was more than 250,000 and the commitment of the Armed Forces was reaching 375,000 personnel. In addition, the U.S. Commander in Vietnam was requesting still more troops. The result of this was a drain on the manpower of all units outside Vietnam. The Special Action Force, being no exception, lost many experienced and well-trained men to the Southeast Asian conflict.”<sup>87</sup> One of the men who departed the Special Action

---

<sup>85</sup> Alan Hoe, *The Quiet Professional: Major Richard J. Meadows of the U.S. Army Special Forces* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2011), 73, 74.

<sup>86</sup> SAF 65.

<sup>87</sup> SAF 66.

Force for Vietnam in 1966 was Master Sergeant Vazquez-Rodriguez. He returned to the Canal Zone in January 1968 after recovering from wounds he suffered in combat in Vietnam the previous July.

Beyond reassignments, the growing war in Vietnam also created an increased demand for experienced instructors within Panama. In 1964, the Army's Jungle Operations Center trained 1,164 U.S. personnel and 219 Latin Americans. By 1966, the center had shifted its focus to training replacements bound for Vietnam and the increase in throughput was astounding. The eleven training cycles carried out in 1964 had ballooned to forty-two cycles by 1966, training a total of 6,639 men—an almost six-fold increase!<sup>88</sup> The Special Action Force, along with other Canal Zone units, contributed men to the Jungle Operations Center to support the massive increase in training. However, while local infantry units sent enlisted soldiers and a few non-commissioned officers to supervise them, the Special Action Force sent trained Instructors. At the height of the upsurge in early 1966, the command contributed 23 officers and 68 non-commissioned officers. Later, that commitment dropped to a more sustainable 12 officers and 40 non-commissioned officers, but this was still a significant drain on manpower.<sup>89</sup> In 1966, the U.S. Army authorized the Special Action Force an overall manpower (the number of men serving in the unit) strength of 1,018 personnel. In August of that year, the organization's actual manpower was 296 men below its authorized level giving it an actual strength of only 722 men.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, the diversion of 91 officers and men to the Jungle Operations

---

<sup>88</sup> Hugh H. Gardner, Staff Historian United States Army South, "Jungle Warfare Training in the Canal Zone," 15 April 1968, United States Army South, Ft. Sam Houston, TX (hereafter cited as USARSO), Command Historian Files, 16, 31.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 27, 30.

<sup>90</sup> Edward Wozniak, U.S. Army Forces Southern Command, Fort Amador, Canal Zone, "Combined Command and Inspector General Inspection, FY 1967, 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (ABN), 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces," 19 September 1966, NAAFC, 170/4/2, TAB B. Although the title of this report lists the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group rather than the Special Action Force the inspection and reporting details included the Special

Center in early 1966 represented a drain of approximately twelve percent of the unit's strength.

The war in Vietnam had yet a third impact. Not only did it siphon off the Special Action Force's manpower, the war reduced the quality of the few replacements who were assigned to the unit. "Towards the end of the year the Special Action Force began to receive additional personnel," said the 1966 report. "However, these were frequently recruits having had little or no training beyond basic instruction."<sup>91</sup> Thus the command, already shorthanded, had to devote more of its scarce manpower to training its new men at its home station in the Canal Zone.

The United States' growing involvement in Vietnam coincided with a marked decrease in mobile training team missions in Latin America (see Table 4.4).<sup>92</sup> The apogee of Special Action Force training team deployments came in 1965 (107 missions); the same year U.S. ground forces began combat operations in Vietnam. Training team deployments in Latin America tapered to 83 in 1966 before dropping again in 1967 (56) and 1968 (53). Nevertheless, the available historical records of the Special Action Force and other U.S. Army elements involved in managing and coordinating training for Latin American military and security forces do not cite Vietnam as the cause of this decline. Other factors undoubtedly also influenced the decline in training deployments.

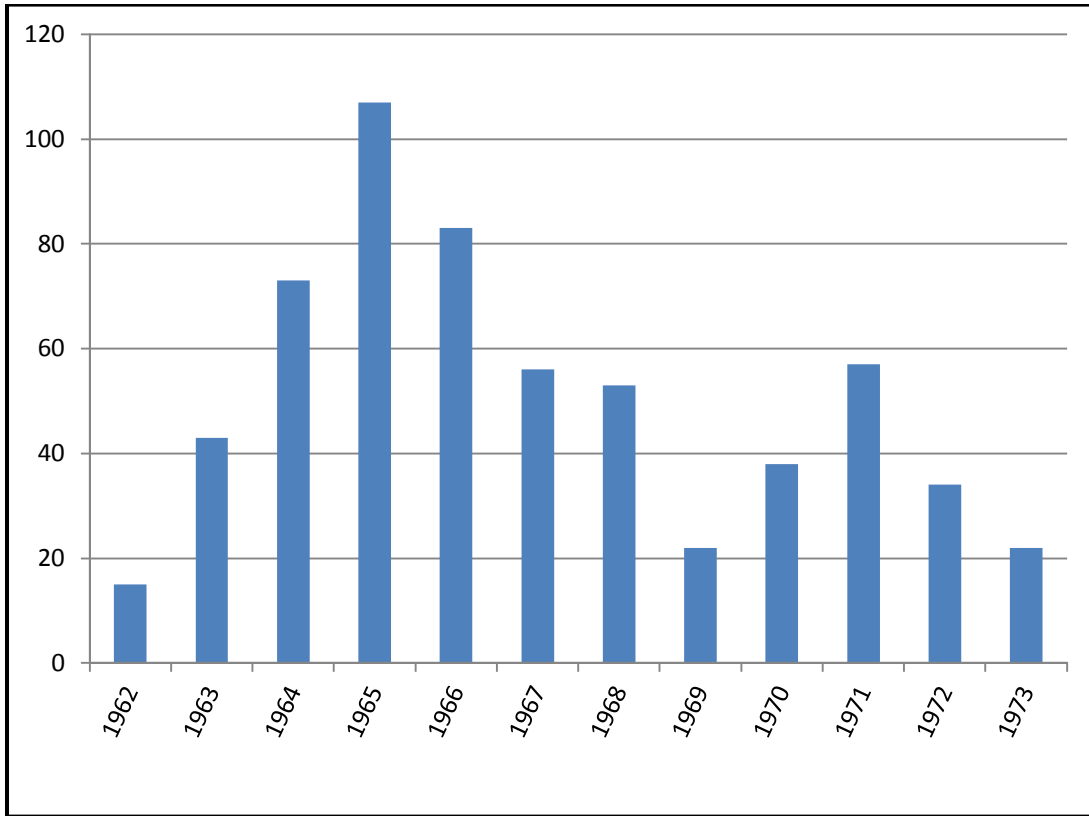
---

Forces Group and its augmentation detachments. Lieutenant Colonel Wozniak and his team conducted their inspection visit from 22 to 26 August 1966. Wozniak submitted his final report on 19 September 1966. During the 1960s, the U.S. Government fiscal year ran from July 1 through June 30 of the following year; see "Annual Report of the Comptroller General of the United States for the Fiscal Year ended 30 June, 1966," accessed online August 20, 2014 at: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/170/168566.pdf>

<sup>91</sup> SAF 66.

<sup>92</sup> Data compiled from Special Action Force historical reports 1965-1973, USAHEC.

Table 4.4: Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions in Latin America by Year.



From the United States' perspective, the trend line also reflects changes within the region. The initial fervor and momentum of counterinsurgency (and civic action) training begun under the Kennedy administration (1961-1963) and carried over into the early years Johnson presidency (1963-1965). However two events in Latin America likely shaped Johnson's perception of the Communist threat in this arena of the Cold War. First, the Brazilian military coup of 1964 removed the fear that South America's largest nation might turn Communist. Second, the United States' intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 signaled to the region that Johnson was willing to deploy American military power to prevent another Cuba in the Western Hemisphere. Both events likely

had a chilling effect on support for insurgencies in the region and conceivably diminished regional governments' demands for U.S. military training.

The greatest blow to rural insurgency in the Americas came with the capture and execution of Ernesto “Che” Guevara in Bolivia in late 1967. The Special Action Force conducted no further counterinsurgency missions in South America after that year. Unit records and contemporary Army doctrinal manuals reveal the cause for this surprising absence. The U.S. Army had no urban counterinsurgency doctrine during the 1960s. The Special Action Force conducted its first training team mission related to urban counterinsurgency, what the unit termed “urban guerrilla warfare,” in the Dominican Republic in April 1970 – several years after the rise of the National Liberation Action (ALN) in Brazil (1968-71) and the Tupamaros in Uruguay (1963-73).<sup>93</sup> A telling passage in the unit’s 1970 historical report underscores this limitation. “As urban guerrilla warfare is a relatively new field, and of ever increasing importance in Latin America of the 1970s,” the unit’s historians wrote, “CPT Dixon’s team had to spend extra time in preparation, studying all available doctrine and writings on the subject.”<sup>94</sup> In other words, Captain Dixon and his men developed their own doctrine and training program for “urban guerrilla warfare.”

An analysis of relevant doctrinal manuals confirms the Army’s rural-centric view of counterinsurgency. *Operations Against Irregular Forces* (Field Manual 31-15) published in 1961 set the tone for the Army’s view of insurgency as a rural-based threat. “Areas of rugged or inaccessible terrain, such as mountains, forests, jungles, and swamps,

---

<sup>93</sup> Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 86; Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 177.

<sup>94</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, “Historical Supplement 1970” (hereafter cited as SAF 70), USAHEC, 24.

are extremely difficult to control,” the manual’s authors confidently stated, “and the guerrilla elements of an irregular force are most likely to flourish in such areas.” The same authors acknowledged that insurgent elements might conduct limited operations in urban areas, but the responsibility for confronting such actions either fell on the local police or required a short-term military action leading to the swift return of forces to main area of struggle in the countryside.<sup>95</sup> *Counter guerrilla Operations*, (Field Manual 31-16) published in 1963 reinforced this message. “Terrain such as jungles, mountains, swamps, etc., which restricts the observation, fire, communications, and mobility of the regular force,” the authors explained, “is ideal for operations of guerrilla forces.”<sup>96</sup>

The Army’s rural-centric view of insurgency persisted throughout the 1960s. In an update to the 1967 edition of *Counter guerrilla Operations* (published in 1969), Army doctrine writers devoted new attention to “Operations in Built-Up Areas,” but maintained their interpretation of guerrilla operations in urban areas as a secondary effort.<sup>97</sup> “Built-up areas usually are unfavorable for guerrilla force operations,” the authors definitively explained. “Guerrillas normally will not choose to fight in these areas; however, underground elements in cities and towns may incite organized rioting, seize portions of urban areas, erect barricades, and resist attempts of counter guerrilla forces to enter the area.”<sup>98</sup> Despite the example of a new form of urban-centered guerrilla warfare in Brazil and Uruguay (and later Argentina), the U.S. Army apparently continued to rely on its own rural insurgency experience gleaned in Vietnam when writing and revising its

---

<sup>95</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations Against Irregular Forces*, Field Manual 31-15 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, May 31, 1961), 2, 10, 29.

<sup>96</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Counter guerrilla Operations*, Field Manual 31-16 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, February 19, 1963), 1, 9.

<sup>97</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Counter guerrilla Operations*, Field Manual 31-16, Change 1 to 1967 edition (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, July 25, 1969), 14.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

doctrine. “Concentrated, urban populations are more easily controlled and protected by host country forces,” Army experts pronounced, “than are scattered populations in rural areas.”<sup>99</sup> Moreover, the Army, and the U.S. government, viewed the cities as primarily the domain of police forces. The U.S. Agency for International Development provided police training and material assistance through its Office of Public Safety while the CIA assisted with police intelligence functions.<sup>100</sup> The U.S. Army’s lack of relevance (and perhaps lack of mandate) in confronting urban insurgency helps explain the absence of counterinsurgency training missions in South America after 1967.

The much lower rates of training team deployments from 1969-1973 almost certainly reflect the diminished threat of rural insurgency in the region. The overall decline in mobile training team activity also likely reflects the much lower level of attention the Nixon administration allocated to Latin America, instead focusing its efforts on global geopolitics with China and Soviet Union and extricating the nation from Vietnam.

The previously unavailable data contained in the Special Action Force’s historical reports also allows new insights into the question of the United States’ military support to authoritarian regimes in Latin America. Unsurprisingly, the unit supported both

---

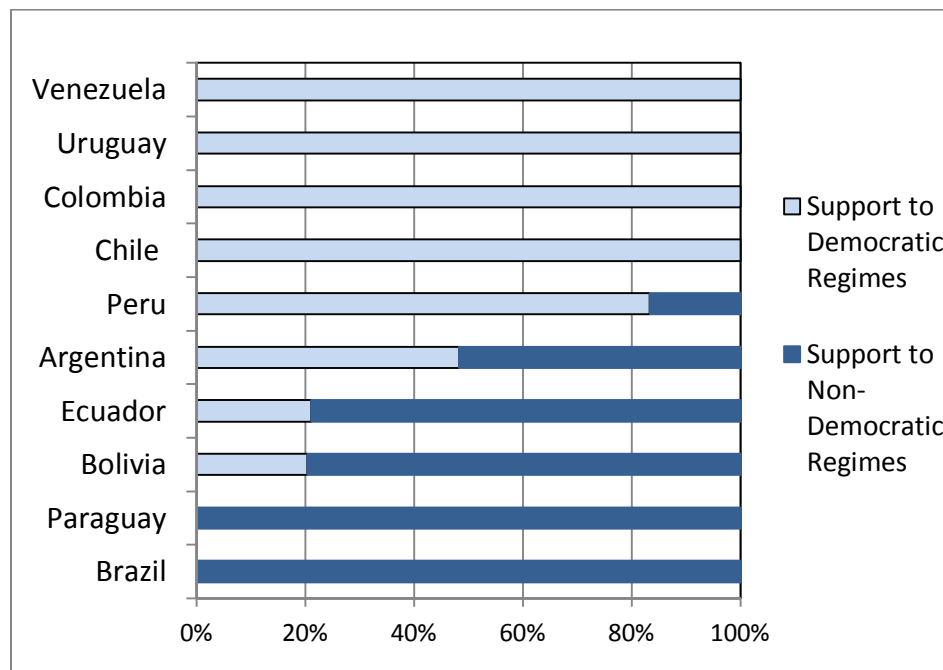
<sup>99</sup> U.S. Army, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, Change 1 to 1967 edition, 16; See also Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine*, 300. Birtle confirms the Army’s lack of doctrine for confronting an urban insurgency. “While American-style counterinsurgency methods succeeded in keeping the [Western] hemisphere’s rural insurgents at bay, both the Americans and their allies were unprepared to meet the shift to urban terrorism that occurred in the later 1960s. Although the Army had procedures for conducting combat, riot control, and cordon and search operations in urban environments, U.S. doctrine had largely mirrored Maoist revolutionary thought by focusing on the countryside rather than the cities. The criminal nature of urban insurgency, however, did not lend itself to a military solution.”

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*



democratic and non-democratic governments.<sup>101</sup> During its ten-year lifespan, the Special Action Force conducted 359 missions in South America. Two hundred and twenty-four of these missions (sixty-two percent) supported democratically-elected governments while one hundred and thirty five aided non-democratic governments (thirty-eight percent). Overall, the record is mixed (see Table 4.5).<sup>102</sup> All training missions to Chile, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela supported democratic governments. Meanwhile, all training missions to Brazil and Paraguay supported non-democratic governments. In Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina and Peru the Special Action Force provided training to democratic and non-democratic governments.

Table 4.5: Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions in South America 1962 – 1973 by Government Type.



<sup>101</sup> For the classification of democratic versus non-democratic governments by country and by years see Peter H. Smith, *Democracy in Latin America; Political Change in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), Appendix I.

<sup>102</sup> Data compiled from Special Action Force historical reports 1965-1973, USAHEC.

Does changing the paradigm from democratic versus non-democratic to Leftist versus anti-Communist regimes generate different results? While labeling governments as anti-Communist is problematic, two regimes in South America stand out as the ones most likely perceived by the United States as Leftist: João Goulart (1961-1964) in Brazil and Salvador Allende (1970-1973) in Chile. We can assume that the United States saw other regional governments as anti-Communist, although certainly in varying degrees. Yet this new paradigm still presents some ambiguities. For example, the Special Action Force conducted no missions with the Brazilian military during the Goulart presidency. Conversely, the Special Action Force did conduct several training missions to Chile during Allende's term of office although none included counterinsurgency training. The periodization of these records also limits the conclusions that we can draw. The Special Action Force did not exist prior to João Goulart's assumption of the presidency of Brazil in 1961 so it is not possible to compare mobile training team engagements before his tenure. Similarly, the U.S. Army deactivated the Special Action Force in 1973 so it is not possible to determine if training team support to the military authoritarian government of Augusto Pinochet increased or decreased after the 1973 coup d'état based the currently available U.S. Army records.<sup>103</sup>

However, if we narrow the focus again to consider only counterinsurgency training, the data allows us new insights. The Special Action Force conducted forty-nine counterinsurgency training missions in South America during its lifespan. Thirty-three of those missions supported democratic governments (sixty-seven percent) while sixteen

---

<sup>103</sup> The Army deactivated the Special Action Force for Latin America and the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces in June 1972, reorganizing its units into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group and the Security Assistance Force. The available annual historical reports for this unit end in 1973. For the purpose of this dissertation the records of the Security Assistance Force and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group are included with the previous reports and both organizations are referred to by their earlier nomenclature (see Security Assistance Force Historical Summary 1972, USAHEC, 16).

assisted non-democratic governments (thirty-three percent). These results are very similar to the percentages of total training team missions by regime type (see above). Yet changing the paradigm from democratic versus non-democratic to Leftist versus anti-Communist regimes in the case of counterinsurgency training yields surprising clarity. The Special Action Force never provided counterinsurgency training to the security forces of a Leftist government in South America.<sup>104</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The election of John F. Kennedy as President in January 1961 brought counterinsurgency to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy in the Third World. At the opening of the decade of the 1960s the U.S. Army lacked a specialized organization to teach its new counterinsurgency doctrine to foreign militaries. It quickly assigned that mission to its Special Forces. The Army formed these units in the 1950s to conduct unconventional warfare by training and leading guerrilla units in enemy controlled areas during wartime. In the late 1950s these formations underwent a dramatic expansion. Special Forces during this period became the Army's counterinsurgency experts, adding the responsibility for training local forces to fight against guerrillas in friendly nation controlled areas to its repertoire of unconventional warfare skills.

The Army deployed several hundred Special Forces men and other experts to the Panama Canal Zone in 1962 to establish a new Special Action Force for Latin America. This organization brought the specialized military skills, cultural knowledge and language capabilities required to undertake its mission to "advise, train, and assist Latin American military forces in counterinsurgency."<sup>105</sup> The unit accomplished its mission

---

<sup>104</sup> Special Action Force historical reports 1965-1973, USAHEC.

<sup>105</sup> SAF 65.

through the deployment of mobile training teams of varying size, composition and duration—all specially tailored to meet the particular needs of host nation forces. During its ten-year lifespan, the Special Action Force conducted just over six-hundred mobile training team missions across Central and South America and the Caribbean training thousands of soldiers in the skills and concepts of counterinsurgency and civic action. The Special Action Force was a crucial element of U.S. regional counterinsurgency efforts, yet its origins, composition, and accomplishments have remained largely undiscovered by historians.

The Special Action Force, U.S. Army Forces Caribbean (its headquarters) and the U.S. Army Missions stationed in Latin American countries all interacted to orchestrate the Army's mobile training team effort. No single source outlines the complex internal procedures and protocols the Army developed and implemented to manage this endeavor. Nevertheless, analysis and interpretation of a wide variety of reports, records, correspondence, personal accounts and secondary sources yield a reasonably accurate recreation of this process. These same records also provide surprising new information. For example, although the Special Action Force trained thousands of Latin Americans during its lifespan, far fewer received counterinsurgency training than implied in the Cold War literature on Latin America. According to the organization's own calculations, counterinsurgency doctrine and skills training comprised slightly less than twenty percent of its overall mobile training effort in 1965 and slightly over ten percent of its overall effort in 1966—its two most active years.<sup>106</sup> Thus despite regional fears of Communism, most South American governments overwhelmingly chose to accept internal development (civic action) and technical assistance support from the United States

---

<sup>106</sup> SAF 66.

through military training missions in the 1960s – not internal security and counterinsurgency.

These same fragmentary records also allow new insights into the challenges the Special Action Force's instructors faced. Imparting counterinsurgency (and other skills) to counterpart armies through mobile training teams was much more difficult and transitory than historians have previously assumed. The barriers to training were more than just cultural; although they faced those as well. Army instructors had to develop teaching methods that would allow them to transmit complex subject matter to poorly educated conscripts, many of whom were illiterate. Training conscripts (who composed the majority of lower ranking troops in all regional armies) also confronted the Americans with the problem of perishability. Exerting tremendous time and effort to train individuals and units whose members served only one-year terms of enlistment meant that sustaining counterinsurgency capabilities required training new individuals and units year after year.

Furthermore, sending one or two counterinsurgency training teams did not equate to an enduring counterinsurgency capability in the partner nation's security forces. One mobile training team mission could seemingly develop an effective counterinsurgency capability in a particular unit, as was the case with the training of Bolivian 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion, the unit that captured Che Guevara. But that capability was very short-lived due to personnel turnover. More importantly, single units, no matter how effective, rarely defeated an insurgency on their own; the capture of Che Guevara in Bolivia by a U.S. trained unit was an anomaly, not the norm. Guevara had largely failed in his efforts to spark an insurgency. In fact, non-Ranger units of the Bolivian Army had detected and harassed his beleaguered guerrilla band mercilessly from June through October 1967. The

Rangers arrived just in time to capture and execute the ill and malnourished Guevara—and claim lasting fame for their exploits. Training local instructor cadres offered a potential solution, but also introduced new concerns related to the control of course content and the quality of training.

Mobile training team missions also faced disruptions due to international and internal crises. Coups d'état, elections, strikes, riots and natural disasters could and did elicit responses by security forces making them unavailable to attend U.S. sponsored training. However, one of the most significant disruptions to the Army's mobile training team effort in Latin America was the growing war in Vietnam. The war effort reduced the Special Action Force's manning levels and those who remained found themselves burdened by the diversion of instructors to provide jungle operations training to American soldiers destined for Southeast Asia. The rising U.S. involvement in Vietnam beginning in 1965, shifted attention away from Latin America at the same time perceptions of the Communist threat began to wane. While earlier momentum continued to drive U.S. training team engagement into 1966, Special Action Force missions declined dramatically in 1967 and 1968.

Perhaps more importantly, the unit's historical records reveal that the organization conducted no counterinsurgency training missions in South America after 1967. The Army's rural-centric view of insurgency, and lack of doctrine for urban guerrilla warfare, made it largely irrelevant in confronting the rise of urban insurgencies in the Southern Cone in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Nevertheless, the barriers to imparting military skills and concepts to foreign troops appear to have been the greatest obstacle to success faced by the Special Action Force.

## **PART II: COUNTERINSURGENCY IN THE ANDEAN RIDGE**

The intensity of the Cold War experience varied tremendously between countries. No area better illustrates this phenomenon than the Andean Ridge of South America. The five nations of this sub-region, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, each faced their own threats and challenges during the 1960s. Each also accepted its own mix and measure of American internal security training. These nations all included remote, mountainous or jungle terrain that was conducive to guerrilla activity. All suffered insurgencies during the 1960s.

Venezuela topped Fidel Castro's list of countries for the export of revolution early in the decade. The Venezuelan Communist party adopted a program of both urban and rural insurgency designed to overthrow the country's fledgling democratic government, and Cuba lavishly supported the revolutionaries. Havana provided guerrilla warfare training to hundreds of Venezuelan insurgents; it also sent money, weapons and even Cuban combat advisors to bolster their revolution. Colombia faced the consequences of a long-running internal civil war. Over time, armed groups had usurped Bogotá's authority over large portions of the national territory. Bandit warlords terrorized the countryside and controlled their own fiefdoms. Rural Communists also commanded remote territories outside of government control, several of which they declared "independent republics."

Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia all included large indigenous populations. Each also suffered from chronic rural poverty and underdevelopment that made them vulnerable to revolution. Ecuador and Peru squelched nascent insurgencies in the early 1960s. Bolivia

received unwanted attention late in the decade when Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara targeted it for revolution. Cuba’s leaders sought to strike a spark in Bolivia that would spread the flames of revolution across South America. They also intended to draw the United States into another Vietnam-like quagmire on the continent. To achieve such audacious aims, Che Guevara personally led the Bolivian *foco* aided by Cuban combat veterans of the Sierra Maestra, Santa Clara and Congo campaigns. The guerrilla threat in South America was real and persistent, although it took many forms across the decade.

The effects of U.S. counterinsurgency training also varied greatly across South America. The degree of U.S. military involvement in each nation reflected the level of insurgent threat and that country’s willingness to accept American assistance. President Kennedy’s Special Group (Counter Insurgency) ranked Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador as critical watch countries during its first few months of operation in early 1962.<sup>1</sup> Colombia received by far the greatest number of U.S. Army Special Action Force mobile training team missions of any nation in the Americas, a total of seventy-five between 1963 and 1972.<sup>2</sup> Bolivia ranked second, hosting fifty-four visits by these teams of American Green Beret instructors. Yet, in Colombia only nine of the mobile training teams taught counterinsurgency. In Bolivia, the number was eight. At the high end of the spectrum, Venezuela received a total of fourteen counterinsurgency mobile training team visits from 1962 to 1966. U.S Army trainers instructed approximately 1,600 Venezuelan

---

<sup>1</sup> McGeorge Bundy, “National Security Action Memorandum No. 165,” dated 16 June 1962, Central Intelligence Agency, Freedom of Information Act Reading Room (hereafter cited as CIA FOIA), accessed online 25 March 2015 at <http://www.foia.cia.gov/document/cia-rdp80b01676r000100100035-4> ; See also Maxwell Taylor, “Counterinsurgency Activities of the United States Government,” July 30, 1962, Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter cited as FRUS), Vol. VIII, Document 102. Kennedy established the Special Group (Counter Insurgency) on 18 January 1962 under National Security Action Memorandum 124 and assigned the group “cognizance” for three initial countries: Laos, South Vietnam, and Thailand. Kennedy assigned additional countries to the group in June 1962 which are listed in NSAM 165 above.

<sup>2</sup> See Special Action Force for Latin America unit historical reports 1965-1973, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (hereafter cited as USAHEC).



military personnel in 1966 alone.<sup>3</sup> Seventy-nine Venezuelan officers received counterinsurgency training at the School of the Americas between 1961 and 1964. Colombia sent nine. This disparity in the levels of training across the Andean Ridge hints at the impact of local factors on the reception, efficacy, and outcome of American internal security efforts in Latin America.

The power relationship between the United States and its regional allies in the Andean Ridge during the 1960s was, of course, unequal. However, unequal did not mean subordinate. Latin American civilian and military leaders accepted American military equipment and counterinsurgency training, but they did not serve as proxies of the United States. Colombian, Venezuelan and Bolivian leaders determined how much U.S. military advice and assistance they were willing to receive, how their forces were to be organized, and most importantly – they controlled the employment of those forces in combat. No U.S. military advisors ever accompanied national army units during combat operations in South America during the 1960s and 1970s. The Special Action Force helped build counterinsurgency tools in the Andean Ridge, but Latin American political and military leaders wielded those tools.

Internal political and social factors, not the amount of U.S. training, determined how each country fared during the 1960s. American military assistance almost always played a secondary role. The histories of Venezuela, Colombia, and Bolivia illustrate this point. These cases contradict the Cold War narrative that U.S. internal security doctrines led to military dictatorships and trained regional militaries to commit human rights violations. Despite all receiving the same U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and training (albeit in varying degrees of intensity), each nation experienced its own unique outcome.

---

<sup>3</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, “Historical Report 1966” (hereafter cited as SAF 66), USAHEC, 63-66.

Bolivia suffered from coups d'état and dictatorships (as did Ecuador and Peru), while Venezuela and Colombia consolidated stable democracies. The stark divergence in each country's internal social and political context in the 1960s and 1970s explains the disparity in their historical experiences. U.S. counterinsurgency training does not. Latin America's Cold War historiography has too often overstated the impact of U.S. counterinsurgency training while understating the agency, and importance, of Latin American political and military actors.

## Chapter Five: Counterinsurgency in Venezuela

U.S. policymakers drafted a “Plan of Action” for Venezuela in September 1962. The plan’s central goal was to increase the stability of the elected government of Rómulo Betancourt and enable his administration to “complete its term of office democratically and constitutionally.”<sup>4</sup> The U.S. military, and the Army in particular, worked in support of these goals. Venezuela sent the largest number of students to U.S. Army counterinsurgency courses and received the highest density of counterinsurgency mobile training teams of any nation in Latin America. During the early years of the Venezuelan insurgency, American training efforts sought first to inculcate U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine within the Venezuelan National Guard. However, the U.S. Army did not withhold counterinsurgency training from the Venezuelan Army. The Communist’s early focus on urban terrorism meant that government efforts to counter those activities primarily relied on police and National Guard forces. Meanwhile, developing the Venezuelan Army’s internal training capability, creating institutional and political acceptance, and forming specialized units to conduct rural counterinsurgency, all took time. Yet the United States was not alone in providing doctrine, arms, and military training to Venezuelans during the Cold War. Havana supported the revolutionaries.

Cuba provided money, weapons, ammunition, and guerrilla warfare instruction to Venezuelan insurgents and helped sustain their struggling revolution through most of the decade. In 1962 alone, some 200 Venezuelans graduated from guerrilla warfare training

---

<sup>4</sup> Clint E. Smith, “Memorandum for the Latin American Policy Committee,” 21 September, 1962, FRUS, 1961–1963, Volumes X/XI/XII, accessed 31 May 2015 online at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSup/d225>. The Latin American Policy Committee was subordinate to the Special Group (Counter Insurgency).

in Cuba and returned home to put their new skills to use.<sup>5</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency estimated that the Cubans also provided their Venezuelan guerrilla brothers over one million dollars from 1960 to 1964.<sup>6</sup> But Cuba's efforts went even further – Fidel Castro sent a minimum of fourteen combat advisors to Venezuela, all experienced guerrilla warfare veterans.<sup>7</sup>

Venezuela was by far the largest recipient of U.S. counterinsurgency training and support in all of Latin America, and Fidel Castro orchestrated a sustained military and political campaign to overthrow its newly-established democracy. Yet the nation stabilized its representative government and subordinated its military to civilian rule into the 1990s. How did Venezuela overcome both internal and external threats to its fledgling democracy? U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, as adopted and implemented by Venezuelan security forces, undermined Communist efforts to win peasant support. Over time, patient U.S. training efforts yielded specialized counter guerrilla units that eventually overwhelmed and eradicated the rural guerrillas. Nevertheless, in the case of Venezuela, counterinsurgency training was not the antidote to insurgency. Instead, effective democracy provided the best and longest lasting cure.

#### **CASTRO VERSUS BETANCOURT**

Venezuela stood on the front lines of Latin America's Cold War. Yet one might ask, "why Venezuela?" since this aspect of Latin America's Cold War remains largely overlooked in the region's historiography. It has not received the intense academic scrutiny of the "Dirty Wars" in the Southern Cone during the 1970s or the Central

---

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan C. Brown, "Fidel Castro and the Venezuelan Guerrillas," (unpublished course reading, The University of Texas at Austin, 2012), 10; Jonathan C. Brown, "Cuba's Export of Guerrilla Warfare in 1960s," (unpublished course reading, The University of Texas at Austin, 2012), 27.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Latell, *Castro's Secrets*, 77, cited in Brown, "Cuba's Export of Revolution," 27.

American civil wars of the 1980s. Although often unrecognized, Venezuela was one of the key battlegrounds during the early 1960s. Three factors help explain the intensity and longevity of this insurgency – counterinsurgency conflict: a bitter personal feud between Fidel Castro and Rómulo Betancourt, an ideological contest between Communism and Democracy, and a behind-the-scenes regional cold war struggle between Cuba and the United States.

Betancourt and Castro were erstwhile allies among the Latin American Left during the 1950s, although they later became bitter rivals. Betancourt was the elder statesman of the two. He served his first term as President of Venezuela from 1945 to 1948 while the younger Castro was still studying law at the University of Havana and just beginning his political activism. A decade later, Betancourt supported Castro's M26 movement in the Sierra Maestra by sending weapons and supplies to the guerrilla fighters.<sup>8</sup> Betancourt also offered Venezuela as a location for the formation of a Cuban government in exile. Betancourt hosted discussions in Caracas in 1958 which brought together Cuba's many disparate anti-Batista political and insurgent organizations. These talks resulted in the drafting of the Pact of Caracas which united them into a single Cuban insurrectionary movement.<sup>9</sup> Fidel Castro adroitly maneuvered the drafting of the pact to establish M26 as the central anti-Batista political organization and himself as the sole leader of Cuban revolutionary forces.

In January 1959, Betancourt and Castro congratulated one another on the overthrow of their respective dictators. Betancourt called Castro's victory "another

---

<sup>8</sup> Center for Research in Social Systems (hereafter CRSS), "Internal Defense Against Insurgency: Six Cases," (The American University, Washington, D.C., 1966), 73; Robert E. Quirk, *Fidel Castro*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993), 19-20; Jonathan C. Brown, "The Caribbean War of 1959," (unpublished course reading, The University of Texas at Austin, 2012), 3.

<sup>9</sup> CRSS, "Internal Defense," 73; Ramón L. Bonachea and Marta San Martín, *The Cuban Insurrection 1952-1959* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1974), 238.

decisive episode in the march toward the recovery of public liberties by Latin America.”<sup>10</sup> “We consider Venezuela part of Cuba,” Castro declared from Havana just three weeks after Batista’s ouster, “and Cuba part of Venezuela.”<sup>11</sup> Fidel then traveled to Caracas to thank President-elect Betancourt for his support of the insurgency.<sup>12</sup> It was Castro’s first trip abroad since his return to the island aboard the *Granma* in 1956 to launch his revolution.<sup>13</sup> Yet rather than cement an alliance, Castro’s visit marked a turning point for both men. During their brief face-to-face meeting Castro asked Betancourt for a \$300 million dollar loan or an equivalent amount in crude oil. Betancourt offered to sell Cuba the oil “at prevailing prices” but refused to loan Castro the \$300 million.<sup>14</sup> Castro never forgot the slight. The Cuban revolutionaries’ drift towards Communism over the next several years dismayed Betancourt and other Latin American democrats. Meanwhile, Castro’s embrace of Communism increasingly pitted him against Venezuela’s fledgling democracy.

The two men’s personal animosity also defined their places in the larger international conflict of the Cold War. By 1963, Fidel Castro openly supported the Venezuelan Communist guerrillas struggling to overthrow Betancourt. Castro announced his position in a speech on July 26<sup>th</sup> celebrating the tenth anniversary of his failed attack on the Moncada army barracks. “From this tribune,” Fidel declared, “face to face with the Cuban people, we send greetings to the heroic Venezuelan revolutionaries.”<sup>15</sup> Castro’s opposition to Betancourt was ideological, political and economic. “For a Marxist

---

<sup>10</sup> Quirk, *Castro*, 213.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, “Fidel Castro and the Venezuelan Guerrillas,” 2; Quirk, *Castro*, 226.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 477.

revolution to topple a leader of Betancourt's stature would represent an enormous victory for Fidel Castro" historian Robert Quirk explained. "It would not only demonstrate the fragility of the democratic left in Latin America but also give Cuba immediate access to Venezuelan oil and iron and free the island from its absolute dependence on the distant Soviet Union for energy supplies."<sup>16</sup>

President Rómulo Betancourt opposed Castro out of both principle and necessity. He faced two threats capable of extinguishing his new democratic government. The first was a growing communist insurgency. The second was the ever present prospect of a return to military dictatorship – since its declaration of independence from Spain in 1810 until Betancourt's inauguration in 1959, military strongmen had ruled the country nearly continuously.<sup>17</sup> Embracing anti-Communism allowed Betancourt the means to oppose both threats. Confronting Cuba's export of revolution gave him the opportunity to ally Venezuela with the United States. Meanwhile, confronting the insurgency and the receipt of U.S. military goods and training enabled Betancourt to allay the military's fears of a communist takeover. It also served to reinforce civilian control of the military. Venezuela's generals undoubtedly remembered Fidel Castro's speech in downtown Caracas in 1959. "Your revolution is not over yet," Fidel told the masses, "You have done only part of your job. You still have not got rid of the military."<sup>18</sup>

#### **INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY IN VENEZUELA**

Insurgency in Venezuela traces its roots not to the verdant jungles or lush mountains of the interior, but rather to the barren streets of Caracas. Massive,

---

<sup>16</sup> Quirk, *Castro*, 477.

<sup>17</sup> See for example, Edwin Lieuwen, *Venezuela* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 63, 157; Richard A. Haggerty, ed., *Venezuela: a Country Study*, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1993), 23.

<sup>18</sup> Quirk, *Castro*, 226.

spontaneous street protests in 1960 and 1962 spread throughout the country and convinced Venezuelan Communists that the country was ripe for revolution.<sup>19</sup> Inspired by the example of Cuban success, the revolutionaries developed and implemented a plan for “rapid victory” by the end of 1962.<sup>20</sup> The plan envisioned a combination of urban terrorism and rural guerrilla warfare to topple Betancourt’s newly-elected government.

However, the Venezuelan Communists faced multiple obstacles in their efforts to replicate Fidel Castro’s revolutionary success in Cuba. They sought to overthrow a popular democracy rather than Batista’s corrupt and despised dictatorship. Venezuela boasted reasonably effective security forces, not the inept military that confronted Castro. Moreover, the United States never wavered in its support of Venezuelan democracy. The U.S. decision to withdraw military and diplomatic support from the Batista regime hamstrung that government’s anti-revolutionary efforts and proved a boon to Castro’s guerrillas. But the greatest obstacle faced by Venezuela’s would-be revolutionaries was their Communist affiliation.<sup>21</sup> Fidel Castro succeeded as a nationalist revolutionary, not a Communist supported by foreign powers. Venezuela’s revolutionaries sprang from the country’s urban Communist political parties and the population never embraced them. Nevertheless, Fidel Castro supported them and expressed confidence in their revolutionary efforts. “[O]n April 19, 1962,” Rómulo Betancourt later recalled, “Fidel Castro exultantly predicted that my government would be overthrown within a year.”<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> CRSS, “Internal Defense Against Insurgency,” 81.

<sup>20</sup> Georgetown Research Project, “Castro-Communist Insurgency in Venezuela; A Study of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency Operations and Techniques in Venezuela, 1960-1964,” (Atlantic Research Corporation: Alexandria, VA, 1964), i.

<sup>21</sup> CRSS, “Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict, Volume III: The Experience in Africa and Latin America,” (The American University, Washington, D.C., April 1968), 477-8.

<sup>22</sup> Rómulo Betancourt, “The Venezuelan Miracle,” *The Reporter*, 13 August 1964, 39.



The Communists diligently pursued “rapid victory” in late 1961 and into 1962. Their efforts at urban terrorism in the cities included strikes, riots, bombings and the murder of policemen.<sup>23</sup> They did not shrink from targeting Americans officials in Venezuela either. In January 1962 the Communists bombed the United States Embassy in Caracas. Equally embarrassing, the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN) guerrillas raided and burned the offices of the U.S. Military Mission to Venezuela the following June.<sup>24</sup>

In early 1962, the Communists launched their first attempt at rural guerrilla warfare. It foundered. “Details about the guerrilla movement flooded newspapers after April 1962,” American researchers noted. “Captured guerrillas reported that they had been recruited largely from the secondary schools of Caracas or on the campus of the UCV [Central University of Venezuela]. They said that in training camps they were often taught by Cuban instructors and that their training had included actual combat attacks on rural towns and other places where guns, transportation and communication equipment, and food could be found.”<sup>25</sup> But city boys made poor rural guerrillas. American researchers later described their travails,

The [foray] into rural guerrilla warfare quickly turned into a series of almost unrelieved insurgent disasters. In most areas, the student guerrillas ran into a hostile peasantry which refused them food, informed the authorities of their whereabouts, and sometimes had to be restrained by police and military units from slaughtering the guerrillas with shotguns and machetes. In some areas, the guerrillas fled from the peasantry and floundered about in wild and unpopulated regions until government forces caught up with them and, in some instances, literally rescued them.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Georgetown Research Project, “Castro-Communist Insurgency,” 29-30.

<sup>24</sup> CRSS, “Challenge and Response,” 480; Immanuel J. Klette, “U.S. Assistance to Venezuela and Chile in Combatting Insurgency 1963-1964 – Two Cases,” *Conflict*, vol. 3, no. 4, (1982), 229.

<sup>25</sup> CRSS, “Challenge and Response,” 477.

<sup>26</sup> Georgetown Research Project, “Castro-Communist Insurgency,” 33.

The Communists launched seven rural *focos* (guerrilla elements designed to spark and lead peasant uprisings) in early 1962.<sup>27</sup> Only two of them, in Falcón state and the El Charal region, survived their first few months in mountains (see Figure 2). “The guerrilla leadership in these areas,” American analysts explained, “included men with family connections among the local populations. This circumstance enabled them and a handful of followers to find shelter and concealment after government forces rounded up 71 of the guerrillas originally sent into Falcón and El Charal.”<sup>28</sup>

In spite of these setbacks, Venezuela’s revolutionaries did brush with success in May and June 1962 when leftist navy and marine officers led mutinies in Carúpano and Puerto Cabello. Army battalions loyal to the government managed to crush the revolts and achieve partial success in their first rural counterinsurgency operations. In doing so, they helped stymie the Communists’ first attempt at “rapid victory.”<sup>29</sup>

As the Communists stepped up their attacks and the Cubans increased their support of the guerrillas, the U.S. Army began its training of Venezuelan security forces. During the first years of the insurgency the American army provided only limited support to its Venezuelan counterparts. Thirty-four Venezuelan officers received counterinsurgency training from the Caribbean School in the Panama Canal Zone in 1962, up from just three the year before. The first counterinsurgency mobile training team to visit Venezuela arrived early that same year. The Army dispatched this first team from the 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg; it predated the establishment of the 8<sup>th</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Georgetown Research Project, “Castro-Communist Insurgency,” 32.

<sup>28</sup> Georgetown Research Project, “Castro-Communist Insurgency,” 33. The Charal region included portions of the states of Lara, Trujillo and Portuguesa.

<sup>29</sup> CRSS, “Internal Defense Against Insurgency,” 476.

Special Forces Group at Fort Gulick, Panama by several months.<sup>30</sup> This first team taught counter guerrilla warfare techniques to “personnel of the Venezuelan Army and National Guard.”<sup>31</sup> This notation from the U.S. Army mission in Caracas in July of 1962 is important. It demonstrates that from the outset of U.S. Army training support, American officers recognized and accepted the Venezuelan Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperación (Armed Forces of Cooperation - FAC) as a fourth military branch and a legitimate internal security organization.

Venezuela’s National Guard served in a unique capacity among its security forces. It stood between the civilian police and the traditional military services. “The Armed Forces of Cooperation (FAC), is a fourth active-duty force under the Ministry of Defense,” American officers noted in 1963. It “is a professional, highly motivated career organization made up of volunteers. Turnover in personnel is low.”<sup>32</sup> The duties of this approximately 12,000-man force included “security of frontiers, ports of entry, coastal waters...rivers and main highways; internal security during disorders; protection of natural resources; and control of smuggling and enforcement of customs laws.”<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> United States Army Mission (hereafter cited as USARMIS) to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 July 1962, National Archives II, College Park, MD, Records Group 548, Records of U.S. Army Forces in the Caribbean [hereafter cited as NAAFC], n.pag.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Department of Defense, “Military Assistance Plan: Venezuela,” dated 15 July 1963 (hereafter cited as MAP Venezuela 1963), USAHEC, Narrative G, 2.

<sup>33</sup> MAP Venezuela 1963, Narrative G, 3.

Figure 2: Venezuela Political Boundaries Map.<sup>34</sup>



<sup>34</sup> Venezuela Political Map, 1993, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, The University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 24 February 2016 online at: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/venezuela.gif>

The FAC's volunteer (as opposed to conscript) composition, longer terms of service, and its innate internal security functions made it a natural object of U.S. counterinsurgency training. However, the organization still suffered from several weaknesses. "While the FAC is the best trained, most highly motivated military force," U.S. officers judged, "its lack of heavy armaments and wide dispersal of personnel minimizes its effectiveness as a force individually capable of maintaining order in event of intensive, widespread, anti-government activity."<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, the Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperación became the focus of early American training efforts, not the Venezuelan Army. This ordering of U.S. training priority flowed from Venezuelan government policy. The United States did not dictate this arrangement. President Betancourt adopted a three-tiered response to the insurgency based on his commitment to democracy and the rule of law. Betancourt conceptualized the struggle as a challenge to law and order, not an internal war.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the civilian police assumed primary responsibility for "the maintenance of public safety, law, and order."<sup>37</sup> The Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperación served in a second-tier role supporting police units in urban areas and conducting rural counter guerrilla operations. The Venezuelan Army formed the third-tier. It reinforced police and FAC units in emergencies.<sup>38</sup> The Army conducted direct counterinsurgency operations in rural areas only by exception until the later years of the insurgency.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> MAP Venezuela 1963, Narrative G, 3.

<sup>36</sup> See for example CRSS, "Internal Defense," 79; Georgetown Research Project, "Castro-Communist Insurgency," 147-8.

<sup>37</sup> CRSS, "Internal Defense," 74.

<sup>38</sup> CRSS, "Castro-Communist Insurgency," 147.

<sup>39</sup> CRSS, "Challenge and Response," 491-2.

The second counterinsurgency mobile training team to visit Venezuela focused its training on the Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperación. A team of two officers and twelve enlisted men, this time from the newly-activated Special Action Force in Panama, arrived in mid-1962. The Special Forces trainers spent the following six months training several groups of National Guard personnel. Deploying a full Special Forces A-Team enabled the Green Berets to break into smaller elements and spread their capabilities. The American instructors primarily taught counter guerrilla tactics over the course of their visit. However, this team also laid the foundation for future counterinsurgency training. “In addition” to the counter guerrilla training conducted, American officers in Caracas wrote in October 1962, “the Army and FAC have special courses organized by the US Mobile Training Team in which members of the tactical units are given this [counter guerrilla] instruction.”<sup>40</sup> This team earned its pay. Not only did it train “more than 500 members of the Venezuelan Armed Forces...in counter guerrilla tactics and techniques” and prepare courses for future instruction, it also organized a FAC “instructor group” to continue those courses in the future.<sup>41</sup>

Based on these reports, the first mobile training team from the Special Action Force employed two of the three mechanisms for imparting counterinsurgency training. It trained individuals and it developed instructor cadres to sustain and expand that training after its departure. American efforts to raise and train specialized counter guerrilla units, the third mechanism, soon followed.

---

<sup>40</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 25 October 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>41</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 15 April 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.; Robert G. Foote, “MTT to Venezuela,” dated 8 July 1963, NAAFC.

The existing capabilities of the Venezuelan security forces, coupled with some preliminary U.S. Army training, thwarted the Communists' first bid for "rapid victory."<sup>42</sup> After their initial failure to topple the government, the Communists reorganized their forces in late 1962. They created the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN) as the armed wing of the movement. This unified organizational structure allowed the revolutionaries to move personnel and supplies between their urban and rural operational areas.<sup>43</sup> The Communists also critiqued their strategy. Some revolutionaries argued for a shift to protracted guerrilla warfare. Others still sought the quick road to success. The latter group held sway, and the Communists developed a second plan for "rapid victory." This plan aimed to discredit the Betancourt government by disrupting the 1963 elections. Urban terrorism and rural guerrilla warfare would intimidate the voting populace and derail Venezuelan democracy in its first real test. So they imagined.

The U.S. Army increased its internal security training for Venezuelan forces during 1963. Most of that effort took place in Venezuela, even while the country's security forces dispatched another seventeen students to attend counterinsurgency courses in the Canal Zone. A total of six teams from the Special Action Force visited the country, up from just one the year prior.<sup>44</sup> Three of these mobile training teams focused on counterinsurgency. One was a survey mission for which little detail is available. The second team consisted of just two men. Although small in number, this team also achieved big results. Captain Robert Foote, accompanied by a sergeant first class, arrived in April with the mission to reinforce "Counter Guerrilla training as conducted by the

---

<sup>42</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (hereafter cited as CIA), "National Intelligence Estimate: Prospects for Political Stability in Venezuela," dated 19 February 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXXI, Document 522, accessed 31 May 2015 online at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d522>, 6.

<sup>43</sup> CRSS, "Challenge and Response," 478.

<sup>44</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, "Historical Report 1965" (hereafter cited as SAF 65), USAHEC, n. pag.

previous MTT.”<sup>45</sup> The American trainers joined the “Venezuelan Instructor Group” of the FAC which their predecessors helped establish. The instructor group, comprised of four officers and twelve enlisted men, then conducted three counterinsurgency courses at different locations across Venezuela under the supervision of the Green Berets. The instructor group trained a total of ninety-four of their National Guard colleagues over the course of the American’s fourteen-week mission.

The Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperación trainers conducted their first five-week counterinsurgency course outside Caracas utilizing the facilities built by the previous MTT. The team then shifted its focus. The group next taught a three-week course at the FAC headquarters – most likely this was a counterinsurgency orientation program for senior officers much like those taught at Fort Bragg and in the Canal Zone. After this short respite, the American and Venezuelan instructors moved to a new site in Barinas some 350 miles to the west of Caracas. The teams spent a week constructing new facilities at this site before conducting a second five-week counter guerrilla course. They erected outdoor classrooms and constructed rifle, machinegun, mortar and demolitions ranges. The Green Berets were proud of the work they and their counterparts had accomplished. “Facilities of this type,” Foote wrote in his after action report, “are in general not available in Venezuela except for a few in the Caracas area.”<sup>46</sup>

Captain Foote gave a more somber assessment of the instructor group’s teaching skills. “The first course presented by the Instructor Group was rather poor,” he judged, “although it did satisfy the majority of the training objectives.” The National Guardsmen’s performance improved with practice. “The second course went much

---

<sup>45</sup> Foote, “MTT to Venezuela,” 1.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.



better,” Foote concluded. “The instructors were much better prepared and the classes were conducted in a very satisfactory or in some cases an excellent manner [sic].”<sup>47</sup>

Foote’s team left additional legacies beyond just the additional personnel trained in counterinsurgency and a more polished instructor group. The FAC now boasted a new multi-purpose range and training facility in Barinas. The Green Berets and the instructor group also “prepared a revised program of instruction, training schedules for the five (5) week course, complete[d] detailed lesson plans and complete lists of training materials.” Armed with these tools, the National Guard planned to “conduct six (6) of these courses each year, and the instructor group is now well qualified to give this training,” Foote explained.<sup>48</sup> In their report of July 1963, American officers noted another new capability. “In FAC,” they noted, “a mobile training detachment for counter insurgency type operations was formed under the auspices of the Army Mission and the Special Forces MTT.”<sup>49</sup> The Green Berets had replicated their mobile training team capability in Venezuela.

Although his mission was to “reinvigorate” the previous counterinsurgency training, Foote and his sergeant also broke new ground. They planned and coordinated the first joint counter guerrilla operations exercise ever conducted in Venezuela.<sup>50</sup> “Twenty-two Guards were used as guerrillas in the area west of Barinas,” Foote recounted in his report. “Seventy (70) personnel including the Counter Insurgency students were used as the Counter Insurgent Force and given the mission of securing the area and eliminating the insurgent group. The action started with the CI force securing

---

<sup>47</sup> Foote, “MTT to Venezuela,” 2.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 July 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>50</sup> This is according to Foote’s account and he was in a good position to know. Foote, “MTT to Venezuela,” 2.

certain critical points and placing an extensive patrol plan into effect.”<sup>51</sup> The Venezuelan Air Force provided reconnaissance and aerial resupply support to the FAC units. The National Guardsmen located the guerrillas on 1 June and the Green Beret trainers planned to “drop two Platoons of Parachutists into blocking positions while the CI force moved in the pursuit. Also reconnaissance aircraft were to be overhead with strike aircraft on call. A loudspeaker broadcast mission was also scheduled.”<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, the weather in the training area did not cooperate, forcing the team to divert the airborne jump to the Barinas airport. Nevertheless, Foote judged the five-day exercise a success. “Headquarters GN (FAC) was well satisfied with the operation and plans to have another one in the near future,” he added.<sup>53</sup>

Over the summer, attentions within Venezuela turned to the elections scheduled for December 1963. The Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional developed an elaborate plan to sabotage the elections with the goal of seizing power, or at least improving the group’s position, in the aftermath of national crisis. American researchers explained that:

The plan to wreck the elections had two parts. “Operation Caracas” called for the seizure and fortification of a large sector of Caracas by 800 insurgents armed with mortars, bazookas, recoilless rifles, automatic rifles, submachineguns [sic] and ammunition smuggled in from Cuba. “Operation Moto” was to support the Caracas uprising in the remainder of the country by oilfield sabotage, forest fires, and attacks on communications facilities, military garrisons, and other strategic locations. The approach of Operations “Caracas” and “Moto” was heralded in October 1963 by a spectacular surge in the volume of urban terrorist actions.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Foote, “MTT to Venezuela,” 3.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> CRSS, “Castro-Communist Insurgency,” 74-5.

In response to the increasing attacks and in preparation for the elections, the U.S. Army dispatched Military Police riot control and bomb disposal mobile training teams to assist Venezuelan forces. A Military Police criminal investigation team arrived late that fall to aid in the “establishment of an investigative capability in the Venezuelan Army.”<sup>55</sup> These missions contributed to Venezuela’s internal security. Although they did not teach counterinsurgency, they directly aided the Venezuelan Army’s ability to confront the FALN’s urban insurgency.

Meanwhile, fate intervened to thwart the Communists’ plans. “[O]n 1 November the insurgent scheme for ‘Operation Caracas’ was dealt a mortal blow,” American analysts observed. “A fisherman in Falcón State discovered the cache of Cuban arms needed to support the operation on an isolated beach. A few days later, police in Caracas seized the detailed plans for ‘Operation Caracas’ and thereby averted the chance that it might be attempted without the Cuban arms.”<sup>56</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the Cuban arms cache discovery, President Betancourt asked President John F. Kennedy for “advice on surveillance, infiltration intercept tactics, and counterinsurgency.”<sup>57</sup> Kennedy’s response was swift. “A team of fourteen Army, Navy and Air Force representatives, including Special Forces and Air Commandos, formed in the Canal Zone and departed for Venezuela nine hours after that country’s formal request for assistance,” the American team leader later wrote.<sup>58</sup> The American’s alacrity made quite an impact on their hosts. “Venezuelan officials were most impressed by – and grateful for – this quick reaction,” U.S. Air Force Colonel Immanuel

---

<sup>55</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 16 January 1964, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>56</sup> CRSS, “Castro-Communist,” 75.

<sup>57</sup> Klette, “U.S. Assistance to Venezuela and Chile,” 230.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

Klette, the American team leader, later recalled. “The Caracas newspapers had announced that morning that 120 people had been killed or wounded in Caracas the previous day as a result of FALN activity.”<sup>59</sup>

After analyzing conditions on the ground, this team spent the following eight months working with senior Venezuelan officers from all services to develop a joint operations center. Its role would be to coordinate and synchronize all counterinsurgency efforts. Although they arrived at the behest of a presidential request, the Venezuelan Minister of Defense, General Briceño, still harbored some doubts about the American team. Colonel Klette allayed Briceño’s concerns by linking U.S. support for Venezuela to the broader U.S. regional conflict with Castro’s Cuba. Briceño asked Klette why his team was in Venezuela. “It was there,” Klette told him, “not only because of Venezuela’s request but because the United States faced serious problems with respect to Cuba and needed Venezuela’s help. Possibly no North Americans had ever asked him, or perhaps any other Venezuelan, for help. But from that moment on the door was open to the team [sic].”<sup>60</sup> This passage demonstrates that at least some American and Venezuelan officers perceived U.S. assistance to Venezuela as part of a broader anti-Communist struggle against Cuba. It also highlights Klette’s diplomatic skills.

Cuba’s leaders also saw their support to Venezuela’s guerrillas as part of a broader struggle against the United States. “When the people of Venezuela are victorious,” Blas Roca, Cuban Communist Party spokesman, declared from Havana in January 1963, “when they get their total independence from imperialism, then all America will take fire, all America will push forward, all America will be liberated once

---

<sup>59</sup> Klette, “U.S. Assistance to Venezuela and Chile,” 230.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

and for all from the ominous yoke of Yankee imperialism. Their fight helps us today, and their victory will mean a tremendous boost for us. We will no longer be a solitary island of the Caribbean facing the Yankee imperialists, for we will have land support on the continent.”<sup>61</sup>

As the December 1963 elections neared, Venezuelan security forces again marshalled their efforts and confronted the rebels throughout the country. But it was the Venezuelan voter that crushed the Communists’ second bid for “rapid victory.” Undeterred by threats and terrorism citizens marched to the polls in droves. Some ninety-one percent of eligible voters cast their ballots on 1 December 1963.<sup>62</sup> “Although the element of fear was present,” American researchers later noted, “voters stood for hours in long lines outside the polling places. The voter participation in the December 1963 elections was a stunning rebuff to the entire Castro-Communist terrorist campaign...The elections were clear proof that the Venezuelan people preferred democratic procedures to the Castro-Communist insurgency as a means of registering political dissent.”<sup>63</sup>

Many contemporary researchers and historians later rightly cited the 1963 elections as a watershed moment in Venezuela’s fight against insurgency. However, the government laid the foundations for this success much earlier. One major element was Betancourt’s land reform policies. “Between 1959 and 1963,” one historian notes, “Betancourt’s government distributed more than one and one-half million hectares [of land], more than half of which had been expropriated from big landowners.”<sup>64</sup> The government also gave out agrarian credits, constructed roads and aqueducts, improved

---

<sup>61</sup> Blas Roca, as quoted in Rómulo Betancourt, “The Venezuelan Miracle,” *The Reporter*, 13 August 1964, 39.

<sup>62</sup> CRSS, “Castro-Communist Insurgency,” 76.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Brown, “Fidel Castro and the Venezuelan Guerrillas,” 6.

schools and invested in rural electrification.<sup>65</sup> “The loyalties of the majority of campesinos lie with the present administration,” American officers judged in 1963, “whose efforts in the fields of education and land reform appear to impress the people.”<sup>66</sup> President Betancourt himself later elucidated his success. “The basic fact that explains the survival of democracy in Venezuela against all attempts to destroy it,” he wrote, “is that it had the support of the decisive majority of all Venezuelans.”<sup>67</sup> Public support was critical – and here is where U.S. counterinsurgency instruction made its most important contribution. Venezuelan Army officers rapidly internalized the counterinsurgency concepts they learned from their American counterparts. Instilling the tactics and raising counter guerrilla units took longer.

Venezuelan officers adopted and applied U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine from as early as January 1963. This doctrine focused on uplifting the population rather than terrorizing it. Not only did it help prevent rural campesinos from joining the insurgency, the new counterinsurgency doctrine converted many of them into willing collaborators of the government forces. In February 1963, Lieutenant Colonel Jorge E. Osorio-García of the Venezuelan Army gave a press interview regarding his unit’s recent counter guerrilla operations in the Falcón area. His comments illustrate the impact of the new counterinsurgency concepts. “At first they [the residents of the mountains] were reactionary,” Osorio- García explained. “This was because they thought that we – the military – were going to cut off heads and commit atrocities.”<sup>68</sup> The Army had brutalized the peasantry under the Gómez dictatorship and the locals remembered. “The Chief of

---

<sup>65</sup> CRSS, “Castro,” 172.

<sup>66</sup> MAP Venezuela 63, Narrative B, 1.

<sup>67</sup> Betancourt, “The Venezuelan Miracle,” 41.

<sup>68</sup> CRSS, “Castro-Communist Insurgency,” 223.

Operations explained that in the area now under military occupation, they were utilizing a doctrine different from that employed in earlier epochs. Previously, they believed it was the Army which must be feared, not the guerrillas or bandits,” Osorio- García continued. “At present, the new [counterinsurgency] technique proclaimed the complete opposite: ‘We must capture or destroy the active guerrilla, but we must win the population to our side, as well as the collaborators and the passive guerrillas’”<sup>69</sup> In other words, the Venezuelan Army sought to win hearts and minds. An Army General Staff officer reinforced the point. “The Army is studying and has initiated activities in Falcón which are independent of the persecution of the guerrillas,” he explained. “It believes that popular education, and the solution of problems which seemingly are minor but are of great importance in peasant life, are the best weapons to combat the deplorable activities of those ambitious persons who rebel against the legitimate government and attempt to drag the peasantry into their absurd adventure.”<sup>70</sup>

The newly imported counterinsurgency doctrine quickly bore fruit. In March 1963, the head of the Falcón Campesino Federation told reporters that, “In my constant visits to the peasant regions [in Falcón], the peasants carry out their work in the most complete normalcy. They have not presented denunciations of any kind of abuse,” he added, “very much to the contrary, they feel protected and benefited by the presence of detachments of government forces, which has already removed the danger of the outlaws.”<sup>71</sup>

This patient and careful approach by the Venezuelan Army, together with other beneficial government policies and programs, exemplified the tenets of U.S. Army

---

<sup>69</sup> CRSS, “Castro-Communist Insurgency,” 223-4.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

counterinsurgency doctrine. It closely mirrored the Special Warfare Center's admonition that "suppressive action alone will not eliminate an insurgent movement. Rather, any program for countering an insurgency must be coupled with positive efforts to remove the basic causes of discontent and to facilitate social and economic progress through peaceful means... [and rests on] the absolute necessity for popular support."<sup>72</sup> Not all militaries in Latin America embraced the positive aspects of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, as did the Venezuelans. Other armies utilized state terror to the opposite effect, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate.

Meanwhile, the Venezuelan Communists did not abandon revolution after the failure of their second bid for "rapid victory." Instead, they turned to protracted guerrilla warfare.<sup>73</sup> Cuba continued the fight as well. "Venezuela remains a priority target in Communist efforts to promote violent revolution in Latin America," Central Intelligence Agency analysts warned in February 1964, "primarily because Fidel Castro cannot afford to allow such an important democratic reformist regime to succeed."<sup>74</sup> As the Communists and their Cuban benefactors shifted their efforts to training and equipping guerrilla bands in 1964, the U.S. Army turned its attention to training specialized Venezuelan Army and FAC counter guerrilla units to find and eradicate them.<sup>75</sup>

The Venezuelan Army began planning its first *cazadores* ("hunters" in Spanish) counter guerrilla unit in mid-1963.<sup>76</sup> However, it took considerable time for the unit to take shape. The Army constituted the new "Destacamento de Cazadores Páez," (Páez

---

<sup>72</sup> United States Department of the Army, "U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare (Airborne) Ft. Bragg, N.C. 1964," (hereafter cited as USAJFKCSW 1964), USAHEC, 13.

<sup>73</sup> CRSS, "Castro-Communist Insurgency," xiii.

<sup>74</sup> CIA, "Prospects for Political Stability in Venezuela," 3.

<sup>75</sup> The Venezuelan Communist party officially supported the rural guerrillas until 1966.

<sup>76</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 18 July 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.



Hunters Battalion) named after independence hero José Antonio Páez, in early 1964. The new unit then underwent six months of basic training through that August. A Special Action Force mobile training team arrived that same month to commence thirteen weeks of specialized counter guerrilla training for the 350-man unit. The Green Berets conducted their training into two phases. Between August and mid-September, the training focused on individual skills. Cazadores troops received advanced instruction in weapons, communications, medical skills, demolitions, and scouting.<sup>77</sup> During the second phase, which lasted from mid-September to the end of October, the Cazadores trained as a unit. They learned “the tactics and techniques of counter guerrilla operations” from their Special Forces instructors.<sup>78</sup> The new Cazadores battalion completed its training on 30 October, but there was no time for celebration. Instead, “the new unit was committed to field operations on 1 November 1964,” American officers in Caracas reported. “The [Cazadores battalion] to date has been the most successful Venezuelan unit in the prosecution of counter guerrilla operations.”<sup>79</sup>

While the first Cazadores battalion was completing its basic training, American and Venezuelan officers sought to dramatically increase the number of specialized counter guerrilla units in the Venezuelan Army. In early August, the U.S. Army made tentative plans to dispatch a Special Forces company headquarters and five “A” detachments to Venezuela, a total of sixteen officers and fifty-six enlisted men. The mission of this massive MTT would be to train five battalion-sized Cazadores units.<sup>80</sup> By

---

<sup>77</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 16 February 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces Southern Command, “Staff Conference, 7 August 1964,” NAAFC, n.pag.

early September, U.S. Southern Command in Panama had approved the Army's plan "contingent on approval by the Venezuelan President and the availability of [U.S.] funds," but the now joint team would include a smaller Army contingent. The revised plans called for fifty-two Army and thirty-one Air Force personnel.<sup>81</sup>

The plans faltered on 11 September due to domestic political sensitivities concerning external assistance. "The president of Venezuela refused approval of the MTT program," American staff officers bluntly recorded. Yet they noted that the commander of the U.S. Military Group in Venezuela was undeterred. He "is proposing a new plan for conducting COIN training in the Canal Zone," they wrote. Betancourt's successor, President Raúl Leoni, apparently shared his trepidation regarding U.S. military assistance. After all, Betancourt did not directly ask Kennedy for military assistance until the final months of his term of office. American officers in Venezuela detected Leoni's sensitivities. "The term 'Counterinsurgency Mobile Training Team' coupled with the distinct uniform of the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (ABN) personnel," Army officers in Caracas wrote in their late 1964 report to the Canal Zone, "comprise a political problem for the Venezuelan Army since all MTT's [sic] must be approved by the president. A change in designation and uniform may be requested to alleviate the political aspect when deemed appropriate."<sup>82</sup> Although President Leoni rejected the plans to train five new Cazadores units in 1964, he did approve training of one more battalion. Consequently, the men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group arrived in September to begin instruction as planned.

While the Venezuelan president harbored his doubts about specialized units (and their American trainers), his army was convinced. The success of first Cazadores

---

<sup>81</sup> Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces Southern Command, "Staff Conference, 4 September 1964," NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>82</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 16 February 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

battalion spawned efforts to raise more dedicated counter guerrilla units. After training the Destacamento de Cazadores Páez, the Green Berets did not go home. Instead, they immediately began training two “especially selected” infantry companies of about 280 personnel in “Counterinsurgency operations.”<sup>83</sup> The Venezuelan Army intended these companies to go into action in January 1965. Meanwhile, the Venezuelan Army made plans to raise a second 350-man Cazadores battalion in July 1965.

Because of its overwhelming success, the U.S. Army mission in Caracas did not want to see the Special Action Force mobile training team leave the country. It was the sole counterinsurgency MTT deployed to Venezuela in 1964. “The Counterinsurgency team completed its original project [training the Cazadores] and then worked with other Army units [the two infantry companies] and will be extended into the second half of the fiscal year,” the Army mission reported in January 1965. “Continual efforts are being made to extend the utilization of this team.” The Army mission also reassigned its own counterinsurgency advisor and Special Forces non-commissioned officer to the Venezuelan Army base outside the city of Maracay “to better assist in advising the Cazadores and the Airborne Battalion.”<sup>84</sup>

Other counterinsurgency efforts continued as well. Venezuela sent twenty-five students to the School of the Americas counterinsurgency courses in 1964. The Army mission added two new advisors to the Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperación, doubling its presence with that organization. The U.S. Army also planned to deliver two UH-1B “Huey” helicopters to the Venezuelan Army on 15 December in Caracas. “Venezuelan pilots and mechanics are being trained in CONUS [Continental United States] by the U.S.

---

<sup>83</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 16 February 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

Army,” officers in the Canal Zone recorded, “and their instructors will then form an MTT which is scheduled to arrive in Venezuela at the same time as the aircraft.” Venezuela’s capability to airlift troops to remote areas, especially members of the newly trained counter guerrilla units, would greatly increase its Army’s effectiveness in internal security operations.

American counterinsurgency training continued in 1965. As the rural guerrilla menace abated in late 1964, the U.S. Army mission’s attention refocused on classroom education. “The combined efforts of schooling – both in and out of country – with MTT operations from Panama and CONUS,” American officers in Caracas wrote, “currently have produced an adequate number of trained personnel in the areas of counterinsurgency, riot control, and psychological operations within the Venezuelan Armed Forces.” The Army mission also reported that, “The presence of US Army advisors in the FAC schools greatly contributed to the development of a common doctrine based on U.S. Army doctrine.”<sup>85</sup>

The Special Action Force deployed three counterinsurgency mobile training teams to Venezuela in 1965. However, the unit’s annual historical report provides little detail on these missions. It is probable that at least one of them trained the second Cazadores battalion in early 1965. The other two missions may have trained other counter guerrilla units or “reinvigorated” counterinsurgency instruction in Armed Forces schools. What these teams, or any others, did not do was advise Venezuelan units in combat. “On site evaluation of the effectiveness of government counter guerrilla forces is prohibited for US Military Mission personnel, as a matter of policy,” American officers in Caracas told their superiors in Panama. “Capability of units therefore is judged only by the results

---

<sup>85</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 6 December 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

of operations and by observation of units in garrison and training areas [sic].”<sup>86</sup> The policy emanated from Caracas, not Washington. “U.S. military personnel in Venezuela are not permitted to accompany local forces into combat areas,” the Special Group (Counter Insurgency) noted in an April 1965 meeting. “This limits their capability to observe and take corrective action.” The American policymakers then “discussed the advisability of a high-level approach to the Venezuelan Government on the seriousness of this limitation.” However, there is no indication that Caracas ever relented on this point.<sup>87</sup>

Nevertheless, Venezuela remained a concern in Washington. In its meeting of 7 October 1965, the Special Group (CI) received a brief report on Africa and then turned its attention to the “Guerrilla Problem in Venezuela.” “The Country Team is urging increased GOV [Government of Venezuela] pressure on the guerrillas,” the senior policymakers learned during the meeting. Meanwhile, “Ambassador Bernbaum considers the scheduled delivery of helicopters, and...training of pilots and maintenance personnel satisfactory.” Surprisingly, the group also recorded that “A request for a Venezuelan military observer team to go to Viet Nam [sic] has been sent to the Embassy and concurrence received.” U.S. Army General Earle Wheeler assured the group that “obtaining concurrence from MACV [Military Assistance Command Vietnam] is no problem.”<sup>88</sup> Wheeler was in a position to know. He was serving as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time. The available records do not indicate if the Venezuelan

---

<sup>86</sup> USARMIS to Venezuela, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 6 December 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

<sup>87</sup> Special Group (Counter Insurgency), “Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Group (CI) 2:00 p.m., Thursday, April 8, 1965, FRUS. Accessed online 27 April 2016 at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d28>

<sup>88</sup> Special Group (Counter Insurgency), “Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Group (CI) 2:00 p.m., Thursday, October 7, 1965,” Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library (hereafter cited as LBJPL), National Security Files (hereafter cited as NSF), Robert W. Komer File.

military observers ever made their trip to Vietnam, but their own counterinsurgency struggle continued.

In January, the Special Action Force dispatched the first of four counterinsurgency mobile training teams that visited Venezuela in 1966. A team of one officer and six enlisted men arrived to train a third Cazadores battalion. The team spent nine weeks conducting basic and advanced training. “Classes included [a] patrol leaders course, radio operators course, medical course, heavy weapons, demolitions and drivers training.” The Green Berets concluded the battalion’s training with “nineteen (19) days of unit tactical training.” The course of instruction they employed was quite similar to the one first utilized in 1964, but it was of shorter duration. “Unfortunately some of the training time was curtailed,” the Special Action Force’s historians later wrote, “because of the operational commitments of the unit.”<sup>89</sup>

In February another mobile training team arrived. This team of two officers and six sergeants conducted a “fairly rigorous” training program for two groups of students. The first consisted of a one hundred fourteen-man airborne company; “three officers and one hundred twenty-six technical sergeants” made up the second group. The composition of these companies and the instruction they received indicate that both were almost certainly specialized counter guerrilla units assigned to duties in mountainous areas. The five week course included “infiltration and exfiltration, instinctive firing, rappelling, suspension traverse [a technique for constructing a rope bridge], and ambush tactics,” the Special Action Force later recorded.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, “1966 Supplement to the Historical Monograph of 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group Training Activities in Latin America” (hereafter cited as SAF 66 Supplement), USAHEC, 64.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

Two other counterinsurgency training teams focused their efforts on individuals. Both teams taught a five-week course of instruction. The first trained “over 1,000 [recruits] who had recently completed basic training” in “counter guerrilla operations...basic mountaineering, instinctive rapid fire, combat intelligence and river crossing techniques.” The second team “provided formal instruction and field training in counterinsurgency to sixty-four newly commissioned lieutenants. The field training included patrolling, raids, ambushes, and escape and evasion.” While the only problem mentioned in relation to recruit training was the large number of men assigned for training, the Green Berets found dealing with the new officers somewhat more challenging. “No major problems were encountered,” they later recorded. However they also observed that, “the [officer] students lacked ambition, especially when they were tired.”<sup>91</sup> The Venezuelan Army leadership almost certainly assigned the men of these groups as replacements for their Cazadores battalions and other counter guerrilla units.

The Venezuelan Army put increasing pressure on the guerrillas during the summer and into the fall of 1966, but the guerrillas still managed to carry out a growing number of attacks. The American military command in Panama observed a “serious resurgence of terrorism” later that year. “The level of guerrilla activity in October,” they noted, “was the highest for one month since 1963.”<sup>92</sup> The same report also noted that that the United States had delivered eight new UH-1D helicopters to Venezuela during the year, and that the country has also purchased twenty Allouette helicopters from France, and fourteen Canberra bombers from Great Britain.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> SAF 66 Supplement, 66.

<sup>92</sup> United States Southern Command, “Historical Report Calendar Year 1966,” n.d., (hereafter cited as USSOUTHCOM CY66), U.S. Army Center of Military History (hereafter cited as CMH), IV-3.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

Not to be outdone, Fidel Castro also reinforced his support of the Venezuelan insurgents. Forty men, fresh from their guerrilla training in Cuba, landed on the shores of Falcón state in July 1966. Their Venezuelan leader symbolically chose the 24<sup>th</sup> for their debarkation – the birthdate of famed Venezuelan independence leader Simón Bolívar, the Liberator of South America.<sup>94</sup> Luben Petkoff, in command of the group, later recounted several attacks by bombers of the Venezuelan Air Force. Nevertheless, the revolutionaries persevered and made their way into the mountains to join their fellow insurgents.<sup>95</sup> Cuba dispatched an additional seventy armed and trained guerrillas, mostly Venezuelans, in November. Yet another group arrived in May 1967.<sup>96</sup>

By spring 1967, President Leoni had had enough. He reconsidered his earlier refusal of increased U.S. support for counter guerrilla unit training. In April, he requested President Lyndon B. Johnson's help in training and equipping ten (later reduced to nine) new "Ranger-type battalions." Again the U.S. response was swift. "DOD sent a special team to Caracas to assist the Venezuelans," Walt Rostow informed President Johnson in late June. The Department of Defense "gave a special priority to the Venezuelans and all of the equipment will be delivered by July 1967," Rostow reported.<sup>97</sup>

This major increase in the number of Cazadores battalions tipped the balance. The guerrillas disdained the Army's conventional units, but they feared the Cazadores. One guerrilla leader later recalled "the regular army, which seemed like a clumsy, helpless and blind elephant stumbling up the mountain." The Cazadores were different. He acknowledged them as "a special body... a kind of counter guerrilla." Other guerrilla

---

<sup>94</sup> Brown, "Fidel Castro and the Venezuelan Guerrillas," 34.

<sup>95</sup> Richard Gott, *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America* (London: Thomas Nelsons and Sons, 1970), 151.

<sup>96</sup> Brown, "Fidel Castro and the Venezuelan Guerrillas," 35, 36.

<sup>97</sup> Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson, dated 7 April 1967, NSF, Intelligence File, Box 2, LBJPL, enclosure 1a, 2.



leaders also singled out the Cazadores as tenacious and very effective. “They were a politically indoctrinated group, superbly trained and clever,” Luben Petkoff recounted. “[T]hey utilized guerrilla tactics to fight the guerrillas. They lived and slept in the mountains, keeping their camp as though they were themselves guerrillas. Therefore, of course, when you see that you are fighting an enemy that not only is not foolish, as we had believed, but is in fact clever and much more numerous than you, you have to begin changing your mind.”<sup>98</sup>

The nine new Cazadores battalions, joining those previously trained and other counterinsurrection formations, proved too much for the revolutionaries. By 1968, “the government [had] fielded 13 battalions of specialized and heavily armed antiguerrilla troops,” CIA analysts noted.<sup>99</sup> That same year the number of active guerrillas dwindled to about two hundred.<sup>100</sup> This was a significant drop from the four hundred or so estimated by U.S. policymakers to have been fighting in summer 1967.<sup>101</sup> The Venezuelan Army relentlessly pursued the remaining guerrilla bands throughout 1968 and beyond, but by then the revolution was essentially over. In April 1969, the Venezuelan Minister of Defense met with the United States Secretary of Defense in Washington. According to the notes of the meeting, General Marín García Villasmil told his American counterpart “that the problem of insurgency in Venezuela is under control.” “There are two or three major insurgency groups,” García explained, “but they are not effective. The Venezuelan

---

<sup>98</sup> Aragorn Storm Miller, “Precarious Paths to Freedom: The United States, the Caribbean Basin, & the New Politics of the Latin American Cold War, 1958-1968,” (unpublished dissertation, the University of Texas at Austin, 2012), 365, 368.

<sup>99</sup> CIA, “Status of Insurgency in Venezuela,” 31 October 1968, CIA FOIA, accessed 31 May 2015 online at [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/89801/DOC\\_0000126963.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000126963.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*; Miller, “Precarious Paths to Freedom,” 380.

<sup>101</sup> Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 7 April 1967, NSF, Intelligence File, Box 2, LBJPL.

armed forces have gone into isolated areas of the country, where they have engaged in civic action projects and give[n] the local populace a chance to voice their problems to representatives of the government.”<sup>102</sup> Adoption of a benign counterinsurgency doctrine and years of patient American counterinsurgency training, coupled with effective democracy and reasonably good governance, had thwarted the Communist’s decade long attempt at revolution.

## CONCLUSION

Fidel Castro selected Venezuela as one of the first countries he targeted for the export of revolution. Although largely overlooked in the historiography of Latin America’s Cold War, Venezuela was a key battleground throughout the 1960s. The United States supported Venezuela’s fledgling democracy with military assistance while Cuba sent its own financial and military aid to the Venezuelan Communists. Yet despite almost ten years of effort and external backing, the revolutionaries in Venezuela never overcame their lack of popular support. The transplanted urban guerrillas failed in their bid to put down roots in the countryside. The goodwill engendered by effective electoral democracy undermined the Communists’ calls for revolution. Land reform eased rural discontent. Meanwhile, patient and careful counterinsurgency operations and civic action by Venezuelan security forces, based on the tenets of U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine, also helped deny the insurgents the ability to gain peasant support. Venezuela exemplified the validity of the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center’s 1964 admonition that “any program for countering an insurgency must be coupled with positive efforts to

---

<sup>102</sup> United States Department of Defense, “Visit of Venezuelan Minister of Defense,” dated 25 April 1969, FRUS 1969–1976, Volume E–10, Document 657, accessed 31 May 2015 online at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d657>.

remove the basic causes of discontent and to facilitate social and economic progress through peaceful means.”<sup>103</sup>

U.S. Army counter guerrilla training took longer to reach fruition, but it was only a matter of time for Venezuelan forces to develop the organizational expertise and a sufficient number of specialized units required to finally eradicate the guerrillas. The Venezuelan Army and National Guard undertook the three elements required to develop effective and durable counterinsurgency forces. First, they accepted individual training. Venezuela dispatched ninety students to U.S. Army counterinsurgency schools between 1961 and 1964 – the highest attendance of any Latin American nation. Second, they developed specialized counter guerrilla units, most of which received training from the Special Action Force. Fourteen counterinsurgency mobile training teams visited Venezuela from 1962 to 1966, again the highest of any Latin American country. Lastly, the Venezuelan Army and National Guard developed their own instructor cadres to overcome the challenges of conscription and to sustain and spread their newly-acquired counterinsurgency training across their respective forces. The case of Venezuela aptly demonstrates that these three elements were crucial to developing an effective and enduring counterinsurgency capability.

Venezuela received the highest density of U.S. counterinsurgency training of any armed forces in the Americas during the 1960s. Yet despite this supposedly corrosive training, Venezuela did not suffer any military coups d'état attempts between 1963 and 1992, nor did its military forces resort to “dirty war” tactics in facing a prolonged insurgency. Despite this high density of American counterinsurgency training, successive Venezuelan presidents controlled what training the country accepted. They alone

---

<sup>103</sup> USAJFKCSW 1964, 13.

determined the number of counter guerrilla battalions formed in the country. Moreover, Venezuelan civilian leaders directed the employment of counterinsurgency forces and Venezuelan military officers led them in combat. Americans did not. Venezuela's democratic presidents of the 1960s all exhibited due caution in employing armed force to counter the guerrilla threat. Rómulo Betancourt assigned the police and National Guard to the primary responsibility for confronting the insurgency in the cities. He restricted the army's combat and counter guerrilla operations to the countryside. The presidents that followed him maintained these policies and in doing so they liked spared unintended civilian casualties. Adopting the tenets of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, and maintaining civilian control, gave the Venezuelan military the means to defeat a Cuban-supported Communist insurgency without resorting to dictatorship, murder, disappearances, or torture. Nonetheless, counterinsurgency was only an antidote to insurgency; democracy proved to be the real cure.

## Chapter Six: Counterinsurgency in Colombia

Colombia's post-World War Two history made it unique among Latin American nations. Its troubles began earlier than most. Colombia's violence problem of the late 1950s and early 1960s stemmed from an incomplete process of reconciliation in the aftermath of an earlier period of civil war rather than Communist insurgency. Internal security efforts in that nation predated both Cuba's export of revolution and the United States' "counterinsurgency era" under the Kennedy administration. This bloody era, known as "La Violencia," began with an urban riot in Bogotá in April 1948. The violence quickly spread to countryside as Liberal and Conservative political factions took up arms against each other. Policymakers and historians later estimated that some 150,000 to 250,000 people perished between 1948 and 1959 during La Violencia.<sup>1</sup> Government responses alternated between military repression and political reconciliation, but all proved incapable of bringing lasting peace. Meanwhile, over the decade rural violence slowly morphed from political to criminal in nature.

By the end of the 1950s, rural violence was endemic and persisted in "five of Colombia's richest provinces" according to U.S. presidential advisors.<sup>2</sup> The Americans

---

<sup>1</sup> Accounts vary, see for example, Central Intelligence Agency, "Banditry and Insurgency in Colombia," 22 July 1966, CIA FOIA, accessed 31 May 2015 online at [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/89801/DOC\\_0000598514.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000598514.pdf), 1; United States Department of State, "Violence in Colombia: a case study," dated 6 April 1964, LBJPL, NSF, Country File, "Colombia, Vol. 1.," Box 14, 1; Time, "A Changing Role," Vol. 84, Issue 21, 13 November 1964; Dennis M. Rempe, "The Origin of Internal Security in Colombia: Part I – a CIA Special Team Surveys La Violencia, 1959-1960" *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 10, no. 3. (Winter 1999), 38.

<sup>2</sup> Department of State, Position Paper: "State Visit by Colombian President Lleras," 5 April 1960, Digital National Security Archives (hereafter cited as DNSA), accessed 31 May 2015 online at <http://ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/docview/1679065289?accountid=7118>, 2.

also noted that this phenomenon was “characterized more by lawlessness, murder and banditry than by politically-motivated guerrilla warfare.”<sup>3</sup> Colombian and American officials of the time recognized that rural violence was mainly criminal and not ideological in nature. Most rural armed groups sought local autonomy to conduct illicit activities and control territory rather than seeking to overthrow the central government. However, the Cuban Revolution and the Cold War did affect Colombia. These same U.S. and Colombian officials feared that rural insecurity left the country vulnerable to Cuban-style guerrilla warfare, and they often referred to Colombia’s violence problem as a form of insurgency.

The year 1958 ushered in a new era of political compromise between the Liberals and Conservatives. Alberto Lleras Camargo, Colombia’s first president elected under the National Front agreement, issued an amnesty in 1958 forgiving all previous political violence committed since 1948. Although the amnesty did reduce rural bloodshed, some bandits and guerrillas rejected reconciliation. Lleras Camargo was unable to eliminate these remaining armed groups. Therefore, in 1959, he sought assistance from the United States. In response, President Dwight D. Eisenhower dispatched a special counterinsurgency survey team to investigate Colombia’s violence and provide recommendations to the government on how to counter the persistent insecurity. These efforts achieved only partial success. Yet, Colombia’s 1959 request for U.S. assistance and the special team visit did help establish an enduring United States-Colombian security relationship.

During the 1960s, Colombia accepted the greatest number of Special Action Force mobile training team visits of any Latin American nation. Seventy-five Green

---

<sup>3</sup> Department of State, “State Visit by Colombian President Lleras.”

Beret teams visited Colombia from 1962 to 1972, but only nine taught counterinsurgency skills. Five of those missions focused on psychological operations -- just four related to doctrine and tactics. Colombia dispatched a mere fourteen students to attend U.S. Army counterinsurgency courses between 1961 and 1964. By comparison, Venezuela sent ninety. Colombia confronted ongoing rural violence in the early 1960s and asked for and accepted high level U.S. internal security assistance. But Colombia apparently received only the barest level of counterinsurgency training. What explains this seeming disconnect?

The 1959 American survey team found that Colombian security forces had already developed basic counter guerrilla tactics. In fact, due to years of conflict in the hinterlands, some Colombian officers boasted greater counter guerrilla experience than their American counterparts. In 1960, the Colombian Army also already possessed an effective light infantry school and several small counter guerrilla units. However, American survey team members found the Colombian Army's tactics limited and their overall posture defensive. Colombian units were capable of responding to armed groups when and if they encountered them, but they did not actively seek them out.

Colombia also lacked a counterinsurgency doctrine. What the country needed was a strategy that would enable them to resolve rural violence and reestablish government support and control in conflict areas rather than simply reacting to each new incident and atrocity. American counterinsurgency concepts filled this gap. From 1948 to 1958, successive Colombian governments had vacillated between offering political amnesty to the armed factions and, when amnesty failed, using conventional military force to repress rural populations. In essence, these policies forgave the bandits and punished the peasants. The new American counterinsurgency doctrine inverted this approach. Now the

Colombian government would seek reconciliation with the rural population through civic action and psychological operations while utilizing specialized counter guerrilla units to more selectively apply military force against the remaining armed groups. The Colombian military also found their efforts hampered by the absence of knowledge and expertise in the military skills that augment and compliment counterinsurgency efforts. In response, the United States provided many more mobile training teams related to intelligence, psychological operations, communications, and civic action, than it did for counterinsurgency tactics and doctrine.

U.S. military efforts in Colombia did not seek to implant American-style counterinsurgency capability from scratch. Instead, U.S. support centered on enhancing and improving Colombia's preexisting internal security capabilities. The U.S. Army did provide counterinsurgency doctrine and tactics, but in smaller measure than previously understood. However, because the country's political leaders chose short-term military solutions over long-term political and social reforms, rural insurgency reemerged in the late 1960s. U.S. Army counterinsurgency assistance proved successful at curtailing Colombia's rural violence, but it did not end it.

#### **COLOMBIA'S LINGERING CIVIL WAR**

Colombia's modern civil war began in the years after World War Two. As society split between the traditionally oriented Conservative party and the more progressive Liberal party, the country became increasingly polarized. "The two traditional parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, dominated politics," one historian noted. "While leadership of these parties came from the upper economic and social strata of society, the intense



rivalry that developed expressed itself at all levels of Colombian society.”<sup>4</sup> The assassination of popular Liberal politician Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in Bogotá in 1948 provided the spark that touched off years of intense violence between the two groups. Two student radicals from Cuba observed “the waves of destruction in the streets” of the Colombian capital in 1948. Fidel Castro was one of them. A biographer later noted that the young Castro was “fascinated by the violence.”<sup>5</sup>

Gaitán’s murder triggered five days of urban rioting in Bogotá, and the lawlessness soon spread to other cities and the countryside.<sup>6</sup> “Pent up frustrations and hatreds found release in an orgy of violence far beyond the control of scattered public security forces,” Central Intelligence Agency analysts later wrote. “Conservative and Liberal groups formed in the countryside with almost religious fervor to attack each other with the most brutal disregard for life.”<sup>7</sup>

Government efforts to quell the violence swung back and forth between repression and reconciliation. From 1948 to 1953, the ruling Conservative government employed the nation’s armed forces for the “ruthless repression of the Liberals.”<sup>8</sup> “With neither side willing to back down,” U.S. diplomats later judged, “violence entered its worst period of killings, atrocities, burnings and pillaging.”<sup>9</sup> Ongoing violence and political meddling in the armed forces led to a successful military coup d’état by Army General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla in June 1953. Rojas sought to end the violence by offering an amnesty to the political factions. The reconciliation policy achieved some initial

---

<sup>4</sup> Dennis M. Rempe, *The Past as Prologue: A History of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in Colombia, 1958-66*, (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2002), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Robert E. Quirk, *Fidel Castro* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993), 25-26.

<sup>6</sup> CIA, “Banditry and Insurgency in Colombia,” 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” 4.

success. “Although most of those fighting the Government took advantage of the amnesty and laid down their arms,” U.S. diplomats observed, “others, particularly in the Department of Tolima, continued fighting for their own purposes.”<sup>10</sup> Groups in other areas also rejected Rojas’ bid to end the lawlessness. The political amnesty plan of 1953 failed to end Colombia’s rural bloodshed, and violence was once again on the rise by 1956. Having tried reconciliation, Rojas next turned to repression. “Rojas made several ill-considered campaigns to clean out pockets of Liberal and Communist resistance by resorting to torture, concentration camps, and indiscriminate aerial bombing of the inhabitants of these regions,” American State Department officers later wrote.<sup>11</sup> Government brutality tarnished the Colombian Army’s reputation and eventually led to Rojas’ ouster.

Another military coup d’état ended Rojas’ rule in 1957 and ushered in a new era of political cooperation. Liberals and Conservatives formed a pact to topple Rojas and to create “a coalition system [of government] termed the National Front. This system called for the sharing of power for sixteen years in an attempt to cool the passions which had provoked the violence,” American diplomats later explained.<sup>12</sup> However, Colombian government efforts to end the disorder soon stalled again. “The apparent reason for this was that the violence which had begun as political insurrection, was now continuing largely as criminal banditry,” U.S. diplomats reported to Washington. “That is, outlaw elements in the rural areas were now operating in a number of individual armed bands, associated in some cases with ex-guerrilla groups or drawn from old guerrilla units,

---

<sup>10</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

which murdered and pillaged in a pattern of banditry and protection racketeering.”<sup>13</sup> Yet Colombia also faced a number of Communist enclaves in remote areas. The lack of government presence allowed six of the enclaves to function as de facto autonomous zones.<sup>14</sup>

Alberto Lleras Camargo, Colombia’s first president under the National Front compact, took office in August 1958.<sup>15</sup> “When he assumed the Presidency...Lleras declared an amnesty for all those who wished to lay down their arms and also offered sizeable stipends for rehabilitation and relocation,” American diplomats noted.<sup>16</sup> The amnesty forgave “politically-motivated criminal acts” committed since 1948. After the pardon period concluded in June 1959, the government considered all future acts of violence as criminal or subversive in nature and not political. This was an important distinction as it allowed the security forces to aggressively pursue any recalcitrant groups without appearing to take political sides.<sup>17</sup> “Although some bandits and guerrillas did take advantage of the Government’s generous offer and stopped fighting for good, others refused to trust the Government, while still others took the money but later returned to banditry. At any rate, the Lleras policy of placating the bandits was soon discredited,” U.S. diplomats later judged.<sup>18</sup> Having found reconciliation an incomplete solution, the Colombian President again sought a military response.

Just over a year after taking office, President Lleras Camargo requested help from the United States in dealing with the interminable security problem. Although most of

---

<sup>13</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix A, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Rempe, *The Past as Prologue*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” 12.

<sup>17</sup> Rempe, “The Origin of Internal Security in Colombia,” 29.

<sup>18</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” 12.

Colombia's lingering rural violence centered on criminal banditry, in the aftermath of the successful Cuban revolution of January 1959 and the heated rhetoric of the Cold War, political leaders in Bogotá and Washington worried about the potential for Communist insurgency. Lleras Camargo adroitly played on these American fears to gain U.S. military assistance.

President Lleras Camargo met with the American officers of the Military Assistance and Advisory Group in Bogotá in June 1959 "for consultation on the violence question." The Colombian president sought U.S. assistance "to activate and arm within the Colombian Army a special counter-guerrilla force to be deployed for immediate impact in emergency zones."<sup>19</sup> During the meeting, Lleras Camargo also mentioned the failure of U.S. policy in China and Cuba. He told the American officers that he did not worry about the Communists' ability to topple his government in the short term, but he intimated that "such elements, if permitted to grow in this fertile breeding ground of guerrilla activity, would later become a serious threat to the stability of his government."<sup>20</sup> The Colombian President's comments triggered a high level U.S. reaction.

President Eisenhower dispatched a special survey team of American counterinsurgency experts to Colombia in October 1959 in response to President Lleras Camargo's request. This team of "anti-guerrilla warfare experts," drawn from the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense, boasted members with experience in "the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea... and others who had background in the Latin American situation."<sup>21</sup> When the team arrived in Colombia, its presidential mandate from

---

<sup>19</sup> Rempe, "The Origin of Internal Security in Colombia," 29.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Department of State, "State Visit by Colombian President," 2.

Lleras Camargo allowed them a remarkable degree of access and mobility despite a requirement for secrecy. “Only Lleras and his closest advisors were to know of the existence and actual purpose of the team,” Canadian historian Dennis Rempe later noted, “in order to avoid political embarrassment to the Colombian president for inviting ‘foreigners’ to review domestic security problems.”<sup>22</sup> Rempe continued,

With Lleras’ personal backing, the team worked its way through Colombia in November and December [1959], travelling more than 23,000 kilometers, visiting over 100 military garrisons, towns, and cities with the complete co-operation of local military commanders and civilian authorities in emergency zones. Lleras’ support also gave the team access to both official and private documents from military, police, and intelligence services, church and political leaders, and rehabilitation organisations. In the field they observed both civic action efforts and combat operations against bandits, and interviewed over 2,000 people, including refugees and *campesinos*, labour leaders, jailed bandit and guerrilla fighters, as well as “a number of guerrilla leaders in control of substantial regional fighting potentials.”<sup>23</sup>

The team completed its comprehensive survey in mid-December 1959 and set about analyzing what it had learned in order to develop recommendations.

The special survey team completed its draft report in late-January 1960. In the report the team discussed the security problems in Colombia in terms of active violence (due to banditry) and potential violence (from Communist guerrillas). This differentiation of Colombia’s internal security problems as two distinct phenomena had far reaching consequences for policy makers. Events will show that Colombian and U.S. leaders chose to first grapple with the short-term problem of rural banditry, while taking only cursory steps to address the longer-term (and more complex) issues of rural discontent. The team also found a garrison-bound army, a despised National Police force, ineffective

---

<sup>22</sup> Rempe, “The Origin of Internal Security in Colombia,” 32.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 35. Rempe is quoting from the Report of the Colombia Survey Team (hereafter RCST), April 1960, Charles T.R. Bohannon Papers (Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA).

intelligence organizations, and “security forces [that] lacked any kind of information, public relations, or psychological warfare capabilities.”<sup>24</sup>

The American survey team prescribed six steps for the Colombian government to take to rectify these deficiencies. The team recommended the establishment of a specialized counter-guerrilla force drawn from the *Lancero* (U.S. Ranger equivalent) units of the army, improved civilian and military intelligence capabilities, and the establishment of a government public information service. The survey team also urged efforts to “rehabilitate public opinion about Colombia’s security forces,” a complete reorganization of the National Police, and renewed emphasis on internal development programs and projects.<sup>25</sup>

In its final report of May 1960, the American survey team confirmed President Lleras Camargo’s earlier assessment that “active violence” caused by rural banditry posed the most critical, short-term threat to Colombia’s stability.<sup>26</sup> However, the team’s final report also included its earlier division of internal security problems into short- and long-term issues. In doing so, they may have unwittingly tempted policymakers to focus their attentions on the easier short-term military problems rather than implementing deeper political and social reforms. “The team judged that the Colombian government could eradicate [bandit] groups more easily because, unlike real guerrillas, [the bandits] lacked ideological motivation and popular support,” one historian later concluded. “*Lancero* units, guided by qualified advisors and supported by a functioning intelligence service as well as basic psychological warfare and civic action programmes, could alleviate this problem relatively quickly. By employing counter-guerrilla methods to

---

<sup>24</sup> Rempe, “The Origin of Internal Security in Colombia,” 38.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

‘capture, kill, or adequately discourage bandits and outlaws,’ the team estimated that current, active violence could be ‘substantially eliminated’ in 10-12 months.”<sup>27</sup> Prospects for containing Colombia’s violence were good, the team judged.

On the other hand, resolving the risk of potential violence in Colombia posed a far more intractable problem. One historian later summarized the survey team’s conclusions as follows:

To bring long-term stability to Colombia required wide-ranging reform of that country’s social, political, and economic system. Military solutions were secondary and largely a derivative of nation-building efforts that would entrench a broadly respected, democratic society... Internal security could only be achieved by co-ordinating [sic] military and law-enforcement activities with ongoing efforts to eliminate widespread social, political, and economic injustice. The ‘cardinal principle’ to achieving this goal in Colombia was the development of a true democratic government, reflecting the will of the majority of its people, while concomitantly protecting minority rights.<sup>28</sup>

In other words, a lasting solution entailed both the diffusion of good governance throughout the national territory and an enduring reconciliation of Colombia’s earlier civil war. The nation achieved political reconciliation during the 1960s, but proved incapable of spreading governance throughout its national territory.

#### **U.S. INTERNAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO COLOMBIA**

Colombia’s acceptance of the special survey team’s recommendations paved the way for increased U.S. internal security assistance. When President Lleras Camargo met with President Eisenhower in Washington in April 1960, Colombia’s internal security problem was a key item on the agenda. Violence had begun to rise again from its deep

---

<sup>27</sup> Rempe, “The Origin of Internal Security in Colombia,” 45. Rempe is quoting from the RCST.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

decline in 1958.<sup>29</sup> American State Department advisors recommended that Colombia “pay for the modest (estimated \$600,000) military arms and equipment which the Survey Team has recommended in order to avoid exposure to charges U.S. gift arms and equipment are being used in domestic civil strife.” However, Eisenhower’s advisors left the door open to U.S. funding. “If Colombia does not consider it is in a position to do this,” they suggested, “the United States would give the matter further consideration.”<sup>30</sup> President Eisenhower evidently agreed. On January 5, 1961, just fifteen days before the end of his term of office, he approved a presidential determination for internal security aid to Colombia totaling \$1.67 million dollars.<sup>31</sup> This assistance package included “three helicopters and some arms and light equipment for two ranger battalions.”<sup>32</sup>

The U.S. Army Mission in Bogotá also redirected its assistance to the Colombian Army towards internal security in mid-1961. “[I]nstead of their utilization in the [Colombian Army] school system” American embassy officers later wrote, the U.S. advisors now utilized “the bulk of their [American military] personnel in influencing the entire [Colombian] Army on priority aspects of internal security.”<sup>33</sup> Similarly, “during the latter part of 1961 and early 1962 the Army Mission influenced the training of [Colombian] Army recruits,” American diplomats reported. The Colombian Army centralized its previously dispersed recruit instruction “to provide better training, closer

---

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Colombia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1964), 394; “Beginning in 1960 and continuing into the first half of 1961, there was an increase in incidents. Although this change was not great, it reversed the recent trend and, therefore, alarmed the authorities.”

<sup>30</sup> Department of State, “State Visit by Colombian President,” 2.

<sup>31</sup> Robert F. Woodward, “Urgent Need for Internal Security Aid to Colombia,” 27 September 1961, FRUS 1961–1963, Volumes X/XI/XII, Document 54, accessed 31 May 2015 online at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d54> .

<sup>32</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” Appendix C, 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix C, 1.



supervision, and improved instruction.” Perhaps most importantly, the U.S. Army Mission officers convinced their Colombian counterparts to emphasize counter guerrilla training. “Stress was placed on increased Ranger training at Melgar for officers and [non-commissioned officers],” American embassy officers reported to Washington, “and there was begun the rotation, through the Melgar Ranger School, of whole platoons from the five ranger companies located in the brigades. These ranger units were actually the workhorses of the brigades.”<sup>34</sup> Two new Ranger battalions, funded in part by the 1961 U.S. internal security assistance package mentioned above, provided additional counter guerrilla forces. The new battalions also improved the army’s ability to reinforce any brigade requiring assistance.

Although it rose to a new prominence in the early 1960s, the Colombian Ranger School was the fruit of earlier U.S. military assistance. Colombia contributed an infantry battalion to the United Nations forces in Korea from 1953 to 1954.<sup>35</sup> No other Latin American nations participated in the Korean War. Colombian forces fought in several conventional engagements during that conflict, serving under an American infantry regiment. While serving overseas, Colombian officers became aware of the capabilities of U.S. Army ranger companies which excelled at small unit infantry operations behind enemy lines and in difficult terrain. Colombian officers in Korea recognized the value of such unconventional training for their own struggles against bandits and guerrillas in the mountains, forests, and jungles back home. In 1955, American officers helped the

---

<sup>34</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” Appendix C, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Dennis M. Hanratty and Sandra W. Meditz, eds., *Colombia: A Country Study*, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1990), 260. Colombia provided the only military forces from Latin America to participate in the Korean Conflict.

Colombian Army establish the Escuela de Lanceros (Lancers school) modeled on the U.S. Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the initial security assistance efforts in 1960 and 1961, American embassy officers in Bogotá gave a pessimistic assessment of the rural violence problem and the Colombian Army as it stood in late 1961.

During this period, there was a tendency to ignore violence or pretend that it was as inevitable as the July 4 traffic toll in the United States. Even many elements in the [Colombian] military seemed to have this outlook. The Army was psychologically unprepared to fight and kill fellow Colombians and militarily untrained to wage guerrilla-type warfare. The units were stationed in fixed garrisons throughout the country and many officers were more concerned about continuing their studies in traditional type warfare than in learning to fight bandits with positive results. Also, their morale was very low because of their scant belief in what they were doing. Lacking the desire and proper training, the military also was without an overall plan to defeat the bandits. And if there was no organized plan at the upper level, there was a tendency at the lower levels to improvise and forget the basic principles of warfare: economy of force, surprise, and mobility.<sup>37</sup>

To help address these weaknesses, American officials dispatched a follow-on counterinsurgency survey team.

Brigadier General William P. Yarborough, commander of the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, led a second advisory team to Colombia in February 1962. Army leaders charged Yarborough with several tasks. Foremost among them, he was “to evaluate the effectiveness of Colombian counter-insurgency operations” as well as “to formulate recommendations... for the use of the Special Warfare Mobile Training Team scheduled for Colombia.”<sup>38</sup> Over the course of its twelve-day visit, the

---

<sup>36</sup> Ralph Puckett, Jr., “Lancero,” *Infantry Magazine*, July-September 1959, 21-22.

<sup>37</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” 13.

<sup>38</sup> William P. Yarborough, “Visit to Colombia, South America, by a Team from Special Warfare Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina,” dated 26 February 1962, DNSA, accessed 31 May 2015 online at

general's team detected numerous problems related to the country's counterinsurgency efforts and the Colombian Army's effectiveness. The absence of centralized planning and control degraded the country's security efforts into a series of smaller, less effective campaigns. "Fixed outposts place the Army on the defensive," Yarborough reported, "giving the advantage of the initiative to the dissident elements and to the bandits."<sup>39</sup>

Although critical of the Colombian Army's planning and the disposition of its forces, Yarborough apparently believed that American assistance could easily improve its tactics. He did not mention unfamiliarity with counter guerrilla or counterinsurgency tactics among the problems plaguing the Colombian Army. "The Army's most serious deficiency," he wrote instead, "is its lack of essential communications needed to control maneuvering elements, to relay timely intelligence, as well as to maintain contact among fixed installations."<sup>40</sup> "[T]he Army's second greatest deficiency is its lack of transportation, both air and surface," Yarborough added. Inadequate national and military intelligence, a "sporadic" civic action program, and "little evidence of an Army propaganda or psychological operations program" also made the American general's list of problems.

Yarborough also identified several strengths among his Colombian counterparts. "The Army has numerous officers principally in field grade, who are highly competent and who understand the principles of counter-insurgency in all of their ramifications," Yarborough reported to Washington. "The enlisted men of the Army appear to be generally healthy, intelligent, responsive to leadership and are well disciplined."<sup>41</sup>

---

<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/dnsa/docview/1679049650/7CCD5630E083456CPQ/1?accountid=7118>, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Yarborough, "Visit to Colombia," 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

In his final report, Yarborough recommended fifteen actions for the Colombian Army to undertake to improve its internal security efforts and sixteen for the United States. However, a closer analysis of Yarborough's report reveals his Cold War mindset. Yarborough advocated that American Special Forces assume a direct role in Colombia's internal security. "[T]he minimum Special Warfare Units and personnel now needed to assist the Colombian Army in establishing internal security are," Yarborough wrote, "Five detachments "A" to be used with battalions of the four brigades most heavily engaged with bandits and guerrilla elements."<sup>42</sup> Beyond these sixty Green Berets (twelve men per A detachment), Yarborough added six Special Forces officers and soldiers as "control personnel for each of the above brigades," another nine "control personnel for use by the Chief US Army Mission," and "a psychological operations officers and three enlisted psychological operations specialists."<sup>43</sup> In total, Yarborough recommended the immediate deployment of ninety-seven American Special Forces personnel to Colombia!

In retrospect, Yarborough's recommendations may seem shocking but they reflected the U.S. Army's unconventional warfare doctrine of the time and the Cold War pressures of the early 1960s. American Special Forces doctrine of the day anticipated raising and training indigenous forces for guerrilla warfare behind enemy lines in wartime. Yarborough expanded this approach. He also envisioned his Green Berets training, advising, and also controlling Colombian Army formations in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations during a period of internal conflict. This modification reflected Yarborough's fears of another Cuba in Latin America. In a secret classified supplement to his report, he conceded that,

---

<sup>42</sup> Yarborough, "Visit to Colombia," 3.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Even complete implementation of the recommendations made in the basic report will not bring decisive or lasting results unless there is an appreciative amelioration of the political climate and the economic situation in Colombia. In view of the propensity of most leaders in both political and economic fields to ignore their national responsibilities and to seek personal aggrandizement instead, it is considered that positive measures should be taken to influence the situation if a debacle occurs in Colombia.<sup>44</sup>

Yarborough recommended the deployment of U.S. Special Forces to immediately bolster Colombian counterinsurgency activities. In case those efforts failed, Yarborough also recommended the establishment of covert forces to fight on after the fall of a democratic government. “It is the considered opinion of the survey team,” he wrote in the secret supplement to his report, “that a concerted country team effort should be made now to select civilian and military personnel for clandestine training in resistance operations in case they are needed later. This should be done with a view toward development of a civil and military structure for exploitation in the event the Colombian internal security system deteriorates further.”<sup>45</sup> This recommendation was not a blueprint for death squads, as some authors have claimed.<sup>46</sup> Instead, Yarborough’s concept related to the failed U.S. efforts to establish a resistance effort in Cuba. He was making the argument that the time and place to create a resistance movement was internally before the country fell, not externally and after the fact. He was thinking in terms of the spectacular failure to overturn the Castro regime at the Bay of Pigs just ten months earlier.

---

<sup>44</sup> Yarborough, “Visit to Colombia,” 9.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, secret supplement.

<sup>46</sup> See for example, Patrice J. McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2005), 20; and Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counterterrorism, 1940-1990* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 223.

In any event, both Colombian and American officials balked at Yarborough's proposal for the direct intervention of American Green Berets. The Commanding General of the Colombian Army "General Ruiz was very receptive to everything," Yarborough tersely reported, "except deployment of the Special Forces A detachments."<sup>47</sup> State Department officials in Bogotá later provided an additional account of the U.S. and Colombian reaction to Yarborough's proposal. "His initial recommendation for the use of a U.S. Special Forces Team," the diplomats reported, "was not favorably considered by the Colombian Minister of War, [the Commander U.S. Military Group], or the U.S. Ambassador."<sup>48</sup> Colombian political leaders needed American military support, but national sensitivities limited how much intervention they would tolerate. Colombian politicians and military officers accepted American advice. They also retained full control of their Armed Forces throughout the 1960s.

#### **PLAN LAZO**

One element of Yarborough's recommendations proved much less contentious, but it had far-reaching consequences. He recommended that the Army dispatch two field grade Special Forces officers to Colombia to assist in the development of a comprehensive counterinsurgency plan. Despite Yarborough's pessimism regarding Colombia's situation, the Army sent the two-man Special Forces team later in 1962.<sup>49</sup> The advisory team's planning efforts with the Colombian Army resulted in Plan "Lazo" (snare or noose in Spanish). This three-year action plan prescribed:

- the expansion of counterinsurgency units,

---

<sup>47</sup> Yarborough, "Visit to Colombia," 8.

<sup>48</sup> Department of State, "Violence in Colombia," Appendix C, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 2006), 299.

- strengthened command and control over all security forces (police and military) to ensure unity of effort,
- increased civic action and propaganda to win public support, and
- improved intelligence operations to identify guerrillas and agents from amongst the civilian population.<sup>50</sup>

Plan Lazo provided, for the first time, a single standard reference of sound tactics for the elimination of bandits and guerrillas. “This plan was principally the setting down, in one document, of all of the techniques and tactics taught in U.S. Doctrine Guidance,” American Embassy officers explained, “and the issuance of the document as a Plan and Directive to all field commanders... Nothing was particularly new in the plan. It consisted in an emphasis on training, aggressive patrolling by hunter-killer teams, intelligence coordination, civic action, etc., that is, the compilation of U.S. doctrine and techniques into a modified field manual.”

Plan Lazo also provided a five-phase template for operations. The first phase incorporated “Preparatory Actions” to include training, organizing, and coordinating local security forces. “Initiation of Counter-Action,” the second phase, included initial intelligence and psychological operations to gain information on bandits and guerrillas. “Assumption of the Offense” involved military operations to locate the armed groups, displace them away from populated areas, and cut them off from their bases of supply. Phase four, “Destruction of Bandit Bands,” encompassed the employment of “major reaction forces” to defeat the isolated groups. The final phase, “Reconstruction,” involved the intensification of military civic action and “all programs and activities necessary to

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

establish the [affected] community in a favorable political, economic, and sociological setting wherein bandit activities are not likely to recur.”<sup>51</sup>

Plan Lazo incorporated the tenets of American counterinsurgency doctrine. It emphasized the role of specialized counter guerrilla units to detect, engage and destroy insurgent forces. However, it also stressed the winning of hearts and minds and the need for internal development to remove causes of discontent. “Each officer and soldier will be made aware of the psychological effect of his actions on the civil population,” a précis of Plan Lazo explained. “Reasonable precautions should be taken to ensure that no harm or unjustified fear is incurred with respect to innocent elements of the population.”<sup>52</sup> Such a concern for the civilian populace stands in stark contrast to earlier Colombian government policies which viewed the peasantry as the enemy, or, if the *campesinos* were lucky, with indifference.

This sea change in Colombian internal security policy also reflects a convergence of American and Colombian views. “Early in the National Front period,” Dennis Rempe explains, “Lleras Camargo attempted a two-track policy against the guerrilla zones. Peasants were encouraged to participate in rehabilitation programmes while guerrilla leadership which resisted government efforts to gain local support were eliminated.”<sup>53</sup> U. S. counterinsurgency efforts and Plan Lazo codified and reinforced this new concept. “An essential part of [internal security] operations is the concurrent employment of civic action to win the support of the populace and gain a measure of political stability and socio-economic improvement, thereby reducing or eliminating conditions which would

---

<sup>51</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” Appendix B, 3-5.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix B, 2.

<sup>53</sup> Dennis M. Rempe, “Guerrillas, Bandits, and Independent Republics: US Counter-insurgency Efforts in Colombia, 1959-1965,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 6, no. 3, (Winter 1995), 320.



contribute to further outbreaks of banditry,” the Plan Lazo précis explained. Then, perhaps most surprisingly, the précis directed that “Commanders should consider civic action fully as important as combat actions.”<sup>54</sup> Plan Lazo set the intellectual framework for Colombian counterinsurgency in the 1960s. It also reoriented the Colombian Army’s counter guerrilla tactics from defensive to offensive in nature.

### **U.S. COUNTERINSURGENCY TRAINING IN COLOMBIA**

U.S. Army counterinsurgency training in Colombia accelerated after Yarborough’s February 1962 visit. “With the arrival during the period [1 January to 30 June 1962] of MTTs for counterinsurgency, intelligence and psychological operations, considerable progress has been made in the field of internal security training,” American officers in Bogotá wrote. “Numerous courses have been conducted and all teams assisted in the preparation of a Colombian Army counterinsurgency plan [Plan Lazo].” Yet not all Colombian officers rallied to the new internal security mission. A major obstacle “has been a lack of appreciation on the part of senior officers for modern concepts and techniques used in combatting insurgency,” the U.S. officers added.<sup>55</sup>

Yet some senior officers did understand counterinsurgency. One of them was General Alberto Ruiz Novoa, Commanding General of the Colombian Army, and later Minister of War. “Ruiz argued that the Army must not only destroy the guerrillas, once they were raised in arms,” one historian concluded, “but also must attack the social and economic causes as well as the historic political reasons for their existence.”<sup>56</sup> “We learned from Cyprus, Algeria and other such experiences,” Ruiz later told *Time*

---

<sup>54</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” Appendix B, 3.

<sup>55</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Maullin, *Soldiers, Guerrillas and Politics in Colombia*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1973), 127.

magazine, “that you cannot defeat a guerrilla by regular warfare. You have to take away the support of the population.”<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the apparent intransigence on the part of some Colombian Army officers, their organization already boasted a rather robust counterinsurgency training capability. “Service schools continue to devote large numbers of hours to counter insurgency training,” American officers noted in July 1962. However, instead of sending large numbers of its soldiers and officers abroad to attend American counterinsurgency courses, the Colombian Army taught its students at home, in its own institutions. But it did adopt American tactics and doctrine.

Colombian Army tactics evolved over time. Increasing American support and the counterinsurgency concepts espoused in Plan Lazo drove these changes. U.S. Army assistance aided the Colombian Army in revamping its counter guerrilla tactics, raising new counter guerrilla units, and enhancing its mobility through the use of helicopters. The Americans also helped to improve Colombia’s capabilities for communications, intelligence, and psychological operations.

In 1961, the Colombian Army deployed approximately twenty-five percent of its manpower in rural areas. It dispersed most of these forces throughout the countryside in fixed platoon sized *fortines* (forts). Each *fortín* was located within a short distance of several others. “A bandit *caudrilla* [gang] which had a chance encounter with an army patrol now found that the [engaged] unit was linked by sight, sound, or radio to four more units of the same size, all capable of reacting to the danger in movements that resembled defensive plays by a professional football team in the United States,” historian Russell

---

<sup>57</sup> Time, “Stamping Out La Violencia,” 13 March 1964, 42.

Ramsey explained.<sup>58</sup> Yet it took time to reinforce a platoon in contact with bandit forces, especially in mountainous or jungle terrain. The Colombian Army sought to rectify this deficiency by establishing two special *flecha* (arrow in Spanish) companies which “were entirely airmobile [trained for helicopter operations] and capable of moving into a danger zone on a few minutes’ notice...”<sup>59</sup> The Colombian Army also added an air-mobile infantry battalion in May 1961, intended “for the counterinsurgency environment.”<sup>60</sup> Although these early efforts to establish quick reaction forces did improve the mobility of some army units, the overall concept remained primarily defensive. Colombian tactics focused on responding to bandits rather than seeking them out, as American officers such as Yarborough later complained.

Plan Lazo, and ongoing American internal security assistance, soon altered that approach. The U.S. Army Mission in Bogotá reported a “greatly increased emphasis on ranger-type training for all Colombian Army units to better enable these units to more aggressively combat violence” among its major accomplishments as of July 1962.<sup>61</sup> This observation encompassed two significant changes. First, it recognized a shift in the Lancero School from developing individual leaders, which had been its primary purpose since 1955, to a new focus on training counter guerrilla units.<sup>62</sup> Second, it demonstrated the beginnings of a movement away from small conventional units conducting limited local patrolling to an emphasis on aggressive long range patrolling by specialized ranger-type unconventional units.

---

<sup>58</sup> Russell W. Ramsey, “The Modern Violence in Colombia, 1946-1965,” (unpublished dissertation, University of Florida, 1970), 403.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 404.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 405.

<sup>61</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>62</sup> Puckett, “Lancero,” 21-22; Maullin, *Soldiers*, 73.

By mid-1962 the Colombian Army had fielded several new Grupos de Inteligencia Localizadores (Intelligence Locator Groups). Plan Lazo dictated the development and employment of these Localizadores groups, which some American military officers and diplomats also referred to as “hunter-killer teams.”<sup>63</sup> In the 8th Brigade area, consisting of parts of the Departments of Antioquia, Tolima and Valle, these units varied from two to eight men (see Figure 3). These teams specialized in “quick-reaction counter guerrilla operations” such as “small-unit raids, ambushes, the capture or killing of bandits and especially the gang leaders when they were operating alone or accompanied by two, three or four men.”<sup>64</sup> In other areas the units were larger, “composed of 25 veteran officers, NCOs, and civilians, heavily armed, and trained to operate in the field for long periods... were used to both fight and penetrate hostile groups as well as work with informants.”<sup>65</sup>

The Localizadores groups also conducted surveillance and tracking missions in support of larger forces. Here they served as the detection mechanism. The larger and more heavily armed Lancero and airborne battalions provided the quick reaction forces. The Colombian Army employed these units to defeat the bandit or guerrilla bands after their detection by the smaller “hunter-killer” teams.<sup>66</sup> While the Colombian Ranger School trained the reaction forces, U.S. intelligence mobile training teams helped train the Localizadores groups.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Colombia, Ejército, VIII Brigada, *De la violencia a la paz; experiencias de la Octava Brigada en la lucha contra guerrillas*, (Manizales: Impr. Departamental de Caldas, 1965), 42; Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” Appendix B, 1.

<sup>64</sup> VIII Brigada, *De la violencia a la paz*, 42; The 8th Brigade area was the Quindío region which encompassed parts of the Departments of Antioquia, Tolima and Valle, see VIII Brigada, 17.

<sup>65</sup> Rempe, “Guerrillas,” 318

<sup>66</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” Appendix B, 4.

<sup>67</sup> Rempe, “Guerrillas” 318; USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 8 October 1962, NAAFC, 2.

In 1962, the Colombian Army estimated that it faced some seventy-five armed bandit gangs, totaling just under one-thousand men. The army identified just four of these, with only eighty-nine men, as Communist affiliated.<sup>68</sup> Despite these seemingly small numbers, rural armed groups caused immense suffering. “[I]n 1962 there were 2,919 deaths attributed to rural violence,” the Central Intelligence Agency later reported.<sup>69</sup> Many of the Communist groups also proclaimed sovereignty over their territory, declaring them “independent republics” -- an obvious affront to the Colombian government. Under orders from their president, the Colombian Army soon moved to crush the bandit gangs and eradicate the Communist enclaves.

---

<sup>68</sup> Department of State, “The Violence Problem,” 3 May 1962, CIA FOIA, accessed 31 May 2015 online at [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/5829/CIA-RDP80B01676R001900120024-5.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/5829/CIA-RDP80B01676R001900120024-5.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> CIA, “Banditry and Insurgency in Colombia,” 3.

Figure 3: Colombia Political Boundaries Map.<sup>70</sup>



<sup>70</sup> Colombia Political Map, 2001, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, the University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 24 February 2016 online at:

[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/colombia\\_pol\\_2001.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/colombia_pol_2001.jpg)

Colombian forces underwent a remarkable transformation in 1962. By year's end, the newly-elected president, Guillermo León Valencia, had deployed seventy-five percent of the nation's security forces for Orden Público (public order) internal security missions to the countryside under Plan Lazo.<sup>71</sup> More importantly, Valencia swiftly changed the mission of the armed forces from maintaining tranquility to seeking and destroying bandit groups.<sup>72</sup> Colombian security forces quickly embraced their new, more aggressive role. "[B]oth the Army and National Police," American officers in Bogotá reported in January 1963, "have demonstrated an increased aggressiveness which has produced such excellent results that in many areas the Army has been able to withdraw platoon outposts and consolidate into company-sized patrol bases."<sup>73</sup> These changes yielded impressive results. "In 1962 the armed forces had killed 388 bandits and guerrillas from about 75 active *cuadrillas*," historian Russell Ramsey later wrote. "As the new low violence tactics and civic action took root, bandits began to fall in substantial numbers."<sup>74</sup>

The Colombian Army gained confidence and experience as the counterinsurgency campaign under Plan Lazo stretched into 1963. It also gained new counter guerrilla units and much greater mobility. "A continued aggressive counter-banditry campaign is being waged by the Army based upon Plan 'Lazo' with considerable success," the U.S. Army Mission in Colombia reported in April 1963. "This is substantiated by the increased casualty rate sustained by the bandits and government forces and a decreased civilian

---

<sup>71</sup> Rempe, "The Origin of Internal Security in Colombia," 52. Time, "Stamping out La Violencia."

<sup>72</sup> Department of Defense, "Military Assistance Plan: Colombia," dated 15 July 1963 (hereafter cited as MAP Colombia 1963), USAHEC, Narrative D, 1.

<sup>73</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 10 January 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>74</sup> Ramsey, "The Modern Violence in Colombia," 429-430.

casualty rate.”<sup>75</sup> American military assistance supported the new internal security emphasis. The U.S. Military Assistance Program (MAP) underwrote four infantry brigades with small arms, transportation, and communication equipment. More importantly, American military assistance also helped establish a new Ranger brigade. “The first two battalions [of the four planned for the brigade] have been organized and trained since FY 1962,” American officers reported in mid-1963, “and have been successful in combat against bandit groups. Much of their success can be attributed to the excellent training received by the unit cadres at the Colombian Ranger Training Center.”<sup>76</sup>

As part of their specialized counter guerrilla mission, Colombian cadres and American advisors trained and equipped the Ranger battalions to operate in difficult terrain. “It is anticipated,” U.S. officers explained, “that [the Ranger brigade] will provide a lightly equipped, highly mobile and effective force capable of combatting guerrilla[s] operating in either of the two traditional strongholds, namely, the jungles or the mountains.”<sup>77</sup> However, Colombia contained yet a third type of terrain challenging internal security operations – the Llanos. In order to address this challenge the U.S. Army also began efforts to establish an airborne infantry battalion. “When organized, equipped, and trained,” American officers explained, “this unit will be designated as the elite unit of the army and will provide a specialized internal security capability for one of the most critical areas of Colombia from an insurgency standpoint, namely, the extensive Eastern plains areas which are occupied by less than three hundred thousand inhabitants.”<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 24 April 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>76</sup> MAP Colombia 63, Narrative G., 1.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.



The Special Action Force assisted these efforts. After deploying the counterinsurgency mobile training team (MTT) in 1962 that aided in the development of Plan Lazo, the Green Berets from Panama sent a second counterinsurgency MTT to Colombia in 1963 and two in 1964. The Special Action Force also deployed an airborne survey team in 1963 to help determine the feasibility and requirements for a Colombian airborne (capable of deploying by parachute) unit. After Colombian and American officials approved the plans for the new airborne infantry battalion, Special Action Force trainers returned to Colombia in mid-1963 to teach the unit's officers and soldiers how to safely conduct parachute operations. A second team arrived later to teach the unit the intricacies of packing and rigging parachutes as well as their proper maintenance. Two parachute maintenance and repair training teams visited the country again in 1966 as a follow-on to their earlier efforts.<sup>79</sup>

Meanwhile, the Special Action Force also deployed training teams to instruct Colombian forces in other skills related to counterinsurgency. Five psychological operations teams and four intelligence training teams visited Colombia between 1964 and 1966. Colombia received a total of eight communications (signal) related visits between 1963 and 1967. During the same time period, other teams also assisted their Colombian counterparts with medical training, weapons and ammunition, and supply procedures, among other topics. In total, Colombia received seventeen Special Action Force training teams visits in both 1964 and 1965 – the highest number of visits hosted by any Latin American nation in a single year during the 1960s.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> SAF 65.

<sup>80</sup> See Special Action Force for Latin America unit historical reports 1965-1973, USAHEC.

American assistance also continued to support Colombian efforts to establish a robust helicopter capability. Building on the initial U.S. transfer of three helicopters in 1961, the Military Assistance Program helped establish a new helicopter squadron in the Colombian Air Force by 1963. A total of nine medium helicopters provided by the United States were to join fifteen light helicopters purchased by the Colombian government. “Since there is no Colombian Army aviation,” American officers explained, “this unit has provided the only means for army commanders to exercise proper command over isolated outposts. It has also provided a rapid means for the transport of reaction forces, emergency supplies and evacuation of wounded. The reconnaissance capability of the light helicopters has been of inestimable value in locating bandit strongholds,” the U.S. officers judged.<sup>81</sup>

Yet despite their growing success, American and Colombian counterinsurgency efforts did face significant challenges – and not just from Colombia’s armed groups. Not all Colombian officers proved capable of implementing the new counterinsurgency doctrine and tactics. In early 1963, American officers in Bogotá informed their commanders in Panama that,

The majority of brigades involved in active counter-banditry operations are implementing Phase III [Assumption of the Offensive] of Plan “Lazo.” The I Brigade is lagging far behind the III, VI and VIII Brigades in implementing the plan. It is considered that the I Brigade is still in Phase I [Preparatory Actions] due to poor leadership and a lack of aggressiveness on the part of the brigade and subordinate unit officers. This was brought to the attention of the [Colombian] Army Commander in January 1963. The majority of the Brigades are conducting aggressive operations with increasingly good results.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> MAP Colombia 63, Narrative G, 3.

<sup>82</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 24 April 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

Yet poor leadership was not the only challenge. “The principal obstacle facing the Colombian Army is a lack of funds,” U.S. Army officers tersely reported in the same dispatch. “Although operating on the same budget as in 1962, inflation has required pay increases and caused a 25% increase in food prices and a 50% increase in the price of gasoline.” “The present financial crisis is seriously reducing the number of students” able to attend U.S. military schools, the officers in Bogotá explained. In order to ameliorate these financial problems, they recommended that, “requests for Mobile Training Teams be favorably considered since the economic situation in [Colombia] is extremely critical and limits the number of students to attend US schools in [the United States and Panama].”<sup>83</sup> American commanders in the Canal Zone apparently concurred with this proposal, which explains the high number of mobile training team missions to Colombia and the low rate of attendance at U.S. schools. Colombia’s military officers could not remedy the nation’s financial woes, but they did control their own formations. “The I Brigade, under a new commander and subordinate unit commanders,” American officers reported several months later, “has implemented counter action [phase II of Plan Lazo] and for the first time in months inflicted bandit casualties. Further progress is expected in this area...”<sup>84</sup>

#### **APPLYING COUNTERINSURGENCY**

Orden Público internal security operations continued, and 1963 proved a landmark year. “The armed forces lost 58 men in the *violencia* in 1963, a remarkably small number for the scope of operations undertaken,” Russell Ramsey judged. “About

---

<sup>83</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 24 April 1963, NAAFC, n.pag. The United States paid the transportation, housing and tuition costs for Latin American students. However, most regional countries required their armies to pay hefty per diem rates to service members serving abroad (see Chapter Two).

<sup>84</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 22 January 1964, NAAFC, n.pag.

460 bandits and guerrillas of all kinds were killed, and for the first time since 1946 the total number of human beings who died in the *violencia* was less than two thousand.”<sup>85</sup> Colombian forces had greatly reduced the bandit menace. However, peace was not yet at hand – the guerrilla threat of the “independent republics” remained as a thorn in the side of the Colombian government.

In early 1961, Communist guerrilla leader Manuel Marulanda Vélez (aka Tiro Fijo or “sure shot”) declared the independent “Republic of Marquetalia” in southern Tolima department.<sup>86</sup> Marquetalia was but one of several Communist enclaves, or self-styled “independent republics,” established in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>87</sup> Marulanda founded his “Republic of Marquetalia” in southern Tolima Department on the same ground as earlier enclave known as Gaitania (named after Gaitán), established by other Communists in 1949.<sup>88</sup> However, in the highly charged atmosphere of early 1960s Cold War, Marulanda’s declaration sounded more like an allusion to Fidel Castro’s Sierra Maestra than it did a re-branding of an earlier Communist zone. It quickly gained the attention of the Colombian government.

But these Communists were different. Student revolutionaries, with their imaginations fired by the example of Cuba’s bearded insurgents, plagued many Latin American nations in the 1960s as they sought to overthrow their government by establishing a rural *foco* (nucleus) as dictated by Ernesto “Che” Guevara. In contrast, Colombia’s guerrillas arose from the peasantry. Unlike city boys, who often struggled to

---

<sup>85</sup> Ramsey, “The Modern Violence in Colombia,” 435.

<sup>86</sup> Rempe, *The Past as Prologue*, 27; Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” 9 and Appendix A, 2. Marulanda’s birth name was Pedro Antonio Marín. He adopted the nom de guerre Manuel Marulanda Vélez in the 1950s.

<sup>87</sup> Gott, *Guerrilla Movements*, 177-8.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

adapt when transplanted to the rugged interior, the Communist *campesinos* hailed from the mountains and jungles of the interior. These men were hardened to the challenges of outdoor life. Local ties and an innate fortitude made the peasant guerrillas a challenging adversary. However, Marulanda's Communist guerrillas largely lacked any linkage to the cities, and until sometime after 1964 seem to have sought local autonomy rather than the overthrow of the distant central government.

In any event, the Colombian government in Bogotá perceived the "independent republics" as threat to and an encroachment on its sovereignty. The Army launched a major operation against Marulanda's rebels in early 1962 and narrowly missed capturing him.<sup>89</sup> Later, employing the tenets of Plan Lazo, the security forces sought to rehabilitate the area after reestablishing government control. "Judges were installed, police stations built, and a road building program initiated," one historian later noted. "This operation established a pattern which became characteristic in the 1960s, whereby armed guerrillas brought nothing but terror to each region, but the dragnet operations employed to drive them out were invariably followed by a substantial quantity of construction and improvement in living standards."<sup>90</sup>

These remediation efforts in former conflict areas were part of a much larger military civic action program in Colombia. The U.S. Military Assistance Program aided these efforts. It helped with the "establishment of twelve [medical] dispensaries [clinics] in various parts of the country," American officers explained in a 1963 report, "eight of which will be located in violence areas where no medical facilities exist and four in very remote areas where existing medical facilities are completely inadequate."<sup>91</sup> The

---

<sup>89</sup> Ramsey, "The Modern Violence in Colombia," 415.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 415-416.

<sup>91</sup> MAP Colombia 63, Narrative F, 1.

Colombian Army also built and maintained roads with American help, “enabling the populace in the areas concerned to move their products to market by vehicle rather than by mule.”<sup>92</sup> Civic action projects also drilled wells to improve access to potable water. “A joint survey made by the [Special Action Force] civic action mobile training team and representatives of the host country revealed that potable water is currently almost non-existent in...small villages in rural and remote areas.” Well drilling projects “will be another indication to the populace that its government is aware of its problems and is taking action to eliminate suffering,” the American officers asserted, “thus lessening the influence of anti-government elements.”<sup>93</sup>

By mid-1964 the government forces, having eliminated most of the bandits, again turned their attention to the “independent republics.” In May, they commenced Operation Marquetalia to eliminate Marulanda’s “republic” of the same name. The Colombian strategy encompassed both conventional and unconventional warfare aspects. It employed some 3,500 men in a “combined arms approach that included heavy artillery, air force bombing, and infantry and police encirclement of suspected guerrilla villages.”<sup>94</sup> Later, “170 elite troops were airlifted into Marulanda’s hacienda redoubt in an attempt to capture the guerrilla leader. The government [also] recruited Paez Indians with notable success against the rebels as scouts and guides through difficult terrain.”<sup>95</sup> But the wily Marulanda again escaped the government noose. “The so-called ‘separate republic’ of Marquetalia is definitely under Army control,” American officers in Bogotá later

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>93</sup> MAP Colombia 63, Narrative F, 2-3.

<sup>94</sup> Rempe, *The Past as Prologue*, 28.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 28-9.

reported, “its one-time chief Tiro Fijo has been reduced to a state of impotency.”<sup>96</sup> Marulanda’s incapacity was short-lived. Although they couldn’t know it at the time, Marulanda and his guerrillas would continue to pose a threat to the Colombian government for decades to come.

After driving the rebels from the area, the Army again employed another element of its counterinsurgency doctrine - civic action, in an effort to prevent their return. “To backstop the military campaign,” *Time* magazine reported in June 1964, “new roads, schools and other civic-action projects were planned to draw the peasants closer to the government.”<sup>97</sup> “The Colombian peasant is the soldier’s friend now,” *Time* quoted an army commander as saying, “and we can’t let him down.”<sup>98</sup> Plan Lazo’s counterinsurgency doctrine, and civic action, appeared to be winning the struggle for the hinterlands. “Northern Tolima, [another contested area and] a one-time ‘hot-bed’ of bandit activity,” American officers reported in January 1965, “has been pacified to an extent (estimated at 90%) that has permitted normal life to be resumed in this area.”<sup>99</sup>

Operation Marquetalia was the culmination of a long counterinsurgency struggle in Colombia. Internal violence statistics clearly demonstrate several distinct phases between 1957 and 1964 (see Table 6.1).<sup>100</sup> The 1958 amnesty issued by President Lleras Camargo greatly diminished rural violence, but did not end it. In 1960 and 1961, violence was again on the rise. However, the impact of the Colombian Army operations – and U.S.

---

<sup>96</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 13 January 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

<sup>97</sup> *Time*, “Backlands.”

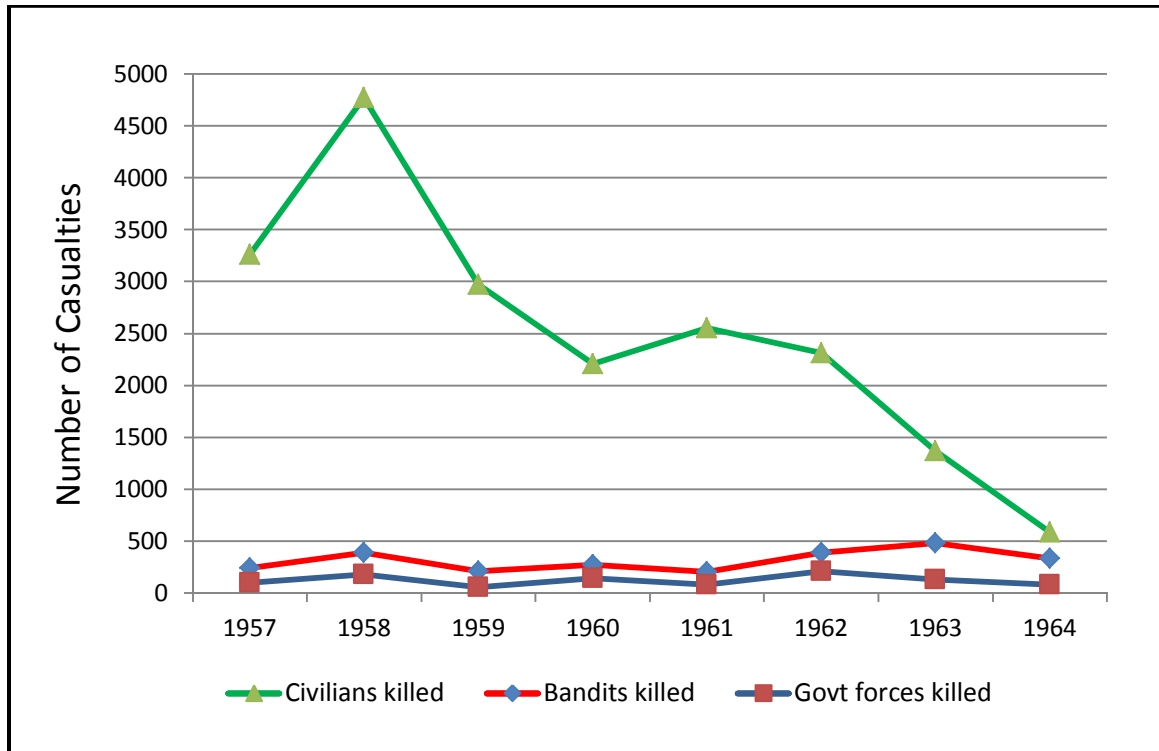
<sup>98</sup> *Time*, “Changing Role.”

<sup>99</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 13 January 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

<sup>100</sup> Figure 6.1 data drawn from USARMIS Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 13 January 1965, USAHEC. 1964 data is through 30 November of that year.

counterinsurgency assistance – beginning in late 1961 are also evident in a decrease in civilian casualties. Plan Lazo, which began in mid-1962, accelerated those gains and civilian casualties declined to their lowest levels since the start of la Violencia in 1948. By late 1964, Colombian security forces had reduced internal violence to a tolerable level, although some violence remained.<sup>101</sup> The “Colombian Army,” American diplomats assessed in May 1964, “after considerable experience in bandit fighting, is more experienced than nouveaux guerrillas in non-conventional warfare.”<sup>102</sup>

Table 6.1: Internal Violence in Colombia 1957-1964.



<sup>101</sup> USARMIS to Colombia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 13 January 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

<sup>102</sup> Department of State, “Violence in Colombia,” 28.



As combat operations declined in 1964 and 1965, civic action grew. In 1963 the Special Action Force conducted two civic action training team missions in Colombia. The following year they undertook two direct civic action missions and deployed another four teams in support of developing the Colombian Army's engineering and medical capabilities. The year 1965 saw five engineer related mobile training team visits followed by another six in 1966. The Special Action Force conducted additional engineer mobile training team missions in 1968, 1970, 1971 and 1972 – long after its counterinsurgency support ended in 1966.<sup>103</sup>

By 1965, Plan Lazo's integrated counterinsurgency campaign had greatly reduced the amount of territory controlled by the guerrillas and diminished their strength. Many insurgents were on the run. That year Colombian Army Intelligence estimated that only thirty guerrilla and/or bandit groups remained active with an overall strength of just 700-800 men.<sup>104</sup> Plan Lazo did not end insurrection in Colombia but it did force the insurgents into a period of dormancy with guerrilla forces ceasing active operations until February 1967.<sup>105</sup> "The Colombian armed forces, which are well-trained and disciplined," Walt Rostow informed President Johnson, "are putting pressure on them... The guerrillas do not represent an immediate threat to [President] Lleras."<sup>106</sup> As noted above, the Colombian Army required no additional counterinsurgency support from the Special Action Force after 1966, although it did continue to accept mobile training team visits.

---

<sup>103</sup> Data compiled from Special Action Force Historical Reports.

<sup>104</sup> Rempe, "Guerrillas," 321.

<sup>105</sup> Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 7 April 1967, NSF, Intelligence File, Box 2, LBJPL.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*; Colombian President Carlos Lleras Restrepo was in office 1966-1970, not to be confused with Alberto Lleras Camargo who was in office 1958-1962.

Yet the guerrilla menace in Colombia was far from over - despite a decade of U.S. counterinsurgency assistance. Shortly after he fled Marquetalia in 1964, Marulanda met with other regional guerrilla leaders in what they termed the “First Southern Guerrilla Conference.” The disparate groups consolidated themselves into the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – FARC) in 1966 with Marulanda emerging as the group’s leader.<sup>107</sup> The FARC, along with the Ejército Nacional de Liberación (Army of National Liberation – ELN), plagued the Colombian government for decades to come. In fact, for all their counterinsurgency training and years of mounting operations against him, the Colombian forces never caught Marulanda. He died, not from the guns of a counter guerrilla unit, but from a heart attack in his jungle hideout in March 2008. He was seventy-six.<sup>108</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Colombia’s internal security problems predated both the Cuban Revolution and the “counterinsurgency era” in American foreign policy implemented by President John F. Kennedy. Rural violence in Colombia during the late 1950s and early 1960s traced its roots to a lingering civil war that began in 1948. No foreign power inspired or supported insurgency. Most armed groups in the hinterlands sought local autonomy for their criminal activities, rather than the overthrow of the distant central government. Successive Colombian governments failed to end the protracted violence. Therefore in 1959 an elected President, Alberto Lleras Camargo, requested help from Washington.

---

<sup>107</sup> Rempe, *The Past as Prologue*, 29; Simon Romero, “Manuel Marulanda, Top Commander of Colombia’s Largest Guerrilla Group, Is Dead,” *New York Times*, 26 May, 2008, accessed 29 May 2015 online at [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/26/world/americas/26marulanda.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/26/world/americas/26marulanda.html?_r=0)

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

In order to aid Colombia, the Americans sent counterinsurgency survey teams to assess the problem and implemented internal security assistance and training programs. However, American military efforts in Colombia did not build a U.S.-style counterinsurgency capability from scratch. Instead, U.S. support centered on enhancing and improving Colombia's preexisting internal security capabilities. The U.S. Army provided counterinsurgency doctrine and tactics through schools and mobile training team missions, but perhaps its most important contribution was its assistance in the development of Plan Lazo - a comprehensive counterinsurgency plan and a compilation of tactics and doctrine. Although American military officers helped, Colombian civil and military leaders controlled the crafting and implementation of Plan Lazo. They adapted American counterinsurgency concepts and tactics to fit their situation and their forces, but they did not cede control to the Americans. Colombian authorities rejected General Yarborough's recommendation that American Special Forces soldiers assume control of Colombian Army battalions and lead them in combat against the guerrillas and bandits. Nevertheless, the introduction of American internal security assistance dramatically altered the country's history.

Plan Lazo transformed the Colombian Army. It rested on the three principal tenets of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine: military action against bandits and insurgents, civic action to improve rural life, and psychological operations to publicize government efforts and gain popular support. Earlier government policies to end rural violence had alternated between the military repression of the rural peasantry and amnesty plans seeking reconciliation with armed groups. American counterinsurgency concepts reflected in Plan Lazo inverted this approach. The government now sought to target the bandits and armed guerrillas while seeking reconciliation with the rural populace.

American military assistance supported Plan Lazo by improving the Colombian Army's counter guerrilla tactics, creating specialized counter guerrilla units to conduct offensive operations against armed groups, and greatly enhancing the army's mobility through the use of helicopters. It also created new intelligence and psychological warfare capabilities, which along with civic action, aided government efforts to gain the support of the population.<sup>109</sup> Like their counterparts in Venezuela, the Colombian Army undertook the three elements required to develop effective and durable counterinsurgency forces. They accepted individual training, but unlike other countries, they sent few students to U.S. Army counterinsurgency schools. Due to budget constraints, only fourteen Colombian officers received counterinsurgency training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina or in the Canal Zone between 1961 and 1964. Among South American nations, only Brazil and Uruguay sent fewer students during the same time frame. Nevertheless, the Colombian Army adopted American counterinsurgency doctrine. Its own preexisting military education system included the well-renowned Lancero School, which had training courses modeled on the U.S. Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia. This internal instructional capability allowed Colombia to sustain and expand the training of its specialized counter guerrilla battalions. Several of these units also received local instruction from the U.S. Army Special Action Force.

Colombia accepted U.S. tactics and doctrine, but suffered from a lack of government commitment to reform. By 1965, counter guerrilla operations under Plan Lazo had eliminated most bandit groups and toppled the Communist "independent republics." As the rural violence declined to its lowest levels in many years, the government considered the problems solved; it once again relegated internal security to

---

<sup>109</sup> Department of State, "Violence in Colombia," 14-15.

the national police and reform efforts lost momentum and urgency. U.S. Army counterinsurgency assistance proved successful at reducing Colombia's rural violence, and the country's army gained valuable counterinsurgency experience, but it did not solve all of Colombia's problems. A lessening of government internal security and rehabilitation efforts led to a resurgence of guerrilla movements in the late 1960s. These groups, while initially posing little threat to the central government, plagued Colombia long into the future. As was the case in Venezuela, the Colombian Army eschewed involvement in politics. Colombia has suffered no military coups d'état since 1957. In the 1980s, as it faced the dual menace of drug cartels and rural guerrilla groups, some Colombian military units and officers did commit human rights violations. Nevertheless, Colombia did not suffer the repression of the Southern Cone "dirty wars," nor did it ever again revert to military dictatorship.

Venezuela and Colombia received the highest levels of U.S. counterinsurgency assistance of any nations in Latin America during the 1960s. These two countries also avoided the legacy of military dictatorship that plagued other regional countries. The foregoing analysis does not suggest that U.S. military aid or American counterinsurgency enabled democracy to survive, but it does indicate that U.S. military assistance did not inexorably lead to coups d'état. The survival of democracy, however, has complicated causality that lies beyond the scope of this research.

## Chapter Seven: Counterinsurgency in Bolivia

At first glance, Bolivia seemed fertile ground for revolution in the 1960s. The country suffered from political instability, social and economic inequality, and had strong student, peasant and union movements. Fidel Castro's lieutenant, Ernesto "Che" Guevara chose to personally lead the struggle to foment a revolution in this land-locked nation as the first stage of his dreams of sparking revolutions throughout South America and creating "two, three, many Vietnams."<sup>1</sup> Yet Bolivia in the mid-1960s was home to angry miners, not angry peasants. Although it experienced a leftist and elected revolution a decade earlier, the country fell under military rule in 1964. Less than two years later, Bolivians took to the polls, restored democracy, and overwhelmingly elected former Air Force General René Barrientos Ortuño as their new president. Despite these obstacles, Guevara chose Bolivia. His efforts to establish a guerrilla *foco* among the Andean *campesinos* failed within a span of eighteen months.

Guevara's death in October 1967 at the hands of a U.S.-trained Bolivian Ranger battalion was a major turning point in Latin America's Cold War. It effectively terminated Cuba's "export of revolution." It also marked the end of the Special Action Force's counterinsurgency training efforts in South America. American policymakers of the time, such as White House advisor Walt W. Rostow, touted the Bolivian Ranger's success as proof of the "soundness of our 'preventative medicine' assistance to countries

---

<sup>1</sup> Clara Nieto, *Masters of War; Latin America and United States Aggression from the Cuban Revolution through the Clinton Years* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 152-3; Ernesto Guevara, "Message to the Tricontinental," accessed 5 May 2015 online at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1967/04/16.htm>

facing incipient insurgency.”<sup>2</sup> Latin American historians and researchers have since placed much of the blame for Guevara’s failure on the guerrillas themselves. Other historians have viewed the Green Beret’s training of the Second Ranger Battalion, and that unit’s subsequent role in the defeat of Che Guevara, as a showcase of successful U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Latin America.<sup>3</sup> However, placing the Special Action Force’s 1967 mobile training team effort in a longer historical context complicates this view.

U.S. Army efforts to instill a counterinsurgency capability in the Bolivian Army began in 1961 - not 1967. Sixty-five Bolivian students attended U.S. counterinsurgency courses from 1961 through 1964.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the Special Action Force deployed thirty mobile training teams to the country between 1962 and 1967 - eight of them focused on counterinsurgency.<sup>5</sup> Most importantly, the American Military Assistance Program had trained and equipped two other Bolivian Ranger Battalions, and other counterinsurgency focused units, before 1966.<sup>6</sup> But when the crisis of a Cuban-supported guerrilla movement, led by none other than the famed Ernesto “Che” Guevara himself, arose in early 1967, national leaders in La Paz and American authorities lacked confidence in the Bolivian Army’s ability to counter the threat.

---

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 11 October 1967, NSF, LBJPL.

<sup>3</sup> See for example, Kenneth Finlayson, “The 1960s: A Decade of Revolution” *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, 20; Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 2006), 300; and Brian Loveman, *For la Patria: Politics and the Armed Forces in Latin America*, (Wilmington, DE, Scholarly Resources, 1999), 191.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Army Center of Military History, “Counterinsurgency Training at the U.S. Army School of the Americas,” unsigned memorandum dated 26 October 1965, CMH, enclosure 2; “Special Warfare Center Historical Report 1963” (hereafter cited as SWC 63), CMH, 27.

<sup>5</sup> Special Action Force Unit Histories 1965-1967; see bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 13 January 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

Rather than deploying existing internal security units, some previously prepared and equipped for counterinsurgency, they chose to raise and train a new formation from scratch. Why did they make such a decision? A deeper analysis of American military efforts yields several clues. The documentary evidence points to two problems that undid earlier training efforts: unit personnel turnover of conscript soldiers and the inability of Bolivian Army schools to sustain counterinsurgency training. These issues exemplified problems of perishability. Many Latin American armies proved unable to maintain or expand the training levels of their soldiers. When faced with the challenge of a Cuban-instigated insurgency, La Paz and Washington had to form a new counter guerrilla Ranger battalion that eventually captured Che Guevara. American Special Forces' training of the Second Bolivian Rangers was a U.S. foreign policy success, but it also underscored the perishability of U.S. Army counterinsurgency training efforts.

#### **BOLIVIA'S INCOMPLETE REVOLUTION**

Only two Latin American nations experienced social revolution in the 1950s: Bolivia and Cuba. Bolivia's revolution came in early 1952, a year before Fidel Castro's failed Moncada Barracks attack and seven years before he and his bearded comrades marched into Havana. The upheaval of the Bolivian revolution tempered some of Bolivia's long simmering social tensions but exacerbated others. Like enduring revolutions in Mexico, and later in Cuba and Nicaragua, Bolivia's revolution generated irreversible changes; land reform, voting rights and mine nationalizations all fundamentally altered Bolivia's social, political, and economic landscape.

Tin miners, students, and the national police banded together under the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) in April 1952 and toppled Bolivia's military government. The rebels defeated the army in La Paz and forced its surrender



during three days of bloody fighting that left some 2,000 to 3,000 dead. Miners and peasants made significant political and economic gains in the aftermath of the revolution. In one of its first acts, the new government decreed “universal adult suffrage, without literacy or property requirements.” MNR leaders also quickly nationalized Bolivia’s mines, later granting miners a fifty percent wage increase.<sup>7</sup> Bolivia’s peasantry also prospered as a result of the revolution. “After the 1952 revolution,” one author noted, “indigenous peoples, now officially known as campesinos, became citizens, voters and property owners.” While Bolivia’s peasantry did not achieve all they might have dreamed of, they did garner a significant land reform program. Between 1952 and 1973, some “400,000 peasant families became owner-operators” of small-holdings.<sup>8</sup> In turn, the rural *campesinos* were generally quiescent during the 1960s and content to farm their newly-acquired plots.

However, not all sectors of society prospered as a result of the revolution. The big loser was the Bolivian military. Although the army escaped the complete destruction that befell the Mexican, Cuban, and Nicaraguan armies after their revolutions, it did suffer severe degradation as an institution. “Apprehensive about any potential threat to its own government,” American researchers later explained, “the MNR moved rapidly against the army through forced retirement of about 80 percent of its commissioned and non-commissioned officers.”<sup>9</sup> “Between April 1952 and January 1953,” another historian later calculated, “the armed forces were reduced from 20,000 to a little over 5,000 total personnel.” Times were bleak for those who remained in uniform. The “army was

---

<sup>7</sup> Thomas E. Weil, et al, *Area Handbook for Bolivia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), 35-37.

<sup>8</sup> Waltrud Q. Morales, *A Brief History of Bolivia* (New York: Facts on File, 2003), 151; Weil, *Area Handbook for Bolivia*, 299.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

rendered virtually impotent in the first year of the revolution,” one analysis concluded, “military expenditures dropped from 23 percent of the national budget in 1952 to 6.7 percent in 1957.”<sup>10</sup>

The MNR government also sought to counterbalance the power of the military by raising and arming civilian militias. These organizations, most formed around miner and peasant syndicates, soon surpassed the military in terms of numbers and clout. “Existing militias were legitimized, and weapons taken from the army were made available to new [militia] units sponsored by peasant, miner, and factory leaders,” American researchers later declared. “By 1953 the civilian militias were the strongest military forces in the country. The numerical strength of the militias has fluctuated widely... They probably reached their peak strength in 1956 (between 50,000 and 70,000 armed men).”<sup>11</sup> “The civilian militias,” a U.S. officer later wrote, “...outnumbered the regular armed forces by over 10 to 1.” By 1956, U.S. policymakers had begun to express alarm regarding the militias. American officials feared that the Communists might exploit Bolivia’s instability and come to power by seizing control of the militias. Without the bulwark of an effective military, only the nation’s small police forces would stand in their way. The MNR government shared at least some of those concerns by 1958. Unlike the Cuban regime, the Bolivian government did not control the civil militias. La Paz undertook a rebuilding of the military to counterbalance the threat of the militias – it also began accepting U.S. military assistance that same year.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Robert O. Kirkland, “United States Military Assistance to the Bolivian Military 1958-1964,” *MACLAS Latin American Essays*, March 1998, 45; Weil, *Area Handbook for Bolivia*, 255.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 347.

<sup>12</sup> Kirkland, “U.S. Military Assistance,” 39; Weil, *Area Handbook for Bolivia*, 255.

By the late 1950s, the revolution had begun to unravel. Falling tin prices, declining production, and higher wages plagued the mining sector and hurt the national economy. Meanwhile, few peasants grew enough on their new plots to send a surplus to the cities. “Consequently the food supply for the urban population was significantly smaller than it had been before the land reform. Declining revenues from the sale of tin meant that there was less foreign exchange to underwrite the import of food; thus the continuance of shortages was reinforced.”<sup>13</sup> Inflation resulted.

The economic crisis helped to shatter the MNR’s political coalition. The government increasingly turned to the revitalized army to quell the worsening dissent, primarily among miners, during the early 1960s.<sup>14</sup> The *campesinos*, for their part, drifted away from national politics. “After achieving their goal of landownership,” American researchers wrote in the early 1970s, “the most critical purpose of the [peasant] *sindicatos* had been accomplished, and [the] tendency to focus on local issues and needs hampered their effectiveness as a national interest group.”<sup>15</sup> For most of the 1960s, Bolivia’s internal threat was radical miners, not rural guerrillas.

#### **U.S. COUNTERINSURGENCY TRAINING IN BOLIVIA**

The United States sought to instill a counterinsurgency capability within the newly-restored Bolivian Army in the early 1960s, despite the absence of an active insurgency.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, eight Bolivian students attended the first counterinsurgency courses at the U.S. Army Caribbean School in Panama in 1961 and another ten followed

---

<sup>13</sup> Weil, *Area Handbook for Bolivia*, 37.

<sup>14</sup> Morales, *A Brief History of Bolivia*, 160.

<sup>15</sup> Weil, *Area Handbook for Bolivia*, 40.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Bolivia did not merit inclusion in the Special Group Counter-Insurgency’s Critical List of 1962. See CIA, “Counter-Insurgency Critical List, dated 25 July 1962, CIA FOIA, accessed 3 June 2015 online at [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/5829/CIA-RDP80B01676R000600090002-7.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/5829/CIA-RDP80B01676R000600090002-7.pdf).

them the next year.<sup>17</sup> In June 1962, American officers in La Paz formalized their goal to “establish an effective counter-guerrilla, counter-insurgency capability within [the Bolivian] army based on US Army doctrine” in reports to their Canal Zone superiors.<sup>18</sup> But Bolivia’s economic woes affected its ability to send students outside the country to attend military courses. “Lack of funds in the [Bolivian] Army to pay allowances required for personnel going to U.S. Army Service Schools,” American officers in La Paz reported in June 1962, “results in schools quotas frequently being declined.”<sup>19</sup> Bolivia declined two seats at U.S. Army schools in late 1962 and another fifteen in early 1963.<sup>20</sup>

Despite Bolivia’s financial challenges, its national army did manage to continue sending students to American counterinsurgency courses. A total of twenty-three Bolivian officers took counterinsurgency courses at the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina between 1961 and 1963 and another twenty-four officers received counterinsurgency training in the Canal Zone in 1963 and 1964.<sup>21</sup> As was the case in many other countries, the U.S. Army augmented its classroom-based counterinsurgency training efforts by offering Bolivia U.S. mobile training team visits. Although inadequate Bolivian Army finances did affect U.S. counterinsurgency efforts, more than the lack of money impeded internal security training.

Like other regional armies, conscription hamstrung the Bolivian Army’s effectiveness. A “one-year conscript system,” American officers in Buenos Aires explained to their Canal Zone superiors in 1963, “results in an army that is born,

---

<sup>17</sup> CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training,” enclosure 2.

<sup>18</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “Cold War Activities Report,” dated 30 June 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 15 Oct 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.; USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 15 Jan 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>21</sup> CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training,” enclosure 2; and SWC 63, 27.

flourishes and dies each year.”<sup>22</sup> The same was true in Bolivia. One author estimated that, during the early 1960s, the strength of the Bolivian Army “varied in strength from eleven thousand to as few as four thousand when down to cadre strength between annual intakes of conscripts.”<sup>23</sup> American officers in La Paz were keenly aware of the problem. They listed the “short term of service for conscriptees” as the first item in the “Obstacles and Problems” section of their June 1962 report to the Canal Zone. However, the U.S. officers also noted that Bolivia’s financial woes compounded the problem. “Although the term of conscription is one year,” they explained, “many conscriptees are released before completing the period due to budget limitations imposed on the [Bolivian] Army which result in a lack of funds to support conscriptees for the full year.”<sup>24</sup> Conscription proved an enduring problem. Turnover of unit personnel due to conscription plagued U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Bolivia throughout the 1960s. It also became a point of contention between the U.S. ambassador and the Bolivian president during the crisis of Ernesto “Che” Guevara’s insurgency in 1967. Nevertheless, American internal security training continued.

Bolivia received its first mobile training team for counterinsurgency in May 1962. A full Special Forces “A” Detachment of twelve men taught courses in La Paz and Cochabamba. Four officers providing expertise in civil affairs, military intelligence, psychological warfare, and the medical fields augmented their efforts. During the first course, the Special Action Force team presented three weeks of classroom instruction to 225 officers and cadets. The Americans then put their students through a two-week field

---

<sup>22</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 April 1963, NAAFC, n. pag.

<sup>23</sup> Robert O. Kirkland, *Observing our Hermanos de Armas: U.S. Military Attachés in Guatemala, Cuba, and Bolivia, 1950-1964*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 107.

<sup>24</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “Cold War Activities Report,” dated 30 June 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

exercise to reinforce their lessons and hone their new skills. After a short respite, the Green Berets moved to the Cochabamba area and taught the same course to a second group of Bolivians. “Personnel (students) of these courses,” American officers in La Paz wrote in mid-1962, “are to be assigned to schools and frontier units to provide a nucleus for the training and organization of personnel in the counter insurgency field.”<sup>25</sup> Training individuals would prove to be problematic, but the U.S. Army also trained and equipped Bolivian units.

Mobile training team visits and classroom-based counterinsurgency training formed parts of a larger American effort to improve Bolivia’s internal security capabilities. Those efforts began in 1958 when “a grant of \$500,000 was provided to strengthen the internal security capability of the Bolivian Army.”<sup>26</sup> This first grant established the Military Assistance Program (MAP) in Bolivia and included weapons, equipment, and radios for several units stationed in and around the capital. In 1961, the United States began supporting the First Infantry Battalion, located some twenty miles outside La Paz and organized “along U.S. lines,” with weapons, wheeled vehicles and communications equipment. “Training has been provided for personnel of this unit, in [the continental United States] and the Canal Zone,” American officers reported in 1963, “in operation and maintenance of equipment furnished and in other subjects such as infantry tactics, counterinsurgency, military intelligence and logistics.” “Personnel of this unit,” the same dispatch noted, “participated in counterinsurgency training presented by a

---

<sup>25</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “Cold War Activities Report,” dated 30 June 1962, NAAF, n.pag.

<sup>26</sup> Department of Defense, “Military Assistance Plan: Bolivia,” dated 15 July 1963 (hereafter cited as MAP Bolivia 63), USAHEC, Narrative C, 1.

MTT during FY [Fiscal Year] 1962.” “A MAP supported truck transportation company is available to supplement the battalion transportation when required,” the report added.<sup>27</sup>

The Military Assistance Program in Bolivia shifted much of its effort to internal development in 1962. That year American assistance began supporting four engineer battalions. Bolivia raised two of the battalions from scratch and the United States provided them with military construction equipment, vehicles, weapons, and radios. These units greatly contributed to what American officers termed the “vast Civic Action Program in Bolivia,” which included highway and road construction, road repair and maintenance, and colonization efforts. Civic action missions also undertook water system, airfield, and school construction, as well as numerous medical projects.<sup>28</sup> However, U.S. officers soon realized that Bolivia’s ability to absorb civic action development projects far exceeded the American ability to fund them. “The principal obstacle encountered in the civic action category,” U.S. officers in La Paz wrote in 1962, “is the inability of the host government to provide sufficient economic support. Manpower is available in limitless quantities and the desire is evident but dependence is placed on outside sources (principally U.S.) for necessary funding.”<sup>29</sup> The United States budgeted the total Bolivian Civic Action program at an average of just over \$2 million per year from 1964 through 1969. The American taxpayers contributed eighty-five percent of the total, while the planners expected Bolivian government to furnish the last fifteen percent -- about \$300,000 per annum.<sup>30</sup> “It is important to note that this undertaking of Civic Action had a favorable outcome,” a senior Bolivian officer later

---

<sup>27</sup> MAP Bolivia 63, Narrative G, 1.

<sup>28</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 July 1964, USAHEC, n. pag.; MAP Bolivia 63, Narrative F.

<sup>29</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Cold War Activities Report,” dated 30 June 1962, n. pag.

<sup>30</sup> MAP Bolivia 63, Narrative F.

explained, “particularly in the campesino sectors of Bolivia, because it replaced the image of the arrogant and abusive military man – who was to be feared – with that of a friend in uniform – who, through a shared effort, helped communities to solve some of their fundamental problems such as the need for drinking water, the building of schools and sanitary facilities, and the improvement of local highways.” How much these civic actions projects contributed to Bolivia’s development is difficult to estimate. Nevertheless, some Bolivian officers claimed such programs did bear fruit in 1967 as Bolivian peasants shunned Che Guevara’s efforts to establish a guerrilla *foco* and informed on him to local army units.<sup>31</sup>

In 1963, American efforts again turned to internal security. The Military Assistance Program added an Airborne Infantry Company to its growing list of supported units. The new unit, organized in Cochabamba, received “parachutes, M-1 rifles, automatic rifles, 60mm mortars, 3.5 in. rocket launchers, light machine guns, portable radio sets, and equipment for a [medical] field dispensary.”<sup>32</sup> “The company will acquire,” American officers wrote, “the capability to contribute to the internal security posture by opposing any subversive activity in any part of Bolivia.” The Special Action Force assisted the training of the Airborne Company by dispatching an airborne survey mobile training team, followed by a team providing an airborne orientation, and a third providing airborne training - all in 1963.<sup>33</sup>

These MAP-supported units faced their first internal security test later that same year. The U.S. Southern Command Historical Report for 1963 explains that,

---

<sup>31</sup> Gary Prado Salmón, *The Defeat of Che Guevara: Military Response to Guerrilla Challenge in Bolivia* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 22, 88, 93-4.

<sup>32</sup> MAP Bolivia 63, Narrative G, 1.

<sup>33</sup> SAF 65.



Bolivia experienced a national emergency during December 1963, when rebellious tin miners in the Catavi Siglo XX Mines openly defied the government and captured hostages, four of whom were U.S. citizens. Principal military units which maneuvered into position around the mines as measures to bring the striking miners under control were MAP supported units employing U.S. methods and using U.S. provided equipment. Participating forces included the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion, the Airborne Company, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Transportation Truck Company.<sup>34</sup>

This passage demonstrates three important points. First, the internal security challenge in Bolivia during the early 1960s mainly centered on civil disturbances in mining and urban areas, not rural insurgency. Second, it shows the ongoing deterioration of the 1952 revolution as the government used its newly revamped army to quell unrest among its former supporters the now rebellious miners. And lastly, it indicates that the Bolivian Army could move units from their local regions (in this case La Paz and Cochabamba) to respond to internal security threats in other areas when the elected president, Victor Paz Estenssoro, ordered the army to do so.

The Military Assistance Program added two specialized counter guerrilla units to its list of supported units in 1964. “The 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ranger Battalions were organized based on recommendations to the [Bolivian Army] by [the U.S. Army Mission to Bolivia],” American officers reported.<sup>35</sup> The Bolivian Army organized the First Ranger Battalion in early 1964 and assigned it to the Oruro area, near Bolivia’s biggest tin mines. The United States, for its part, provided training and sufficient equipment to supply a unit of approximately 500 men. However, internal unrest disrupted the unit’s initial training. “During April, conditions became so unstable that a special air delivery of MAP equipment to the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Ranger Battalion became necessary,” American officers in

---

<sup>34</sup> United States Southern Command, “Historical Report Calendar Year 1963,” dated 25 April 1964, (hereafter USSOUTHCOM CY63), CMH, VIII-10.

<sup>35</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 July 1964, USAHEC, n.pag.

the Canal Zone later recorded. “Three U.S. Air Force C118s landed at La Paz [on] 20 April with 405 rifles, 417 bayonets, 142 pistols, 24 mortars, 16 rocket launchers, 61 radios, clothing, and eating utensils... During this national emergency period, the value of providing MAP equipment and training for reducing instability was evident. MAP-supported units, including the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Ranger Battalion, the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion from Viacha [outside La Paz], and the Airborne Company from Cochabamba cooperated with [the] national police in suppressing the unstable mine workers in and around Oruro.”<sup>36</sup> After helping restore calm, the First Ranger Battalion continued its initial training.

Bolivia also created the Third Ranger Battalion in 1964. However, rather than belonging to the Army, this unit formed part of the new River and Lake Force inaugurated the previous year.<sup>37</sup> The mission of the new service (which the government redesignated as the Bolivian Navy in 1966), was “internal security and conducting public works of improvement in the northeastern area of Bolivia.”<sup>38</sup> “The new force,” American officers observed, “has been established on a status equal to that of the Bolivian Army and Air Force.”<sup>39</sup> However, the River and Lake Force of some 1,500 men remained much smaller than the 9,000-man Army.<sup>40</sup>

The River and Lake Force officially activated the Third Ranger Battalion in May of 1964. It organized the unit “at Riberalta which is located in the Beni Department of northern Bolivia,” American officers wrote. “The battalion will operate in the Pando,

---

<sup>36</sup> United States Southern Command, “Historical Report Calendar Year 1964,” n.d., (hereafter USSOUTHCOM CY64), CMH, VIII-8-9.

<sup>37</sup> USSOUTHCOM CY63, VIII-10.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*; USSOUTHCOM CY66, XII-11.

<sup>39</sup> USSOUTHCOM CY63, VIII-10.

<sup>40</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 July 1964, USAHEC, n.pag.

northern Beni and northern La Paz Departments,” they added. The United States provided the new battalion with enough equipment for a unit of approximately 250 men, it also furnished four 40-foot boats. “This unit was formerly the Cavalry Squadron (Horse),” U.S. officers explained. “It was recommended to [the Commander of U.S. Caribbean Command] that the designation of this unit be changed from Cavalry Squadron (Horse) to Infantry Battalion (Ranger) because the Government of Bolivia will not be able to purchase and support the necessary horses and equipment to mount a horse cavalry squadron.”<sup>41</sup> In any event, U.S. officers designed for these new units to have the ability to do more than just respond to occasional disturbances. Moreover, the positioning of these units also supported broader internal security efforts. Bolivian officials chose not to station the Third Ranger Battalion in Riberalta. Rather than position the new unit in that remote city far to the north of the country near the Brazilian border, they chose the more centrally located Trinidad (see Figure 4). Re-exerting central government control over Bolivia’s hinterlands also influenced this decision. “Trinidad up until January of this year had accepted no troops in the city since the revolution of 1952,” American officers in La Paz observed in 1964. “The 3<sup>rd</sup> Ranger Battalion now has its headquarters there.”<sup>42</sup>

American officials continued to worry about both civil unrest and the potential for insurgency during the early 1960s. “The communists [sic] control many units of the estimated 15,000 man armed civilian militia, located in the mining areas,” American officers wrote in 1963, “and could use them in provoking civil disorder and uprisings... The communist threat is a continuing danger by reason of economic backwardness, low standard of living, frustrated hopes of 1952 revolution,” and political instability, among

---

<sup>41</sup> MAP Bolivia 63, Narrative G, 2.

<sup>42</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 July 1964, USAHEC, n.pag.

several other maladies. “There exists in Bolivia a very good possibility of insurgent uprisings against the government,” they added. “The most probable source of such insurgency could be from small groups of armed guerrillas led by in-country communists and supported by Cuba and Czechoslovakia,” they concluded. In order to meet these threats, and as part of their ongoing efforts to build a counterinsurgency capability in the Bolivian Army, U.S. officers planned “to train MAP units in counterinsurgency [and] schedule CI [counterinsurgency] MTTs to work with [the] Ranger [battalions] as activated.” In turn, the Special Action Force deployed counterinsurgency mobile training teams to Bolivia in 1964 and 1965. The Airborne Company also conducted training on “techniques of Guerrilla/Counter Guerrilla Warfare” in mid-1964.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> MAP Bolivia 63, Narrative B, 1-2.; USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 July 1964, USAHEC, n.pag.; SAF 65; USARMIS to Bolivia, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 July 1964, USAHEC, n.pag.

Figure 4: Bolivia Political Boundaries Map.<sup>44</sup>



<sup>44</sup> Bolivia Political Map, 1993, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, The University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 24 February 2016 online at: [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/bolivia\\_pol93.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/bolivia_pol93.jpg)

In 1966, the U.S. Army produced a short film entitled “The U.S. Army in Andes” as part of its “The Big Picture” television series.<sup>45</sup> This episode, long overlooked by historians, shows the U.S. Army’s training of Bolivian counterinsurgency units prior to 1967. After discussing civic action efforts in the country, the film turns its attention to a Special Action Force mobile training team providing a counterinsurgency course to the Bolivian First Ranger Battalion. The training, most likely undertaken in mid-1964, took place near the village of Challapata, some seventy-five miles south of Oruro. The course began with separate classes for the battalion’s eighteen officers and twenty-four non-commissioned officers – with each group receiving approximately 180 hours of instruction. The film then shows the Green Berets putting the Rangers through individual and tactical training including instinctive firing, negotiating an infiltration lane, rappelling and crossing rope bridges, the use of demolitions, and patrolling – all conducted in the high altitude, arid environment of the Altiplano. The course ended with a counterinsurgency training exercise in which the unit undertook a simulated counter guerrilla mission. After reacting to a mock guerrilla ambush, the Rangers pursued the guerrillas (portrayed by local civilians and other soldiers) to a nearby village. They then searched for the guerrillas from among the local campesinos. At the conclusion of the exercise, “the U.S. Army instructors were proud of their student’s performance,” the narrator tells us. “The Bolivian Rangers had demonstrated competence in handling a typical counterinsurgency situation, a problem which had been simulated for the occasion,” he added, “but the next time could well prove to be the real thing.”<sup>46</sup> The

---

<sup>45</sup> United States Army, “The Big Picture: U.S. Army in the Andes,” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Audiovisual Center, 1966), accessed online 15 May 2015 at <https://archive.org/details/gov.archives.arc.2569871>

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

Special Action Force also sent mobile training teams for psychological operations (two), civic action (three), and medical (one) to Bolivia during 1964.<sup>47</sup>

U.S.-sponsored MAP units formed the core of the Bolivian Army's internal security capability. By the end of 1964, the country boasted one infantry battalion, two ranger battalions, and an airborne company, all of which had received at least some American counterinsurgency training. Additionally, U.S. officers had plans to add a second infantry battalion and a third ranger battalion in upcoming years.<sup>48</sup> The United States also supported four engineer battalions, primarily for civic action, and two truck transportation companies. Other Bolivian military units also participated in civic action but were generally in poor shape. "Non-MAP units have a limited capability to maintain internal security or offer resistance to external aggression," American officers in La Paz assessed in 1964. These "units are all understrength and poorly equipped. Combat readiness of Non-MAP units is estimated at 15%."<sup>49</sup> A fully manned, trained, and equipped unit capable of undertaking all of its assigned missions would be considered 100% combat ready. In contrast, Bolivia's non-MAP units, with a combat readiness rating of 15%, would have been woefully unprepared to execute even the most rudimentary military tasks.

The Bolivian military located its internal security forces within the country based on both perceived threats and an understanding of the country's widely divergent geographical environments. The Army stationed the First Infantry Battalion at Viacha outside La Paz to protect the capital and the First Ranger Battalion in Oruro in the mining zone to keep watch on the miners. Both units trained for and acclimated themselves to the

---

<sup>47</sup> SAF 65.

<sup>48</sup> MAP Bolivia 63, Narrative G, 2.

<sup>49</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," 17 July 1964, USAHEC, n.pag.

high altitude environment of the Altiplano. The River and Lake Force established the Third Ranger Battalion in the country's tropical lowlands in the north where it received equipment and training to enable it to operate in riverine and tropical environments. The Army stationed the Airborne Company in Cochabamba to cover the sub-Andean region and highland valleys, although its parachute capability and air mobility provided it the ability to quickly deploy to any region. American officers began planning for the Second Ranger Battalion as early as 1963 and expected the Bolivian Army to station it near Santa Cruz, where it could respond to trouble in both the sub-Andean region to the west and the Chaco region to the east (see Figure 4).<sup>50</sup> However, the Bolivian Army resisted organizing this third counterinsurgency-focused battalion until the guerrilla crisis of 1967.<sup>51</sup> Ironically, Che Guevara established his *foco* in Santa Cruz province - exactly where American officers had expected the Bolivians to station the Second Ranger Battalion several years earlier.

The MNR coalition continued to crumble and Bolivia again faced civil unrest in 1964. Under pressure from the military, President Victor Paz Estenssoro named General René Barrientos of the Air Force as his Vice President in August 1964. However, the social and political crises continued unabated. "Strikes and demonstrations in late October 1964 brought the popular discontent to a head," one historian noted. "On October 29, President Paz ordered the army to crush a strike by the miners of the large

---

<sup>50</sup> MAP Bolivia 63, Narrative G, 2.

<sup>51</sup> American officers began planning for the Second Ranger Battalion and the Second Infantry Battalion in 1963, both of which they programmed for activation in fiscal year 1966. Bolivian authorities resisted organizing a third ranger type battalion after 1965. Ryan notes that, "the U.S. embassy had been prodding the Bolivian government for at least two years to bring in [a counterinsurgency mobile training team]... the Bolivians finally agreed to schedule a team for 1968" to train a new ranger battalion. "Then, in March 1967, under pressure from the U.S. embassy and with insurgency a reality, they agreed to bring in the team a year earlier, advancing its arrival to the following month." Henry Butterfield Ryan, *The Fall of Che Guevara: a Story of Soldiers, Spies, and Diplomats* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 82.



Huanuni-Catavi mining complex. The government also forcefully repressed the striking teachers and students of San Andrés University in La Paz.”<sup>52</sup> In early November the military rebelled and toppled the civilian government, replacing it with a military Junta led by General Barrientos of the Air Force and General Alfredo Ovando of the Army. The U.S. Ambassador suspended Military Assistance Program deliveries after the coup d’état, but the program resumed shortly after the United States recognized the new government on 7 December.<sup>53</sup>

Former Vice President Barrientos, who was much more popular than Ovando, swiftly assumed the presidency. Barrientos’ popularity stemmed in part from his humble roots in Cochabamba and his fluency in Quechua, but he also cultivated the peasants as a political base of support. “Since 1962,” former Ranger officer Gary Prado Salmón argues, “General Barrientos had carried out a domestic political campaign aimed at capturing the sympathy and support of the majority *campesino* sector of the nation, which had transformed him into an important political figure.”<sup>54</sup> Barrientos also capitalized on American-sponsored Civic Action projects to cultivate his popularity among the Bolivian peasantry. “The general had used civic action funds to build schools and recreation centers,” one historian explained, “upon entering the town where the school was located, Barrientos was greeted with *abrazos* by the *intendente* and the *alcade*. He [Barrientos] proceeded to speak in Quechua to about a thousand gathered Indians on the importance of education, bettering living conditions, and strengthening the military.”<sup>55</sup> Soon after taking office in 1964, President Barrientos leveraged his popularity among the peasantry

---

<sup>52</sup> Morales, *A Brief History of Bolivia*, 166.

<sup>53</sup> USSOUTHCOM CY64, VIII-9.

<sup>54</sup> Prado, *The Defeat of Che Guevara*, 45.

<sup>55</sup> Kirkland, *Observing our Hermanos de Armas*, 114.

to cement a political alliance. He formalized the agreement in the Military-Campesino Pact. The Armed Forces and the peasants not only formed a coalition against the power of the miners, the military also enlisted the rural campesinos as counter-subversive agents of the state in the hinterlands in return for political support at the national level.<sup>56</sup>

With the MAP program restored in late 1964, the U.S. Army continued its counterinsurgency and civic action efforts in Bolivia in 1965 and 1966. The Special Action Force deployed eleven mobile training teams in 1965, a small increase from the seven visits of the year before. Beyond the one counterinsurgency training team previously mentioned, the Green Berets also conducted three medical and two military police visits, as well as engineer, ordnance and marksmanship training.<sup>57</sup> The year 1965 proved the high water mark for mobile training team missions to Bolivia. In 1966, Special Action Force teams visited Bolivia on only three occasions. One team taught advanced marksmanship skills to the Bolivian Army Rifle Team to enable them to compete in the Pan-American Rifle matches hosted by the U.S. Army in Panama. A second team trained Bolivian medical personnel so that they could man and operate rural clinics. The third team taught counterinsurgency.

Bolivia returned to democracy in 1966. President Barrientos won a landslide election in July with over sixty percent of the vote.<sup>58</sup> Although Che Guevara and Fidel Castro may have misread Barrientos' election as the continuation of the previous military dictatorship, Barrientos won a democratic election based on his broad popular support. Barrientos' popularity, and the Military-Campesino Pact, raised tremendous barriers to a

---

<sup>56</sup> Morales, *A Brief History of Bolivia*, 168-9.

<sup>57</sup> SAF 65.

<sup>58</sup> CIA, *The Situation in Bolivia*, 5.

rural insurgency. Meanwhile, American internal security efforts continued after the 1966 elections.

The Special Action Force sent four officers and one enlisted man to Cochabamba, Bolivia in August 1966 to deliver a nine-week course on counterinsurgency. However, the team did not train any of Bolivia's existing counter guerrilla units. Instead, their purpose "was to teach the requirements and concepts of a National Defense Plan for Counterinsurgency," unit historians later reported. "The team emphasized such fields as community and civic action as means to preventing insurgency." The Green Berets taught twenty-four Bolivian officers "from the grade of Major to Colonel" in a course format that was "partly formal instruction and partly practical exercises." The instructors and their students devoted the last two weeks of the course to "writing up an actual a National Defense Plan for Counterinsurgency which was completed in its basic form and submitted to the Commander of the Bolivian Army." The team concluded its visit by conducting a one-week counterinsurgency orientation at the Bolivian War College in La Paz. The Special Action Force team departed Bolivia in late October 1966.<sup>59</sup> That very month Ernesto "Che" Guevara, in disguise, flew into La Paz from São Paulo, Brazil to establish his guerrilla *foco*.<sup>60</sup>

However, despite years of American effort to develop a counterinsurgency capability in the Bolivian Army, it was not prepared to face a Cuban-instigated insurgency of fifty guerrillas in 1967. The incessant turnover of Bolivian army troops caused by conscription undermined the U.S. Army's efforts to establish specialized counter guerrilla units. This same phenomenon plagued American efforts in other Latin

---

<sup>59</sup> SAF 66.

<sup>60</sup> Gott, *Guerrilla Movements*, 312.

American countries during the 1960s; one U.S. official called it the “frustrating treadmill” of training conscripts.<sup>61</sup> The Bolivian Army’s “effectiveness is limited by the fact that its conscripts serve only a one-year tour of duty,” CIA analysts noted, “leaving only a minimal period of service after completion of basic training.”<sup>62</sup> The same held true for the country’s counterinsurgency units. Bolivian soldiers, meticulously trained by the Green Berets of the Special Action Force and formed into specialized units, returned to civilian life when their one-year term of enlistment ended. When the conscript soldiers left these units, the advanced training they had received departed with them. New draftees replaced them.

The Bolivian Army was unable to sustain its American-provided training. It lacked a formal instructor cadre for counterinsurgency (as in Venezuela) or an effective counter guerrilla school (as in Colombia). Instead, the institution relied on the initiative and skills of unit officers to train their men for counterinsurgency – something the Army senior leadership did not wholeheartedly support. “[O]ne thing was clear by the end of 1966,” Captain Gary Prado Salmón, who would command B Company of the Second Ranger Battalion in the fight against Che Guevara, later explained. “Although some training courses had been given for subordinate personnel, and some coordination had been set up at the level of the Latin American armies, the problem of subversion was not considered fundamentally important at the higher levels of the armed forces...Subversion was treated in a very superficial theoretical framework.”<sup>63</sup> Even though some Bolivian officers might have tried to reproduce at least portions of the previous training received

---

<sup>61</sup> United States Department of State, “U.S. Internal Security Programs in Latin America, Volume II: Guatemala,” November 30, 1966, Digital National Security Archives, accessed online 29 January 2015 at <http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/nsa/documents/GU/00318/all.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> CIA, *Situation in Bolivia*, 3.

<sup>63</sup> Prado, *The Defeat of Che Guevara*, 25.

from the Americans, they could not replicate the intensive training provided by the Special Action Force without institutional support from their army. That institutional support, in the form of counterinsurgency instructor cadres or a specialized counter guerrilla school did not exist in the Bolivian Army. Conscription and the lack of an institutional capability to sustain internal security training meant that by 1967 Bolivia lacked an effective counterinsurgency force.

### **COUNTERING CHE GUEVARA'S INSURGENCY**

The Bolivian Army began receiving indications of potential insurgent activity in remote areas of the country early in 1967. "After considerable prodding," Central Intelligence Agency analysts later wrote, "Army patrols began to follow up on reports of bearded strangers in southeast Bolivia."<sup>64</sup> The revelation of an active guerrilla movement caused immediate consternation in La Paz, but U.S. policymakers remained skeptical.<sup>65</sup> At first, American diplomats perceived the Bolivian reports of an armed guerrilla movement as exaggerated and a ploy to gain increased American financial and military aid. "We are as unconvinced of the validity of the alleged threat and the requirement for U.S. assistance as before," U.S. embassy officials reported to Washington in mid-March. The diplomats saw this as an effort to "get more from the US while the getting is good."<sup>66</sup> A clash on 23 March changed American attitudes. On that day, a Bolivian "Army patrol stumbled into an insurgent hideout. The guerrillas reacted immediately, killing one officer, five soldiers, and one civilian guide. In addition, they also wounded another five

---

<sup>64</sup> Department of State, "Cuban-inspired Guerrilla Activity in Bolivia," dated 14 June 1967, accessed 21 December 2015 online at: <http://galenet.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/servlet/DDRS?vrsn=1.0&slb=KE&locID=txshracd2598&srchtp=basic&c=195&ste=4&txb=Bolivia&sortType=RevChron&docNum=CK2349020276>.

<sup>65</sup> Ryan, *The Fall of Che*, 46.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

troops and took 21 prisoners.”<sup>67</sup> The chance encounter shocked the Bolivian Army, especially after it later confirmed the presence of Cuban agents among the guerrillas.<sup>68</sup> Six days later, CIA analysts concluded that the guerrilla movement “is an independent, international operation under Cuban direction.”<sup>69</sup> “Initial battles between the guerrillas and the Bolivian Army,” American diplomats reported to Washington, “proved almost disastrous to the poorly trained, ill-equipped troops who suffered heavy losses in every encounter. The failure of the army to deal effectively with a handful of insurrectionists shook the entire Bolivian government and led to desperate appeals for US assistance.”<sup>70</sup> Yet rather than sparking the American overreaction and intervention Che Guevara dreamed of, the news of a Cuban guerrilla cell operating in Bolivia triggered caution on the part of the United States. During these early days of the crisis American officials had no evidence Che Guevara was still alive, much less operating in Bolivia. However, larger political considerations also influenced their guarded response.

The Cold War of 1967 was not the Cold War of the early 1960s. The Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Dominican Republic intervention of 1965, and the growing U.S. war in Vietnam all augured for a limited United States response in Bolivia. “We fully support [the] concept of providing limited amounts of essential material [to] assist [a] carefully orchestrated response to [the] threat,” the State Department instructed its embassy in La Paz in late March, “utilizing to maximum extent possible [the] best trained

---

<sup>67</sup> Department of State, “Cuban-Inspired Guerilla Activity in Bolivia.”

<sup>68</sup> Prado, *The Defeat of Che Guevara*, 211

<sup>69</sup> Department of State, Office of the Historian, “Editorial Note,” FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXXI, Document 163, accessed 30 May 2015 online at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d163>

<sup>70</sup> Department of State, “Guevara’s Death – The Meaning for Latin America,” dated 12 October 1967, accessed 30 May 2015 online at <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB5/docs/doc11.pdf>, 3.

and equipped troops available.”<sup>71</sup> Unfortunately, even after years of patient U.S. effort to develop Bolivia’s internal security and counterinsurgency capability, the country suffered from a dearth of trained and equipped troops.

Che Guevara chose southeastern Bolivia as the site for his insurgency. Socially, the area’s prospects for revolution were dim. Unlike the Andean highlands, Santa Cruz province did not suffer from a scarcity of land. In fact, the region had been a focus of Bolivian government resettlement programs since 1952.<sup>72</sup> It was also far from the mining regions and their discontented workers. Militarily, however, it was fortuitous choice. The Bolivian Army in that region was better suited to serve as peasants than as soldiers. “In those years (1966-67),” Bolivian historian Gary Prado Salmón explains, “the garrisons in the East and the South as a general rule had to undergo a short training period of three months and then use the other nine months of their time as draftees in farm labor, construction of living quarters and barracks, and production of materials (railroad ties, bricks, lime and so forth)...This practice undoubtedly affected the troops’ combat ability and also led to administrative irregularities, since in many cases soldiers were rented out as peons to area landowners for the personal profit of the commander.”<sup>73</sup> This passage highlights several of the challenges confronting the Bolivian Army; conscription meant limited terms of service while the lack of training resulted in unprepared forces.

Bolivia’s Military Assistance Program units, trained and supported by the United States, fared better, but not by much. The First Infantry Battalion at La Paz, the First

---

<sup>71</sup> Department of State, “Editorial Note.”

<sup>72</sup> Migration to the area increased after the completion of the Cochabamba-Santa Cruz highway in 1954, and the paving of that road in 1956. The government sponsored several land colonization efforts in Santa Cruz Department which provided Altiplano Indians a plot of land for homesteading. However, many more migrants to the region took part in “spontaneous settlement,” which was not government controlled. See for example, Lesley Gill, *Peasants, Entrepreneurs, and Social Change: Frontier Development in Lowland Bolivia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 36-8, 42.

<sup>73</sup> Prado, *The Defeat of Che Guevara*, 72.

Ranger Battalion at Oruro, and the Airborne Infantry Company at Cochabamba also suffered from personnel turnover due to conscription which made sustaining their counterinsurgency training without outside assistance nearly impossible. Maintaining a level of military competency adequate to intimidate a crowd of angry miners proved much less challenging than maintaining the skills required to face experienced Cuban guerrillas and their Bolivian pupils in combat. “When a regiment had been sent to occupy a mining center, a campesinos area, or any locale,” Prado Salmón points out, “the mere presence of troops had ended the conflict. The situation in the Southeast was a different story. They were facing an organized and experienced enemy who ... required different tactics and techniques, for which the army was not adequately prepared... It was clear that even troops such as those of the CITE [Center for Instruction of Special Troops – which included the MAP-supported Airborne Infantry Company] were not prepared for this kind of operation.”<sup>74</sup>

American analysts shared Prado’s assessment. “The [Bolivian] Army is handicapped by the fact that most officers have been trained in traditional warfare and have no comprehension of guerrilla tactics,” they wrote. “The majority of the men are raw recruits with little or no training.” After describing the 23 March ambush, the State Department analysts continued, “In subsequent clashes, the Army faired [sic] no better. The guerrillas repeatedly escaped virtually unscathed, enriched by the spoils of battle, while the Army suffered mounting losses in dead and wounded, even when MAP-trained troops were engaged.”<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Prado, *The Defeat of Che Guevara*, 81.

<sup>75</sup> Department of State, “Cuban-Inspired Guerilla Activity in Bolivia.”



The American Ambassador in La Paz, Douglas Henderson, also worried about the proficiency of the Bolivian Army as well the continuing drain on its readiness due to conscription. In private meetings with President Barrientos in late March, Ambassador Henderson pushed for reform of the Army's annual conscription policy. He noted that even after two years of prodding by the Americans, the country still "replaced most of its army every year, losing its training investment," according to diplomatic historian Henry Butterfield Ryan.<sup>76</sup>

Compounding Bolivia's problem was the fact the government still faced civil unrest in the mining and urban areas. Bolivian leaders feared that their indigenous opponents might rise up while the military was occupied facing the foreign-led guerrilla threat. American diplomats and military officers shared those concerns. Therefore, instead of deploying MAP-supported units to confront the insurgents, or seeking to re-train exiting units, the Bolivians and Americans agreed to raise and train a new counterinsurgency unit from scratch.<sup>77</sup>

In late April, the U.S. Military Group signed an agreement with the Bolivian Army to provide a sixteen-man team from the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group to train and organize a new 650-man counterinsurgency unit. The text of the agreement makes clear that this was to be no routine mobile training team mission. Instead, this was the United States responding to an internal security crisis in a friendly nation, albeit with restraint. First, the agreement specified a sixteen-man team – one and a half "A" Detachments of Green Berets – a very large team for the Special Action Force to deploy at a time when it

---

<sup>76</sup> Ryan, *The Fall of Che Guevara*, 56.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 80; Department of State, "Editorial Note." The Bolivian Army dispatched small elements from some MAP-supported units to the guerrilla zone, but it did not deploy entire units – see Prado, *The Defeat of Che Guevara*, 264 for a detailed list of units engaged in counter guerilla operations against Che Guevara's insurgent *foco*.

was losing trained instructors to combat duty in Vietnam and to support the Jungle Warfare School in Panama. Second, the memorandum specified that all the team members were to be “ranger-qualified and combat experienced,” an unprecedented stipulation for a mobile training team mission. Lastly, the team was to be “commanded by an officer not less than the grade of Major.”<sup>78</sup> Only two Special Action Force officers met the criteria to lead the team. One was on orders for Vietnam so the duty fell to Major Ralph “Pappy” Shelton, then serving as the Operations Officer of the Special Action Force in the Canal Zone.

In recognition of the problem of conscription, the Americans also added their own requirements in the agreement. “The reassignment of personnel from or within this unit will be minimal,” the memorandum stated, “and their period of service will be not less than two years.” The last page of the memorandum contained several restrictions. “The members of this [mobile training] team will not exercise command authority over any member of the Bolivian Armed Forces,” the Bolivian and American military leaders ordered. “All members of this Special Training Team are specifically prohibited from participating in actual combat operations either as observers or advisors with members of the Bolivian Armed Forces.”<sup>79</sup> The Bolivians granted the Green Berets broad latitude in developing the course of instruction for the new counterinsurgency unit, but they retained absolute control over the employment of their military formations in combat. Training of

---

<sup>78</sup> U.S. Military Group, La Paz, Bolivia, “Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Activation, Organization and Training of the 2d Battalion - Bolivian Army,” dated 28 April 1967, NSF, LBJPL.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*; The State Department worried about Americans becoming involved in the insurgency in Bolivia and in late March gave strict instructions to the U.S. Embassy to keep both military and civilian personnel out of the contested area. “They did not want another Vietnam-type operation,” Ambassador Henderson later recalled. The Pentagon added its own admonishment several weeks later. “U.S. military personnel are not authorized to assist host country military personnel or units which are actively engaged in counterinsurgency combat operations against armed insurgents,” it reminded its subordinates. Ryan, *The Fall of Che*, 51-53.

the new unit, designated by the Americans as the Second Ranger Battalion, began in May.

Major Shelton arrived in Bolivia in early April. Among his first priorities was locating a suitable area for the training of the new ranger battalion. Bolivian authorities initially offered a site in Guabirá, north of Santa Cruz, but the Green Berets rejected it because too many people lived in the area and it lacked space for training. Instead, Major Shelton and his officers selected an abandoned sugar mill outside La Esperanza seven miles west of Guabirá. The new location had several advantages. First it was remote, and thus better for maintaining security. Second, the old mill's buildings and warehouse offered enough shelter to house both the sixteen American trainers and their 650 Bolivian students. Lastly, the mill structures proved ideal for rappelling training. Its grounds and the surrounding area were large enough to support maneuver training and firing ranges.<sup>80</sup> By late April, the Special Action Force's coordination and preparations were complete. On 29 April 1967, fourteen Green Beret instructors boarded two U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules planes packed with their equipment and supplies for the new ranger battalion and departed for Bolivia. They landed on a dirt airstrip outside Santa Cruz where two of their team members and soldiers of the Bolivian 8<sup>th</sup> Division met them and provided transportation to La Esperanza.<sup>81</sup> Although the American trainers did not know it at the time, they would remain in Bolivia for the next eight months.

The counter guerilla training regimen devised by Major Shelton generally followed what his predecessors had used to train the two previous Bolivian Ranger battalions. However, the training of the Second Ranger Battalion was longer in duration

---

<sup>80</sup> Charles. H. Briscoe, "The Bolivia Mission, Site Survey, and MTT Mission Prep" *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, 47.

<sup>81</sup> Charles. H. Briscoe, "Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X" *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, 63.

and of greater intensity. Shelton prescribed and executed a nineteen-week, five phase training plan: basic individual training (six weeks), advanced individual training (three weeks), basic unit training (three weeks), advanced unit training (five weeks), and finally, a two-week combined field exercise to integrate all the previous skills and lessons.

Before training could begin the Americans and their Bolivian students first had to adapt the abandoned sugar mill and its surrounding terrain to fit their new purposes. Some areas served the Green Beret's needs with little or no modifications. "Classroom instruction was conducted in old workshops, garages and compartments of the huge building housing the mill machinery," the Americans reported to their superiors in the Canal Zone. "Field training was conducted on the huge expanse of land surrounding the sugar mill."<sup>82</sup> The men had to construct other training facilities from scratch. "We built a full-scale Ranger training camp by hand," Shelton later explained, "an obstacle course, confidence course, quick-reaction course – where jungle footpaths are rigged with pop-up cutouts of enemy figures – a river course, [and] a target range."<sup>83</sup> After the Special Forces team completed the construction of training ranges and other facilities, and after making accommodations to house themselves and their Bolivian students, the Americans were finally ready to start training the new battalion.

Meanwhile, the Bolivian Army continued to suffer at the hands of the better-trained insurgents. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, army patrols stumbled into a series of guerrilla ambushes. When the smoke cleared, the army had suffered eleven killed and thirteen wounded. Embarrassingly, the guerrillas had also taken twenty-three men captive,

---

<sup>82</sup> Special Action Force MTT BL-404-67X (1967 Counterinsurgency Mission to Bolivia) unpublished After Action Report [hereafter cited as MTT BL-404-67X AAR] dated 10 December 1967, reproduced in John David Waghelstein, "A Theory of Revolutionary Warfare and its Application to the Bolivian Adventure of Che Guevara," (unpublished master's thesis, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 1973), 73-4.

<sup>83</sup> Andrew St. George, "Finally the Full Story: How the U.S. Got Che Guevara" *True*, (April 1969), 97.

including one major, while suffering only one man killed. “An appreciable amount of arms and ammunition fell into the guerrillas’ hands,” Prado Salmón noted.<sup>84</sup> The insurgents, being unable to care for prisoners, soon released their captives, but they kept the other spoils of battle. The following day the army issued Operations Order 4/67 directing that units in the guerrilla zone “should be organized defensively, undertaking patrols with a short radius of action in their respective areas, under conditions that will prevent guerrilla groups from obtaining vital supplies. They should isolate the probable area occupied by the guerrillas.”<sup>85</sup> The Bolivian Army High Command had decided to contain the Cuban-sponsored *foco* while it waited for the Americans to train a specialized counter guerrilla unit to defeat them.

When Major Shelton and his Green Beret’s began their formal instruction of the Bolivian Second Ranger Battalion on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 1967, they started with a blank slate. “The troops had no previous military training,” one Special Forces sergeant recalled, [and] “their education level was just about zero.” The first phase of training began with individual soldier skills such as physical fitness drills, how to fire and clean weapons, techniques of camouflage, and an introduction to patrolling.<sup>86</sup> The Americans also taught the new soldiers land navigation skills (how to read terrain and use a map and compass), the throwing grenades, bayonet fighting, and basic medical skills. Although the Bolivian officers and the American trainers all spoke Spanish, communicating with the Bolivian enlisted troops posed a challenge. Most Bolivian officers could not speak the indigenous languages. “The *altiplano* conscripts spoke Quechua and Aymara primarily, but they

---

<sup>84</sup> Prado Salmón, *The Defeat of Che Guevara*, 79-80.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>86</sup> Kenneth Finlayson, “Turning the Tables on Che: The Training at La Esperanza” *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, 78.

understood some rudimentary Spanish,” another Green Beret instructor recounted. “While classes often evolved into ‘monkey see, monkey do’ learning, the soldiers were always enthusiastic and eager to learn.”<sup>87</sup>

Major Shelton faced a formidable challenge in determining how a mere sixteen Special Forces instructors could effectively manage the training of some 650 Bolivian troops. To solve the problem the Americans applied a novel solution. “[T]he Battalion is divided into three (3) groups for training,” the Green Berets explained in report to the Canal Zone. “Each group trains under separate schedules. At the end of each week, the groups are then rotated until all groups have received all subjects.” The plan worked. “This method has proven successful to date,” the Special Forces men reported. Bolivian authorities agreed. The Bolivian Army Commander, General Alfredo Ovando, arrived to inspect the training on 10 May. “He appeared highly pleased with the activities being conducted,” the Green Berets told their superiors in Panama.<sup>88</sup>

However, the American trainers also faced cultural challenges in dealing with the Bolivian Army. Major Shelton asked Bolivian Captain Julio Cruz, “How many rounds per rifleman for the course?” “How many what?,” Cruz responded. “How many live bullets,” Shelton explained. Captain Cruz told him, “I think 10 bullets are authorized for a recruit.” “Ten rounds?” Shelton exclaimed, “How can you teach them anything that way?” “First we tell them,” the Captain explained, “then we kick them.” Shelton ended up allocating each rifleman 3,000 rounds for training. The Americans eschewed kicking the Bolivian conscripts.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Charles. H. Briscoe, “Field Sanitation: Practicing Medicine and Civic Action in Bolivia” *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4. 72.

<sup>88</sup> MTT BL-404-67X AAR dated 29 May 1967.

<sup>89</sup> St. George, “How the U.S. Got Che Guevara,” 97.

After six weeks the Bolivian soldiers progressed to advanced individual training. During this three-week phase the Americans separated the conscripts into training groups based on their assigned military occupation specialties, or MOS. As some troops honed their medical skills, others received specialized instruction in communications, the use of crew-served weapons, or advanced marksmanship for the snipers. The Green Berets also trained a battalion reconnaissance platoon. Seven men from this group received additional training in intelligence collection methods. Meanwhile, the officers and non-commissioned officers studied leadership and staff planning skills.<sup>90</sup>

The Special Forces men gave the Bolivians their first introduction to “Ranger training” during this phase. Ambushes, raids and patrols entered the curriculum, as did rappelling, confidence and obstacle courses, and specialized weapons. “We did rappelling off the side of the mill, about thirty feet high,” Master Sergeant Millard later recounted. “We set up a confidence course there with a rope climb and a “Slide for Life” into the [nearby village] pond.”<sup>91</sup> The Bolivian Rangers also learned how to fire the 3.5 inch anti-tank rocket (potentially useful against a vehicle or machine gun position) and U.S. and French mortar systems. Again, the Special Action Force instructors were pleased with their students. “The Battalion has shown tremendous progress since the beginning of training,” the Americans reported at the end of June.<sup>92</sup>

With their individual training completed, the Special Forces next turned their attention to teaching the Bolivian conscripts how to operate in squad, platoon, and company formations. This basic unit phase of training began on 10 July. The Green Berets taught the Rangers how to move as members of unit – as they would do while on

---

<sup>90</sup> Finlayson, “Turning the Tables on Che,” 79-80.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>92</sup> MTT BL-404-67X AAR dated 29 June 1967.

patrol, but also the intricacies of “fire and maneuver.” Controlling groups of men while in close combat with an enemy is extraordinarily demanding. Fire and maneuver involves directing one element to move forward towards the enemy while a second element keeps the enemy engaged with fire from their weapons. Because the sound of weapons firing overwhelms the human voice and blunts the hearing, leaders must often transmit their commands using hand and arm signals. The Green Berets taught that as well.

Learning these complicated tasks required repetition. Because the training took place in Bolivia, the Special Forces trainers did not have the benefit of the modern infantry training ranges on American military bases with their mechanized target systems. So like their predecessors on earlier mobile training team missions, they improvised. “Our pop-up targets for the live-fire immediate action drills were simple, but effective,” Sergeant First Class Daniel Chapa recalled. “Some were hinged to trees with rubber tire tubing and pulled around with commo wire. Others were mounted in a row on logs and we ‘daisy-chained’ the targets together so that you could pull all of them up simultaneously.”<sup>93</sup> The “U.S. Army in the Andes” film shows the Special Action Force trainers employing many of the same techniques while training the Bolivian First Ranger Battalion near Challapata in 1964.

The Bolivian conscripts also did well in this more complicated stage of their preparation. “Training during this phase has been arduous and fruitful,” the Special Forces instructors told their superiors in Panama. “The individual soldier has improved tremendously during this phase, and the interest of the entire Battalion remains high.” The American officers added their assessment that, “if fully equipped and manned, the Battalion could be an effective fighting force at this time.” They did not share that

---

<sup>93</sup> Finlayson, “Turning the Tables on Che,” 81.



evaluation with the Bolivian authorities, who were anxious to get the new Ranger Battalion into the fight against Che Guevara's guerillas. Shelton had just such an opportunity on 29 July. On that day, "General Rene Barrientos Ortuno (president of Bolivia) visited this site and addressed the Battalion and Detachment members at a formation," the Americans reported to the Canal Zone. "He presented each of the Battalion Officers and NCOs [non-commissioned officers] with a gift. His address was a great moral[e] booster to the Battalion." Apparently, Shelton kept his assessment that the Second Ranger Battalion was capable of being "an effective fighting force at this time" to himself. The Green Berets were not in Bolivia to train just another unit. Their mission was to create an elite counter guerrilla unit capable of defeating the best insurgents the Cubans could export to Bolivia. Doing so took time. "We needed every day of that training schedule," Shelton later recalled.<sup>94</sup> More training lay ahead for the Rangers. President Barrientos' visit "came at an opportune time," the Americans reported, "and may carry [the new unit] through some of the more arduous training which will come in Phase IV."<sup>95</sup>

The advanced unit training phase began on 31 July and focused on company and battalion level operations. This fourth phase also included an increased emphasis on counter guerrilla tactics. The battalion reconnaissance platoon began fine-tuning its skills. U.S. Captain Margarito Cruz, a Special Action Force officer from the 801<sup>st</sup> Military Intelligence Detachment, trained seven men of the recon platoon as "agents." These men later donned civilian clothes, and infiltrated the guerrilla area to collect intelligence on

---

<sup>94</sup> St. George, "How the U.S. Got Che Guevara," 91.

<sup>95</sup> MTT BL-404-67X AAR dated 29 July 1967.

Guevara's insurgents. The Americans even equipped them with wristwatches so that they could accurately record the timing of their observations.<sup>96</sup>

The American counterinsurgency training was methodical, but like most combat instruction it also entailed risks. During this phase the new battalion suffered its worst training accident. On 11 August, a "Bolivian sergeant, on his own initiative, decided to take his squad out for some additional training one Sunday afternoon," Special Forces sergeant Jerald Peterson recalled,

No one in the Bolivian chain of command nor any of the Americans were notified. How he got the ammunition was unknown. The sergeant had his squad set up the French mortar for a fire mission. Then, he took several men about a hundred meters in front of the position along the gun-target line to show them how to call for fire. The first round fell short, killing one (the sergeant) and seriously wounding several others. The explosion caught us by surprise... SSG [James] Hapka [a Special Forces medic] did an emergency triage and started first aid, got IVs flowing, and stabilized them as best he could. Then, the dead man and the two most seriously wounded were loaded aboard a truck. SFC [Richard] Kimmich accompanied them to the province hospital in Santa Cruz [two hours away]. The primitive, early 1900s-vintage, medical facility did have a doctor on duty. [However, o]ne of the wounded died in the hospital.<sup>97</sup>

Another conscript had died a few weeks earlier when he accidentally discharged the pistol a Bolivian lieutenant had ordered him to clean, killing himself.<sup>98</sup> Despite these casualties, training continued.

The battalion completed its formal training at the start of September. However, the Special Forces trainers knew the Bolivian authorities would almost certainly send their charges into combat against the guerrillas immediately after graduation. Therefore, in order to reinforce their previous training and to provide the new Rangers with every

---

<sup>96</sup> Finlayson, "Turning the Tables on Che," 80, 85; St. George, "How the U.S. Got Che Guevara," 99.

<sup>97</sup> Briscoe, "Field Sanitation," 72.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

possible advantage in their upcoming fight against Che Guevara's insurgents, Major Shelton decided to extend the preparations just a bit longer.<sup>99</sup> He added "a two-week field exercise approximately 15 miles southwest of Santa Cruz" near the "Red Zone" where the Bolivian Army had contained Che Guevara's guerrilla *foco*. "The purpose of this exercise," the Americans reported to the Canal Zone, "was to accustom the 2d Ranger Battalion to the terrain found in the Guerrilla Warfare Operational Area."<sup>100</sup>

Although much of the Second Ranger Battalion's training focused on counter guerrilla tactics, they also practiced applying the tenets of counterinsurgency during the final field exercise. "As part of the immediate action training," Sergeant First Class Daniel Chapa recalled, "we set up a little mock village to teach the soldiers how to properly clear buildings without harassing the local people. Some of the role players dressed up as women. That got a real 'hoot' from the troops, but they did learn."<sup>101</sup>

The Bolivians also learned from the example of their American instructors throughout the training period. The Special Forces men undertook a civic action project to rebuild the local school in La Esperanza. "The existing school is in a horrible state of repair," the Americans reported soon after their arrival, "and a new one is essential for the community."<sup>102</sup> The Green Berets combined about \$1,000 of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) money, the labor of the village inhabitants and the Ranger students, and the technical expertise of an American construction company working in the area to renovate and expand the school for the local townspeople.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> MTT BL-404-67X AAR dated 29 August 1967.

<sup>100</sup> MTT BL-404-67X AAR dated 10 December 1967.

<sup>101</sup> Finlayson, "Turning the Tables on Che," 82.

<sup>102</sup> MTT BL-404-67X AAR dated 29 May 1967.

<sup>103</sup> Briscoe, "Field Sanitation," 74.

The Special Forces troops also provided extensive medical support to the local population around La Esperanza during their deployment. The American medics treated one-thousand Bolivian military men and a whopping 2,500 Bolivian civilians. They expended approximately \$10,000 worth of medicine during their stay in the country. These civic action activities presented a very visible altruistic gesture, but they also served more practical military purposes. “The harmony and good will created by the [civic action] program served many real and worthwhile causes,” the team reported to the Canal Zone in their final dispatch. “One of those causes was the accurate and timely intelligence available to the team providing the invaluable security that was absolutely necessary in this operation.”<sup>104</sup>

While the Special Forces focused their efforts on raising a new counterinsurgency unit, other formations of the Bolivian Army continued to suffer a series of defeats at the hands of Guevara’s guerrillas. At one point the Bolivian Army lost 28 men in six engagements while only killing two or three rebels.<sup>105</sup> The situation strained U.S.-Bolivian relations. In June, the Department of State lamented that the Barrientos government “has repeatedly demonstrated its total inability to cope with the guerrillas” and declared that most army officers have “no comprehension of guerrilla tactics.” The same report cited the lack of training of Bolivian soldiers, their low morale, and unreliable communications among other Bolivian Army maladies and opined that, “This is aggravated by the fact that officers reporting on skirmishes do not hesitate to distort the facts to cover their own ineptitude.”<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> MTT BL-404-67X AAR dated 10 December 1967.

<sup>105</sup> Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson, dated 23 June 1967, NSF, LBJPL.

<sup>106</sup> CIA, “Cuban-Inspired Guerrilla Activity in Bolivia.”

Walt W. Rostow, Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, kept President Johnson apprised of the situation in Bolivia. After a 24 June meeting on the “guerrilla problem in Latin America,” Rostow informed the president that “we have put Bolivia on the top of the list [of countries of concern] more because of the fragility of the political situation and the weakness of the armed forces than the size and effectiveness of the guerrilla movement.”<sup>107</sup> The guerrillas “have so far clearly out-classed the Bolivian security forces,” Rostow explained to the president in a memorandum the day before. “The performance of the government units has revealed a serious lack of command coordination, officer leadership and troop training and discipline.” However, Rostow was also aware of earlier U.S. efforts to train Bolivian Ranger units and the challenges inherent in that undertaking. “Soon after the presence of the guerrillas had been established, we sent a special team and some equipment to help organize another Ranger-type Battalion,” Rostow explained. “On the military side, we are helping about as fast as the Bolivians are able to absorb our assistance.”<sup>108</sup>

Some Bolivians also expressed their frustrations. “The guerrilla tactics we were taught in Panama are useless here,” a Bolivian lieutenant complained in a July 23<sup>rd</sup> Baltimore *Sun* article. “In Panama we were taught to respond to an ambush with heavy fire. But the ambushes here are totally different. The guerrilla tactics are scientific, something we never anticipated in Panama training.”<sup>109</sup> A few days later Covey T. Oliver, the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, forwarded a copy of the Baltimore *Sun* article to Rostow adding his own observations,

---

<sup>107</sup> Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson, dated 24 June 1967, NSF, LBJPL.

<sup>108</sup> Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson, dated 23 June 1967, LBJPL.

<sup>109</sup> “Bolivia Finds War a Bore,” *The Sun*, (July 23, 1967), accessed 21 December 2015 online at: <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/baltsun/doc/541599526.html?FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:AI&type=historic&date=Jul+23%2C+1967&author=&pub=The+Sun+%281837-1990%29&edition=&startpage=&desc=BOLIVIA+FINDS+WAR+A+BORE>.

I personally doubt that the counter-ambush tactics taught at the Canal Zone school are inappropriate, but it is obvious that the training is ineffective as far as total Bolivian army performance is concerned. It may be that training Latin American officer cadre of combat units is useless in itself because they do not have the inclination or the capability to pass on their learning to the conscript troops they command when they return home... Our Special Forces MTT's [sic] from the Canal Zone have done some training of Latin American units in their entirety, the most successful being the development of the first Venezuelan Ranger Battalion in 1964. There is an MTT in Bolivia training a Ranger Battalion right now. But we are looking into the advisability of focusing more of our training effort on integral elite units in their home territory.<sup>110</sup>

Oliver astutely recognized the failure of the Bolivian Army to sustain and spread its American-supplied counterinsurgency training.

Despite these pessimistic assessments, the Bolivian Army enjoyed several advantages the guerrillas could not match. First, it had the resources of an entire nation at its disposal. While the insurgents had limited arms and manpower, the Bolivian Army faced no such impediments. The weaponry of its non-MAP supported units may have been antiquated, but they were plentiful. The Army had thousands of men at its disposal in the Santa Cruz region and it could move in units from other regions to reinforce its counter guerrilla operations at will. Second, and perhaps most importantly, the Army enjoyed popular support. After many years of American assistance in implementing Bolivia's "vast Civic Action program," the peasantry viewed the national army in a favorable light.<sup>111</sup> The country also had a democratically elected president. René Barrientos won an impressive electoral victory in 1966, in large part due to his popularity among the campesinos. Moreover, the peasants in Santa Cruz Department seemed

---

<sup>110</sup> Memorandum from Covey T. Oliver to Walt Rostow, "Current COIN Problems in Latin America," 27 July 1967, accessed 21 December 2015 online at: <http://galenet.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/servlet/DDRS?vrsn=1.0&slb=KE&locID=txshracd2598&srchtp=basic&c=181&ste=4&txb=Bolivia&sortType=RevChron&docNum=CK2349068253>.

<sup>111</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 17 July 1964, USAHEC, n. pag.

committed to fulfilling their role under the Military-Campesino Pact of 1964, which cast them as counter-subversive agents of the state in the countryside.

The guerrillas, on the other hand, sorely lacked support. Frank Pais' urban network had sustained Fidel Castro's embryonic *foco* with men, money and arms during their early years in the Sierra Maestra Mountains. Che Guevara had no Frank Pais in Bolivia; he lacked a pipeline to send him supplies and fresh recruits. The Bolivian Communist party rejected the idea of a foreign led insurgency and left Guevara to try to establish his own urban network. The effort failed.<sup>112</sup> The local peasants also shunned the insurgents. The well-educated, world-traveler and revolutionary theorist and his fellow guerrillas, had difficulty connecting with the Bolivian campesinos. One encounter illustrates their plight. "When the National Liberation Army triumphs," a member of the guerrilla *foco* told one village peasant, "you will have tractors, schools and even a university." "What's a university?" the campesino asked. The guerrilla told him it was where high school students went to study. "And who are high school students?" "Those who have finished secondary school," the guerrilla explained. "And where are they going to come from?" the befuddled peasant wondered. "They will have to come from yourselves," the exasperated guerrilla told him.<sup>113</sup> Although they walked the same ground – the guerrillas and peasants lived in different worlds. Guevara's *foco* consisted of a mere 38 men by mid-June: seventeen Cubans, three Peruvians and eighteen Bolivians.<sup>114</sup> Because of the lack of support every guerrilla was irreplaceable. Recruiting new members from among the local campesinos was simply not an option.

---

<sup>112</sup> Paul J. Dosal, *Comandante Che: Guerrilla, Soldier, Commander, and Strategist* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 259.

<sup>113</sup> Gott, *Guerrilla Movements*, 356.

<sup>114</sup> Dosal, *Comandante Che*, 286.

On the other side of the cordon, the pessimism continued. In early August, the Central Intelligence Agency observed that, “Most of the insurgents’ successes [sic] to date results from the fact that the Bolivian Armed Forces are almost totally inept in counterinsurgency operations.”<sup>115</sup> CIA analysts also emphasized that both the Armed Forces High Command in La Paz and President Barrientos continued to seek a “miraculous solution” or a “spectacular victory” and believed that obtaining modern firepower from the United States would solve their guerrilla problems – the opposite of U.S. advice which argued for improvements in training, maintenance and logistics, among other remedial actions.<sup>116</sup> In the meantime, the Green Berets continued their training of the Second Ranger Battalion. However, the tide of battle soon shifted. In hindsight, the Bolivian Army performed better than many contemporary observers had realized. As Bolivian forces gained strength and experience, the guerrillas weakened. President Barrientos did not have long to wait for his “spectacular victory.”

The Bolivian Army’s first victory was very welcome, although it did not seem spectacular at the time. On 30 August, the Bolivian’s turned the guerrilla’s favorite tactic against them. An army patrol ambushed the rearguard of a guerrilla formation killing ten rebels and capturing one.<sup>117</sup> In a single encounter, Bolivia’s conventional forces had reduced Guevara’s insurgent *foco* by one quarter. The conscript army had discovered its bite.

The Bolivian Army’s momentum continued when the newly activated Second Ranger Battalion took the field on 26 September. By that point the guerrillas were worn

---

<sup>115</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “The Bolivian Guerrilla Movement: An Interim Assessment,” 8 August 1967, NSF, LBJPL, 7.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 8.

<sup>117</sup> Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 5 September 1967, NSF, LBJPL



down from being on the run for months. They were suffering due to the constant marching and their relentless harassment by Bolivian conventional forces. The 30 August engagement eliminated an entire wing of the dwindling *foco*. Guevara himself was in ill health from asthma. He had run out of medicine and his men lacked food and water. The arrival of a fresh 650-man counter guerrilla battalion doomed Che Guevara and the remnants of the Bolivian *foco*. After only two weeks in action, the Rangers caught up with the insurgents. As had been the case in earlier encounters, when faced with actively supporting Guevara's guerrillas, or passively supporting them through silence, Bolivian *campesinos* instead chose to immediately denounce them to the nearest military authorities.

On the evening of 7 October, a rural farmer saw seventeen men pass near his potato field and continue on into a nearby canyon. He told an officer of the Second Ranger Battalion who relayed the sighting to other members of the unit by radio.<sup>118</sup> The next morning the Rangers caught up with the insurgent column. In the ensuing firefight, Rangers under the command of Captain Gary Prado Salmón killed several guerrillas and wounded Che Guevara. Seeing that escape was impossible, Guevara surrendered to the Rangers on the afternoon of 8 October.<sup>119</sup> Bolivian forces executed him the following day on direct orders from Army Headquarters in La Paz.<sup>120</sup>

Guevara's death sent shockwaves across the Americas. Coupled with the failure of other attempted *foco*-style insurrections, Che's death signaled the decline of Cuban-inspired rural revolutions in Latin America. The Americans celebrated what they

---

<sup>118</sup> Kenneth Finlayson, "The 2nd Ranger Battalion and the Capture of Che Guevara" *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, 95.

<sup>119</sup> Memorandum from W.G. Bowlder to Walt Rostow, 9 October 1967, NSF, LBJPL.

<sup>120</sup> Memorandum from Richard Helms to Walt Rostow, 11 October 1967, NSF, LBJPL.

considered an important Cold War victory and attributed much of their success to the U.S.-trained Second Ranger Battalion. Walt Rostow (Deputy Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs) wrote to President Johnson that Guevara's death "shows the soundness of our 'preventative medicine' assistance to countries facing incipient insurgencies."<sup>121</sup> In fact, the sustained pressure from Bolivia's conventional units choked off and ground down the Cuban-sponsored guerrillas. The Rangers delivered the coup de grâce and claimed credit, but in reality they stole the spotlight in the last act of a much longer drama.

In any event, Guevara's death and the demise of his *foco* did not immediately end U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Bolivia. American authorities wanted one more insurance policy against a renewed guerrilla outbreak in the country. "In early July, I was called back to Panama by [General Robert] Porter, the U.S. Southern Command commander" Shelton later revealed. "Before leaving La Paz, the [CIA] Station Chief and I had a long conversation. He felt that the U.S. needed to maintain a training presence in Bolivia after we finished training the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion. This became the genesis of our follow-on mission: to provide refresher tactical and COIN [counterinsurgency] training to nine Bolivian infantry companies."<sup>122</sup>

Shelton's Special Forces instructors began training the first three companies at La Esperanza on 9 October, the same day a Bolivian soldier executed Che Guevara at La Higuera. "The rifle companies who received refresher training were composed of personnel with varied military experience," the Americans reported. "Most all personnel have served in the combat area before arriving at the [La Esperanza] training site."<sup>123</sup> The

---

<sup>121</sup> Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 11 October 1967.

<sup>122</sup> Finlayson, "Turning the Tables on Che," 83.

<sup>123</sup> MTT BL-404-67X AAR dated 10 December 1967.

four-week training course began with a week of weapons training. In the second week, the infantry companies reviewed individual combat skills. The American trainers spent the third week covering squad and platoon tactics as well as patrolling. In the final week the Green Berets taught counterinsurgency. After four weeks the Bolivian Army rotated in a new group of three infantry companies for refresher training.

During the second cycle the American trainers and their Bolivian Army counterparts finally began a concerted effort to train Bolivian instructor cadres for counterinsurgency. The Bolivian Army also incorporated the sugar mill site at La Esperanza as an official army training center. It assigned Colonel Constantino Valencia as the first commander of the new Centro de Instrucción Especial de Operaciones, (CIEOP, or Center for Special Operations Instruction). The American then implemented a “train-the-trainer” program to develop a cadre of Bolivian instructors to man the new center. “The POI [Program of Instruction] was changed to reflect [Valencia’s] emphasis,” Shelton explained later, “which was on counter-guerrilla operations. Courses in intelligence collection, target detection, and more practical work in patrolling and operations against irregular forces were added.”<sup>124</sup>

During the final rotation of infantry companies, the Green Berets turned over primary responsibility for instruction to their newly-trained Bolivian counterparts. Major Shelton had one last goal for his mission to Bolivia. “Well, Che was dead,” he recounted in an interview in 1969, “and it occurred to me right afterward that there was only one thing I really wanted – I wanted everyone in the team home for the holidays. I went up to Panama and spoke to the boss [General Porter], and on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December we had our last breakfast in Santa Cruz. We were all home – every one of us was home the night

---

<sup>124</sup> Finlayson, “Turning the Tables on Che,” 83.

before Christmas.”<sup>125</sup> The new Bolivian instructors finished the last two weeks of training for the third rotation of infantry companies on their own.<sup>126</sup>

In 1967, the Bolivian Army, aided by its U.S. Special Forces trainers, did nip an insurgency in the bud – and in doing so they changed the course of revolutionary warfare in the Americas. But it was a crisis response by both the United States and Bolivian forces. Reacting to Cuban guerrillas with untrained conscript units and raising a new counterinsurgency from scratch was not what American advisors envisioned in 1962 when they set out to “establish an effective counter-guerrilla, counter-insurgency capability within [the Bolivian] army based on US Army doctrine.”<sup>127</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Bolivia’s counterinsurgency experience in the 1960s differed dramatically from that of either Colombia or Venezuela. For most of the decade, Bolivia’s internal threat was radical miners, not rural guerrillas. U.S.-sponsored military units quelled miner uprisings and riots. They were not prepared to face a Cuban-sponsored guerrilla insurgency attempt in 1967. All three countries faced the challenge of rapid personnel turnover due to conscription. Venezuela and Colombia each developed an internal training capability to sustain and spread their American instilled counter guerrilla and counterinsurgency tactics and doctrine. Bolivia did not even try - until the last days of 1967.

Bolivian military authorities chose not to invest the effort needed to develop an internal educational capability to sustain their U.S.-imparted counterinsurgency training. In their assessment, the persistent threat of rebellious miners outweighed the potential

---

<sup>125</sup> St. George, “How the U.S. Got Che Guevara,” 100.

<sup>126</sup> MTT BL-404-67X AAR dated 10 December 1967.

<sup>127</sup> USARMIS to Bolivia, “Cold War Activities Report,” dated 30 June 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

threat of a rural insurgency. Bolivian officials considered two counterinsurgency-trained ranger battalions established in 1964 and 1965 sufficient to meet their needs. They did not approve another U.S.-trained battalion until faced with the threat of a Cuban-supported insurgency in 1967. Yet without effective schools, the Bolivian Army proved incapable of maintaining a high level of counter guerrilla competency in its U.S.-trained Ranger battalions due to the annual personnel turnover caused by conscription. When the *foco* crisis came in 1967, the Bolivian Army's poorly trained forces could at first only circumscribe the guerrillas' mobility while they waited for the Special Action Force to train yet another Ranger battalion to find and finish Guevara's insurgents. Yet over time, Bolivia's conventional forces improved. By the time the newly-trained Ranger battalion took the field, the guerrillas were nearly defeated. In one of the Cold War's ironies, the Bolivian Second Ranger Battalion, which many historians have assumed was the only counterinsurgency unit trained by the United States, was actually the third. Nevertheless, the Bolivian Second Ranger Battalion ended the Bolivian guerrilla saga by capturing and killing Che Guevara. In doing so, it achieved lasting fame.

Throughout the decade, Bolivia maintained military autonomy from the United States. Bolivian authorities approved all American military training and assistance. They accepted all the civic action projects and military equipment that they could garner from the United States, but they also set limits on American efforts to establish counterinsurgency trained forces. Bolivian officers, rather than Americans, determined whether or not to embed counterinsurgency tactics and doctrine in their military schools system. Most importantly, Bolivian civilian and military leaders maintained full control of their nation's response to Che Guevara's insurgency attempt in 1967. Bolivian officers devised and implemented the containment strategy that restricted the guerrilla's

movements and denied them access to the outside world. Although American Special Forces spent months training the Second Ranger Battalion, Bolivian officers led them in combat. Like their Venezuelan and Colombian counterparts, Bolivians accepted U.S. military training and assistance on their own terms and they determined when and where to apply military force in their country.

## **COUNTERINSURGENCY IN THE ANDEAN RIDGE: CONCLUSION**

Latin America experienced a tumultuous decade during the 1960s. Cuba sought to export its revolution while the United States labored to prevent “another Cuba” in the hemisphere. The United States Army’s counterinsurgency training efforts in the region formed part of larger American effort to prevent the spread of Communism. Yet the United States also had to contend with the national political and military sensitivities of its regional allies, even as it sought to assist them in bolstering their security. The effect of U.S. military support for internal security, and its concomitant counterinsurgency training, varied tremendously between countries in the 1960s. Political, economic, and social differences in each country – and the nature of the threat each faced – determined whether a country accepted or rejected American counterinsurgency doctrine. It also strongly influenced the mix and measure of training and assistance each country’s security forces received.

The nations of the Andean Ridge of South America clearly demonstrate this diversity. Colombia faced the lingering vestiges of civil war and first sought American internal security assistance in 1959. Lawlessness and bandit gangs wracked the Colombian countryside, although Bogotá also confronted the threat of Communist enclaves. Fidel Castro targeted Venezuela for revolution soon after seizing power in Cuba. He supported Venezuela’s Communist insurgents throughout most of the decade. Castro’s military trained hundreds of Venezuelans in guerrilla warfare techniques in Cuba, he also sent arms and ammunition, money, and even combat advisors to Venezuela. In Bolivia, the recurrent security threat was riotous miners, not rebellious peasants. Yet as the decade drew to a close, Castro’s lieutenant Ernesto “Che” Guevara

targeted Bolivia for a revolution that he dreamed would sweep across South America and liberate the continent.

Because each country's situation was unique, each country's leadership developed its own understanding of counterinsurgency doctrine and applied its training as it saw fit. Colombia embraced American counterinsurgency doctrine as part of Plan Lazo. This plan inverted the policies of earlier Colombian governments which had vacillated between offering political amnesty to rural armed factions and using conventional military force to repress rural populations. Under Plan Lazo, the Colombian government sought to win the "hearts and minds" of the rural population and used its specialized counter guerrilla units to attack bandit gangs and Communist "republics." In Venezuela, the government of Rómulo Betancourt and his successors used electoral democracy, land reform, and counterinsurgency to thwart the urban Communists' attempt to foment a Cuban-style rural insurgency. Bolivian leaders embraced civic action in the countryside to earn the good will of the peasants, but they also used military forces to repress unruly miners. Because they faced no active insurgency until 1967, they adapted their U.S.-sponsored counterinsurgency capabilities to confront the extant threat of recalcitrant miners rather than the latent threat of a rural uprising. There was no rural tinderbox as Che discovered.

Each country also accepted a differing mix of U.S. counterinsurgency training. Developing an effective counterinsurgency capability required training individuals and units in counterguerrilla tactics, civic action, and psychological operations. It also required raising specialized counter guerrilla units capable of besting the guerrillas at their own game. Colombia, Venezuela, and Bolivia each accepted individual and unit training and raised specialized units, although in differing ways. Financial constraints prevented large numbers of Colombian officers from attending U.S. counterinsurgency



schools. Instead, the Colombian Army accepted the highest number of Special Action Force mobile training team visits of any nation in the hemisphere. It also adjusted its preexisting counterinsurgency tactics based on American advice. Venezuela sent large numbers of National Guard and Army officers to U.S. Army counterinsurgency schools and received the highest number Special Action Force counterinsurgency training missions in the region. Bolivia sent students to counterinsurgency schools and raised several counter guerrilla units based on the U.S. Army model. It also accepted eight Special Action Force counterinsurgency mobile training teams between 1962 and 1967.

However, counterinsurgency training proved to be highly perishable. Personnel turnover due to conscription could swiftly undo American efforts to instill a counter guerrilla capability. Venezuela's Army and National Guard developed instructor cadres to sustain and spread internal security skills and knowledge throughout their organizations. The Colombian Army disseminated its newly-enhanced counterinsurgency tactics and techniques through its own robust military schools system. However, Bolivian forces proved incapable of sustaining their American imparted counterinsurgency training. They failed to integrate counterinsurgency into their limited formal schools system and unit officers proved unable to sustain counter guerrilla skills within their specialized formations. When Che Guevara targeted Bolivia for revolution in 1967, Bolivian and American leaders judged the army's previously trained counter guerrilla units as incapable of meeting the threat. Instead, in response to Bolivian requests for assistance, American policymakers ordered the Special Action Force to deploy an oversized team and train yet another Ranger battalion from scratch.

The cases of Colombia, Venezuela, and Bolivia aptly illustrate that internal political and social factors were the primary determinants of how each country fared

during the 1960s. U.S. military training was not. These cases also cast doubt on the Cold War narrative that U.S. counterinsurgency training led to military dictatorships and that Americans trained regional militaries to commit human rights violations. Despite all accepting the same U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and training (albeit in varying degrees), each nation developed and applied American doctrine in its own way and each experienced its own unique outcome. Colombia and Venezuela consolidated lasting democracies with their military forces subordinated to civilian rule. Bolivia did not establish an enduring democracy; it experienced military coups d'état before, during, and after the 1960s. Nevertheless, none of these countries embarked on a Southern Cone-style “dirty war” during the 1960s or 1970s. Colombia did experience a resurgence of rural violence in 1980s in which some military units committed human rights abuses, but attributing those abuses to earlier U.S. counterinsurgency training is obviously problematic.

These cases also highlight the paramount importance of Latin American agency. Political and military leaders in the Andean Ridge exhibited a high degree of autonomy in their security relationship with the United States. Although the power behind these relationships was not equal, Americans did not dictate the terms of internal security training to their counterparts in the Andean Ridge. For example, Colombian leaders rejected General Yarborough’s recommendation that five Green Beret “A” Detachments assume control of Colombian brigades and lead them in counterinsurgency operations. Colombian political leaders also determined how much internal security their country needed. When military operations reduced the level of rural violence to tolerable levels in the mid-1960s, Colombian authorities returned responsibility for internal security to its police forces and withdrew its military formations. Venezuelan presidents also controlled

the employment of military forces within their national territory. Police and National Guard units led the counterinsurgency efforts in the cities. They restricted the Venezuelan Army's operations to the hinterlands. Venezuela's civilian presidents also controlled the pace of development for counter guerrilla units. They refused American plans to raise and train additional Cazadores battalions until they decide the guerrilla threat situation warranted the extra formations.

Likewise, Bolivian leaders determined how many counter guerrilla units they would form in the country. They resisted American efforts to train additional Ranger battalions after 1965 until they faced an armed insurgency. Bolivian authorities also decided how much effort and expense they would invest in maintaining their American-provided counterinsurgency training. Forces capable of intimidating striking miners met their needs. Controlling riots required much lower levels of training so they allowed counterinsurgency skills to atrophy in their specialized units. In each of these Andean Ridge cases, Latin American countries requested U.S. military training. However, each nation also controlled their own forces, commanded their own units, and fought their own campaigns. Colombians, Venezuelans, and Bolivians exhibited a considerable degree of agency in their security dealings with the United States. That autonomy has frequently been overlooked in a regional historiography that often overestimates the negative impact of external U.S. counterinsurgency training on Latin America's Cold War.

### **PART III: COUNTER REVOLUTION IN BRAZIL AND THE SOUTHERN CONE**

The Southern Cone of South America was not immune to the upheavals and Cold War challenges of the 1960s and 1970s. The Cuban Revolution inspired Leftists and stoked fears of Communism among military officers and conservatives, just as it had in the rest of the hemisphere. Havana spared Chile in its efforts to export revolution, but it did support guerrilla movements in Brazil and Argentina. Security forces detected and defeated the nascent *focos* before they could achieve their goal of sparking a revolution. Nevertheless, the absence of successful rural insurgency did not equate to social harmony. Instead, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile each faced growing urban unrest and ideological polarization during these decades.

Just as in the Andean Ridge, the internal political, economic, and social factors affecting each country varied greatly, as did their responses. Brazil faced a deep economic crisis in the early 1960s and military officers perceived President João Goulart as increasingly pro-Communist. In 1964, the military seized power and established an enduring military authoritarian regime. In Argentina, the country confronted a series of worsening political and economic crises. The military feared the return of the country's populist "demagogue," former president Juan Perón. They also proscribed the nation's largest political party, founded by Perón, from participating in elections. Military and civilian governments alternated in power with neither proving able to solve the country's persistent problems. Meanwhile, Chile encountered an ongoing shift to the left in its national politics culminating in the election of the avowed Marxist Salvador Allende in

1970. The country appeared on the verge of civil war by 1973. On September 11 of that year, the Chilean Armed forces deposed Allende and installed a dictatorship.

American counterinsurgency doctrine proved a poor fit for the circumstances facing Southern Cone armies in the 1960s. The security forces of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile confronted urban unrest, and later urban terrorism, during the 1960s and 1970s. Rural insurgencies were uncommon and usually short-lived. More importantly, the armies of this sub-region perceived the rise of elected leftist governments as the most immediate threat to their countries and their institutions, not rural insurgency. Nationalism also played a role in these armies' indifference to American counterinsurgency doctrine. The armies of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile believed themselves fully capable of managing their own internal security problems without foreign interference. Because of these and other factors, the armies of the Southern Cone largely rejected U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine.

Brazil, Argentina, and Chile sent far fewer students to American internal security courses than their Andean Ridge neighbors. During the same time period that Venezuela dispatched ninety students to attend U.S. Army counterinsurgency schools, Brazil sent only six. Argentina boasted the highest number of students from the Southern Cone with twenty-six graduates while Chile had fifteen. These armies also accepted fewer Special Action Force mobile training team missions. Venezuela earned the distinction of accepting the most Special Action Force counterinsurgency training visits in the Americas with fourteen; Argentina led the Southern Cone by accepting just four. Brazil accepted three counterinsurgency missions. Chile allowed only two. Yet each of these countries did confront social and political instability during the 1960s and 1970s. They did not focus solely on internal security; each nation also pursued internal economic

development as a means to ease those tensions. Yet if they rejected American counterinsurgency, what doctrine took its place?

The armies of the Southern Cone adopted what was later termed the National Security Doctrine in order to confront the Cold War challenges of the 1960s and 1970s. Some Latin American historians have mistakenly conflated the National Security Doctrine (NSD) with American counterinsurgency, perceiving NSD as an “imported doctrine” introduced to South America from the United States.<sup>1</sup> Other scholars have attributed the origins of the National Security Doctrine to the Brazilian Army’s Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG) and French revolutionary warfare theories.<sup>2</sup> Argentina and Chile each later developed their own variants of the NSD based on their distinct threat assessments and unique circumstances. The confusion between American counterinsurgency and the National Security Doctrine likely arose because each broadly sought the same results: to ensure internal security and promote internal economic development. Yet the two doctrines advocated starkly different means for achieving those aims.

American policymakers and military strategists conceived their counterinsurgency doctrine as a mechanism to support and strengthen friendly democratic governments facing the threat of insurgency. This doctrine sought economic development to ameliorate the causes of discontent coupled with civic action and psychological operations in an

---

<sup>1</sup> See for example, Cecilia Menjivar and Nestor Rodriguez, eds., *When States Kill: Latin America, the U.S., and Technologies of Terror* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 34-5; Patrice J. McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2005), 3, 17; Thomas C. Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and International Human Rights* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 25, 101.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Wayne A. Selcher, *The National Security Doctrine and Policies of the Brazilian Government* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 1977); and João Roberto Martins Filho, “Military Ties between France and Brazil during the Cold War, 1959–1975” *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 41, no. 5, (Sep 2014), 167-183.

effort to win the support of the population – it represented a “hearts and minds” approach. Military efforts were but one component of, and supported, an overall civilian-led development program. Tactically, American counterinsurgency doctrine selectively targeted guerrilla forces through the training of specialized counter guerrilla units. Military operations strove to protect the civilian population while attacking armed insurgent elements.

In contrast, the armies of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile each eventually considered their elected civilian governments incapable of achieving either economic development or internal security. These armies overturned their elected democratic governments and established enduring military authoritarian regimes to implement the tenets of their National Security Doctrines. They restricted political competition and civilian participation in government to pursue a technocratic plan of national development managed by military officers. These dictatorships also eschewed winning the hearts and minds of their populations. Instead, they ruthlessly repressed “subversive” organizations and groups using torture, disappearances, and murder and created a climate of fear to intimidate the population into obedience. Southern Cone armies rejected American counterinsurgency in favor of their own home-grown internal security doctrines. The “Dirty Wars” of South America owe their origins to these home-grown National Security Doctrines. U.S. counterinsurgency training had little impact.

## **Chapter Eight: Contra Revolucionario in Brazil**

Unlike most of its regional neighbors, Brazil faced all three primary types of Leftist revolutionary challenges during the 1960s. Early in the decade the nation faced the potential for revolutionary change from above as elected Leftist politicians pursued a progressive social agenda that threatened the military as an institution. In 1964, the armed forces responded by ousting President João Goulart and establishing military rule. The country also confronted revolution from below as it encountered both rural and urban insurgencies. Brazil's Cold War was mainly an internal Brazilian affair, although outside actors such as Cuba, the United States, and France did exert considerable influence at certain times.

Cuba did not directly target Brazil for its export of revolution prior to 1964. There was no need to do so. Brazil boasted a strong Communist party and Leftist presidents ruled the country in the early 1960s. President Jânio Quadros reestablished relations with Cuba and the Soviet Union during his brief term of office in 1961. He also decorated Fidel Castro's most famous lieutenant, Argentine revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara, with Brazil's highest award, the Order of the Southern Cross. However, officially lauding Guevara with the country's most prestigious medal caused considerable outrage among Brazilian military officers, compounding Quadros' political problems. In a surprise move, Quadros resigned in August 1961. He had apparently hoped to garner additional political clout by forcing Brazilian elites to beg for his return to office. Instead, they accepted his resignation.

Yet Quadros' departure did not bring stability. Vice President João Goulart eventually assumed the presidency, but only after a contested succession. Goulart, widely



acknowledged as being more radical than Quadros, was out of the country on a visit to Communist China when the president resigned. Several of Brazil's political and military elites seized on his absence and sought to block him from becoming president. Eventually they struck a bargain whereby Goulart assumed office, but under a parliamentary arrangement which reduced his presidential powers. Undeterred, Goulart continued to shift the country towards the left. He deepened relations with Cuba by signing an agreement with Fidel Castro authorizing Cubana airlines to run charter flights to Brazil. Some four hundred Brazilians availed themselves of these and other flights to travel to Cuba by mid-1963. At least forty of them received guerrilla warfare training on the island, according to U.S. Department of Defense reports.<sup>3</sup> Yet Brazilians created, led, and sustained the later urban and rural insurgencies – they received limited support from Havana. After the 1964 coup d'état, Fidel Castro sought to form alliances with Brazilian leftists and he supported their revolutionary efforts with money and training.

Brazilian security forces faced these insurgent threats on their own. They accepted only minimal American internal security assistance. Just four Brazilians attended American counterinsurgency courses in the Panama Canal Zone between 1961 and 1964. Among South American nations, only tiny Uruguay sent fewer students during the same period with just three graduates.<sup>4</sup> In the meantime, only two Brazilian officers undertook training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, but neither of them enrolled in the counterinsurgency course.<sup>5</sup> Brazil also largely shunned American internal security mobile

---

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan C. Brown, "To Make the Revolution: Solidarity and Division among Latin American Guerrillas in the 1960s" *Asian Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, (2015), 7; Department of Defense, "Military Assistance Plan: Brazil" dated 15 July 1963 (hereafter cited as MAP Brazil 1963), United States Army Heritage and Education Center (hereafter cited as USAHEC), Narrative B, 1.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Army Center of Military History (hereafter cited as CMH), "Counterinsurgency Training at the U.S. Army School of the Americas," unsigned memorandum dated 26 October 1965, encl. 2.

<sup>5</sup> One officer attended the Special Warfare Officers Orientation Course, the other attended the Psychological Operations Course. See U.S. Army Element, Joint Brazil-U.S. Military Commission

training teams. The Special Action Force executed nineteen mobile training team missions in Brazil during the decade. However, just a scant three of the visits taught counterinsurgency, all of them in 1965 and 1966. The first internal security team conducted a survey to coordinate future instruction. Two missions followed with both providing parachute and counterinsurgency training to the Brazilian Army's Airborne Brigade in Rio de Janeiro. However, the training was brief and focused mainly on the skills related to parachute operations. During the third and final internal security visit, the American Green Berets taught just thirty Brazilian students – out of an army of some 150,000.<sup>6</sup> The Brazilian Army also eschewed American military advice as it faced its rural (1962, 1966, 1970, and 1972-1975) and urban (1968-1970) insurgencies. The Special Action Force deployed no counterinsurgency training teams to Brazil after 1966.

Rather than import the foreign internal security doctrine espoused by the United States, Brazilian Army officers developed their own. Military theorists from the Superior War College (Escola Superior de Guerra – ESG) conceptualized an interpretation of the Cold War threat facing Brazil. They then designed responses based largely on the nation's previous experiences with development and internal security. Their anti-communism was also home-grown. It derived from the military's earlier fights against Communism in 1930s and 1950s. The ESG's military intellectuals collected their theories and policies into what was later termed the National Security Doctrine (NSD). The Brazilian generals that ousted President Goulart in 1964, many of whom had served on

---

(hereafter cited as USARELM Brazil), "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 18 January 1963, National Archives II, College Park, MD, Records Group 548, Records of U.S. Army Forces in the Caribbean (hereafter cited as NAAFC), n.pag.

<sup>6</sup> George S. Beatty, "Senior Officer Debriefing Report," dated 1 August 1972, Defense Technical Information Center (hereafter cited as DTIC), accessed online 19 April 2016 at: <https://www.dtic.mil/DTICOnline/citation.search?docId=AD0523736&collectionId=tr&index=0&format=If&contentType=HTML>

the faculty of the Escola Superior de Guerra, implemented the tenets of NSD as national policy. Meanwhile, the Brazilian Army developed and disseminated its own “Contra-Revolucionario” tactics and conducted its own exercises to reinforce the training.<sup>7</sup> If the Brazilian Army developed its own internal security doctrine and tactics, how did they differ from American counterinsurgency? Throughout the 1960s and beyond, Brazil employed its own internal security doctrine and tactics. In turn, Brazilian generals had little need for American counterinsurgency training.

### **THE ORIGINS OF BRAZILIAN DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNAL SECURITY DOCTRINE**

Brazil’s challenges with development and internal security did not begin in the 1960s. Their roots run much deeper. President Getúlio Vargas began the first efforts at centralization of political control and state-directed economic development in the 1930s. In the aftermath of World War I and the Great Depression, Brazilian political and military leaders saw the nation’s lack of industrialization and reliance on commodity exports as a weakness which made the country vulnerable to the great powers and its regional rivals.

Vargas’ terms in office as dictator (1930-34), president (1934-37), and dictator again (1937-45) established several enduring themes in Brazilian history. First, Brazil needed to modernize to ensure its national security and meet its potential for greatness. Second, implementing economic development required centralized governmental authority. Third, the needs of the State legitimated the use of repression to maintain internal security and pursue development.

Vargas sought to modernize Brazil through industrialization. He also worked to break the power of Brazil’s agricultural oligarchs and end the country’s overreliance on

---

<sup>7</sup> USARELM Brazil, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 January 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

exports. Vargas adopted policies designed to replace dependence on imported goods with the ability to manufacture those products domestically. Economists later coined the phrase Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) to describe this new development model.<sup>8</sup> Although policymakers implemented ISI to remedy the disruption of imports during World War I and the Great Depression, many regional politicians also saw it as a path to modernization. During his nearly fifteen years as head of state, Vargas made great progress in his efforts to modernize the nation by reorienting the economy from oligarch controlled agriculture to state-directed industrialization. He also created enemies and generated a backlash against his policies. Vargas responded to the most serious challenges with repression and state-directed terror. “[G]rowth and repression,” one historian notes, “were the twin orders of the day.”<sup>9</sup>

Vargas’ efforts increase the power of the federal government sparked a revolt in 1932. Regional elites in São Paulo attempted to secede from the nation and they employed the state militia to enforce their newly-claimed sovereignty. Vargas sent federal forces to subdue the rebellion and reestablish the authority of the central government. The military succeeded in quelling the revolt, but only after four months of armed struggle.<sup>10</sup> In 1934, Vargas won a new four-year term of office. A year later he faced a Communist rebellion from within the military. The secret police and military leadership employed state-directed terror to quash the insurrection. “[M]ilitary commanders were in no mood for mercy” in the aftermath of the uprising, historian

---

<sup>8</sup>Simón Teitel and Francisco E. Thoumi, “From Import Substitution to Exports: The Manufacturing Exports Experience of Argentina and Brazil” *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vol. 34, no. 3 (Apr. 1986), 456.

<sup>9</sup> Rex A. Hudson, ed., *Brazil: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1998), 69.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America* (New York: Oxford Press, 1997), 168.

Shawn Smallman observes. “The special police and military officers tortured not only their prisoners, but also their victims’ wives and children...Some prisoners simply disappeared. Many people unconnected to the conspiracy suffered. The state and the military seized upon this opportunity to repress not only communists, but also anarchists, union leaders, ‘socialists, progressives, and reformers of all stripes.’”<sup>11</sup>

Vargas dissolved the Congress and established the dictatorship of the Estado Nôvo (New State) in 1937. Authoritarianism allowed Vargas the luxury of implementing his policies by decree rather than struggling for consensus under a democracy. “The *Estado Nôvo* furnished a centralized apparatus through which Vargas and his aides could pursue economic development and organizational change.” historians Thomas Skidmore and Peter Smith note. “The federal government assumed an aggressive role in the economy, organizing and strengthening market cartels (in cocoa, coffee, sugar, and tea) and creating new state enterprises, such as the National Motor Factory (to produce trucks and airplane engines).”<sup>12</sup> During the Estado Nôvo, Vargas also sought to encourage colonization of Brazil’s vast interior through his “March to the West” program.<sup>13</sup> This internal development initiative foreshadowed later resettlement efforts under military rule in the 1960s.

Yet despite Vargas’ nationalist rhetoric, coercion and political violence remained key tools of the state. “The Estado Novo also had its darker side.” Skidmore and Smith explain. “The security forces had a virtual free hand. Torture was routine, against not only suspected ‘subversives’ but also foreign agents... Censorship covered all the media,

---

<sup>11</sup> Shawn C. Smallman, *Fear and memory in the Brazilian Army and Society, 1889-1954* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 51-3.

<sup>12</sup> Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, 171-2.

<sup>13</sup> Joel Wolfe, *Autos and Progress: the Brazilian Search for Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 104.

with a government news agency...furnishing the 'official' version of the news. There were resemblances to Germany and Italy, but the Brazilians stopped well short of those extremes."<sup>14</sup> Brazilian generals later employed torture and censorship to maintain social control in the 1960s and 1970s, just as Vargas had done two decades earlier.

World War II provided President Getúlio Vargas with new opportunities to advance his development agenda. He negotiated with United States to provide air and naval basing rights along Brazil's northeast coast. In return, Brazil received American investment and technology.<sup>15</sup> Together the two nations constructed Brazil's first large-scale steel mill at Volta Redonda and Vargas established a new entity, the National Steel Company (CSN), to manage its operations and distribute its output. It quickly became "Brazil's foremost state-owned company and its largest industrial enterprise in the mid-twentieth century," historian Oliver Dinius notes. "It symbolized the state's capacity to effect economic change. Once production began, in 1946, the CSN instantly became the country's main supplier of steel, cutting imports by half."<sup>16</sup>

World War II also profoundly influenced the Brazilian Army. In mid-1944, Brazil dispatched a 25,000-man division known as the Brazilian Expeditionary Force (Fôrça Expedicionária Brasileira - FEB) to fight alongside the Allied Forces in the Italian campaign.<sup>17</sup> World War II combat opened the eyes of the Brazilian officers who fought overseas. All of them gained combat experience, but some also came to lament the lack

---

<sup>14</sup> Wolfe, *Autos and Progress*, 172.

<sup>15</sup> Hudson, *Brazil*, 353.

<sup>16</sup> Oliver J. Dinius, *Brazil's Steel City: Developmentalism, strategic power, and industrial relations in Volta Redonda, 1941-1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 1.

<sup>17</sup> Hudson, *Brazil*, 353.

of organization and modern equipment in their own army and Brazil's still underdeveloped industrial capabilities.<sup>18</sup>

The Army deposed Vargas in 1945, in part due to fears of populism and Vargas' efforts to mobilize the working classes into a political base. Yet, the drive towards development continued. Army General Eurico Gaspar Dutra served as president from 1946 to 1951 and completed numerous infrastructure improvements including highway construction, a rural schools building effort, railway improvements, and an expansion of electrical generation and distribution systems. Vargas won election as president again in 1951 under a platform of "accelerating industrialization and expanding social legislation." However, his social policies soon ran afoul of the military once more. Under the threat of another military coup, Vargas committed suicide in 1954.<sup>19</sup>

Juscelino Kubitschek became the first elected president of the post-Vargas era in 1956. Kubitschek managed to achieve both rapid industrialization and a cooling of social tensions during his term in office. His administration largely delivered on its ambitious slogan of "Fifty Years Progress in Five." It supported the creation of a domestic automobile industry, expanded the highway network, and raised a new national capital in Brasilia from scratch. Unfortunately, Kubitschek's government financed much of this development through foreign borrowing. When obtaining new loans became impossible, Kubitschek began printing money. Rising inflation and heavy foreign debt set the conditions for a worsening economic crisis in the early 1960s.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Several FEB veterans later served on the staff and faculty of the Escola Superior de Guerra where they integrated these concerns into their National Security Doctrine as a plan for future national development.

<sup>19</sup> Hudson, *Brazil*, 70-72.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-4, Jordan M. Young, ed., *Brazil 1954-64: End of a Civilian Cycle* (New York: Facts on File, 1972), 87; Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil: 1964-85* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 142-3, 151.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE BRAZILIAN NATIONAL SECURITY DOCTRINE

Brazilian generals continued to worry about both internal security and economic development in the post-World War II era. In the late 1940s, they sought the assistance of the United States in establishing an institute of higher learning to formalize their research and thinking about these and other issues. The Brazilian Army established the Superior War College (Escola Superior de Guerra – ESG) in 1949. The National War College in Washington D.C. served as the model for the new school and American officers provided their Brazilian counterparts with the curriculum of the college as a blueprint. However, Brazilian officers did not intend the school to be a duplicate of its American forbearer. They quickly set about imparting their own ideas and adapting the curriculum to meet the Brazilian reality and needs.<sup>21</sup>

The founders of the Superior War College understood from the outset that their national situation was unique and therefore required modification from the American National War College model. First, they recognized that because the United States was a developed country its military officers had the luxury of focusing their studies primarily on issues of fighting wars. American officers did not have to overcome national problems of underdevelopment. Second, the Brazilians realized that the United States had access to a pool of national security “elites formed by an educational system of proven effectiveness,” which Brazil lacked.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the Brazilian ESG would focus much of its attention on internal issues of national economic development and it would seek to train a corpus of civilian and military national security experts.<sup>23</sup> “In Brazil,” the Escola

---

<sup>21</sup> Sonny B. Davis, *A Brotherhood of Arms; Brazil-United States Military Relations, 1945-1977* (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1996), 98; Antônio de Arruda, *A Escola Superior de Guerra*, (São Paulo: Edições GRD, 1983), xxi-xxv.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, xxii.

<sup>23</sup> See also Alfred Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 175-6.



Superior de Guerra's historian, Antônio de Arruda, notes, "rather than preparation for war, the priority [of the school] would be to form elites to solve the country's problems in peacetime."<sup>24</sup>

The Escola Superior de Guerra conducted its first course in 1950. After establishing the school, and installing its faculty, the ESG began its efforts to define national policies and doctrine in the late 1950s. During this period a U.S. Army mission directly participated in the ESG. An American Army officer served on the faculty and also delivered lectures to the students. However, by the late 1950s rising Brazilian nationalism led one leftist student to "question the presence of an American officer when sensitive subjects were discussed."<sup>25</sup> Brazilian officials eliminated the U.S. Army mission to the ESG and downgraded the American officer's position to that of a liaison in 1960.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the U.S. Army did maintain an officer on the teaching faculty of the ESG in the late 1950s when Brazilian officers developed their concepts on internal security. However, Brazilian authorities eliminated the American presence on the ESG faculty several years before the United States refocused its foreign policy efforts towards internal security. Brazilian officers expressed pride in their ownership and control of the Escola Superior de Guerra. "The ESG is a daughter of the Americans," Marshal [General] Oswaldo Cordeiro de Farias, the school's first commandant, later explained, "but it has naturalized itself Brazilian."<sup>27</sup>

Brazilian generals relied on lessons drawn from their past national experiences in developing their National Security Doctrine. For them, countering an externally-

---

<sup>24</sup> Arruda, *A Escola Superior de Guerra*, xxii.

<sup>25</sup> Davis, *A Brotherhood of Arms*, 107.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>27</sup> Wilfred A. Bacchus, *Mission in Mufti: Brazil's Military Regimes, 1964-1985* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 20.

supported Communist insurgency was not a theoretical exercise. Their predecessors had faced just such a threat during the 1930s when the Brazilian Communist Party, allied with the Soviet Union, sought to foment a rebellion among sergeants in the Brazilian military. “Army generals believed they were under attack from external agents,” one historian explains, “and they had to respond ruthlessly. They targeted not only communists, but also all those they perceived as a threat.”<sup>28</sup> The Brazilian Army leadership later sought to obscure the fact that the rebellion originated from inside the organization, but within the officer corps the incident helped to reinforce strong anticommunist sentiments, fears of internal subversion, and an acceptance of repression as a legitimate tool of the state.<sup>29</sup>

Government efforts to suppress the Communist Party sparked another uprising in 1948. “Fierce battles between police and communists raged throughout Brazil,” historian Shawn Smallman notes. Attacks included the bombing of the Army’s ammunition plant outside Rio de Janeiro and an arson attack on an army barracks at João Pessoa. The government again responded with mass arrests and repression.<sup>30</sup> The Brazilian military faced the threat of communist infiltration yet again in 1952. The arrests of several Air Force members for posting communist propaganda on their base and the discovery of a list of five hundred names of military members in shop producing communist leaflets “set the stage for a wave of ‘anticommunist’ repression.”<sup>31</sup>

Military fears of communist infiltration and subversion, based on its own past experiences, ensured a prominent role for internal security in the Superior War College’s development of national security policies. Centralization of control and a predilection for

---

<sup>28</sup> Smallman, *Fear and Memory*, 117-118, 51.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-55.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

authoritarianism also formed key tenets of the ESG's conceptualization of internal security in the 1950s. Ildefonso Mascarenhas de Silva argued in a 1956 ESG lecture that,

We live in a climate of worldwide war that will decide the destiny of Western civilization. A decentralized system is fundamentally weak in periods of war, which demand a centralized and hierarchic structure. As total war absorbs all people, institutions, wealth, and human and natural resources for the attainment of the objectives, it seems certain that centralization and concentration will increase the efficiency and ability of the political and national power.<sup>32</sup>

Centralization of government control for internal security was an important element of ESG thinking. The school also advocated a strong government role in the economy.

Brazilian and American internal security doctrines shared the same goals of economic development and internal security. This fact, combined with the American role in the establishment of the Escola Superior de Guerra, has led some scholars to conclude that the United States developed the National Security Doctrine and exported it to Brazil via the ESG.<sup>33</sup> This thesis suffers from a problem of timing, among other issues. American economists and policymakers only began linking internal security and economic development in the late 1950s and early 1960s. For example, Walt W. Rostow published his influential *The Stages of Economic Growth* in 1960. Rostow later served as a national security advisor to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson where his concepts of economic development heavily influenced American counterinsurgency policy. In Brazil, however, this linkage came much earlier. "Security and development," the school's

---

<sup>32</sup> Stepan, *The Military in Politics*, 182.

<sup>33</sup> See for example Joseph Comblin, "The National Security Doctrine" in Jean Louis Weil, et al, *The Repressive State: the Brazilian "National Security Doctrine" and Latin America* (Toronto, Canada: Brazilian Studies, 1976).

historian explains, “have been constant concerns of the ESG since the first days of its creation” in 1949.<sup>34</sup>

An analysis of the two doctrines reveals important differences. The mechanisms by which their adherents expected to achieve economic development and internal security were not the same. U.S. counterinsurgency envisioned insulating friendly democracies from the challenges of modernization and the threat of insurgency. It promoted economic development assistance under the Alliance for Progress and military civic action to bolster public support for the friendly government and its policies.<sup>35</sup> The National Security Doctrine, on the other hand, encouraged replacing democracy with military rule as the most effective path to promoting development and ensuring internal security. Moreover, the National Security Doctrine did not seek public support. Instead, it advocated imposing social control under authoritarianism to enable a military government to rule by decree rather than consensus. “Liberal democracy, with its contradictions, showed itself unable to guarantee peace and the necessary internal order to achieve these goals,” one Brazilian researcher investigating the origins of the National Security Doctrine explains. “It would be up to the military, the most disciplined and organized sector of society, to ensure the application of a security policy in which the government ‘coordinates, in a fundamental strategic concept, all political activities,

---

<sup>34</sup> Arruda, *A Escola Superior de Guerra*, 13.

<sup>35</sup> See for example, “National Security Action Memorandum 182: Counterinsurgency Doctrine,” September 1962, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (hereafter cited as JFKPL), National Security Files, National Security Action Memoranda, 1. Accessed online 19 April 2016 at: <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKNSF-338-010.aspx> This NSAM promulgated the United States Overseas Internal Defense Policy (hereafter cited as OIDP) that explained the United States’ purpose for countering foreign insurgencies, its strategies to accomplish that goal, and assigned tasks to various departments of the government in support of those efforts. “It is the purpose of this document to provide the responsible executive agencies of the U.S. Government (State, DOD, AID, USIA and CIA) with policy guidance for the employment of U.S. resources to prevent or defeat subversive insurgency and to assist in the development of balanced capabilities for the total defense of free world societies against the threat of internal attack.”

economic, psychosocial and military.”<sup>36</sup> In other words, both doctrines sought to establish a coordinated government program incorporating all political, social, economic and military actions to counter subversive insurgency, but for the Brazilian generals the best way to do that was under a military dictatorship – not an elected democracy.

Brazil’s doctrine also differed from American counterinsurgency in how it sought to achieve economic modernization. The United States supported development to ameliorate economic conditions in order to reduce social unrest. However, senior American policymakers also recognized that the country had an “economic interest in assuring that the resources and markets of the less developed world remain available to us and to other Free World countries.”<sup>37</sup> Although decried by some critics as maintaining dependency, free markets and economic access are also key tenets of capitalism. Brazilian theorists of the Escola Superior de Guerra, on the other hand, sought greater economic independence. General Golbery do Couto e Silva, the intellectual author of the ESG’s National Security Doctrine in Brazil, advocated a state-directed economy, not the free-market capitalism encouraged by the United States. In fact, much of Brazil’s industrial development in the 1960s and 1970s replaced U.S. imports with newly-developed Brazilian products. The rise of the country’s defense industry provides a stark example. “Arms production by Brazilian industry began in a limited manner in the early 1960s” under military rule, American researchers explain, “with the manufacture of rifles, pistols, and machine guns...from that small beginning a large, thriving industry evolved.”<sup>38</sup> By the early 1980s, Brazil not only broke its reliance on American industry

---

<sup>36</sup> Gustavo Henrique Marques Bezerra, *Da Revolução ao Reatamento: a Política Externa Brasileira e a Questão Cubana (1959-1986)* (Brasília: Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, 2012), 247.

<sup>37</sup> OIDP, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Richard F. Nyrop, ed., *Brazil: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1983), 303-304.

for its weaponry, it had become a competitor with sales from its arms exports reaching US\$1.2 billion in 1981.<sup>39</sup>

External influences also played a role in the development of the National Security Doctrine. The Superior War College's theorists relied heavily on the writings of French military officers and academics in crafting their internal security doctrine. The French Army's practical experience confronting insurgencies in the late 1950s endowed those authors with a credibility that contemporary American writers lacked. "The greatest influence on the Brazilian military's ESG was not American, but French," Brazilian historian Gustavo Marques Bezerra argues. "Especially the experience of the French army in the fight against communist guerrillas in Indochina and later in Algeria ... French authors such as Gabriel Bonnet in the field of insurrectional or revolutionary war, [also] had a decisive influence on the NSD."<sup>40</sup>

The Escola Superior de Guerra began its study of insurgency, using the French term "Revolutionary War," in 1959. Colonel Augusto Fragoso gave a lecture at the school in May of that year as an introduction to the study of the new concept. Revolutionary war "is a type of war that seeks to seize power," Colonel Fragoso explained, "through the active participation of the population – conquered physically and morally - by destructive and constructive technical processes, following precise stages."<sup>41</sup> During the conference, Colonel Fragoso cited the work of the French War College in Paris and told his audience that, "the French bibliography on GR [Guerra Revolucionária or Revolutionary War] is, you might say, the only one in existence. A bibliography of North American origin has not yet given the subject the merit it deserves: in the last fourteen editions of *Military*

---

<sup>39</sup> Nyrop, *Brazil: A Country Study*, 304.

<sup>40</sup> Bezerra, *Da Revolução*, 249-250. Translation by author.

<sup>41</sup> Arruda, *A Escola Superior de Guerra*, 250-251.

*Review* (from January 1958 to February 1959) there was not a single study, article or topic that began with the title Revolutionary War, Insurrectionary War, or Subversive War.”<sup>42</sup> General Octavio Costa later recalled the impact of this new French doctrine on the Brazilian Army,

At that time [in the late 1950s], we were professionally bewildered, not knowing which direction to take. . . . So we started to become aware of new experiences . . . . On that occasion, the French military literature . . . . began to formulate a new kind of war. It was the infinitely small war, the insurrectionary war, the Revolutionary War. . . . It came [to us] through our ESG channel, it was [the ESG] who introduced the ideas of the insurrectional or revolutionary wars and brought them to the table of our own possible war. For we have not had nuclear war, conventional war was already outdated. But there was a war that seemed to us be here . . . . This all contributed to the formulation of our own doctrine of revolutionary war, which resulted in the military movement of 64.<sup>43</sup>

Many of the lessons contained in the revolutionary war doctrine grew out of the French experience in Algeria in the late 1950s. Contained within it were four tenets that came to shape the National Security Doctrines of the Southern Cone. First, the French conceptualized “revolutionary war” as a global total war for the survival of Western Civilization. Internal dissent and revolution were therefore markers of new form of warfare that necessitated a military response. Second, the use of terrorism by the insurgents legitimated the use of harsh measures including torture and executions as an antidote, according to French practitioners and authors such as Roger Trinquier.<sup>44</sup> Third, the French created specialized intelligence organizations to implement systematic repression in order to defeat the insurgency. Finally, they applied terror, through mass

---

<sup>42</sup> João Roberto Martins Filho, “A Influência Doutrinária Francesa Sobre os Militares Brasileiros no anos de 1960” *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, vol. 23, no. 67, (Junho 2008), 49. Translation by author.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>44</sup> See Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: a French view of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 21, 23.

arrests, disappearances and torture, to intimidate the population away from supporting the guerrillas. These hallmarks of French “revolutionary war” doctrine are also present in how the Brazilian generals applied their National Security Doctrine in the 1960s and 1970s.

### **BARRIERS TO U.S. COUNTERINSURGENCY TRAINING IN BRAZIL**

Two major obstacles impeded the transmission of American counterinsurgency concepts to the Brazilian Army in the 1960s. Nationalism proved the greatest barrier, but the timing of American doctrinal development also prevented its diffusion to Brazil. Language problems played only a minor role. A late start was the first issue to impact U.S. counterinsurgency training in Brazil in the early 1960s and it set the tone for much of the rest of the decade.

Brazilian Army strategists outpaced their American counterparts in the late 1950s and early 1960s as each army sought to develop a holistic counterinsurgency doctrine. The Brazilian Army Chief of Staff established a commission in September 1959 to develop a course of instruction on modern war emphasizing internal insurgency.<sup>45</sup> In July 1961, General Oswaldo Cordeiro de Farias, then serving as the Chief of Staff of the Brazilian Army, issued a formal publication promulgating doctrinal definitions of revolutionary war, insurrectionary war, subversive war, and psychological warfare.<sup>46</sup> In contrast, the Special Group (Counterinsurgency) did not disseminate its counterinsurgency definitions until May 1962. The U.S. Army published its own

---

<sup>45</sup> Martins Filho, “Military Ties between France and Brazil,” 179.

<sup>46</sup> Document FA-E-01/61 (Estado-Maior das Forças Armadas, 1961) as cited in Martins Filho, “A Influência Doutrinária Francesa,” 40.



explanation of counterinsurgency terms in an article entitled “Use the Right Word!” which appeared in *Special Warfare, U.S. Army: an Army Specialty* later that same year.<sup>47</sup>

The Brazilian Army had codified a comprehensive “Contra-Revolucionario” doctrine by mid-1962. It disseminated its new internal security doctrine through the training of individuals from basic recruits to senior officers. Several U.S.-supported units in Brazil “conducted a combined arms exercise of 5 days’ duration” in the fall of 1962, American officers reported. “This exercise involved the reduction of elements of an insurrection army, counter-guerrilla clean-up, and restoration of properly constituted government.”<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, the U.S. Army lagged behind. While Brazilian Army units were conducting complex internal security exercises based on their “Contra-Revolucionario” doctrine, the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg and the Caribbean School in Panama each offered only one narrowly focused counter-guerrilla course as 1962 drew to a close. That same year, Brazilian generals were busy training the senior leadership of their military on their new concepts. On 31 August 1962, General Humberto de Castello Branco, Chief of Staff of the Brazilian Army (and future president of Brazil), delivered a seminar on revolutionary war attended by ninety officers in Rio de Janeiro. “Courses followed at various centers of the military,” Brazilian historian João Roberto Martins Filho notes.<sup>49</sup> The Special Warfare School added a one-week counterinsurgency orientation course for general officers, but not until later in 1963. The

---

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Special Warfare, U.S. Army: an Army Specialty* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), 8.

<sup>48</sup> USARELM Brazil, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 January 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>49</sup> Martins Filho, “Military Ties between France and Brazil,” 179.

U.S. Army did not publish its first comprehensive internal security manual, Field Manual 31-22 *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces*, until November 1963.<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, it is evident that the Brazilian Army did not base its “Contra-Revolucionario” doctrine on American counterinsurgency concepts or methods. Brazil sent a mere four students to attend counterinsurgency training at the School of the Americas between 1961 and 1964, all of them in 1962.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Brazil sent only two officers to the Special Warfare School during the same time period – again both attended in 1962. Yet, neither officer took the counterinsurgency course.<sup>52</sup> The Special Action Force did not conduct its first counterinsurgency training visit to Brazil until 1965.

The Brazilian Army’s minimal participation in U.S. Army internal security courses during the early 1960s indicates its rejection of American counterinsurgency training. Or does it? Just six Brazilian officers received internal security related instruction at the School of the Americas or at Fort Bragg, North Carolina in in the early 1960s and all of them attended courses in 1962. Meanwhile, Brazil accepted no Special Action Force mobile training team visits before 1965. The Brazilian Army’s trepidation regarding U.S. counterinsurgency training seems clear. However, when considered against the backdrop of Brazil’s polarized political atmosphere of the early 1960s, a more complicated picture emerges.

Nationalism also played a role in Brazil’s rejection of American internal security doctrine. In October 1962, the Special Group (Counterinsurgency) dispatched an Interdepartmental Survey Team “to visit Brazil and submit appropriate

---

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces*, Field Manual 31-22 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, November 12, 1963).

<sup>51</sup> CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training,” enclosure 2.

<sup>52</sup> USARELM Brazil, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 January 1963, NAAFC, n. pag.

recommendations.” General William H. Draper Jr. led the team which spent sixteen days traveling in the country and meeting with American and Brazilian officials. “The Brazilians are convinced that theirs is a great country with a great future and that they are competent to manage their own affairs,” the team reported to President Kennedy. They “are highly sensitive to any implication of U.S. tutelage or direction.”<sup>53</sup> International military training operated in this same political atmosphere, it did not take place in a vacuum. Latin American political leaders authorized or rejected their military personnel’s foreign schools attendance and the hosting of U.S. military trainers on their sovereign soil. Military leaders did not. In Brazil, the pro-Communist governments of Jânio Quadros and João Goulart ruled from 1961 to 1964. New research indicates that both men curtailed the Brazilian Army’s participation in U.S. internal security training.

The Brazilian Army sent twelve students to the Caribbean School during President Quadros’ brief term of office in 1961, but none undertook counterinsurgency courses.<sup>54</sup> After Quadros’ abrupt resignation in August 1961, Vice President Goulart should have assumed the presidency. However, Goulart was visiting Communist China at the time. His absence allowed Brazilian political and military leaders to contest his ascension.<sup>55</sup> Goulart did eventually take office, but he governed under a parliamentary system with reduced powers. All Brazilian officers attending U.S. Army internal security courses in the early 1960s did so under this brief period of limited presidential powers.

---

<sup>53</sup> William H. Draper Jr., “Report from the Inter-Departmental Survey Team on Brazil to President Kennedy” dated 3 November 1962, Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter cited as FRUS), 1961-1963, Volume XII, American Republics, Document 288.

<sup>54</sup> Carlton T. Fox Jr., “The U.S. Army School of the Americas and U.S. National Interests in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” (unpublished thesis Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2001), 2-49; CMH, “Counterinsurgency Training,” enclosure 2.

<sup>55</sup> Larry Rohter, *Brazil on the Rise: The Story of a Country Transformed* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 26.

Goulart regained the full presidency as a result of a national plebiscite in January 1963. During this period American diplomats sought to re-designate two U.S. Military Assistance Program-sponsored Brazilian Army units from hemispheric defense to internal security. However, the Goulart administration refused to sign the “internal security note” requested by American diplomats. This refusal triggered the suspension, and later the cancellation, of all American internal security training with Brazil from that point forward.<sup>56</sup> In early 1963, Goulart cut funding for overseas military training and reduced Brazilian draftees’ training time from twelve to eight months, both ostensibly as economy measures.<sup>57</sup> As a result, Brazil sent no students to any Canal Zone schools or the Special Warfare School during that year. The first Special Action Force counterinsurgency mission to Brazil came during Fiscal Year 1965, after the military coup in April 1964.<sup>58</sup>

The Brazilian Army developed its own concepts and doctrine for internal security during the late 1950s and early 1960s. It is now also evident that pro-Communist Presidents Jânio Quadros and João Goulart curtailed Brazilian Army interactions with the U.S. Army during the years of greatest American counterinsurgency emphasis between 1961 and 1964. Nevertheless, the Brazilian Army retained sufficient autonomy to develop and begin implementing its “Contra-Revolucionario” doctrine even as Goulart shifted the country farther to the left. Pro-Cuba Presidents Quadros and Goulart impeded the Brazilian Army’s ability to receive U.S. counterinsurgency training, but they could not alter internal army functions.

---

<sup>56</sup> MAP Brazil 1963, Narrative D, 2, Narrative E, 1; United States Southern Command, “Historical Report Calendar Year 1963,” 25 April 1964, (hereafter cited as USSOUTHCOM CY63), CMH, VIII-11.

<sup>57</sup> USARELM Brazil, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 2 April 1963, NAAFC, n. pag.

<sup>58</sup> The military coup d’état that removed President João Goulart from office began on 31 March and was concluded on the morning of 1 April. For clarity, this dissertation will refer to 1 April as the date of the coup.

Yet if civilian resistance to foreign military training was the only barrier to the Brazilian Army's acceptance of U.S. counterinsurgency, then training with the Americans should have flourished after the 1964 coup d'état. It did not. After seizing power, Brazilian generals had full authority to determine their military's attendance at foreign schools and the hosting of U.S. military trainers in the country. Civilian oversight no longer constrained their actions. The United States and Brazil also resolved their earlier impasse over the internal security note. However, there was no sharp increase in U.S. schools attendance post 1964. This indicates that other considerations also affected these decisions.

The Brazilian Army's own internal nationalism also impeded U.S. Army schools attendance. Brazil sent a total of 181 students to attend courses at the School of the Americas in Panama between 1961 and 1970. The average participation rate was a mere eighteen students per year out of an army of some 150,000 members. In contrast, Bolivia (with a 15,000-man army) sent 1,291 students. Venezuela sent 1,983. Brazil's attendance at the school did increase to twenty-three students in 1964, but it dropped to only seven the following year. Presidential restrictions on foreign military training were not a factor after the Army seized control of the government in April 1964, so what explains the continued lack of participation?

Nationalism within the Brazilian Army affected its willingness to accept American counterinsurgency doctrine and training. However, the Brazilian army was not a unitary actor in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Two factions competed for influence within the organization. Nationalist officers favored state-led development, but "feared the economic power of the United States and its multinationals," according to historian Shawn Smallman. These officers "wished to remain neutral in the Cold War."

Internationalist officers, on the other hand, “worried about the threat from communism and wished to ally with the United States in its global struggle.”<sup>59</sup> Ironically, both groups had reason to reject adopting American counterinsurgency. Nationalist officers would have spurned any foreign military doctrine, especially one that potentially made them subordinates of the United States. The Internationalist officers formed the intellectual backbone of the Escola Superior de Guerra. Ironically, although these officers were pro-United States, they had no need for American counterinsurgency. They had spent the last decade developing their own Brazilian concepts for internal security and the running of the country. After seizing control of the government in 1964, the Internationalists officers implemented their National Security Doctrine as Brazil’s national policy.

The Brazilian Army sought just enough training to understand American counterinsurgency. It did not seek to adopt it. A similar dynamic affected American efforts to increase Brazilian participation in U.S. Army military intelligence courses in the Canal Zone. “These courses have been repeatedly offered to the Brazilian Army,” American Army officers wrote, “[b]ut have been turned down based on the host country evaluation that local training parallels or exceeds training offered at the [U.S. Army Caribbean School] course.” The same January 1963 report from Brazil also mentioned that spaces in U.S. Army military intelligence courses were “placed in lower priority in [the] Brazilian Army Training budget in favor of maintenance training requirements.”<sup>60</sup> The Brazilian Army sought American training only for those technical skills it did not already possess. It did not need or want a large infusion of U.S. counterinsurgency

---

<sup>59</sup> Smallman, *Fear and Memory*, 121.

<sup>60</sup> USARELM Brazil, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 January 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

training because it had already developed its own “Contra-Revolucionario” doctrine, which it considered superior to American counterinsurgency.

The Brazilian Army was reluctant to accept American military training or advice during the 1960s, but jungle training was a notable exception to this rule. General Andrew P. O'Meara, the commander of U. S. Southern Command in Panama, visited Brazil in early 1964. During the trip Brazilian Army leaders asked for American assistance in their efforts to establish a jungle school. “In conjunction with General O’Meara’s visit to Brazil earlier this year,” American staff officers in Panama wrote, “a request was made for training of Brazilians in jungle warfare for the purpose of preparing cadre for a planned Brazilian Jungle Warfare School.”<sup>61</sup> The Brazilian generals clearly intended to model their new school on the U.S. Army Jungle Warfare Training Center in the Panama Canal Zone.<sup>62</sup> The United States funded the training for the Brazilians, but because it was not a budgeted request (i.e. planned a year in advance) American officers in Panama had to delay the course from June until August 1964. Eleven Brazilian officers and twelve enlisted men arrived in Panama in early August to begin their training, but this was not an ordinary event.

The American instructors tailored the course to meet the needs of their students. The Brazilians received three weeks of instruction at a time when the standard course was just two weeks in duration. Presumably, the American instructors spent much of that extra time on curriculum development, instructor preparation, and teaching methods. In mid-1964, the jungle warfare course focused on “teaching men to fight under jungle conditions,” U.S. Army South Historian Hugh Gardner explains. “Subjects presented

---

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Army South (hereafter cited as USARSO), “Weekly Staff Conference,” dated 7 August 1964, NAAFC.

<sup>62</sup> Chapter Three explains the history and role of the U.S. Army Jungle Warfare Training Center.

included escape and evasion techniques, jungle firing, communications, navigation, tactical and logistical operations ... Although a few basic elements of survival were taught, this phase was incidental to the combat training.”<sup>63</sup> The course also covered small-unit patrolling, ambushes and other combat skills. However, counterinsurgency tactics were not yet a part of the curriculum in 1964.

Language also made the course different for the American jungle school cadre. They normally conducted their courses in Spanish, so “consequently the School of the Americas requested the help of Portuguese-speaking personnel from the Special Action Force.” “As a result of this request,” Special Action Force historians noted, “selected personnel conducted the course completely in Portuguese and did such a successful job that when the Brazilian contingent finished they were able to return home and organize their own school in the Amazon basin.”<sup>64</sup> Special Action Force unit historical reports support this assessment of the success of the Portuguese language jungle warfare course. The Brazilians required no further U.S. Army assistance with jungle training after 1964.

Language was an obstacle to military training between the United States and Brazil, although not an insurmountable one. The Brazilian Army did send students to U.S. Army schools in Panama and Fort Bragg, North Carolina as noted above. The jungle school course in 1964 demonstrates that American trainers in the Canal Zone had the ability to successfully conduct courses in Portuguese when requested by the Brazilians. The Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg also worked to ameliorate language problems in its curriculum. By 1965, the school offered “simultaneous interpretation in French and Spanish for all resident instruction received by foreign officers.” However, the small

---

<sup>63</sup> Hugh H. Gardner, “Jungle Warfare Training in the Canal Zone,” 15 April 1968, USARSO, 9-10.

<sup>64</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, “Historical Report 1965” (hereafter cited as SAF 65), USAHEC, n. pag.



number of Portuguese-speaking students taking courses there precluded a heavy focus on that language. “Most all Portuguese speaking officers also use the Spanish translation,” American officials noted.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, Brazil also had the option of sending English speaking students to American courses throughout the 1960s. Likewise, the Special Action Force deployed multiple Portuguese-speaking mobile training teams to Brazil between 1965 and 1970.

The greatest barriers to Brazilian acceptance of American counterinsurgency doctrine were timing and nationalism. The Brazilian Army, and its generals that ruled the country after 1964, simply did not need or want American internal security assistance. They had developed and implemented their own National Security Doctrine to guide the nation and “Contra-Revolucionario” tactics to deal with insurgencies before American counterinsurgency came into being. Major General George S. Beatty, the commander of the Joint U.S.-Brazilian Military Commission, summed up the situation in 1971. In testimony in front of the Senate Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs (commonly known as the Church committee, for its Chairman Senator Frank Church), Beatty responded to series of questions about American internal security assistance to Brazil. “[O]ne of your jobs is to counsel on the strategy and tactics for dealing with the threat,” a committee member asked. “What advice have you given or do you give the Brazilians for dealing with the threat to their internal security?” “Not a bit; none,” General Beatty explained, “because they don’t ask.”<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> John B. Holt, “U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare Counterinsurgency Training Review” Fort Bragg, N.C., October 1965, n. pag.

<sup>66</sup> United States Senate, “United States Policies and Programs in Brazil,” Hearings before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, May 4, 5, and 11, 1971 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 87.

Two additional factors support the conclusion that the Brazilian Army relied on its own “Contra-Revolucionario” concepts and tactics during the 1960s. First, unlike Colombia, Venezuela, and Bolivia, Brazilian authorities did not request American military assistance when confronting rural or urban insurgencies. Second, the way that Brazilian forces responded to those insurgences showed a marked difference from American counterinsurgency tactics as applied by other Latin American armies of the time.

### **CONTRA REVOLUCIONARIO IN BRAZIL: RURAL *FOCO* ATTEMPTS IN THE 1960S**

The first Cuban-inspired guerrilla *foco* in Brazil began in 1961. The roots of this initial rural insurgency effort grew out of the widespread poverty and inequality of Brazil’s sugar zone in the northeast. The guerrilla *foco* was an offshoot of the Peasant League organizations formed there in the late 1950s. “Northeastern Brazil, an area of 970,000 square miles with a population of 22,000,000,” CIA analysts explained, “is rivaled in Latin America as a depressed area only by Bolivia and Haiti. Per capita income is estimated at less than \$100 annually, one third of the average for Brazil as a whole.”<sup>67</sup> The area’s problems, and its potential for revolution, first gained the attention of American journalists in late 1960. “Northeast Brazil Poverty Breeds Threat of Revolt,” warned a page one headline in the *New York Times* on 31 October. Tad Szulc, author of the article, based his reporting on extensive travel and numerous interviews in the sugar zone. “The Northeast will go Communist,” a local Brazilian official told Szulc, “and you will have a situation ten times worse than in Cuba – if something is not done. If the

---

<sup>67</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary,” dated 1 June 1962. CIA Freedom of Information Act Reading Room online (hereafter cited as CIA FOIA). Accessed 19 April 2016 online at: [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/89801/DOC\\_0000762512.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000762512.pdf)

Brazilian Northeast is lost to you Americans the Cuban revolution will have been a picnic by comparison.”<sup>68</sup>

By 1961, U.S. policymakers were also taking note of the Peasant Leagues and the potential for revolution in the sugar zone. “The Communist Party (PCB) and its pro-Castro allies will probably be able to keep the poor, rural northeast in ferment,” CIA analysts explained. “There, the 25,000-member Peasant Leagues, led by pro-Communist, pro-Castro Francisco Julião, have become a powerful force for social agitation among the rural laborers and tenant farmers.”<sup>69</sup> In July 1961, President John F. Kennedy met with Brazilian economist Celso Furtado, the director of the Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast (SUDENE). During their meeting Kennedy told Furtado that, “he had become aware of the problems of the Northeast which were now a matter of great interest and understanding in the [United States].”<sup>70</sup> American policymakers sought to defuse the revolutionary potential of the Peasant Leagues through development programs and aid under the Alliance for Progress. They also partnered with Furtado and SUDENE as a means to implement their projects. However, despite dire warnings and inflammatory rhetoric, the Peasant Leagues proved to have little revolutionary potential.

Francisco Julião sought to organize the Peasant Leagues into a political base, not a guerrilla army. Julião was a lawyer, like Fidel Castro, but unlike his Cuban benefactor, Julião harbored no aspirations to become a guerrilla revolutionary. However, his principal lieutenant did. It was Clodomir dos Santos Moraes who established the first

---

<sup>68</sup> Tad Szulc, “Northeast Brazil Poverty Breeds Threat of Revolt,” *New York Times*, 31 October 1960.

<sup>69</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “National Intelligence Estimate: The Outlook for Brazil,” dated 8 August 1961, FRUS, 1961–1963 Volume XII, American Republics, Document 212. Accessed 8 March 2016 online at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v12/d212>

<sup>70</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, “Call of Celso Furtado on the President,” dated 14 July 1961. FRUS, Document 211. Accessed 8 March 2016 online at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v12/d211>

armed *foco* in Brazil. Yet rather than seeking to implant a guerrilla cell in the Peasant League strongholds of the northeast, Moraes inexplicably choose the town of Dianópolis in the state of Goiás – some 1,700 kilometers from Recife (See Figure 5). Several Northeasterners bought farms in the area in late 1961 with the announced plan of raising cattle and growing grains. Moraes then began recruiting would-be guerrillas, most of them students from São Paulo. “The young guerrillas-to-be collected small arms and trained on long marches throughout the countryside,” one historian notes. “They also tried, without much success, to enlist the local peasants.” As their Venezuelan counterparts later discovered, school boys often made poor guerrillas. Moraes soon learned this for himself. “The expenses of the training camps soared as a result of the insistence of these young people on complementing the sparse guerrilla diet with a steady supply of cookies, jellies, and canned food,” Moraes later complained. “In addition, they maintained they were entitled to weekly visits to the prostitutes of the neighboring villages...”<sup>71</sup>

This first *foco* attempt in Brazil was short-lived. A proclivity for the local ladies was not the guerilla trainees’ only vice; they also talked too much. Besides proselytizing among the local peasants, “[i]n São Paulo students talked freely about the camp,” one historian notes, “and some even visited Dianópolis on a lark as part-time guerrillas.”<sup>72</sup> In late November 1962, the Brazilian authorities raided the camp, arrested several of the student guerrillas, and captured a few weapons. The Rio de Janeiro state police caught

---

<sup>71</sup> Page, Joseph A., *The Revolution That Never Was: Northeastern Brazil 1955-1964* (New York: Grossman, 1972), 96-7.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 97

Moraes in December and quickly put him in prison. The whole episode lasted just one year and never became a challenge to the Brazilian security forces.<sup>73</sup>

The perceived menace of the Peasant Leagues was also fleeting. Under pressure from the Catholic Church, the Communist Party, and others to gain the peasants' loyalty, the Leagues began to fracture in 1963. By the time of the military coup d'état in April 1964, the Peasant Leagues crumbled. Their leaders chose not to resist the Brazilian Army's seizure of the government. "In the course of a single day," historian Joseph Page recounts, "a movement which had begun in the 1950s and had been threatening to alter the balance of political and economic power in the most important state of Northeast Brazil collapsed like a house of cards."<sup>74</sup> The military authorities, however, were not convinced that the threat was over. "The repression was most severe in the Northeast" after the coup, one historian notes, "where the Fourth Army and state and local police cracked down on the peasant leagues... Some peasant organizers simply disappeared, the victims of summary executions. Others suffered torture, usually at the hands of the Fourth Army."<sup>75</sup>

The conditions that made insurgency possible did not end when the military took power, despite the initial repression. "There is no active guerrilla movement in Brazil," State Department analysts judged in November 1964. They continued,

A number of reports state that Leonel Brizola, a former Federal Deputy from Guanabara State now in exile in Uruguay, is trying to recruit more

---

<sup>73</sup> It is not clear if American officials were aware of this *foco* attempt. President Kennedy's top level policy committee, the Special Group (Counterinsurgency), discussed Brazil in its meeting of 30 August 1962. "[A]lthough the situation in Brazil is a most difficult one," the Group noted for the record, "it is a political-economic one rather than an insurgency, and does not fall within the purview of the Group." Thomas W. Davis Jr., "Minutes of Meeting of Special Group (CI) dated 30 August 1962, JFKPL, National Security Files, Meetings and Memoranda, Special Group (CI): Subjects: Meetings, 8 June 1961-2 November 1962.

<sup>74</sup> Page, *Revolution that Never Was*, 201.

<sup>75</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 17.

guerrillas in the hope of organizing an effective force. However, the military and police seem to be well informed about the plotting of Brizola and his followers. Moreover, the situation in Brazil, held in check as it is by the revolutionary government of President Castello Branco, offers little to encourage would-be guerrillas.<sup>76</sup>

Although there was no active guerrilla threat, American military training with Brazil did increase after the 1964 coup d'état, but not dramatically. The first event took place not in Brazil, but in the jungles of Panama. As described above, the Special Action Force taught a Portuguese language version of the U.S. Army jungle warfare course to a group of twenty-three Brazilians in August 1964. The American Green Berets undertook their first mobile training team missions to Brazil the following year. The Special Action Force conducted eight visits in 1965, but only two of them focused on internal security. Early in the year the Americans deployed a counterinsurgency survey team to assess Brazilian capabilities and coordinate plans for future missions. Yet rather than developing a plan to establish a comprehensive counterinsurgency program across multiple army units as had been the case in Venezuela, Colombia, and Bolivia, the initial American internal security survey visit and follow-on training in Brazil focused on just one organization.

The Brazilian Army only accepted American counterinsurgency instruction for its Airborne (parachute) Brigade in Rio de Janeiro. The Special Action Force conducted several training missions with this unit, three of them listed as counterinsurgency. However, it appears that much of the Brazilian's interest lay in improving their military parachuting skills, not learning American internal security doctrine and tactics. After the initial counterinsurgency survey mission of early 1965, the Green Berets returned twice

---

<sup>76</sup> Department of State, "Guerrilla and Terrorist Activity in Latin America: A Brief Review" dated 18 November 1964, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library (hereafter cited as LBJPL), National Security Files, Countries, Latin America, Vol. 2. Memorandum.

more to teach airborne operations and freefall parachuting techniques to the Brazilian Airborne Brigade. These missions followed the same pattern of Brazil's attendance at U.S. Army schools. The Brazilian Army sought and accepted courses and instructor visits related to technical skills it needed, in this case military parachuting, it was mostly indifferent to American counterinsurgency training. The Special Action Force conducted several other technical skills mobile training team missions in 1965. They taught two courses on marksmanship, as well as instructing other Brazilian Army units on intelligence, interpreter, and ordinance subjects. The Green Berets completed a total of eight missions to Brazil in 1965. It was the high water mark of their interaction with that army.

The Special Action Force undertook six mobile training team missions in Brazil during 1966, but only one related to counterinsurgency. Five Green Beret instructors visited the Brazilian Airborne Brigade during May and June. The Americans trained seven officers and twenty-three soldiers in techniques of airborne resupply, "personnel parachute drops, landing zone and drop zone preparation, ambushes, raids, and counterinsurgency techniques." "The final field training exercise," the Special Action Force historians noted, "included a guerrilla and counter-guerrilla force with airborne operations for personnel and supply." The American team judged its mission "highly successful, but recommended more practical work in these types of operations on the part of the Brazilians."<sup>77</sup> The Green Berets conducted some counterinsurgency training with the Brazilian paratroopers during this mission, but much of their efforts related to teaching the skills required to execute airborne operations.

---

<sup>77</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, "Historical Report 1966" (hereafter cited as SAF 66), USAHEC, n. pag.

The Special Action Force undertook five additional mobile training missions in Brazil during 1966, all of them focused on technical skills. The courses taught included signal (radio operations and maintenance), logistics (repair parts control and inventory), and intelligence subjects. Language was not a barrier for the Green Berets on these missions to Brazil. For example, the officers conducting the logistics mobile training team “will lecture in Portuguese,” the *Southern Command News* explained, “and discuss engineer, ordnance, and signal supply using slides charts, supply manuals and tests as teaching aids.”<sup>78</sup> The American officers of that team spent twelve weeks in Brazil giving classes in Rio de Janeiro, Vacaria in Rio Grande do Sul state, and João Pessoa in Paraíba state. All went well with the two units in the south, but the Brazilians in the northeast did not appreciate being lectured to by Americans. The team reported “a lack of enthusiasm in their instruction” among the students of the 1<sup>st</sup> Engineer Battalion in João Pessoa, “as well as apparent anti-American feelings.”<sup>79</sup>

The final two visits to Brazil in 1966 supported civic action. “[A]t the request of the Brazilian government,” Captain Leo Rutter and Sergeant First Class James Varnes spent six weeks aiding “in the construction of a new rail line between Puerto Alegre and Brasilia,” the *Southern Command News* reported.<sup>80</sup> This two-man team trained eighteen officers, twenty-eight enlisted troops, and fifty-seven civilians employed by the Brazilian Army during their stay. The second team of two Green Beret non-commissioned officers taught the operation and maintenance of rock crushing machinery near the city of Natal. The American sergeants trained five officers, fifteen enlisted men and ten army civilians at the site. “The rock crushing plant [machinery] was in poor condition,” the team

---

<sup>78</sup> United States Southern Command, *Southern Command News* vol. 1, no 38, May 27, 1966, USARSO.

<sup>79</sup> SAF 66.

<sup>80</sup> United States Southern Command, *Southern Command News* vol. 1, no 40, June 10, 1966, USARSO.



reported, but in spite of this they were “able to instruct the personnel in nearly all aspects of operations and maintenance of the plant machinery.”<sup>81</sup>

These two visits highlight the uniqueness of American civic action assistance to Brazil. Special Action Force civic action missions to Brazil supported mainly engineer construction units. The Brazilian Army’s most intensive civic action efforts during the 1960s supported infrastructure development, mainly road and railway construction. Army engineer units in the Northeast engaged in “the construction of highways, railroads, dams and catch basins, irrigation works, municipal water supply systems, [and] well-digging projects,” U.S. Army officers reported in 1963. Meanwhile, engineer units in the South engaged in “the construction of the main southern railroad trunk line... which will eventually link the industrial-commercial complex of São Paulo with the industrial-agricultural areas of the south and Porto Alegre. The [Brazilian] Army’s mission” the Americans reported, “consists of the construction of 622 kilometers of this line plus ancillary facilities.”<sup>82</sup>

These civic action infrastructure projects contributed to the military government’s internal economic development program. They were very similar in objective to Getúlio Vargas’ “March to the West” program of the 1930s and 1940s and Juscelino Kubitschek’s construction projects of the 1950s. However, in the polarized climate of the Cold War, these programs also served another purpose. They enabled the military government to ameliorate rural discontent in the Northeast and other areas without alienating the landed oligarchy. The Brazilian generals promoted internal colonization of

---

<sup>81</sup> SAF 66.

<sup>82</sup> MAP Brazil 1963, Narrative F, 2.

the country's vast interior, which allowed them to avoid the much thornier issues of land reform or redistribution.<sup>83</sup>

In most countries in which the United States supported civic action, Washington paid the bulk of the costs. That was not the case in Brazil. American military planners budgeted slightly less than \$15 million U.S. dollars for civic action programs in Brazil from 1964 through 1969. They expected the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to contribute another \$7 million. Over the same time period the estimated contribution of the Brazilian government was \$135 million. In other words, Brazil funded some eighty-six percent of the country's civic action program, while the United States contributed about fourteen percent. The numbers were the inverse of civic action programs in other South American nations. In Bolivia, for example, the United States funded almost ninety percent of the program.<sup>84</sup> Of note as well is the fact that military construction was only one part of a larger national effort. "The military government expended an estimated \$7.5 billion in public funds on colonization," historian Seth Garfield notes, "more than half of which went to road building."<sup>85</sup>

Unlike the situation in most other South American countries, the Brazilian Army already conducted civic action type missions as part of its Ações Cívico-Sociais (ACISO) program. American officers noted "the Brazilian Army['s] historical role in civic action," in a report from early 1963. "To varying degrees," U.S. Army officers explained, "all active Brazilian Army units contribute directly or indirectly to the improvement of the health of the civilian population." "In the interior," the authors continued, "it is an

---

<sup>83</sup> See for example, Seth Garfield, "From Ploughshares to Politics" in Virginia Garrard- Burnett, et al, eds., *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of Latin America's Cold War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013), 156.

<sup>84</sup> MAP Brazil 1963, Narrative F, 4-5, 9.

<sup>85</sup> Garfield, "From Ploughshares to Politics," 160.

accepted practice for military medical and dental personnel to treat the civilian population which, in many cases, would otherwise be without qualified medical assistance.” Army formations also conducted literacy programs, provided some vocational training, occasional transportation, and food supplements.<sup>86</sup> Army units also assisted in times in natural disaster. For example, in 1963 army units operated “pontoon bridges and ferries where bridges were washed out by floods in Minas Gerais,” American officers reported. Other units established “10 field kitchens and aid stations for several thousand people waiting for flood waters to subside.”<sup>87</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1966 Brazilian security forces confronted the second wave of efforts to establish rural guerrilla *focos* in the country. The military’s assumption of power in 1964 did not end Brazil’s internal security problems; in fact it inadvertently created the manpower that supported several attempts at armed revolution. One of the important triggers for the military overthrowing the government of João Goulart was his efforts to gain support among enlisted military personnel. The commanders of the armed forces viewed Goulart’s sympathy for leftist sergeants and sailors as an echo of previous Communist attempts to spark subversion within the ranks. Goulart openly supported efforts to unionize the ranks and publicly supported the sailors of the naval mutiny of March 1964.<sup>88</sup> “In addition,” CIA analysts reported on 30 March, Goulart “has given the navy men who defied their superiors a promise of no reprisals. This open disregard of military discipline has drawn the line between Goulart and military leaders even more clearly. There is now a real chance for a direct confrontation between Goulart and his

---

<sup>86</sup> USARELM to Brazil, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 2 April 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.; MAP 63 Brazil, Narrative F, 2-3.

<sup>87</sup> USARELM to Brazil, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 18 January 1963, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>88</sup> See for example, Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 16; John W. F. Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil: Political-Military Crises 1955-1964* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970), 278-296, 299.

opponents.”<sup>89</sup> The CIA analysts were correct in their prediction. The generals ousted Goulart the following day.

After the coup d'état, military commanders swiftly purged the ranks of leftist soldiers, sailors, and officers. The authorities imprisoned some of the mutineers, while others fled the country. Some cashiered military men sought refuge in Montevideo, Uruguay. These men gained the attention of Leonel Brizola, whom the State Department had warned of in 1964. Brizola was also living in exile in Montevideo and had continued his efforts to foment an armed revolution in Brazil. Brizola was not a Communist, although he was an ardent leftist. He also happened to be Goulart's brother in law. Brizola had formerly served as governor of Rio Grande do Sul and as member of the Chamber of Deputies. The military purged him after the coup d'état and later revoked his political rights for ten years by cassation.<sup>90</sup> But that did not end Brizola's efforts to regain political power in Brazil. From exile, he established the Movimento Nacionalista Revolucionário (National Revolutionary Movement – MNR) to coordinate insurrectional actions against the dictatorship.<sup>91</sup>

Brizola sponsored his first attempt to spark an uprising in Brazil in 1965. Jefferson Cardim, a former Brazilian Army colonel forced to retire after the 1964 coup, led thirty men across the border from Uruguay into Brazil. The men conducted an attack on an army base in Rio Grande do Sul state. The rebels “overcame *Brigada Militar* soldiers at Tres Passos, then took over a local radio station and transmitted an anti-government manifesto,” one historian notes. “Subsequently they clashed with the local

---

<sup>89</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “The President's Intelligence Checklist” dated 30 March 1964, CIA FOIA accessed online 31 March 2016 at:

[http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/1827265/DOC\\_0005959061.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1827265/DOC_0005959061.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> Thomas E. Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 26.

<sup>91</sup> Bezerra, *Da Revolução*, 267.

police and were finally captured in Paraná, two states north of Rio Grande do Sul.”<sup>92</sup> The hoped-for uprising never materialized. Despite the failure of Cardim’s raid, Brizola remained undeterred.

Brizola next turned his attention to the more patient *foco* approach to revolution as espoused by Che Guevara. By late 1966, at around the same time that Guevara sought to establish his own *foco* in Bolivia, Brizola was supporting several guerrilla cells, or *focos*, in various parts of Brazil. However, unlike the younger Che, the forty-four year old Brizola left the leadership of the guerrilla cells to the former soldiers. He remained in Montevideo. Brizola’s guerrilla’s received some Cuban support, but they were not under Cuban control or direction. “There are no references in Guevara’s diary,” one historian notes, “to the possibility of making contact with Brizola and the Brazilians.”<sup>93</sup>

Brizola located his first *foco* in the southern state of Mato Grosso near the Bolivian border.<sup>94</sup> The second cell operated in Maranhão state in the Northeast. The men of the third *foco* established their guerrilla base in the Caparaó Mountains between the states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo (See Figure 5). All three efforts soon foundered. “After a week, the Brazilian guerrillas [in Mato Grosso] had to give up” historian Richard Gott notes. “They had contracted bubonic plague and were forced to surrender.”<sup>95</sup> Meanwhile, the fifteen men Brizola dispatched to establish a *foco* in

---

<sup>92</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 49.

<sup>93</sup> Richard Gott, *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America* (London: Thomas Nelsons and Sons, 1970), 313, note 2.

<sup>94</sup> Richard Gott locates the *foco* in Rio Grande do Sul, however neither author states a precise location for the jungle cell. The Brazilian government did not create the current state of Mato Grosso do Sul until 1977, so it is possible that the short-lived 1966 *foco* was near the juncture of these two states.

<sup>95</sup> Gott, *Guerrilla Movements*, 313.

southern Maranhão state opened a six hundred meter airstrip in anticipation of receiving an aircraft load of weapons from Guyana. Yet the plane never arrived.<sup>96</sup>

Ex-sergeant Felipe Amadeu da Luz led the third guerrilla *foco*. He located his cell in the Caparaó Mountains, some four hundred kilometers northeast of Rio de Janeiro. Brizola and the sergeants hoped that Brazil's highest mountain range would be remote enough to avoid early detection by the security forces. Amadeu and thirteen guerrillas ascended the mountains in November 1966. The *foco* later grew to twenty-two revolutionaries: thirteen former military men (including a former captain) and five civilians. Of the group, only four had received guerrilla training in Cuba. The rest relied on their previous military training or, in the case of the civilians, what they learned from the others in the forest.<sup>97</sup>

The Caparaó *foco* collapsed in early 1967. The Brazilian Army captured two ex-sergeants who were members of the guerrilla cell on 23 March. It was the same day that Che Guevara executed the ill-fated ambush against the Bolivian Army that alerted them to presence of armed guerrillas in that country. The Brazilian First Army, acting on information gleaned in Rio de Janeiro, had increased its surveillance in the Caparaó region. It located and detained the two former sergeants in a barbershop in the village of Espera Feliz. The luckless guerrillas had missed the train to Rio and were killing time waiting on a bus. It was the beginning of the end. "Caparaó crumbled within a week," Brazilian historian Elio Gaspari writes, "without having fired a shot and without a single contact with the inhabitants of the region." A few days later, a state military police

---

<sup>96</sup> Elio Gaspari, *A Ditadura Envergonhada* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002), 201-202.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 202, 204.

corporal leading a patrol captured another eight guerrillas. “One of them, according to his jailers, had the first symptoms of bubonic plague.”<sup>98</sup>

Figure 5: Brazil Political Boundaries and Guerrilla Locations Map.<sup>99</sup>



<sup>98</sup> Gaspari, *A Ditadura Envergonhada*, 205. Translation by author.

<sup>99</sup> Brazil Political Map, 1994, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, The University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 18 April 2016 online at: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/brazil.jpg> Insurgent locations annotated by author.

Despite the success of the security forces in capturing the guerrillas using a small scale approach, the Brazilian Army and Air Force decided to flex their muscles. They mounted a large joint operation in April to apprehend the few remaining revolutionaries. The Air Force used helicopters to search for the guerrillas by air, while the Army established a camp “in the middle of the mountain.” However, the infantrymen from coastal Rio de Janeiro were ill-equipped for the high altitude and rugged terrain of the Caparaó Mountains. Many of the troops deployed for counter-guerrilla operations still wearing their stiff parade boots. “Before they were issued tennis shoes,” Elio Gaspari claims, “more than sixty soldiers went to the infirmary” with “flayed feet.”<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, on 16 April the Army captured another five guerrillas fleeing the mountains, including the *foco* commander Amadeu. After the collapse of Caparaó, Brizola reportedly gave up on guerrilla insurgency as a means for achieving revolution in Brazil.<sup>101</sup>

Brazil’s generals did not request American internal security assistance as they confronted the rural insurgencies of 1967. The Special Action Force, the U.S. Army’s premier counterinsurgency experts Latin America and its only group of Portuguese-speaking instructors, conducted only three mobile training team missions to Brazil in 1967. None of them taught counterinsurgency. The Green Berets made no visits to Brazil in 1968 or 1969. By that time the Brazilian security forces were facing a new threat – urban terrorism.

---

<sup>100</sup> Gaspari, *A Ditadura Envergonhada*, 206. Translation by author.

<sup>101</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 86.



## CONTRA REVOLUCIONARIO IN BRAZIL: CONFRONTING THE URBAN TERRORISTS

The death of Che Guevara in October 1967 discredited his *foco* theory of rural insurgency. However, it did not end leftist radicals' dreams of sparking revolutions to "liberate" their countries. Instead, other took up the banner and shifted to battleground from the countryside to the cities. Urban terrorists in South America "have stolen millions of dollars," CIA analysts noted, "ransacked arms depots, engaged in various kinds of sabotage, and murdered local and foreign officials."<sup>102</sup> Urban guerrillas first took up arms in Brazil in mid-1968. They conducted bombings and assassinations as well as bank robberies and kidnappings to fund their operations.<sup>103</sup> Although numerous groups played a role, two organizations stood out as among the most dangerous. One sprang from the Communist Party. The other, oddly, had links to the Brazilian Army.

Urban terrorism in Brazil began in part by way of a side trip to Cuba. Fidel Castro hosted the inaugural meeting of the Latin American Solidarity Organization (OLAS) in August 1967 in an effort to unite the Left. The Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), following the official Soviet line that the only true path to revolution lay through a workers movement, boycotted the conference. The PCB's unwillingness to take up arms against the dictatorship frustrated its more radical members. One of them was Carlos Marighella. In defiance of the party, Marighella attended the OLAS conference and the PCB expelled him for his disobedience. Marighella was a committed communist, he had been a member of Brazilian Communist Party since the 1930s, but after 1964 he found himself increasingly at odds with his comrades over the issue of taking up arms against the dictatorship. Marighella traveled to Havana in July 1967 to consider other options.

---

<sup>102</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "The Latin American Guerrilla Today," dated 22 January 1971, CIA FOIA, 5. Accessed online 19 April 2016 at: [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/89801/DOC\\_0000637157.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000637157.pdf)

<sup>103</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 86-7.

The OLAS conference ended on 10 August, but Marighella remained in Cuba until December refining his theories and developing a revolutionary strategy for Brazil.<sup>104</sup>

Shortly after his return from Cuba, Marighella formed his own movement in São Paulo to begin the armed struggle. Marighella's Ação Libertadora Nacional (National Liberation Action - ALN), which operated in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, took its first armed actions in 1968 –many of them bank robberies to finance the group. Marighella also availed himself of Cuban support. Between 1967 and 1970, the ALN sent ninety-two guerrillas to the island. Fidel's trainers instructed them in "marksmanship, explosives formulas, weapons assembly and disassembly." "There was also, at the end of the course," a Brazilian researcher notes, "a survival exercise including simulated combat with Cuban army."<sup>105</sup> "Havana offered Marighella arms and financial assistance," analysts of the CIA judged, however, "he apparently did not want to commit his organization to outside influence or direction."<sup>106</sup> Brazilian revolutionaries could be just as nationalistic as their military adversaries.

Many Ação Libertadora Nacional insurgents may have learned their guerrilla warfare skills in Cuba, but the theory guiding them was a product of Brazil. Carlos Marighella became one of the leading theorists of urban terrorism in South America. Marighella converted Guevara's rural *foco* theory into an urban guerrilla strategy more suited to the changing social demographics in South America. "Latin America has been urbanizing at accelerating rates," CIA analysts explained in a 1971 report. "In 1940 there were five Latin American cities with more than a million inhabitants; in 1960 there were

---

<sup>104</sup> Brown, "To Make the Revolution," 17-18; Jean Rodrigues Sales, "A Ação Libertadora Nacional, a Revolução Cubana e a Luta Armada no Brasil" *Tempo*, vol. 14, num. 27 (2009), 206-7.

<sup>105</sup> Sales, "A Ação Libertadora Nacional," 213.

<sup>106</sup> CIA, "Urban Terrorism in Latin America," dated 6 November 1969, CIA FOIA, 4. Accessed online 19 April 2016 at:

[http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/89801/DOC\\_0000637154.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000637154.pdf)

nine. It is estimated that today there are 17.”<sup>107</sup> Marighella emphasized a war of urban movement instead of fixed rural *focos*, which the failure of earlier attempts in Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, and Peru had shown were vulnerable to early detection and destruction by the security forces.

Marighella rejected Che Guevara’s prescription for beginning the revolution in the countryside, but the Brazilian’s tactics were no less violent than those of the Argentine Che. “In Brazil, the number of violent actions carried out by urban guerrillas, including executions, explosions, seizures of weapons, ammunition and explosives, assaults on banks and prisons, etc...” Marighella wrote, “is significant enough to leave no room for doubt as to the actual aim of the revolutionaries; all are witness to the fact that we are in a full revolutionary war and that this war can be waged only by violent means.”<sup>108</sup> Marighella compiled his urban guerrilla strategy and tactics in the *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*. Although not published openly until after his death, the *Minimanual* was influential in Brazil and across the region. “Marighella,” CIA analysts later wrote, “has replaced both Guevara and [Régis] Debray as the primary theoretician of violent revolution in the hemisphere.”<sup>109</sup>

However, even Marighella could not escape the siren song of the guerrilla *foco*. Instead, he altered the sequence. The revolution would begin in the cities with urban terrorism, according to Marighella, then transition to rural guerrilla warfare. He envisioned that the ongoing rebellion in the cities would tie down the security forces and

---

<sup>107</sup> CIA, “The Latin American Guerrilla Today,” 5.

<sup>108</sup> Carlos Marighella, *Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerrilla* (Montreal: Abraham Guillen Press, 2002), 7.

<sup>109</sup> CIA, “The Latin American Guerrilla Today,” dated 22 January 1971, 2. Régis Debray, a Frenchman, elaborated on the *foco* theory of revolutionary warfare based on Che Guevara’s strategies in *Revolution in the Revolution?* (1967). See for example, Paul J. Dosal, *Comandante Che: Guerrilla, Soldier, Commander, and Strategist* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 189.

allow the rural movement to develop into a revolutionary army.<sup>110</sup> Yet Marighella still organized the ALN into a series of small urban cells that closely resembled Guevara's *focos*. Other Brazilian insurgent groups also followed Marighella's urban first, rural second guerrilla warfare strategy.

Other São Paulo radicals formed the second major group urban terrorist group that plagued Brazil. The Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária (Popular Revolutionary Vanguard –VPR) also began its armed actions in 1968. The VPR often competed with the ALN to see which group could carry out the most spectacular attacks. The VPR attacked an army hospital in São Paulo in June 1968 and stole a cache of weapons. When the Second Army commander complained, “They attacked a hospital! Let’s see them attack my barracks!” the guerrillas truck bombed his headquarters. That October, VPR guerrillas kidnapped and executed U.S. Army Captain Charles Chandler in São Paulo. The situation worsened in January 1969 when Brazilian Army Captain Carlos Lamarca “defected to the VPR with three sergeants and a truckload of weapons.” Lamarca was an expert marksman and turned his talents to training his new guerrilla comrades.<sup>111</sup> He also quickly became the leader of the organization.

The growing urban insurgencies of 1967 and 1968 embarrassed the Brazilian government. “Washington was alarmed” after Chandler’s assassination, Thomas Skidmore explained, “and assigned its deputy chief Public Safety Officer in Brazil to work full-time with the Brazilian authorities investigating” the case.<sup>112</sup> However, the Brazilian generals ruling the country did not request American military assistance in

---

<sup>110</sup> Marighella, *Mini-Manual*, 20; see also Carlos Marighella, “Problems and Principles of Strategy” published in the same edition, 40-41.

<sup>111</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 87-8.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

confronting the new urban terrorism threat. The Special Action Force conducted their final counterinsurgency training mission in Brazil in 1966. Brazilian authorities were willing to accept American help in investigating specific guerrilla crimes when pressured by Washington, but they employed their own doctrine and tactics for defeating urban insurgency.

For its part, the U.S. Army had little to offer Brazil in the way of urban counterinsurgency doctrine during the late 1960s. Throughout the decade the American Army focused its attention on countering rural insurgencies in mountains and jungles, where it expected guerrillas to operate, not urban terrorism in the cities. “Areas of rugged or inaccessible terrain, such as mountains, forests, jungles, and swamps, are extremely difficult to control,” the U.S. Army declared in *Operations Against Irregular Forces* (Field Manual 31-15 published in 1961), “and the guerrilla elements of an irregular force are most likely to flourish in such areas.” The manual recognized the possibility of limited guerrilla operations in urban areas, but envisioned responding to such actions as a matter for the local police or a short-term military action that would allow the quick return of forces to the main struggle in the countryside.<sup>113</sup>

The U.S. Army’s rural-centric view of insurgency persisted in the late-1960s. In an update to the 1967 edition of *Counter guerrilla Operations* (published in 1969), Army doctrine writers devoted new attention to “Operations in Built-Up Areas,” but maintained their interpretation of guerrilla operations in urban areas as a secondary effort. “Built-up areas usually are unfavorable for guerrilla force operations,” the authors definitively explained. “Guerrillas normally will not choose to fight in these areas; however, underground elements in cities and towns may incite organized rioting, seize portions of

---

<sup>113</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Counter guerrilla Operations*, Field Manual 31-16, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, February 19, 1963), 1, 29.

urban areas, erect barricades, and resist attempts of counterinsurgency forces to enter the area.”<sup>114</sup>

Although Brazilian security forces had been confronting urban terrorism since 1968, the Special Action Force did not conduct its first urban counterinsurgency training mission until several years later. The Green Berets executed their first “urban guerrilla warfare” mobile training team mission in the Dominican Republic in April 1970. The unit’s historical report underscores the U.S. Army’s lack of preparedness for this new threat. “As urban guerrilla warfare is a relatively new field, and of ever increasing importance in Latin America of the 1970s,” unit historians commented, “CPT Dixon’s team had to spend extra time in preparation, studying all available doctrine and writings on the subject.”<sup>115</sup> In other words, Captain Dixon and his men developed their own doctrine and training program for “urban guerrilla warfare.”

The U.S. Army was not alone in its lack of experience in confronting urban terrorism. Few armies had faced an insurgency rooted in the cities. However, one army did claim a record of “victory” against just such an enemy – the French army in the “Battle of Algiers” in 1957. French forces first confronted an insurgency in Algeria in 1954. Two years later the revolutionaries of the National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale –FLN) shifted their focus to the capital city of Algiers. FLN terrorists executed strikes, indiscriminate bombings, and random assassinations in an attempt to undermine French authority, generate public support, and garner international publicity.<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, Field Manual 31-16, Change 1 to 1967 edition, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, July 25, 1969), 14.

<sup>115</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, “Historical Supplement 1970” (hereafter cited as SAF 70), USAHEC, 24.

<sup>116</sup> See for example Martha Crenshaw Hutchinson, *Revolutionary Terrorism: the FLN in Algeria, 1954-1962* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 12-14; and Christopher M. Craddock and M. L. R. Smith,

The French responded by conducting military operations heavily influenced by revolutionary war theory.<sup>117</sup> Several French officers who fought in Algeria, including one with direct participation in the “Battle of Algiers,” later incorporated their experiences into treatises on the conduct of counter revolutionary warfare.<sup>118</sup> The publication of these works, especially Roger Trinquier’s *Modern Warfare*, made French urban counter terrorist tactics available to Latin American military audiences. Brazilian strategists of the Escola Superior de Guerra had based much of their internal security doctrine on French revolutionary war theory during the late 1950s. As they faced growing urban terrorism in the late 1960s, they again looked to the French army for inspiration. Among French tactical innovations in Algiers two elements stand out: the creation of specialized intelligence organizations and the use of terror, through mass arrests, disappearances, and torture to intimidate the population. Brazilian security forces defeated the urban terrorists of the late 1960s by emulating these repressive tactics developed by the French Army during the “Battle of Algiers.”

As the terrorists increased their attacks in 1969, the Brazilian security forces responded by ratcheting up their repression. The Brazilian generals did not blithely copy all of the French Army’s tactics in Algeria; they adapted French techniques to meet their needs. However, the similarities are striking. “In June 1969 the São Paulo police and military introduced a new repressive technique,” historian Thomas Skidmore explains, “the massive dragnet, which detained thousands, all of whose identity papers were checked. The innocent were intimidated, while the guerrillas now had to be much more

---

“‘No Fixed Values:’ A Reinterpretation of the Influence of the Theory of Guerre Révolutionnaire and the Battle of Algiers, 1956-1957” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4, (Fall 2007), 83.

<sup>117</sup> Cradock and Smith, “No Fixed Values,” 80.

<sup>118</sup> See for example David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (published in English 1964 and Portuguese 1966) and Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: a French view of Counterinsurgency* (published in French 1961, Spanish 1963 (Bogotá) and 1965 (Barcelona), and English 1964).

cautious when moving about.”<sup>119</sup> The French employed similar tactics during the “Battle of Algiers” in 1957. “[T]he Muslim sectors of Algiers were completely sealed off from the city at large,” one historian notes. “To leave or to enter the Casbah... its inhabitants had to show their identification papers at police checkpoints manned by soldiers.”<sup>120</sup> However, checkpoints in Algeria and dragnets in Brazil served as more than just a mechanism to arrest guerrillas, they were the precursor to torture.

French counter terrorism officers in Algeria believed that conventional police and military forces were not well-suited to confront armed clandestine groups. Therefore, the French reorganized their police and military structures to create new, specialized intelligence organizations to defeat the urban terrorists. It was these new organizations that institutionalized the use of torture to extract intelligence. French General Jacques Massu’s Tenth Parachute Division took charge of the Battle of Algiers in January 1957. Massu immediately reorganized the division’s intelligence wing to form the Centre de Coordination Interarmées (Interservice Coordinating Center - CCI) to better synchronize intelligence information. He also established new Dispositif Opérationnel de Protection (Operational Protection Detachment - DOP) units to gather intelligence. The DOPs, Massu later admitted, “specialized in interrogation of suspects who did not want to say anything.”<sup>121</sup>

Meanwhile, the French also created a second “parallel staff” with responsibilities for interrogations and executions. Lieutenant Colonel Roger Trinquier led a secret group that specialized in intelligence gathering and interrogation. Suspects that resisted

---

<sup>119</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 88.

<sup>120</sup> Alf Andrew Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 234.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 233, 243, Jacques Massu as quoted in Rita Maran, *Torture: the Role of Ideology in the French-Algerian War* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 119.



interrogations by the regular military units or the police found themselves handed over to the DOPs or to Trinquier's group. Although most low-level suspects were imprisoned and a few released, those identified as important Front de Libération Nationale members or as bombers met a different fate.<sup>122</sup> Commandant Paul Aussaresses led a second clandestine unit that specialized in what he called "action implementation." Aussaresses and his men tortured their victims to extract information that helped them unravel the FLN organization, but they also executed most of the captives passed to his unit. "We would hold on to the others who were either positively dangerous, or thought to be so," Aussaresses later explained, "and make them talk quickly before executing them." The "action implementation" group established its operations in a remote villa outside Algiers. "The mere fact that they were at the villa de Tourelles," Aussaresses noted, "meant they were considered so dangerous that they were not to get out of there alive. These were men who had directly participated in deadly attacks."<sup>123</sup>

Brazilian authorities also implemented an elaborate institutional apparatus for intelligence gathering. São Paulo police and military officers created the first joint clandestine intelligence organization, Operação Bandeirantes (OBAN), in early 1969. Later that same year, Marighella's Ação Libertadora Nacional executed its most spectacular operation. On 4 September 1969, the group kidnaped U.S. Ambassador Burke Elbrick. The ALN, and its partner group the MR-8 (Movimento Revolucionário-8 named for the date of Che Guevara's capture on 8 October 1967), blackmailed the Brazilian government and demanded the release of several notorious urban guerrillas in exchange for the ambassador's life. Elbrick "was released unharmed," CIA analysts reported,

---

<sup>122</sup> Cradock and Smith, "No Fixed Values," 87; Paul Aussaresses, *The Battle of the Casbah: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Algeria, 1955-1957* (New York: Enigma Books, 2002), 119.

<sup>123</sup> Commandant is a French rank equivalent to Major. Cradock and Smith, "No Fixed Values," 86-7; Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*, 119, 120.

“when 15 terrorists were flown to Mexico. Most of them went on to Cuba, where they were greeted by Fidel Castro.”<sup>124</sup> The kidnapping was a propaganda victory and the insurgents secured the release of several of their comrades. However, this action soon cost the ALN dearly.

The Elbrick abduction triggered a massive expansion in the Brazilian intelligence apparatus. State and local police, as well as each military service, already had functioning intelligence organizations before the military took control of the government. However, shortly after the coup d'état the generals created a new National Intelligence Service (Serviço Nacional de Informações - SNI). In 1967, the Army expanded its intelligence capability and established the Centro de Informações do Exército, or CIE. In late 1969, in part due to the Elbrick kidnapping, military authorities greatly enlarged the intelligence system. They also began creating “parallel structures” like those employed by the French in Algiers and recommended by Trinquier in *Modern Warfare*.<sup>125</sup> The generals created new Comandos Operacional de Defense Interna (Operational Commands for Internal Defense – CODI) in each military region. These joint military-police organizations served an intelligence sharing and coordination role similar to the French Centre de Coordination Interarmées (CCI) used in Algiers. Each CODI ostensibly controlled a series of local Destacamentos de Operações Internas (Internal Operations Detachments – DOIs). These units were a “‘strike force’ of military and police,” historian Thomas Skidmore notes, “all operating in plain clothes.”<sup>126</sup> The purpose of the Destacamentos de Operações Internas “was to provide operational autonomy to the entities responsible for intelligence gathering, conducting stake-outs and other actions, and capturing and

---

<sup>124</sup> CIA, “The Latin American Guerrilla Today,” 8.

<sup>125</sup> Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 30, 34, 36-40.

<sup>126</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 128-9.

interrogating ‘terrorists.’” These organizations closely resembled the French Dispositif Opérationnel de Protection (DOPs), but they also combined some of the functions of the units led by Trinquier and Aussaresses.<sup>127</sup> These “parallel structures” served to obscure responsibility for the organizations that employed torture and conducted executions. They existed outside normal police and military organizations and operated with a high degree of autonomy.

French officers created specialized intelligence units and used them to attack the urban terrorist’s “armed clandestine organization.”<sup>128</sup> The purpose of harsh interrogations – including the use of torture – was to quickly gather time-sensitive intelligence. “In the absence of spontaneous information,” historian Martha Crenshaw explains, “the French army resorted to brutal interrogation methods to extract information about the FLN. The recommended practice was to obtain information from suspects as rapidly as possible, through the use of torture if necessary, and to exploit such intelligence immediately, regardless of any standards of legality.” Captured FLN members “would talk quickly,” Aussaresses later dryly commented, “or never.”<sup>129</sup>

The same need for intelligence to attack “armed clandestine organizations” also drove the use of torture in Brazil. “Despite the guerrillas’ best efforts to guard their secrets,” one historian notes, “there was almost always some clue – a nickname, an address, a code word – the interrogators could extract. With the scrap (and sometime more) the police and military would leap into action, dragging in new suspects to be beaten and given electric shocks in the hunt for clues.”<sup>130</sup> Extracting information under

---

<sup>127</sup> Martins Filho, “Military Ties between France and Brazil,” 176-7.

<sup>128</sup> Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 9.

<sup>129</sup> Hutchinson, *Revolutionary Terrorism*, 122; Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*, 128.

<sup>130</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 88.

torture and exploiting it immediately also worked in the aftermath of mass arrests, whether in Algiers in 1957 or São Paulo in 1969. In response to U.S. Ambassador Elbrick's kidnapping, "the security forces carried out a truly massive crackdown," historian Anthony James Joes explains, "a great dragnet resulted in thirty-two thousand arrests. Information extracted from captured guerrillas in this operation revealed the whereabouts of Marighella himself, who was shot dead on the streets of São Paulo on November 4, 1969."<sup>131</sup>

Brazil's urban terrorists attempted to mitigate the consequences of interrogations and torture. The guerrillas "had a pact that, once captured, a prisoner must withhold vital information for 24 hours," Thomas Skidmore recounts. "Thereafter, his or her comrades would have abandoned all of the prisoner's known addresses and contacts, thereby making a confession harmless." But the security forces soon developed a counter tactic. "They made the first day's interrogation relentless," Skidmore continues. "It was an assault that few prisoners could withstand – electric shocks, beatings, near-drownings, mock executions, and forced viewing of the torture of friends or family."<sup>132</sup>

State-directed terror also served a second purpose – it was a brutal form of population control. The French Army employed harsh tactics in Algeria, but the target was not French citizens. Instead it was France's de facto colonial subjects, the vast majority of them native Algerian Muslims, who suffered from the intimidation, tortures, disappearances and murders executed by the security forces. "[T]orture was not only a means of obtaining intelligence," one researcher notes, "but also a way of terrorizing

---

<sup>131</sup> Anthony James Joes, *Urban Guerrilla Warfare* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 77.

<sup>132</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 120.

Algerians and making the cost of aiding the FLN greater than the risks of refusing to do so.”<sup>133</sup>

Brazilian generals unleashed many of these same harsh tactics against their own citizens in the late 1960s. They employed state-directed terror, not against an overseas department or foreign colony, but within their own national territory. Torture, mass arrests, and executions by the Brazilian security forces had decimated the urban guerrilla organizations by 1970. “Terrorist capabilities appear to have declined during 1970,” CIA analysts observed, “as police became more effective in apprehending and killing important guerrilla leaders as well as a significant number of militants.”<sup>134</sup> These brutal methods also served to intimidate Brazilian society. Torture “became a stark warning to other Brazilians who might contemplate active opposition” to the military regime. “Yet torture became something more,” historian Thomas Skidmore continues,

Nothing travelled faster, especially among the younger generation, than the news that your friend, or a friend of your friend, had fallen into the hands of the torturers. The latter warned their victims not to talk their torture, knowing full well that many would. In short, torture was a powerful instrument, if degrading to its users, for subduing a society.<sup>135</sup>

“The ‘repressive apparatus,’ as it was often referred to, cast a shadow of fear and drew an invisible pale through Brazilian society to dissuade the educated classes from crossing it,” American researchers later judged. “It also served to dissuade opposition from within the military itself.”<sup>136</sup> The Brazilian army applied brutal methods again in the 1970s as it faced another outbreak of rural insurgencies in the countryside.

---

<sup>133</sup> Hutchinson, *Revolutionary Terrorism*, 126.

<sup>134</sup> CIA, “The Latin American Guerrilla Today,” 9.

<sup>135</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 89.

<sup>136</sup> Hudson, *Brazil*, 360; see also Shawn C. Smallman, “The Professionalization of Military Terror in Brazil, 1945-1964” *Luso-Brazilian Review*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Summer 2000), 122, 123.

## **CONTRA REVOLUCIONARIO IN BRAZIL: RURAL GUERRILLAS IN THE 1970S**

In the early 1970s, the Brazilian Army faced two rural insurgency attempts. Although they were not Cuban-inspired *focos*, the Brazilian military still perceived these armed groups as an internal security threat. In contrast to the tenets of American counterinsurgency, the Brazilian Army made little effort to win the loyalty of the peasants, nor did it expect them to willingly inform on the guerrillas. Instead, the army viewed the peasants as guerrilla sympathizers at best, if not active supporters. It eschewed forming specialized counter guerrilla battalions and relied on overwhelming conventional military force in its place. However, when that method failed to defeat a Maoist guerrilla insurgency in Araguaia in 1972, the Brazilian Army withdrew its forces. The army then reorganized and implemented a novel counter guerrilla approach. It placed all its deployed forces under the command of its intelligence arm, the Centro de Informações do Exército, rather than its infantry formations, special operations units, or the regional army command. The Brazilian Army's response to this second wave of rural insurgencies reveals similarities to its past urban counter terrorism tactics. Its operations also demonstrated the legacy of French counter terrorism techniques. The Brazilian Army relied on intelligence units that undertook infiltration, implemented mass arrests, and used torture to target guerrillas, they did not raise and train specialized counter guerrilla units. Brazilian military units also adopted a policy of intimidating the local populace. They did not pursue the winning of hearts and minds.

In mid-1970, Brazilian security forces detected the first rural guerrilla activity since the demise of the Caparaó *foco* in 1967. They also demonstrated a lack of preparedness to conduct counter guerrilla operations outside the cities. One Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária member, captured in Rio de Janeiro in April, revealed that Carlos

Lamarca had established two guerrilla camps some 200 kilometers southeast of São Paulo. There, in the remote Vale do Ribeira, Lamarca was training sixteen VPR cadres in weapons firing, tactics, uniform making, and booby trap skills (See Figure 5).<sup>137</sup>

In response, the Second Army launched the largest deployment in its history. It immediately sent 1,500 soldiers to the area to conduct “Operation Registro.” The force soon grew to nearly three thousand – all in pursuit of just seventeen guerrillas. Although the government reaction was impressive in terms of numbers, it suffered from multiple problems. Elements of ten different organizations took part in the operation, making coordination difficult. The Second Army quickly deployed a large force, but its mostly conscript soldiers were ill-prepared to conduct counter guerrilla operations in the dense forests and rugged terrain of the Ribeira Valley. “They were almost all recruits with only three months of training,” Brazilian historian Emilio Gaspari notes, “no practice shooting, and many were carrying antiquated rifles.”<sup>138</sup> The army also employed improvised tactics and achieved few results. Rather than scouring the forests for the guerrillas, security forces focused on areas they could more easily access. They cordoned off several local villages, establishing roadblocks and imposing curfews. The military arrested 120 people during its initial operations, but only two of them turned out to be VPR members. Eight other guerrillas had escaped the area before the army arrived. Meanwhile, Carlos Lamarca and six fellow militants remained on the loose. They successfully eluded the army dragnet for the next several weeks.

---

<sup>137</sup> Elio Gaspari, *A Ditadura Escancarada* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002), 196.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 196. The original passage reads, “Eram quase todos recrutados com tres meses de insrução, sem pratica de tiro, muitos carregando mosquetões.” I believe that “mosquetões,” which translates as carabiners (metal clips used in mountaineering) is a typo. The correct word should be “mosquetãos,” referring to the Itajubá M954 Mosquetão rifle produced in Brazil during 1954 and modeled on the German Gewehr 43.

The Army, apparently frustrated by its inability to locate the guerrillas, soon began threatening the population. It paraded two captured VPR guerrillas through the town of Jacupiranga. “They made us march 200 meters in the little town,” one of the victims, ex-Sergeant Darcy Rodrigues later recounted, “practically naked, in shorts, our bodies covered in marks, the torture inflicted upon us visible to the naked eye, in a grotesque and undignified scene.”<sup>139</sup> The military also tortured several of the civilians it arrested including the former mayor of Jacupiranga who had sold the VPR the parcels of land used for the training camps.<sup>140</sup>

The military next employed a new tactic in its efforts to defeat the guerrillas. After coercing some locals into helping it locate the guerrilla hideouts, it attacked the hidden bases using napalm, a liquefied incendiary bomb which was also well suited to frighten the inhabitants into cooperation. “Since Friday [24 April] the [Brazilian Air Force] has been dropping incendiary bombs on spots in the forest in the region of the Ribeira Valley where there were close to 20 guerrillas belonging to the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard,” *Jornal do Brasil* reported on 28 April. “The bombardments began on Friday afternoon, after government forces managed to determine the probable location of the guerrillas, led by reconnaissance groups which included civilians familiar with the forest. The use of incendiary bombs was the only way the military could find to make the guerrillas leave their hiding places, which are difficult to access.”<sup>141</sup> The guerrillas were unimpressed. “I have no idea what their [the air force’s] criteria were,” ex-Sergeant José Araújo Nóbrega explained. “I think they thought we that we were

---

<sup>139</sup> Anne Vigna, Luciano Onça, and Natalia Viana, “Napalm no Vale do Ribeira” *Agencia Publica*, 25 de agosto de 2014. Accessed online 12 April 2016 at: <http://apublica.org/2014/08/napalm-no-vale-do-ribeira/>

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.



hiding out in a certain area and they bombarded that region based on conjecture, but we had already passed through.” Carlos Lamarca and the remaining guerrillas continued to elude capture. The Air Force bombarded several other areas during the operation, but the airstrikes never killed any guerrillas. “It seems to me that [the bombing] was just to intimidate,” one local resident later reflected, “because in a land mass of 1,200 hectares if you’re going to drop bombs, you’re not going to hit anyone.”<sup>142</sup>

The military’s roadblock system also proved less than fully effective. Lamarca and his band of six guerrillas drove into an army checkpoint on 8 May while trying to break out of the security cordon. The revolutionaries reacted first. They burst out of their vehicles and began firing, wounding two policemen, and then made their escape. Later that same night the guerrillas encountered a Military Police patrol sent to interdict them. Lamarca and the militants again jumped out firing and again overwhelmed their adversaries. The firefight wounded fourteen soldiers, eight others fled into the woods, and another eighteen surrendered to the VPR, according to one Brazilian historian.<sup>143</sup> Lamarca left the wounded Brazilian Army soldiers and released the captives except for the Lieutenant commanding the patrol. The VPR insurgents executed the young officer in the forest a day or two later. Two of the guerrillas lost contact with their comrades during the confrontation. The security forces arrested them a few days later after locals denounced them to the authorities.<sup>144</sup>

Lamarca and the remaining militants again bested the security forces on 31 May. After nearly six weeks on the run, two of the guerrillas donned military uniforms, and along with the three remaining members of group, they attempted another break out of

---

<sup>142</sup> Vigna, et al, “Napalm.”

<sup>143</sup> Gaspari, *A Ditadura Escancarada*, 197.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

the encirclement. As they awaited inspection at a military roadblock, one of the disguised guerrillas shouted out, “by the Colonel’s orders!” The startled troops manning the checkpoint lifted the barrier and let the “official” vehicle pass through.<sup>145</sup> Intimidation worked for the guerrillas as well.

The military deployed nearly three thousand men in mid-1970 to confront seventeen guerrillas. After six weeks of roadblocks, arrests, torture, and aerial bombardments, they managed to capture just four guerrillas. The rest, including Carlos Lamarca, escaped. During the operation, the Brazilian Army allowed their French counterparts a surprising level of *entrée* to the security zone. French “attaché Yves Boulnois had free access,” *Agencia Publica* later reported, “and accompanied Operation Registro with great interest for a month.”<sup>146</sup> Boulnois sent a detailed report to the French Ministry of Defense in May 1970 describing and evaluating the Brazilian counter guerrilla action. “[D]espite the recovery of a relatively large amount of material (weapons, ammunition, radios, uniforms, etc...) and the arrest of several dozen people including some rebels,” Boulnois reported, “the results are, as often happens in this kind of operation, quite disappointing.”<sup>147</sup> Meanwhile, the Brazilian Army requested no counter guerrilla assistance from the Special Action Force. The Green Berets conducted only one mobile training team visit to Brazil in 1970 – a course on supply procedures. The Brazilian Army caught up to Carlos Lamarca again in a desolate region of Bahia

---

<sup>145</sup> Gaspari, *A Ditadura Escancarada*, 200.

<sup>146</sup> Vigna, et al, “Napalm.”

<sup>147</sup> Yves Boulnois, “Rapport Mensuel de Mai 70: L’Operation ‘Registro,’” link posted in Vigna, et al, “Napalm no Vale do Ribeira” *Agencia Publica*, 25 de agosto de 2014, accessed online 12 April 2016 at <http://apublica.org/2014/08/napalm-no-vale-do-ribeira/>

State in September 1971. Taking no chances with the expert marksman, the soldiers shot and killed him as he slept under a tree.<sup>148</sup>

In 1972, the Brazilian government faced its most dangerous rural guerrilla threat. Militants from the Communist Party of Brazilian (Partido Comunista do Brazil – PC do B), an off-shoot of the main Brazilian Communist Party, successfully established three guerrilla bases in the Araguaia region of the Amazon (See Figure 5). By the time of their detection by security forces in 1972, sixty-nine PC do B militants were living in the Araguaia region – an area at the confluence of three states. The guerrillas mainly operated between the cities of Marabá (Pará state) and Xambioá (Goiás state). Maranhão state began just to the northeast across the Tocantins River. The Maoist revolutionaries established three guerrilla “detachments” comprised of twenty to thirty insurgents, each group operating from a separate hidden jungle base.<sup>149</sup>

PC do B activist first began infiltrating the area in the late 1966 and 1967. They selected the location because of the poverty of its residents, many of them migrants from the Northeast who had moved to the area to subsist by farming small plots or taking the few available seasonal jobs. The discovery of mineral deposits in the area put even this precarious lifestyle at risk for the local *camponeses* and Indians. The majority of the guerrillas, most of them students from the cities, arrived a year or two before the military detected their presence in 1972.

---

<sup>148</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 122.

<sup>149</sup> Comissão Nacional da Verdade (hereafter cited as CNV), “Capítulo 14: A Guerrilha do Araguaia” Relatório, vol. 1, (Dezembro de 2014), 688, 685. Accessed online 12 April 2016 at <http://www.cnv.gov.br/todos-volume-1/658-documentos-sobre-a-guerrilha-do-araguaia.html>. Xambioá was located in Goiás state during the period of the Araguaia guerrilla outbreak. The Brazilian government redesignated the area as part of the new state of Tocantins in 1988. See <http://www.brazil.org.za/tocantins.html>

The security forces confirmed the PCdoB militants' revolutionary project through torturing a former guerrilla. He had fled the group with his pregnant wife to avoid a forced abortion decreed by the militants.<sup>150</sup> The Brazilian Army again responded with a large conventional force deploying some 1,500 men to the area under "Operation Papagaio." It also "carried out arbitrary arrests and tortured guerrillas and villagers," according to Brazil's National Truth Commission. The Brazilian Air Force once more assisted with aerial bombardments including the use of napalm. During the operation the military arrested eight guerrillas and listed another ten as killed.<sup>151</sup>

The Brazilian Army undertook some civic action activities during this phase in an attempt to pry the local inhabitants away from the guerrillas. Yet army reports lamented that their Ações Cívico-Sociais (ACISO) efforts had only temporary success. The use of mass arrests and torture, firebombing jungle areas, and "army helicopters machine gunning near houses" evidently negated the army's desultory civic action goodwill efforts. Following the precepts of French revolutionary warfare strategy, when confronting a subversive insurgency, the security forces primarily relied on wielding the stick. The carrots would only come later – after the guerrilla menace had been defeated.<sup>152</sup>

Like the earlier "Operation Registro," the Army's initial counter guerrilla operation in the Araguaia area resulted in an overall failure. Military units were unable to locate and capture or kill the insurgents. "President Emilio Garrastazu Medici," CIA analysts reported to Washington in September 1972, "reportedly is angered both by the

---

<sup>150</sup> Thamyris F. T. Almeida, "Araguaia: Maoist Uprising and Military Counterinsurgency in the Brazilian Amazon, 1967-1975" (unpublished thesis University of Massachusetts – Amherst, 2015), 31.

<sup>151</sup> CNV, "A Guerrilha do Araguaia," 690, 689.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 690, 692; Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 50.

inconclusive results from operations mounted by the Eight Army, and the unfavorable publicity from their sometimes heavy-handed and over-zealous efforts.”<sup>153</sup> Consequently, the Brazilian high command ordered an end to the operation in October 1972.

The Army then reorganized its forces and adopted a new approach.<sup>154</sup> It responded with “Operation Sucuri,” which began in April 1973. This new phase employed a blend of French counter guerrilla methods and lessons derived from the Brazilian Army’s own urban counter terrorism efforts. First, the army placed responsibility for eliminating the guerrilla threat under its intelligence command -- the Centro de Informações do Exército. It also brought in intelligence specialists with previous experience in interrogations. However, rather than operating officially and openly as members of the military, the army employed the technique of infiltration. The French Army had successfully infiltrated undercover agents into the structure of the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algiers in 1957. In fact, French officers established a special unit, the Groupe de Rensiegment et d’Explotation (Intelligence and Exploitation Group - GRE), which specialized in interrogations “as well as infiltrating the FLN/ALN ranks to a high level.”<sup>155</sup> Brazilian security forces also used infiltrators to gather information from within urban guerrilla movements and to target their members for arrest.<sup>156</sup>

However, the Brazilian Army added a new twist to the technique of infiltration for its operations in the Araguaia jungle. Rather than posing as guerrillas, its intelligence

---

<sup>153</sup> CIA, “...Anti-Guerrilla Activities in Northeast” dated 7 September 1972, CIA FOIA. Accessed online 14 April 2016 at:

[http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/89801/DOC\\_0000995549.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000995549.pdf).

<sup>154</sup> CNV, “A Guerrilha do Araguaia,” 690.

<sup>155</sup> Cradock and Smith, “No Fixed Values,” 87, 90.

<sup>156</sup> See Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 121; and Gaspari, *A Ditadura Escancarada*, 349.

operatives masqueraded as civilians. As they entered the region some posed as government officials, while others played the role of migrants. The Army “called in the DOI-CODI of the Planalto Military Command and the 3rd Infantry Brigade, based in Brasilia, and assigned three captains, two lieutenants, nine sergeants and 16 noncommissioned officers and soldiers to work in the region,” the National Truth Commission explained. They were “disguised as officials of the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), the Superintendency of Public Health Campaigns (SUCAM), health workers, winemakers and squatters - they were referred to as "cover stories" in military reports.” Two other soldiers testified to the National Truth Commission that the Army sent them to the Araguaia region in 1973. The men donned civilian clothes and leased small plots of land in order to pose as squatters. “Both had served as soldiers in the 1972 campaign,” the commission noted, “before acting as intelligence agents.”<sup>157</sup>

After several months of planning and preparation, the CIE executed “Operation Sucuri” from April to August 1973. This was “a major intelligence operation,” Brazilian Colonel Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro later explained, “to survey in detail the FOGUERA [Araguaia Guerrilla Force], the terrain, and the local population.” A key part of the operation was the work conducted by the infiltrators. Their purpose, the Truth Commission’s report noted, “was to survey the hiding places and transit areas of the guerrillas, to map the guerrilla support network among the local residents, and then, later, to eliminate them.”<sup>158</sup> The Army’s Centro de Informações do Exército put its newly-

---

<sup>157</sup> CNV, “A Guerrilha do Araguaia,” 691.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 690.

acquired information to use in the third phase of the counter guerrilla struggle, “Operation Marajoara” which it conducted from September 1973 until March 1975.

The Maoist insurgents from the cities provided some social services to the local residents which earned them at least a little gratitude among the inhabitants. However, the revolutionaries counted few peasant converts and had hidden their political agenda and guerrilla training activities from the local residents. Although only approximately ten *camponeses* took up arms with the transplanted urban guerrillas, others did provide the revolutionaries some basic support after the military began pursuing them.<sup>159</sup> As the Army began renewed combat operations in September 1973, it targeted both the guerrillas and this meagre local assistance, which it termed the “guerrilla support network.”<sup>160</sup>

The final phase of the Araguaia campaign, “Operation Marajoara” also demonstrated a blend of French counter guerrilla techniques and Brazilian urban counter terrorism tactics. Rather than focused military operations targeting just the armed guerrillas, the Brazilian Army also arrested and tortured civilians suspected of aiding the Maoist insurgents. Overt military operations, like those undertaken in the preliminary phase (“Operation Papagaio”), gave way to clandestine military operations. Teams of soldiers joined with a few civilians – usually woodsmen – and formed special mixed detachments called “zebras.” These forces, often guided by the infiltrators put in place during “Operation Sucuri,” first attacked what the military feared was an elaborate “guerrilla support network.” They also searched out and destroyed the guerrilla supply depots and hidden weapons caches located previously by military agents.

---

<sup>159</sup> Skidmore, *Military Rule in Brazil*, 122-3; Almeida, “Araguaia,” 12-16; CNV, “A Guerrilha do Araguaia,” 709.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 701.

However, by the Centro de Informações do Exército's own reporting the army had determined that ninety percent of the *camponeses* arrested were guilty of only "circumstantial support." That is they provided "hospitality as was customary in the area, assistance when pressed by the presence of the armed group," or they "provided food or lent small favors to the guerrillas."<sup>161</sup> Although draconian, the targeting of even incidental supporters followed the principles of French revolutionary warfare doctrine. "Any individual who, in any fashion whatsoever, favors the objectives of the enemy" Roger Trinquier argued in 1964, "will be considered a traitor and treated as such."<sup>162</sup> "We know that in *modern warfare* [italics in original] we are not clashing with just a few armed bands," Trinquier further explained, "but rather with an organization installed within the population – an organization that constitutes the combat machine of the enemy, of which the bands are but one element. To win we must destroy his entire organization"<sup>163</sup> The Brazilian Army dutifully attacked what it perceived as the Araguaia guerrilla's organization, and it did so using the familiar techniques of mass arrests and torture.

By 15 November 1973, the Brazilian Army had arrested 161 civilians for being members of the guerrilla support network. Although it recognized that many of the people detained were only guilty of "inadvertently supporting guerrilla actions," the army arrested them, and immediately subjected them to torture just as it had the guerrillas. The need to immediately extract information was a lesson gleaned from urban counter terrorism operations. It was also a practice recommended by the French veterans of the "Battle of Algiers." Moreover, the French likely reinforced those techniques at the

---

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 700.

<sup>162</sup> Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 28.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 67.



Brazilian Army's jungle school. "French military veterans of Indochina and Algeria personally administered a course in 'Interrogation Techniques' at Centro de Instrução de Guerra na Selva (CIGS) in Manaus, between 1970 and 1973," the National Truth Commission documented. "Among the instructors, was an old companion of Roger Trinquier, Colonel Paul Aussaresses."<sup>164</sup> Although the Special Action Force helped train the Brazilian jungle school cadre in 1964, it played no role in Brazil's counter guerrilla operations in the early 1970s. The unit conducted its last mobile training team mission to Brazil in 1970, the Green Beret's last counterinsurgency mission in South America took place in Bolivia three years earlier.

While the Brazilian Army focused much of its attention on eliminating the guerrilla support network during "Operation Marajoara," it also directly attacked the insurgents. In January 1974, the Serviço Nacional de Informações reported that successive guerrilla losses had caused a "decline in strength and fall in their actions."<sup>165</sup> After cutting the guerrillas off from what little support they received from the local population through arrests and intimidation, and destroying the insurgent's jungle bases and supply caches, the Army began eliminating the PCdoB revolutionaries. Armed militants of Araguaia suffered the same fate as the FLN members that found themselves at Aussaresses' villa de Tourelles in Algeria, or the urban guerrillas who ran afoul of OBAN (Operação Bandeirantes) or DOI (Destacamentos de Operações Internas) operatives in Brazil's cities. Government agents executed them and disappeared their bodies. "The final balance sheet of this operation," the National Truth Commission

---

<sup>164</sup> CNV, "A Guerrilha do Araguaia," 694. Aussaresses also served as the French Attaché to Brazil from 1971 to 1973, see Martins Filho, "Military Ties between France and Brazil," 168. The Brazilian jungle school, Centro de Instrução de Guerra na Selva (CIGS), had earlier trained the 3rd Jungle Infantry Battalion, which the Army stationed in Marabá in January 1970, see CNV, "A Guerrilha do Araguaia," 686.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 691.

reported, “was the total annihilation of the guerrillas in the region: 56 dead guerrillas (whose bodies are still missing) and more than two hundred peasants arrested on charges they constituted the guerrilla support network.”<sup>166</sup> The Brazilian Army ended “Operation Marajoara” in March 1975.

## CONCLUSION

Brazil faced multiple Leftist revolutionary challenges in the tumultuous decades of the 1960s and 1970s. The military feared a revolution from above as pro-Communist Presidents Jânio Quadros and João Goulart ruled the country in the early 1960s. After a contested succession in the aftermath of Quadros’ resignation, Goulart sought to move the country further to the left. He alienated landowners and rural elites by supporting voting rights for illiterates and proposing land redistribution. He also stoked the military’s fear of threats to its institutional integrity by supporting the unionization of enlisted members and publicly supporting sailors accused of mutiny. In response, the armed forces ousted Goulart in April 1964 and established a long-term military government. The country also encountered several attempts at revolution from below as it confronted Cuban-inspired rural *foco* attempts and urban terrorist movements in the 1960s. The Brazilian Army deployed its forces to the countryside again in the early 1970s to thwart a second wave of rural insurgencies.

During these internal security crises the Brazilian generals relied on their own doctrine and judgement. Unlike the armies of the Andean Ridge, they did not seek U.S. Army advice or assistance. Brazilian officers had little need for American counterinsurgency doctrine because they had already developed their own National Security Doctrine. Brazilian Army theorists of the Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG)

---

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

melded internal security and economic development lessons from Brazil's past with many of the concepts of French revolutionary war theory to develop their own national policy. American officers helped establish the Escola Superior de Guerra in 1949, but the school quickly became a Brazilian institution. However, because of this linkage some historians have mistakenly perceived the NSD as having been "imported" from the United States.

The National Security Doctrine was a product of Brazil. The Escola Superior de Guerra incorporated several themes from the Vargas era into its new doctrine. The school's theorists recognized Brazil's need to modernize. They also accepted the necessity of using repression to enforce internal security which would allow them to implement their economic development policies. Doing so, they argued, required a strong centralized government in order to achieve both security and development. This Brazilian linkage of internal security and internal economic development in the late 1950s predated the United States' emphasis on economic development and internal security – packaged as counterinsurgency – which took place later under the John F. Kennedy administration in the early 1960s.

American counterinsurgency and the Brazilian National Security Doctrine both promoted internal security and economic development. However, they differed dramatically in the mechanisms they advocated for achieving those goals. Washington envisioned its strategy as means to support friendly democracies facing insurgencies. Brazilian strategists saw dictatorship as a more effective form of government than democracy. American policymakers proposed economic assistance to mitigate popular unrest in developing countries, while maintaining access to markets and resources.

Brazilian officers sought economic independence from the United States, in part through the creation of national industries and the use of state-owned enterprises.

Meanwhile, the Brazilian Army also developed its own Contra-Revolucionario tactics. It modeled many of these techniques and procedures on the French counter insurgency experiences in Southeast Asia and Algeria. Brazil's incorporation of French revolutionary war doctrine and counter insurgency techniques included several important concepts that marked its response to the internal security challenges of the Cold War era. First, Brazilian generals accepted the French premise that internal dissent and armed opposition were elements of a global subversive war waged by Communism to defeat Western Christianity. Second, they incorporated the view that their opponent's use of terrorism legitimated the use of torture as a remedy. Third, they reorganized police and military structures to create "parallel organizations" – in effect specialized intelligence units – to implement systematic repression and obscure responsibility. Lastly, they invoked state-directed terror against their population to intimidate them away from supporting the insurgents or opposing the military government.

The Brazilian Army developed its Contra-Revolucionario doctrine slightly ahead of the U.S. Army's conceptualization of counterinsurgency. Because it had its own doctrine, the Brazilian Army had little reason to adopt American counterinsurgency. Brazilians attended few U.S. Army internal security courses and the country accepted just three Special Action Force counterinsurgency related mobile training team visits during the 1960s. American military officers did not provide their Brazilian counterparts with internal security advice, an American general explained to Congress, "because they don't ask."<sup>167</sup> Instead, the Brazilians drew lessons from the French Army. They developed

---

<sup>167</sup> George S. Beatty, quoted in United States Senate, "United States Policies and Programs in Brazil," 87.

specialized intelligence organizations rather than counterinsurgency battalions. These clandestine intelligence units employed repression, including the use of torture and executions, to break the insurgencies. Brazilian forces also used repression to intimidate their citizenry; they did not seek to win the hearts and minds of the populace. These “Dirty War” tactics evolved from past Brazilian history and the incorporation of French internal security techniques, they did not reflect the principles of American counterinsurgency.

## Chapter Nine: Counter Revolution in Chile

Unlike most of its South American neighbors, Chile faced few revolutionary threats during the 1960s. It had no prior history of internal violence as in Colombia, or recurrent military coups d'état and dictatorships as in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Venezuela. Chilean democracy and stability in the pre and post-World War II era made it unique among Latin American nations. Chile had last experienced a golpe de estado in 1924 and its most recent dictatorship ended in 1931.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, rather than seeing Brazil's revolution of 1964 as a model for emulation, the Chilean armed forces considered themselves above needing any internal security or internal development model at all. Most officers were apolitical, and some - like future dictator Augusto Pinochet - professed little understanding of or appreciation for politics.<sup>2</sup>

Chile enjoyed a mostly peaceful 1960s, although storm clouds gathered late in the decade. Chilean students drew inspiration from the Cuban Revolution, yet the nation spawned few guerrilla movements. The country's geography did not lend itself to rural insurgency, and it lacked despotic governments for the militants to rail against in order to gather supporters. Meanwhile, the nation experienced an ongoing political shift to the left. Chile's traditional Leftist parties and leaders continued to pursue the electoral path to power that had seemed close to achieving success. The participation of legal Socialist and Communist parties in the country's political process also helped undermine the appeal of armed revolution.

---

<sup>1</sup> Brian Loveman, *Chile: the Legacy of Hispanic Capitalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 218-219.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Helen Spooner, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land: The Pinochet Regime in Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 22-28.

Chilean officers repeatedly spurned American efforts to instill a counterinsurgency capability during the decade. Like their Southern Cone counterparts, they rejected the implication that they needed foreign assistance in managing their internal security, especially if that judgement and assistance originated from the hemispheric hegemon the United States. Moreover, Chile faced no insurgency and its highly nationalistic military prided itself on its reputation for strict constitutionality. For those and other reasons, the country's political and military leaders limited the country's military interaction with the U.S. Army. The only internal security training they requested from the United States was assistance with riot control procedures in preparation for the 1964 presidential elections. Yet even this modest training caused consternation for Chile's political and military leaders. They asked the Americans not to publicize the assistance and to minimize the number of U.S. military trainers sent to the country.

The rise of military dictatorships in Argentina in 1966 and Peru in 1968 triggered an altogether different response. Chilean officers worried about strong authoritarian governments in Buenos Aires and Lima. They feared their ambitious counterparts, at the helm of military-controlled regimes, might be tempted to seize portions of Chile's national territory at a time when its government appeared weak and its military unprepared. In turn, Chilean officials did accept American conventional military training, equipment, and aid.

American counterinsurgency doctrine, on the other hand, held little appeal in Chile. The nation confronted minimal domestic unrest until 1970. Consequently, Chile sent few students to American internal security courses. For example, Chile sent just nine students to the School of the Americas counterinsurgency courses between 1961 and

1964. During the same time period its northern neighbor Peru sent seventy-one. The country also largely shunned Special Action Force mobile training teams related to counterinsurgency. Between 1962 and 1973, Chile accepted thirty-nine MTTs. Only two of them pertained to internal security. Santiago received a counterinsurgency assessment survey in 1963 but never authorized any follow-on training. It accepted a psychological operations visit that same year which ended its counterinsurgency interactions with the Special Action Force. The cumulative record of Special Action Force visits to Chile paints a dramatic picture. Ninety-five percent of the MTT missions that Chile accepted related to civic action and conventional military skills, not internal security. If American counterinsurgency doctrine was readily available, why did Chilean generals chose a different internal security doctrine in 1973?

Because Chile faced no domestic threats during the 1960s, the nation's armed forces saw little need to develop or import doctrines for internal security. Only as Salvador Allende steered the nation towards socialism, and economic crisis and internal insecurity worsened in the early 1970s, did military leaders contemplate overturning their democracy. When the generals finally did decide to act their situation appeared much like that of Brazil in 1964. Chile in 1973 did not resemble the two successful cases of American counterinsurgency in South America. The nation was not experiencing a popular rejection of violence and a new embrace of democracy as had been the case in Venezuela and Colombia in the early 1960s. Meanwhile, by the early 1970s American counterinsurgency doctrine seemed discredited in the aftermath of Vietnam.

Many historians have written about the degree to which Cuba's revolution inspired Southern Cone Leftists. Fewer authors have examined the ways in which the Brazilian army's "success" at achieving internal stability and the country's later



“economic miracle” influenced regional military officers. The effects of Brazil’s National Security Doctrine did not go unnoticed in Argentina and Chile. When faced with the worsening crisis of the early 1970s, Chile’s generals looked to Brasilia, not Washington for internal security concepts and advice. After seizing power General Pinochet established a personal dictatorship implementing a Chile-specific version of the National Security Doctrine developed in Brazil.

Like the regime in Brazil, and later in Argentina, Pinochet restricted political competition and civilian participation in government. He also pursued an economic restructuring plan imposed by decree rather than consensus. To cement his rule, Pinochet employed many of the same brutal French counter revolutionary war tactics his Brazilian counterparts had used. Pinochet’s government ruthlessly repressed “subversives” and “Marxists enemies” of all stripes using torture, disappearances, and murder. In doing so, he intentionally created a climate of fear to intimidate Chilean society into obedience. Pinochet rejected the tenets of American counterinsurgency doctrine; the winning of hearts and minds was not on his agenda.

#### **CHILE’S SLOW DRIFT TO THE LEFT IN THE 1960S.**

Although Cuba spared Chile from its export of revolution, social and political tensions increased during the 1960s. Conservative President Jorge Alessandri led the nation in the early years of the decade. Nevertheless, the country’s electorate remained polarized. Alessandri won the presidency by a slim margin in 1958, narrowly beating out the Socialist-Communist alliance Popular Action Front (Frente de Acción Popular – FRAP) candidate Salvador Allende.<sup>3</sup> President Alessandri sought to weather the economic and social challenges of popular discontent in the aftermath of the Cuban

---

<sup>3</sup> Loveman, *Chile*, 261.

Revolution of 1959, but he accomplished little to remedy Chile's problems. The nation continued to face myriad issues on its path to modernization.

Like its neighbors, Chile sought to industrialize in the aftermath of the Great depression of the 1930s. However, the country lacked the vast agricultural and human resources of Argentina and Brazil. Instead, nature endowed Chile with minerals. The country boasted the world's largest reserves of copper and nitrates along with substantial iron deposits. Nevertheless, Chile did pursue Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) which also coincided with a wave of rural-urban migration in the post-World War Two era. "Industry has not, however," analysts of the CIA noted in 1963, "realized the hopes originally held out for it. It is heavily dependent on imported capital equipment and raw materials...is monopolistic and inefficient, [and] it is handicapped in competing in foreign markets." Chilean industry also suffered from "the limited size of the domestic market [which] makes it difficult...to achieve economies of scale." Meanwhile, a powerful landed oligarchy and skewed land tenure stifled agricultural production. The result was "unbalanced growth, declining productivity, and inflation that has ranged from 15 to as high as 80 percent per annum." All of which left the country dependent on its mineral exports making it vulnerable to the boom and bust cycles of the global market. "Although some progressive measures have been adopted," CIA analysts judged, "the [Alessandri] administration has not accomplished enough to arrest the leftward trend in Chilean politics."<sup>4</sup>

Chile confronted numerous challenges in the early 1960s, although rural insurgency was not among them. "Despite peasant grievances," American analysts

---

<sup>4</sup> United States Central Intelligence Agency (hereafter cited as CIA), "The Chilean Situation and Prospects," dated 3 October 1963, Declassified Documents Reference System (hereafter DDRS), University of Texas at Austin, online database, 9-10.

observed in 1963, “there is at present no significant potential for rural insurgency in Chile.” The country also relied on its highly professional national police force, the Carabineros, as the first line of defense against internal disruptions. The lack of insurgency and the Chilean Army’s “history of apolitical attitude” limited the appeal of American counterinsurgency training.<sup>5</sup> However, Chilean nationalism also played a role.

American Army officers in Santiago found their efforts to disseminate counterinsurgency doctrine blocked at almost every turn. Chilean pride was a formidable barrier. “There is a strong feeling among many influential officers of the Chilean Army that they are perfectly capable of running their own army,” American officers lamented in 1962, “and do not need advice or assistance from the U.S. Army Mission.” Economic problems also contributed to the “non-acceptance and apparent lack of interest” in American military schools and mobile training teams.<sup>6</sup> However, “political considerations also played a part,” U.S. officers reported to their Canal Zone superiors. “There is no insurgency threat in Chile; however, there is a legal Communist Party here. All government agencies carefully consider their actions in this context to avoid providing [a] propaganda opening for the Communist Party. The Army, too, feels it must proceed careful [sic] for even the name Counter-Insurgency is subject to misinterpretation and distortion.”<sup>7</sup> “Attempts by the Military Missions and USIS [United States Information Service] to introduce anti-Communist literature into military

---

<sup>5</sup> Department of Defense, “Military Assistance Plan: Chile” dated 15 July 1963 (hereafter cited as MAP Chile 1963), United States Army Heritage and Education Center (hereafter cited as USAHEC), Narrative B, 1, Narrative G, 4.

<sup>6</sup> United States Army Mission (hereafter cited as USARMIS) to Chile, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 July 1962, National Archives II, College Park, MD, Records Group 548, Records of U.S. Army Forces in the Caribbean (hereafter cited as NAAFC), n.pag.

<sup>7</sup> USARMIS to Chile, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 October 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

channels,” a later report noted, “have met with little success, except for unofficial distribution.”<sup>8</sup>

Despite these obstacles, Chile did accept a very limited amount of American internal security training in the early 1960s. The Chilean Army sent nine students to the School of the Americas counterinsurgency courses between 1961 and 1964. Another six Chilean officers attended courses at the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina from 1961 to 1963. The Special Action Force deployed its first mobile training teams to the country in 1962. Green Beret teams taught a medical course and provided Ranger training to their Chilean Army counterparts during the first year of their interaction.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the Chilean Army declined American counterinsurgency training. “Chilean Army offered a [counterinsurgency] Mobile Training Team in Feb 62,” American officers in Santiago reported to the Canal Zone. The Chileans responded with silence. “No reply received,” the U.S. officers tersely noted. However, the same report held at least a partial explanation. “Commander in Chief, Chilean Army authorized the use of the Counter Subversive Warfare Manual published by the War Academy,” American officers explained, “for use in that Academy and the Chilean Army Service Schools.”<sup>10</sup> The Chilean Army’s development of its own “counter subversive warfare” doctrine by mid-1962 obviated the need for an infusion of American counterinsurgency.

The Special Action Force expanded its training deployments to Chile the following year. Seven mobile training teams visited the country in 1963, up from just two visits the year before. Green Beret instructors taught courses on marksmanship, medical

---

<sup>8</sup> MAP Chile 1963, Narrative D, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, “Historical Report 1965” (hereafter cited as SAF 65), USAHEC, n. pag.

<sup>10</sup> USARMIS to Chile, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 17 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

and engineering subjects. Two teams followed up on the Chilean Army's interest in advanced infantry skills and provided a second and third iteration of Ranger training. 1963 also marked the Chilean Army's first acceptance of an American internal security mission. A counterinsurgency survey team visited the country, but Chilean authorities never approved any follow on missions to provide the actual tactical instruction. That same year a Green Beret team provided a course on psychological operations, which the Special Action Force categorized as a form of counterinsurgency training.

Chile again faced presidential elections in 1964. For the United States, the elections proved both a challenge and an opportunity. "The principal immediate [Cold War] threat," American officers wrote in mid-1963, "is a victory of the Communist infiltrated leftist coalition, Frente de Acción Popular (FRAP), in the 1964 national elections." CIA analysts largely concurred. "Although some progressive measures have been adopted," they wrote, "the [Alessandri] administration has not accomplished enough to arrest the leftward trend in Chilean politics."<sup>11</sup> American policymakers feared that avowed Marxist Salvador Allende might win the presidency. Chilean authorities, meanwhile, feared the elections might trigger "possible disturbances" by Allende's supporters if he did not win and asked for U.S. assistance. American diplomats in Santiago framed the request as "a remarkable first opportunity for us to enter into the delicate internal security field" in their reports to Washington.<sup>12</sup>

Chilean authorities and American officials viewed the military assistance request with some trepidation. Both parties agreed that, an "internal security program would be beneficial and useful, providing that it could be handled on unobtrusive basis in order not

---

<sup>11</sup> CIA, "The Chilean Situation and Prospects," 5.

<sup>12</sup> United States Department of State (hereafter cited as DOS), "GOC Request for Assistance on Internal Security," dated 29 April 1964, DDRS.

to arouse public opinion.” In making his official request, the Chilean Minister of Defense approved a “preliminary survey team visit...from Panama, and he emphasized the need that this matter be kept confidential.” He also “expressed the hope that for any secondary training the number of Americans be kept down to an absolute minimum and that previously trained Chilean officers be employed for this purpose.” Meanwhile, American diplomats in Santiago emphasized “the need to avoid any publicity on this and also strongly endorse COMILGP’s [Commander U.S. Military Group] recommendation that the term “counter-insurgency” be avoided as this [is an] unpalatable term here which could negate [the] value of this project which we consider of great significance.”<sup>13</sup>

American military officers in Santiago and Panama quickly set about working to provide the requested support. After the U.S. Southern Command dispatched an internal security survey team, it arranged to provide riot control supplies and equipment for the Chilean security forces. The United States delivered “shotguns, ammunition, non-lethal chemical grenades, communications [equipment], and items for individual protection” in mid-July. A second shipment later the same month delivered “additional items...primarily communications equipment.”<sup>14</sup> Predictably, U.S. Southern Command looked to the Special Action Force to support the internal security assistance request for Chile. In light of Chilean officials’ and American diplomats’ concerns, the Green Berets dispatched just two officers. Nevertheless, their counterparts in Santiago appreciated the help. “Special mention should be made of the MTT of a Military Police and Signal Officer from the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group, Panama,” U.S. Army officers in Chile reported, “who worked with the USARMIS [U.S. Army Mission] and Chilean Army for

---

<sup>13</sup> DOS, “GOC Request for Assistance on Internal Security.”

<sup>14</sup> United States Department of Defense (hereafter cited as DOD) memo, “Riot Control Assistance is Being Furnished to Chile,” dated 21 July 1964, DDRS.

several weeks before the [1964] elections.” Chile also sent a group of students to the Canal Zone for an impromptu riot control course. “The special training in the School of the Americas provided to almost fifty selected junior officers of the armed forces in control of civil disturbances and the use of riot control equipment,” American officers in Santiago wrote, “was also of great value.”<sup>15</sup>

After the elections, American officers in Chile were effusive in their praise of the internal security assistance project. Although the minimal U. S. training, conducted out of the public view, likely had little influence on the peaceful outcome of the election process, American officers in Santiago interpreted it as a great success. “The calm orderliness of the elections probably was due in no small part to the preparedness of the Armed Forces and the Carabineros to deal quickly and forcefully with any disturbance,” U.S. Army Colonel William P. Jones explained to his superiors in Panama. “The Armed Forces and Carabineros evidenced sincere determination to maintain internal order and security. They cooperated with [the] US Military Missions to an extent not previously realized in this field [of internal security] and readily accepted both equipment and advice in their preparation.”<sup>16</sup> The increased military cooperation with Chile relating to internal security was short lived.

Despite the prevalent view of American military hegemony and dominance in the regional Cold War literature, Latin American political and military officials were quite capable of setting and enforcing limits on their interactions with the United States. Chilean officials determined the parameters of the 1964 internal security assistance project with the United States and they strictly limited it to riot control and civil

---

<sup>15</sup> USARMIS to Chile, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 20 January 1964, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

disturbance training. General Andrew P. O'Meara, the Commander of U.S. Southern Command in Panama, considered that level of internal security training inadequate. He worried that Chilean officers' apolitical attitudes made them unaware of "the dangers which the Communists pose to their country today." In a private letter to Attorney General Robert Kennedy in May 1964 O'Meara continued,

[T]he Chilean military, in particular the higher military leaders, have held themselves aloof from politics for so long that their professionalism is quite narrow and unsophisticated in the light of today's threats. In the past they have resisted our efforts to give them any type of counterinsurgency instruction on the basis that no insurgency exists in their country. There is no doubt that the Chilean military need a realistic view of the current threats. The problem is to get it to them without arousing their resistance. If we let them suspect we consider their present outlook unsophisticated, we will get nowhere.<sup>17</sup>

But O'Meara could not order Chilean officials to accept American training. Instead, he proposed to address the issue by hosting a "strategic intelligence seminar" in the Panama Canal Zone. He requested that Attorney General Kennedy "devote a day to join the seminar and to address it" as a means "to attract from Chile, as well as other countries, participants of adequate seniority and responsibility."<sup>18</sup>

General O'Meara hosted the seminar in June 1964. "Fifty military and para-military officers, representing 17 Latin American countries, participated in a USOUTHCOM Strategic Intelligence Seminar at Fort Gulick, Canal Zone, from 8-17 June," Southern Command historians recorded. "Ten U.S. guest speakers and 15 senior U.S. military officers participated."<sup>19</sup> It is not clear from the available records if Attorney

---

<sup>17</sup> United States Commander in Chief, U.S. Southern Command (hereafter cited as USCINCSO), "Exclusive for Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy," dated 02 May 1964, DDRS.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> United States Southern Command, "Historical Report Calendar Year 1964," n.d., (hereafter cited as USSOUTHCOM CY64), U.S. Army Center of Military History (hereafter cited as CMH), I-3.



General Kennedy attended the event. However, Chilean participation did not meet American expectations. “The Chilean Army declined the invitation to attend the Strategic Intelligence Seminar in Panama,” U.S. officers in Santiago wrote, “as did the Chilean Navy and Air Force. Chile was represented at the Seminar by two officers of the National Police (Carabineros).” Meanwhile, the American officers had more bad news to transmit. “No internal security type training spaces [counterinsurgency schools] have been accepted by the Chilean Army,” the same report noted, “for [the continental United States] or Panama.”<sup>20</sup> Although the level of interaction was limited, 1964 proved the high water mark for internal security cooperation between the United States and Chile. The Special Action Force conducted no further counterinsurgency related missions to the country after that year.

Chile continued its drift to the Left in 1964, although Salvador Allende again lost his bid for the presidency. “In the 1964 presidential contest,” American researchers explain, “the right [the party of Alessandri, who was ineligible to run for re-election] abandoned its standard bearers and gave its support to [centrist candidate Eduardo] Frei in order to avert an Allende victory in the face of rising electoral support for the leftists.”<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, Frei promised an ambitious program of social and economic reforms including “greater Chilean control over the United States-owned copper mines, agrarian reform, better housing for residents of the sprawling shantytowns, [and] more equitable income distribution,” among other issues. In a sign of the times, Frei also adopted the rhetoric of the Left. “To distinguish his more moderate program from

---

<sup>20</sup> USARMIS to Chile, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 20 January 1964, NAAFC, n.pag.

<sup>21</sup> Rex A. Hudson, ed., *Chile: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1994), 44.

Allende's Marxism," American researchers note, "Frei promised a 'Revolution in Liberty.'"<sup>22</sup>

The United States continued its military cooperation with Chile after 1964, but the focus was on conventional skills - not counterinsurgency. The Special Action Force conducted four mobile training team visits to Chile in 1964, in addition to its special two-man riot control mission. Green Beret instructors taught courses on marksmanship, medical civic action and two seminars related to equipment maintenance. In 1965, another four teams returned to Chile to provide training on military parachuting, civil affairs, communications and marksmanship. The Special Action Force continued its efforts to assist the Chilean Army in developing an airborne unit in 1966. Two Green Beret officers and five enlisted men spent two months in Chile training a cadre of instructors at the newly-established Chilean Army Airborne School in the procedures of how to conduct a basic airborne course. Other Special Action Force teams taught courses on the operation of engineer equipment, supply and maintenance procedures, and intelligence. Another four teams followed in 1967, but Chile accepted only three visits in 1968. The decline continued in 1969 with only one Green Beret team travelling to Chile that year. As the country again faced elections in 1970, it chose not to seek American assistance. The Special Action Force sent no teams to Chile during 1970.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, social and economic tensions continued to build during the late 1960s. "Chile is involved in a serious political and economic situation," CIA analysts wrote in 1968, "which could result in the election of a Communist-supported Popular

---

<sup>22</sup> Hudson, *Chile: A Country Study*, 45.

<sup>23</sup> Data compiled from Special Action Force unit histories, USAHEC.

Front president in 1970.”<sup>24</sup> The following year even Chile’s apolitical army became restive. “In October 1969,” another CIA report noted, “some army units...mutinied over serious grievances involving salaries eroded by inflation, deteriorating equipment, and dissatisfaction with [President] Frei’s appointees to the top military posts.” Loyalist military units quickly contained the uprising, known as the *tacnazo*, but the polarization of society continued.<sup>25</sup> Frei’s reform programs have “come too fast for some elements of society,” the CIA analysts observed, “and too slowly for others.” The result was that Chile’s “deeply ingrained democratic traditions” were “not only under strong attack from leftist extremists but from rightist elements as well.” As Chileans again prepared for presidential elections in 1970, the country faced its first outbreaks of terrorism and violence. Meanwhile, the political coalition of the center and the right that elected Eduardo Frei in 1964 crumbled. The conservative National Party and the centrists Christian Democrats each backed their own candidates which paved the way for a narrow victory by the left.<sup>26</sup>

#### **THE CHILEAN ROAD TO SOCIALISM: THE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT**

In September 1970, Chileans went to the polls to select a new president. Salvador Allende, of the Popular Unity (Unidad Popular – UP) Leftist coalition, garnered thirty-six percent of the vote. Allende narrowly edged out the conservative candidate former President Jorge Alessandri (with 34.9 percent) and his center-Left rival Radomiro Tomić (with 27.8 percent). Despite the slim margin, Salvador Allende earned enough votes to

---

<sup>24</sup> CIA, “Chile: a New Opening to the Left?” dated 12 April 1968, Central Intelligence Agency, Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, online database, (hereafter cited as CIA FOIA), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Chileans referred to the incident as the *tacnazo* because the mutiny originated in the Army’s Tacna regiment. See CIA, “Outlook for Chile,” dated 4 June 1970, CIA FOIA, 9.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3, 17; Loveman, *Chile*, 294.

gain him the presidency of Chile on his fourth attempt at that office.<sup>27</sup> However, in Chile's highly charged atmosphere of 1970, Allende faced considerable resistance to his taking office.

Although shrouded in secrecy at the time, the President of the United States directed the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to undertake covert operations in Chile to influence the 1964 and 1970 presidential elections. American agents spent three million dollars to support Eduardo Frei's 1964 election campaign in an effort to block Salvador Allende and his Frente de Acción Popular – FRAP from taking the presidency. That effort succeeded. Frei won fifty-seven percent of the vote. The CIA again undertook covert efforts to prevent an Allende presidency in the run up to the 1970 elections. However, rather than back a candidate, as they had in 1964, American agents instead embarked on “a covert ‘spoiling’ operation designed to defeat Salvador Allende,” according to a later United States Senate investigation. “In all, the CIA spent from \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 on covert action to affect the outcome of the 1970 Presidential election” in Chile. That effort failed when Allende won a slight plurality at the polls in September.<sup>28</sup>

Allende's electoral victory did not end American actions to block him from becoming the president of Chile. Instead, the CIA embarked on two additional covert programs to prevent his taking office. Track I focused on a “constitutional solution.” “Since no candidate had received a majority of the popular vote,” U.S. Senate hearings later explained, “the Chilean Constitution required a joint session of its Congress decide between the first- and second-place finishers...the CIA fastened on the so-called Frei re-

---

<sup>27</sup> Hudson, *Chile: A Country Study*, 35

<sup>28</sup> United States Senate, “Covert Actions in Chile, 1963-1973” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 1,5,12, 20.

election gambit as a means of preventing Allende's assumption of office. This gambit, which was considered a constitutional solution to the Allende problem, consisted of inducing enough congressional votes to elect Alessandri over Allende with the understanding that Alessandri would immediately resign, thus paving the way for a special election in which Frei would legally become a candidate." Track I failed on 24 October when 153 members of the Chilean Congress voted for Allende to become president. Only thirty-five congressmen voted against him.<sup>29</sup>

Track II sought to foment a military coup d'état. The plan had little chance of success. Few Chilean officers would have felt compelled to break their constitutional loyalty in 1970 – especially to mount a pre-emptive coup d'état at the behest of the CIA. Nevertheless, the "CIA established contact with several groups of military plotters and eventually passed three weapons and tear gas to one group," the U.S. Senate investigation revealed. "The weapons were subsequently returned, apparently unused." In any event, small groups of mid-level coup plotters could never succeed if opposed by the senior leadership of Chile's armed forces, especially the army. Therefore, most of the plots to overthrow the government began with removing the army's constitutionalist commander General René Schneider. With Schneider out of the way, so the theory went, the Chilean Army would then be free to oppose Allende. One group not affiliated with the CIA put the theory to the test. They made two failed attempts to kidnap Schneider in late October. During their third attempt Schneider resisted and received a fatal gunshot wound. Yet rather than spark the hoped-for uprising, Schneider's murder reinvigorated the military's

---

<sup>29</sup> United States Senate, "Covert Actions in Chile," 23; Hudson, *Chile: A Country Study*, 36.

constitutionality. Track II had also failed. Chileans inaugurated Allende as their president on 3 November 1970.<sup>30</sup>

Salvador Allende presided over three of the most tumultuous years in Chilean history. No single issue caused the Chilean military to overthrow his government. Instead, a confluence of social, economic and political factors combined to create the perception that the country stood on the brink of economic collapse and civil war by late 1973. Increasing politicization of the armed forces and growing threats to the military as an institution contributed to the crisis.

Although he lacked a strong electoral mandate – nearly two-thirds of Chileans had voted against him -- President Allende quickly embarked the country on his “Chilean Road to Socialism.” One of his first economic measures was an effort to increase domestic consumption. “By July 1971 wages and salaries had been raised by almost 55 percent...the legal minimum wage...by about 66 percent,” American researchers noted. “In addition, the government instituted massive increases in public spending, in part to stimulate employment.” The plan worked – at first. However, the increased consumption soon led to shortages and rising inflation. “By late 1971 some food shortages had become noticeable,” the American researchers continued. “General and severe shortages of food and other consumer items did not appear until late 1972, but the shortages then worsened steadily and dramatically through 1973.”<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, Allende’s nationalizations of foreign companies and seizures of domestic manufacturing and industrial centers also harmed the economy. While turning over control of critical industries to the workers might have made good sense as socialist

---

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Senate, “Covert Actions in Chile,” 11, 26; CIA, “Weekly Review: Chile Changes Government,” dated 30 October 1970, CIA FOIA.

<sup>31</sup> Hudson, *Chile: A Country Study*, 38.

policy, it led to economic turmoil. At the same time, government agencies expropriated farms and unused lands while rural workers also seized properties – often without official approval. By 1973, “Agricultural production had declined to the level of the early 1960s,” American researchers note, “and industrial production was 15 percent below the figure for 1971.”<sup>32</sup> Urban and rural workers were unable to achieve a level of productivity sufficient to meet domestic demands, forcing the government to increase imports. When the increased need to import basic items and foodstuffs depleted the country’s foreign reserves, the government resorted to printing money. Inflation skyrocketed. Meanwhile, Washington viewed Allende’s socialist government as a threat to regional security and continued to oppose it by diplomatic and economic means.

Allende’s internal policies, combined with the external policy of the United States to “squeeze” the Chilean economy, produced spectacular results. “The money supply increased by 116% in 1971, and in mid-1972 the inflation rate reached 5 percent a month,” political scientist Paul Sigmund observes. “The Chilean wage earner saw his entire 22 percent wage readjustment disappear in the first five months of 1972, and shortages of food and replacement parts led to massive dissatisfaction expressed in women’s marches, shopkeeper’s strikes, and continued violence in the streets.”<sup>33</sup> Inflation jumped to a record 150% by December 1972, and showed no signs of slowing down. In late 1973, just prior to the coup, the Central Bank estimated that the rate of inflation for the year would surpass 500%.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Hudson, *Chile: A Country Study*, 108.

<sup>33</sup> Paul E. Sigmund, *The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile, 1964-1976* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), 176.

<sup>34</sup> Arturo Valenzuela, *Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 80; Robert J. Alexander, *The Tragedy of Chile* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), 187.

On the political front, Allende moved even more swiftly. He formally reestablished diplomatic ties with Cuba on 12 November 1970 – just nine days after taking office. “The move was hardly surprising, given Allende’s election promises,” historian Tanya Harmer notes, but it did give “Havana its first diplomatic opening in Latin America since 1964.” The reengagement with Cuba also reflected Allende’s personal friendship with Fidel Castro and his deep ties to the regional revolutionary movement. “In 1966 [Allende] participated in the Tricontinental Conference,” Harmer explains. “Subsequently, he was one of those who proposed the formation of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS)” and he also attended its inaugural meeting in 1967. “Then, in February 1968,” Harmer continues, “Allende inspired Havana’s unswerving gratitude when he accompanied the three Cuban survivors of Che’s guerrilla column in Bolivia out of Chile to safety after their escape to that country.”<sup>35</sup>

Despite the sympathies of powerful political figures like Salvador Allende and Fidel Castro, guerrilla movements came late to Chile and had difficulty taking root. Some five hundred Chileans had travelled to Cuba by 1962. Yet unlike other South American nations, not all of them received revolutionary instruction. Chile’s legal Communist Party, one of the strongest in Latin America, “has refused to send members to Cuba for guerrilla warfare training,” analysts of the CIA reported, “as the [Chilean] Socialists have done.”<sup>36</sup> Although some number of Chilean militants did receive instruction in the techniques guerrilla warfare while visiting the island, the first revolutionary movement in the country did not form until several years later. A declassified U.S. Department of State

---

<sup>35</sup> Tanya Harmer, *Allende’s Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 65-66, 36, 37.

<sup>36</sup> Jonathan C. Brown, “To Make the Revolution: Solidarity and Division among Latin American Guerrillas in the 1960s” *Asian Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, (2015), 7; CIA, “The Chilean Situation and Prospects,” 19.



analysis of “Guerrilla and Terrorist Activity in Latin America” in 1964 discussed insurgent activity in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela among South American nations. Chile merited no mention.<sup>37</sup> The country’s leftist students, enamored by the Cuban Revolution and the writings of Che Guevara, soon sought to rectify the situation.

Radical students in Concepción formed the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) in 1965. They envisioned the group as the vanguard of revolution in Chile. The MIR began its “armed struggle” in 1969 seeking to foment revolution among Chilean campesinos in the south and urban workers in the cities. However, the movement remained less dangerous and less well known than its Ação Libertadora Nacional (ALN) counterparts in Brazil or the Montoneros in Argentina. The MIR “probably has a hardcore membership of two thousand or so -- mostly students,” the CIA judged in 1972. “Although scornful of the parliamentary path to socialism, the MIR reached an accommodation with Allende in 1970,” the analysts continued. “The MIR remained outside the [Unidad Popular coalition], but provided qualified support for its programs and manpower for Allende’s personal security force. Allende, for his part, freed members of the MIR imprisoned under Frei and permitted the MIR to pursue its revolutionary activities without government harassment.”<sup>38</sup> The MIR eventually failed in its efforts to convert Allende’s “road to socialism” into a revolution, but the militants’ actions did serve as a powerful catalyst for counterrevolution.

---

<sup>37</sup> DOS, “Guerrilla and Terrorist Activity in Latin America: A Brief Review,” dated 16 November 1964, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library (hereafter cited as LBJPL), National Security Files, Countries, Latin America, Vol. 2. Memorandum.

<sup>38</sup> CIA, National Intelligence Estimate, “Chile: The Alternatives Facing the Allende Regime,” dated 29 June 1972, CIA FOIA, 8.

Members of Allende's inner circle began worrying about his physical security even before he took office. The CIA was correct in its assessment that the MIR provided support. However, relations between the MIR and Allende's government remained contentious. One MIR member later confided that the militants "did not consider protecting a president who represented the bourgeois Chilean institutionalism to be particularly 'honorable.'" For its part, the new government did not fully trust the MIR. Therefore, it looked to Havana for internal security assistance. Allende's daughter Beatriz made the initial request on 14 September 1970 and Fidel quickly dispatched a three-man survey team of advisors to assess the situation. Among them was Beatriz's new husband, a Cuban intelligence officer. The Cubans helped form a new security detail for Allende, known as the Grupo de Amigos Personales (Group of Personal Friends – GAP), and also began providing arms to the Chileans. "Later, after November 1970 [when Allende took office], Cuba began supplying the GAP with more arms," Tanya Harmer argues, "while other members of Cuba's Tropas Especiales – including members of Castro's own bodyguard – began arriving in Chile to offer logistical training."<sup>39</sup>

While tolerating the MIR, and increasing the role of the Cubans, President Allende also sought to safeguard his socialist government by eliciting domestic military support. Ironically, his own actions helped politicize the formerly aloof Chilean armed forces and bring about his own downfall. Military officers in Brazil and Argentina had long involved themselves in their countries' internal development. In Chile, on the other hand, it was Allende who drew military officers into the country's internal economic development. In his early attempts to link the military to his administration as a powerful support group, Allende envisioned the armed forces as a force for national development.

---

<sup>39</sup> Harmer, *Allende's Chile*, 53-55.

In a speech given in Temuco in March 1971, Allende promoted military involvement in the future development of the copper and steel industries, atomic energy, and scientific research. President Allende “cleverly appealed to the armed forces,” historian Frederick Nunn notes, “by saying that there was no such thing as a modern, well-trained, well-equipped army, navy, or air force in an underdeveloped country.”<sup>40</sup> At the same time Allende continued his relations with the Cubans. Fidel Castro visited Chile and enjoyed a three week tour of the country in November 1971.<sup>41</sup>

In his attempts to include the Chilean military in matters of national development, Allende seems to have overlooked two very important events in regional history: the Brazilian coup of 1964 and the Argentine coup of 1966. Both these events occurred during an era of social and economic turmoil in which the armed forces felt compelled to act to prevent civil war. In each case the generals seized control of the government and ousted the civilian leadership. Moreover, both movements found their roots in the National Security Doctrine developed by the Brazilian Escola Superior de Guerra. The Chilean armed forces in the early 1970s had no such doctrine, until Allende helped give them one. “In short,” Nunn explains, “a Chilean civilian was infusing a developmentalist attitude into the armed forces (particularly the army) for his own purposes, thinking he could control that spirit.”<sup>42</sup>

President Allende also drew military officers into the role of internal security. In October 1972, Allende signed a law prohibiting possession of machineguns and heavy weapons by anyone other than the military and Carabineros. Additionally, the new Arms

---

<sup>40</sup> Frederick M. Nunn, *The Military in Chilean History, Essays on Civil-Military Relations, 1810-1973* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), 270-271.

<sup>41</sup> Augusto Pinochet, *The Crucial Day*, trans. María Teresa Escobar (Santiago: Editorial Renacimiento, 1982), 61.

<sup>42</sup> Nunn, *The Military in Chilean History*, 271.

Control Law designated the Ministry of Defense as responsible for arms searches, not, as previously, the Ministry of Interior (Carabineros). This law granted broad powers to the armed forces to conduct arms searches for illegal arms and prosecute violators in military courts. By upsetting the separation of defense and internal security/police functions that existed prior to the law, the Arms Control Law undermined the moderating role of the Carabineros and further increased the politicization of the military. The Armed Forces immediately began conducting raids to locate arms caches; placing themselves in direct opposition to powerful social groups (like the MIR) and reinforcing their fears of rampant arms smuggling and arming of civilian groups with direct, institutional evidence. “Initially, the military chose not to enforce it [the Arms Control Law],” Paul Sigmund notes, “but when they began to do so in 1973 the arms searches revealed stockpiling of arms by both sides [Left and Right-wing groups], which undoubtedly contributed to the military decision to take power that September.”<sup>43</sup>

The United States did not end its relations with the Chilean military after the inauguration of Salvador Allende. But as the country’s situation worsened, Washington provided no internal security support. Three Special Action Force teams visited Chile in 1971. Green Beret instructors taught a course on military parachuting and conducted training on engineer equipment and armored vehicle maintenance. The following year only two teams traveled to Chile. One established an English language laboratory while the other presented an airmobile staff operations course. In 1973 the Special Action Force increased the number of visits to Chile, but the training it provided was mundane and unrelated to the crisis gripping the nation. Green Beret teams established another

---

<sup>43</sup> Alexander, *The Tragedy of Chile*, 325; Sigmund, *The Overthrow of Allende*, 184.

language lab and taught two additional maintenance courses. The fourth mission provided engineer construction training related to soil analysis.<sup>44</sup>

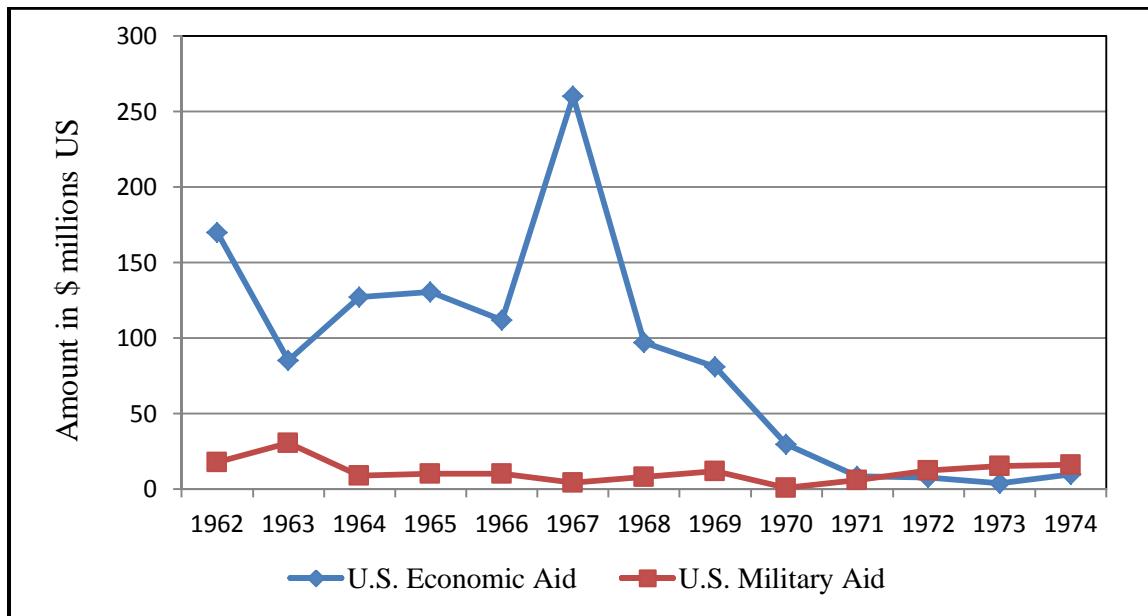
Although President Allende and the Chilean generals disdained American internal security training they did continue accepting U.S. military aid. That assistance, in the form of conventional training and equipment, continued after Allende's election but it did not increase sharply. American military aid provided to Chile between 1971 and 1974 averaged \$12.2 million, slightly lower than the 1962 to 1969 average of \$12.6 million. On the other hand, U.S. economic aid to Chile did decrease dramatically. However, that decline began several years before Allende's election (see Table 9.1).<sup>45</sup> Because the United States wanted to retain its links to the Chilean Armed Forces after 1970, and President Allende sought to avoid alienating his military, the amount of American conventional military aid to Chile remained generally unchanged.

---

<sup>44</sup> Security Assistance Force, "Historical Supplement 1973" (hereafter cited as SAF 73), USAHEC, passim. The U.S. Army redesignated the Special Action Force for Latin America as the Security Assistance Force for Latin America in 1971. The soil analysis MTT most probably took place with Chilean Army engineer units. It almost certainly related to road construction, not farming.

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Senate, "Covert Action in Chile," 34.

Table 9.1: United States Economic and Military Aid to Chile 1962-1974.



Meanwhile, Allende also accepted Cuban internal security assistance and arms, but not for Chile’s uniformed services. “Ever since Allende’s direct request for Cuban security assistance in September 1970,” Harmer explains, “the Cubans had been helping the Chileans by collaborating with their intelligence services and arming Allende’s bodyguard, the GAP. As one of the MIR’s leaders later recalled, the Cubans helped turn the GAP into an ‘organized military structure’ with ‘schools of instruction’... Beyond the GAP, the Cubans would also separately train and arm sectors of the MIR, the PS [Socialist Party], the PCCh [Chilean Communist Party], and MAPU [Movement for Popular Action] during Allende’s time in office.”<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, Allende converted Chile into a safe haven for Southern Cone revolutionaries during his tenure. In mid-1972, militants of the Argentine Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo –ERP escaped from prison. They commandeered a plane and

<sup>46</sup> Harmer, *Allende’s Chile*, 135.

fled into exile, but their destination was not Cuba. Instead they flew to Chile “where they then requested asylum.” “By the end of 1972,” one historian notes, “there were Uruguayan Tupamaros and approximately one thousand Brazilian left-wing exiles living in Chile.” Cuban training and arming of leftist guerrillas and paramilitary groups like the Grupo de Amigos Personales, and the growing number of foreign revolutionaries flocking to the country, exacerbated government tensions with the Chilean armed forces and helped undermine Allende’s control of the military.

Cracks in Allende’s civilian control of the military became fissures in 1973. Interventionists in the army attempted to oust him in late June. Men of the Second Armored Regiment drove their tanks to the presidential palace and opened fire. Constitutionalist army units still loyal to the government suppressed the rebellion, but at a cost of twenty-two killed and thirty-two wounded both civilian and military. The *tancazo* (dubbed that because of the use of tanks and to differentiate it from the earlier *tacnazo* of 1969), highlighted the growing institutional split between rival factions of the military. President Allende added to the polarization in a radio address later that same day when he stated: “I call upon the people to take over all the industries, all firms, to be alert; to come to the center of the city, but not to become victims; the people should come out into the streets, but not to be machinegunned, do it with prudence.” He added, “If the moment comes the people will have arms.”<sup>47</sup> Splits in the army and Allende’s threat to arm his supporters both threatened the Chilean Army as an institution. The army still remained loyal, but social and political polarization had badly frayed the sinews of civilian control over the military.

---

<sup>47</sup> Alexander, *The Tragedy of Chile*, 313.

While the generals worried about the growing rifts in their institutions, and the external threat of rival armed groups, the MIR and other leftists added yet another danger to the list of their fears. “Like other Chileans,” CIA analysts reported in late 1972, “men in uniform are disturbed by shortages of consumer goods and by rising inflation. They are concerned in particular that the policies of the regime are accelerating the polarization of Chilean society and leading to a breakdown of public order.” “The security forces are also disturbed by reports the government is abetting the arming of MIR supporters,” the analysts continued, “that it is doing nothing to check the proliferation of illegal armed groups, and that the Communists, Socialists, and the MIR are intent upon infiltrating the armed forces.”<sup>48</sup> Guerrilla and radical Leftists’ efforts to infiltrate the military exactly conformed to the armed forces’ fears of Communist subversion. It also represented a potentially lethal threat to the institution of the military. “Intoxicated by a dream of popular revolution,” another author notes, “radical students from the MIR took up paramilitary training and attempted to infiltrate the armed forces, imagining the troops would side with them to bring down capitalism forever.” Chilean generals feared they might succeed.<sup>49</sup>

Conditions in Chile had deteriorated to such a degree by mid-1973 that for the first time in more than four decades civilians were openly calling for the military to intervene. “When civilians began clamoring openly for a coup, they touched a chord of military pride,” Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzeula judge. “Hundreds of housewives, irate over food lines and convinced the government was planning to impose leftist indoctrination in schools, threw chicken feed at soldiers on parade.” Senior Chilean

---

<sup>48</sup> CIA, “The Alternatives Facing the Allende Regime,” 11.

<sup>49</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile under Pinochet* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), 25; See Pinochet, *The Crucial Day*, 73 for a discussion of his concerns regarding the threat of Leftist infiltration of the military.



officers bristled at the public criticism. “We felt vilified and cornered,” Air Force General Gustavo Leigh later explained, “the people were calling us cowards.” On 22 August, a majority of the Chamber of Deputies declared the Allende government’s actions unconstitutional and called on the military to “place an immediate end” to the state of affairs.<sup>50</sup> Public scorn and civilian demands for a coup d’état were among the last straws the armed forces could bear. Constitutionalist Army Commander Carlos Prats resigned on 23 August.

By late 1973, President Allende and his Leftist supporters had driven the country far down the “road to socialism.” Yet the pace of revolution was too slow for many of those on the far Left and Allende began to lose control of his political coalition, and most importantly the spiraling violence. Meanwhile, his policies incurred increasing resistance from those on the right, both within the government and amongst the population. Allende’s control of the military, and the country, soon slipped from his grasp. Although external factors – including the opposition of the United States—exacerbated conditions in Chile, it was Allende’s own actions that drove the country to the brink of civil war. On the day of General Prats resignation President Allende selected General Augusto Pinochet as the new army commander.<sup>51</sup> It was a bad choice. Pinochet led a revolt against Allende nineteen days later. “President Allende failed because he lacked the power to impose a revolutionary socialist regime yet insisted on employing the rhetoric of revolution,” Brian Loveman observes. His policies, missteps and tolerance of the radical Left “set the stage for a counterrevolution that imposed upon Chile a regime of coercion, intolerance, and brutality unequalled since the era of conquest.”<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 28-29.

<sup>51</sup> Pinochet, *The Crucial Day*, 107.

<sup>52</sup> Loveman, *Chile*, 308-9.

## COUNTER REVOLUTIONARY WAR IN CHILE: THE PINOCHET REGIME

On September 11, 1973, the residents of Santiago experienced war. The nation's armed forces had fired the opening salvos of a self-declared internal war in Chile. The first "enemy" the military attacked was their own government. Chilean Air Force planes bombed and strafed the La Moneda presidential palace in downtown Santiago. Army units followed and assaulted the burning building with tanks and infantry. The attack ended the socialist presidency of Salvador Allende and his life. He reportedly committed suicide rather than surrender. The assault also brought to a close four decades of uninterrupted constitutional rule in Chile, yet the fighting did not end there. The conventional attack to overthrow Allende was brief – it lasted just one day. The internal "dirty war" it unleashed persisted for years. As in Brazil and Argentina, the Chilean military saw itself at war with subversive Communism. Like those nations, it responded by replacing its "flawed" democracy with a military dictatorship dedicated to reforming the country. "Marxist resistance is not finished," Pinochet declared to the nation ten days after the coup. "There are still extremists left. Chile continues in a state of internal war."<sup>53</sup>

Like his counterparts in Brazil and Argentina, Pinochet installed a regime that implemented the central elements of the National Security Doctrine. He replaced democracy with a dictatorship and he restricted political and social rights. His government also later imposed a program of economic restructuring by decree rather than by consensus. Unlike their Brazilian counterparts, Chilean officers had no long-prepared doctrine or elaborate plans for internal security and internal economic development.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Spooner, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land*, 56.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 84; Pinochet, *The Crucial Day*, 75, 97. Pinochet claims that he ordered initial planning for the overthrow of Allende's government as early as June 1972. However, it appears that those plans, refined in

They also had little experience in government. Because Pinochet and his officers lacked both experience and a well-developed plan, they imported their internal security and economic development models. Pinochet's economic policies had their roots in the United States. His security policy, on the other hand, he derived from Brazil.

General Augusto Pinochet lacked a definitive plan for the country at the time of the coup; however, one Chilean officer did have a concept for internal security. He was also a former student and protégé of Pinochet's at the Chilean Army War College. His name was Colonel Juan Manuel Contreras. Pinochet and Contreras shared much the same views regarding the need to apply harsh measures in response to internal security threats. "I hope the army will not have to come out," Pinochet stated in 1971 in response to request by President Allende to help quell civil disturbances, "because if it does, it will be to kill."<sup>55</sup> Other Chilean officers agreed. At a dinner party prior to the coup, a constitutionalist army colonel commented on the turnout for a pro-Allende rally several days before, "a million people is impressive, don't you think?" His companion, a young navy officer replied, "I believe our last census count reported our population at ten million. Surely we could get along with nine."<sup>56</sup> However, the harsh internal security views of Pinochet, Contreras and others likely formed many years earlier.

As was the case throughout South America, Chilean officers studied insurgency during the post-World War II era. "Chilean soldiers translated accounts of counterinsurgency operations in places ranging from Algeria and Vietnam to Northern Ireland," one author notes. These officers also formed their own opinions and judgements about how best to confront the new revolutionary threats of the 1960s and discussed them

---

greater detail after the *tancazo* of June 1973, focused on ending the Marxist regime, not on what type of government would replace it.

<sup>55</sup> Time, "The Bloody End of a Marxist Dream," 24 September 1973.

<sup>56</sup> John Dinges and Saul Landau, *Assassination on Embassy Row* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 59.

in the Chilean Army War Academy's journal. Some officers were critical of American counterinsurgency doctrine. "In 1966 Major Manuel Contreras wrote that the pernicious nature of Marxist-Leninism had caused the Vietnam War, fracturing the country and causing guerrillas to take up arms against their fellow countrymen," John Bawden observes. Contreras "believed the United States was wasting time with politically sensitive strategies."<sup>57</sup> As the Vietnam War progressed, American counterinsurgency lost much of its appeal and some Chilean officers advocated elements of French counter revolutionary war theory as a more effective doctrine. "In the wake of the Tet Offensive (1968), Contreras and Colonel Augustín Toro-both writing from the academy of war-offered a more complete analysis of the [Vietnam] conflict," John Bawden continues, "including their conviction that Washington could only win the war if it continued to send its best trained and committed special forces to confront the Viet Cong while simultaneously abandoning all efforts to 'win the hearts and minds' of the Vietnamese population. In their view, 'killing guerrillas, destroying their hideouts, and submitting the civilian population to the strictest surveillance' was the only way the war would be won."<sup>58</sup>

Pinochet and the Chilean generals did not seek American internal security advice or assistance in toppling the Allende government. Nor did they ask for U.S. Army help in conducting their counterrevolution after the coup. By 1973, the American military were not the experts in confronting internal subversion. U.S. forces had only recently completed their ignominiously withdrawal from Vietnam that same August. Instead, the internal security experts in South America were the Brazilians, and the Chileans turned to

---

<sup>57</sup> John R. Bawden, "Gazing Abroad, The Chilean Military's Reading of International Events: Implications for Doctrine, Ideology and Behavior, 1945-1975" *The Latin Americanist*, vol. 56, no. 3, (September 2012), 15.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

them for help after the coup d'état. "The Brazilians," Tanya Harmer notes, were "obviously inclined to help... the Brazilian ambassador in Santiago personally extended recognition to the junta early on 11 September. 'We won,' he reportedly exclaimed. Brasilia then offered the Chilean junta immediate help with suppression [of Leftists], working as advisors to the new regime, as well as directly interrogating and torturing prisoners in Chile's National Stadium."<sup>59</sup> The mass arrests of some 7,000 Leftists and other "subversives" after the coup and their detention at the National Stadium echoed the Brazilian security forces' "massive dragnet" operation in São Paulo in 1969.<sup>60</sup> It was also similar to French mass arrests during the Battle of Algiers in 1957. Like those cases, the detentions in Chile also led to torture and selective executions. The use of torture was not the only similarity to the Brazilian and French internal security models.

Pinochet's dictatorship eventually exhibited all four main tenets of French "revolutionary war" doctrine. First, it conceptualized threats to the country's internal security as being part of a global total war against Marxism. "The feat of September 11 brought Chile into the heroic struggle against Marxist dictatorship that is fought by freedom-loving peoples," Pinochet told the nation on the date of the coup. "This same freedom-seeking spirit that moved the Czechs and Hungarians to fight against a powerful and merciless enemy, inspired the Chilean people to defeat international Marxism."<sup>61</sup>

Second, Pinochet, Contreras and other senior officers viewed the use of torture and executions as legitimate means to confront and root out the Marxist "enemy." In order to justify the brutal repression and outright murder of Chilean citizens Pinochet

---

<sup>59</sup> Harmer, *Allende's Chile*, 250.

<sup>60</sup> Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 31; Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 88.

<sup>61</sup> Pinochet, *The Crucial Day*, 150.

promoted the idea of Marxism as a disease. The Allende government and guerrilla organizations like the MIR, Pinochet and other officers believed, had “infected” Chile with the “disease” of Marxism. The concept that Marxism represented a sickness or tumor on the body of society served to dehumanize anyone on the Left who espoused subversive ideology, not just the armed guerrillas. Augusto Pinochet explained that, “Marxism is an intrinsically perverse doctrine; therefore anything that flows from it, regardless of how healthy it may appear to be, is corroded by the venom that gnaws at its roots.” Air Force Commander Gustavo Leigh was even blunter when he advised that the security forces must “cut out the Marxist cancer.”<sup>62</sup> Classifying Marxism as a disease also helped to overcome the moral obstacle to torture and murder by agents of the State. The generals were not ordering their subordinates to brutalize and kill their fellow citizens, they were “saving” their country by excising diseased tissue.

Third, the regime created specialized intelligence organizations to implement systematic repression in order to defeat Marxism. In early 1973, Manuel Contreras commanded an Engineer Regiment and the Tejas Verdes Army base to the west of Santiago and near the port city of San Antonio. Contreras apparently anticipated the overthrow of Salvador Allende and saw the impending crisis as an opportunity to implement the theories he had written about years earlier. “[A]ccording to troops stationed there,” Mark Ensalaco writes, “Contreras began converting the base into a concentration camp and interrogation center on September 9, 1973,” two days before the coup.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Augusto Pinochet, “Chile on its Way to the Future” (Address delivered in Santiago, Chile, September 11, 1976), (Santiago: Impresora Filadelfia, 1976), 45; Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 121.

<sup>63</sup> Mark Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet: Recovering the Truth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 56.

After the 1973 coup d'état, Contreras transformed his experiment into the National Intelligence Directorate (Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional or DINA) which bore much of the responsibility for the nearly three thousand Chileans disappeared or murdered by the Pinochet regime and the tens of thousands more who suffered torture inflicted by government agents.<sup>64</sup> Contreras was the primary architect of state-directed repression in Chile. He also became the second most powerful man in the country.

The DINA was not the only intelligence organization employed by the dictatorship, but it was by far the most powerful. It also existed as a parallel organization. Decree Law 521, of 18 June 1974, officially established the DINA as an independent, autonomous agency. Prior to that date, the DINA operated as a department under the nominal control of the national Prisoners Service (SENDET). Both arrangements placed the DINA outside the normal military structure. The decree law also granted DINA operatives unlimited powers of search and seizures and subordinated all other intelligence services to it. As its power grew, so too did the size of the organization. Some 600 full-time military agents and civilian contract employees comprised the DINA at the time of its official inception in mid-1974. At its zenith in 1977 the organization had ballooned to 9,300 agents and a network of informants numbering in the tens of thousands.<sup>65</sup>

The DINA also enjoyed almost unlimited authority. “[N]o judge in any court or any minister in the government is going to question the matter any further,” a senior Chilean officer explained after the coup, “if DINA says that they are now handling the matter.” The same source confided to his American contact that there are three sources of

---

<sup>64</sup> Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation (also known as the Rettig Report), United States Institute of Peace, posted 4 October 2002, accessed 3 July 2016 online at: [http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/collections/truth\\_commissions/Chile90-Report/Chile90-Report.pdf](http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/collections/truth_commissions/Chile90-Report/Chile90-Report.pdf) 52, 1122; Margarita Palacios, “A Psychosocial Interpretation of Political Violence: Chile 1970–1973” *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* vol. 16, no. 3, (4 Sep 2011), 245.

<sup>65</sup> Dinges, *Assassination*, 132.

power in Chile: “Pinochet, God and DINA.”<sup>66</sup> Later researchers have confirmed this appraisal. “Contreras reported to no one but Pinochet, the sole consumer of DINA’s intelligence reports. No one but Pinochet could give an order to Colonel Contreras, who, though he commanded no divisions, possessed more power than any other Chilean general.”<sup>67</sup>

Chile is a much different country than Brazil and the structure of its repressive apparatus reflected those differences. Because Chile lacked multiple large metropolitan areas and a vast national territory, it did not develop a network of regional intelligence organizations, as was the case in Brazil. Instead, Contreras organized the DINA to operate throughout the national territory and beyond. The DINA consisted of the Interior, Exterior and Logistics Sections. All of the operational “warfighting” elements of the DINA belonged in its Interior or Exterior Sections.

The Interior Section was “responsible for combating real or perceived internal subversion” within Chile, according to a declassified American intelligence report detailing the organization. Contreras further subdivided the Interior Section into a series of “brigades” with specific geographic or functional responsibilities. The Metropolitan Brigade operated solely within Santiago. The Interior Brigade consisted of “mobile units that deploy from Santiago to outlying areas.” The National Brigade was comprised of “military and civilian” operatives “who usually work outside of Santiago.”<sup>68</sup> Each of these brigades contained five to eight man actions teams, which conducted patrols and surveillance, made arrests, abducted subversives, applied torture and disposed of bodies.

---

<sup>66</sup> DOD, “DINA, its Operations and Power,” dated 8 February 1974, Department of State, Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, online database (hereafter cited as DOS FOIA).

<sup>67</sup> Dinges, *Assassination*, 166.

<sup>68</sup> DOD, “Organizational Diagram of the Directorate of National Intelligence DINA,” dated 17 June 1975, DOS FOIA,



The Citizen's Brigade, on the other hand, was unique to Chile. It consisted of civilians who "usually act as informers."<sup>69</sup>

The creation of the DINA enabled the post-1973 dictatorship to apply counter terror, the fourth element of French counter revolutionary warfare, through disappearances and executions. Counter terror served as the means to instill fear throughout society in order to force the population into obedience and intimidate it away from supporting the Marxists. The Interior Brigades provided the DINA with its ability to collect intelligence. Its action teams gathered information through the systematic torture of subversives and their supporters, while the Citizen's Brigade's network of informants or *soplones* (whisperers), numbering up to 20,000 to 30,000 persons, kept watch over society.<sup>70</sup> This elaborate system of surveillance was a uniquely Chilean innovation among the counterrevolutionary regimes of the Southern Cone. "With a networks of spies and informants in factories, universities, political parties, and social organizations, the DINA sowed mistrust among colleagues, neighbors, and friends," Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela judge. "The secret police tentacles also wound through the government itself; dossiers were gathered on employees and telephones were tapped."<sup>71</sup> Together, the agents of torture and disappearance and the network of *soplones* instilled fear not only in Chilean society at large, but also within the regime itself.

The Exterior Brigade, part of the Exterior Section, was also a Chilean invention. It included the "operatives who conduct traditional intelligence operations in foreign countries." But it also did more. The Exterior Brigade provided Contreras with the ability

---

<sup>69</sup> Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 75; DOD, "Organizational Diagram of the DINA."

<sup>70</sup> Dinges, *Assassination*, 134.

<sup>71</sup> Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 101.

to strike his enemies outside Chile - what he termed an “extraterritorial capability.”<sup>72</sup> Contreras later expanded this capability into a regional cooperative arrangement with other military regimes in South America. National intelligence organizations appraised each other of wanted militants hiding in exile, local security forces then apprehended and disappeared the fugitives with the understanding that the security forces of the requesting country would return the favor. Contreras called the scheme Operation Condor.<sup>73</sup>

Whom the Chilean Generals and the DINA targeted as their “Marxist enemies” differed from the Brazilian model and greatly impacted the human cost of Chile’s “dirty war.” “The Brazilian death toll from government torture, assassination, and ‘disappearance’ for 1964-81,” Thomas Skidmore explains, “was, by the most authoritative account 333, which included 67 killed in the Araguaia guerrilla front in 1972-74.”<sup>74</sup> The fact that the Brazilian military primarily targeted just the armed guerrillas for execution helps explain the low incidence of deaths. Although the Brazilian regime tortured thousands of guerrilla supporters and sympathizers, it did not murder them, even during the brutal Araguaia guerrilla campaign.

In contrast, the Chilean generals greatly expanded the scope of the “enemies” they faced. They took Roger Trinquier’s 1964 maxim literally. “Any individual who, in any fashion whatsoever, favors the objectives of the enemy” Trinquier argued, “will be considered a traitor and treated as such.”<sup>75</sup> Pinochet’s regime targeted the Movement of the Revolutionary Left and other armed groups, but its view of its “Marxist enemy” was much broader and encompassed more of society than just the armed guerrillas and

---

<sup>72</sup> DOD, “Organizational Diagram of the DINA”; Dinges, *Assassination*, 138.

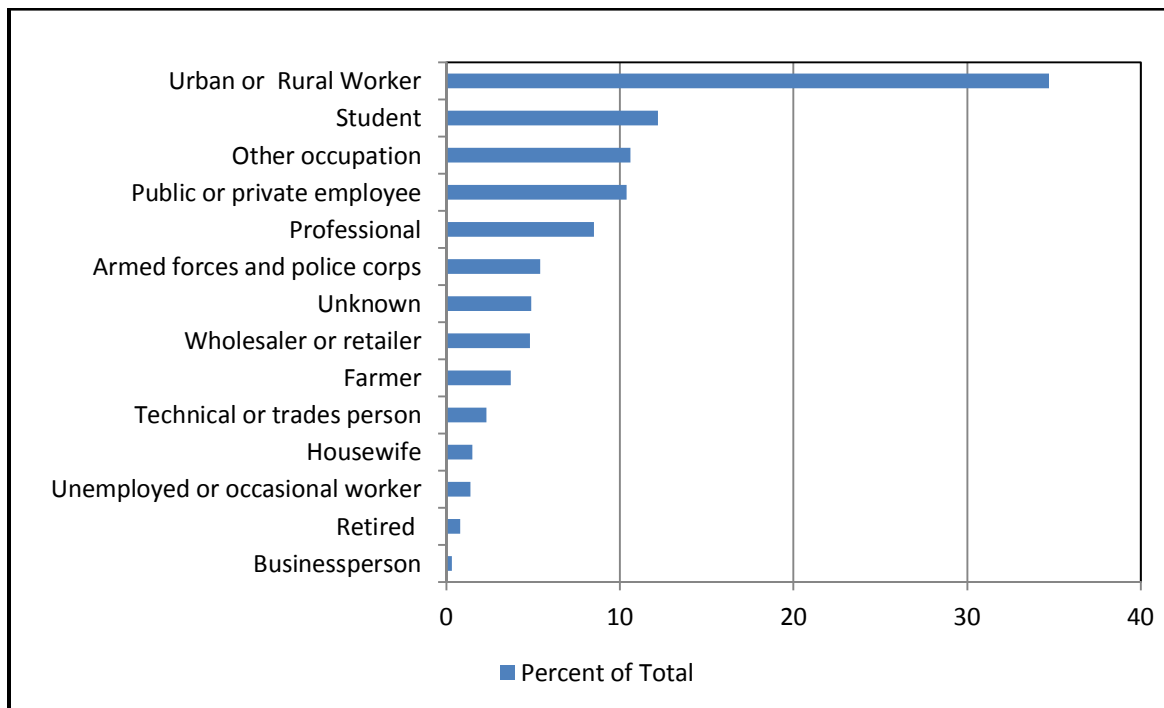
<sup>73</sup> See for example, Patrice J. McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2005).

<sup>74</sup> Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil*, 269.

<sup>75</sup> Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: a French view of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 28.

paramilitaries. Pinochet’s government also tortured and murdered former members of Allende’s government, Socialist and Communist party members, labor leaders and many others. However, the working class, which made up the backbone of the Popular Unity’s electoral base, bore the brunt of the regime’s repression (see Table 9.2).<sup>76</sup>

Table 9.2: Victims of Human Rights Abuses and Political Violence in Chile by Occupation, 1973-1990.



The Pinochet dictatorship’s widespread use of torture, disappearances and executions in the aftermath of the coup d’état generated a growing human rights outcry. The regime killed more than 1,500 persons in 1973 while detaining and torturing tens of thousands more.<sup>77</sup> Although the ability of groups within Chile to challenge the regime

<sup>76</sup> Data adapted from Carlos Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*, trans. Lake Sagaris (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 6-7.

<sup>77</sup> See *Ibid.*, 5; and the Rettig Report.

remained limited during the 1970s and beyond, domestic human rights groups did succeed in shining an international spotlight on the abuses of the Pinochet government. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued one of the first reports condemning the regime for its gross violations of human rights in early 1974. The United Nations Human Rights Commission also took up the issue of Chile, garnering General Assembly resolutions accusing the country of the use of torture and other serious human rights abuses in December 1975 and again two years later.<sup>78</sup> “The UN,” one author notes, “helped keep Chile in the international spotlight for the duration of the military regime.”<sup>79</sup>

The denunciations embarrassed the Chilean government, but they also created real foreign policy problems for the regime. In 1974, the U.S. Congress banned military aid to Chile due to its poor human rights record. “A number of high-ranking [Chilean] Army officers,” analysts of CIA reported in January 1975, “agree that DINA’s methods of operation have done a great deal to tarnish Chile’s international image.”<sup>80</sup>

The activities of DINA’s Exterior Brigade soon made matters even worse. DINA agents assassinated former Chilean army commander Carlos Prats and his wife in Buenos Aires in October 1974. Prats had become a vocal critic of the military regime and some feared he might be planning a counter-coup. One year later the DINA used its “extraterritorial capability” again. Italian agents working for the DINA shot and killed Bernardo Leighton and his wife in Rome. What was Leighton’s crime? He had served as interior minister under the government of Eduardo Frei. As the DINA continued to

---

<sup>78</sup> Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 128, 166.

<sup>79</sup> Thomas C. Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and International Human Rights* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 75.

<sup>80</sup> CIA, “Efforts to Rein in DINA,” dated 31 January 1975, DOS FOIA, 1-2.

expand its definition of “enemies” of the regime, it worsened the Pinochet government’s international standing. In September 1976, DINA agent Michael Townley set a car bomb in Washington, D.C. that killed Allende’s former defense minister Orlando Letelier. His American co-worker was also in the car and later died from her wounds. The attack shocked Washington and as the investigation unfolded the clues pointed directly to the DINA. In response, the U.S. Congress passed additional legislation in mid-1976 ending all arms sales to Chile.<sup>81</sup>

Pinochet sacrificed Contreras and the DINA to assuage his critics within the government and abroad in July 1977. He replaced the DINA with an organization responsible for many of the same functions and initially retained Contreras as its director. However, Pinochet forced Contreras to resign in November formally signaling the demise of his former protégé. Executions and disappearances dropped with the demise of the DINA, but the repression continued for many more years.<sup>82</sup>

After gaining control of the internal security situation through brutal measures, Pinochet’s government sought out an economic policy that also conformed to its goals for the nation. The policies Pinochet adopted followed the tenets of the National Security Doctrine in that they avoided consensus and bypassed the political process. However, Chile’s economic program differed dramatically in terms of its objectives from the program pursued by the Brazilian generals. Officers in Brazil sought to continue the country’s economic modernization through the pursuit of industrialization, state control of the economy and the use of state-owned enterprises. Pinochet incorporated a team of U.S-trained Chilean economists to advise him on how to revive the economy and reverse

---

<sup>81</sup> Spooner, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land*, 122, 125; Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 103.

<sup>82</sup> Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*, 5.

the damages wrought by Allende's "road to socialism." Because those economists had studied at the University of Chicago, Chileans soon dubbed them the "Chicago Boys."

The economic plan devised and implemented by the Chicago Boys proved nearly as brutal as the political repression unleashed by the security forces. It also targeted Allende's former base of support – the working class. "Convinced that 50 years of erroneous policies and their results needed to be corrected rapidly, [the Chicago Boys] were unconcerned that their [neoliberal reforms] would lead to the collapse of many industries and a massive increase in unemployment," Marcus Taylor argues. "Provoking a recession, they believed, was a necessary evil in order to obliterate industries that were inefficient and relied upon state interventions in order to survive." The Chicago Boys' approach was the opposite of the Brazilian Generals' state-directed industrialization plan. It also stood as a complete repudiation of Allende's socialist economic program. The result was a "process of rapid de-industrialization" that devastated the manufacturing sector among other areas of the economy. Productivity of the manufacturing sector, one author notes, "did not recover to its 1972 level until 1987."<sup>83</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Chile avoided the revolutionary struggles and strife that engulfed most of its South American neighbors during the 1960s. The Cuban Revolution inspired Chilean students, just as it had student radicals in other regional countries, but Chile was not fertile ground for guerrilla movements. The country's geography made rural insurgency difficult. Moreover, the lack of despotic governments or severe social strife left the militants bereft of issues to rail against in order to gather supporters. Chile did, however,

---

<sup>83</sup> Marcus Taylor, "From National Development to "Growth with Equity:" Nation-building in Chile, 1950-2000" *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 1, (2006), 77.

experience an ongoing shift to the left in its national politics during the decade. The country's traditional Leftist parties appeared to make steady progress along the electoral path to power. At the same time, the success of those legal Socialist and Communist parties in the country's political process helped diminish the appeal of guerrilla revolutionary movements.

U. S. military officers found little acceptance for American counterinsurgency doctrine among their Chilean counterparts throughout the 1960s. Because Chilean officers faced no insurgencies, and prided themselves on being apolitical, they saw no need to adopt or import any internal security or internal economic development models.

Chilean military and political leaders also exerted a high degree of control over what military assistance they accepted from the United States. Despite the pervasive view of American hegemony and dominance, the United States was not able to dictate that Chile adopt American counterinsurgency doctrine. Instead the country sent few students to U.S. internal security courses and accepted only two Special Action Force mobile training teams related to counterinsurgency – neither of which taught tactics and doctrine. Only in the months preceding the 1964 presidential elections did Chilean officials seek out American internal security assistance. Those same officials placed tight controls on the support they accepted and strictly limited it to riot control and civil disturbance training, not counterinsurgency. The increased internal security interaction with the United States was a one-time event. Chilean authorities requested no American assistance for the 1970 elections.

Salvador Allende's election to the presidency of Chile in 1970 was a watershed for the country. Allende quickly embarked the country on his "Chilean road to socialism" with disastrous results. The economy crashed, social tensions grew and the military

became increasingly anxious. Allende's election and his socialist agenda drew the ire of the United States. Although the Chilean President did not order the cessation of military relations with the Americans, he did not look to Washington for internal security advice. Instead, Allende turned to Havana. The new president reestablished diplomatic relations with the island just nine days after taking office. The first Cuban advisors arrived not long after and helped form and train Allende's personal bodyguard. The Cubans also smuggled arms to Chile and provided weapons and training to Leftists guerrilla groups. At the same time, Allende courted the military and drew them into internal security and economic development, eroding their formerly apolitical stance.

By 1973, the country tottered on the brink of an economic collapse and civil war. In September the Chilean armed forces broke the bonds of four decades of adherence to the constitution and ousted Allende in a bloody assault on the presidential palace. In the aftermath of the coup, the Chilean generals lacked long-term plans for their government. But they did not look to the United States for internal security advice or assistance. Instead they looked to the Brazilians. Army General Augusto Pinochet soon gained undisputed control of the military junta. He then adopted the tenets of the National Security Doctrine: a long-term military dictatorship to reorganize Chilean society while fighting an internal war against Marxism. His government also employed many of the same French counter revolutionary war tactics Brazil had used since 1964, but Chileans adapted them to fit their national circumstances.

Pinochet embarked the nation on an internal war to cleanse it of the "Marxist cancer" of the Allende years. His regime followed many of the repressive precedents set by the Brazilians since 1964, but his subordinate Colonel Manuel Contreras also added several Chilean innovations. Rather than establishing multiple regional intelligence



organizations – as in Brazil, Contreras designed the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) as a single centralized entity to conduct torture, disappearances and executions throughout Chile. Contreras also added two new capabilities: a network of informants to gather intelligence and sow fear and an external section to strike his enemies abroad. The assassination of political foes in Buenos Aires, Rome and Washington by DINA operatives, or by local agents at the request of Contreras, worsened the international human rights backlash against the Pinochet regime.

At home in Chile, Pinochet and Contreras also adopted a much broader view than the Brazilians as to who their enemies were. They targeted armed leftists groups and Socialist and Communist party members, but they also focused much of their wrath on Chilean workers. Pinochet later adopted a neoliberal economic program that also punished the working class and industry. In expanding the scope of their “enemies” and using the economy as a weapon, the Pinochet regime set a brutal new precedent for the dirty war, one that their Argentine counterparts soon adopted with even more malevolent results.

## Chapter Ten: Counter Revolutions in Argentina

Argentina suffered one of the worst periods of political and economic instability in its history during the post-World War Two era. Political violence and economic downturns led the military to overthrow what it deemed to be ineffective governments in 1943, 1955, 1962, 1966 and 1976. A staggering thirteen presidents governed the country between 1960 and the return to democracy in 1983.<sup>1</sup> However, this turmoil was not the result of the National Security Doctrine. Instead, the military regimes of 1966 and 1976 imposed their versions of the NSD in an effort to control the effects of Peronism and remedy the nation's political and economic ills.

The country also faced multiple rural insurgency attempts during the 1960s. The first *foco*, inspired by the 1959 Cuban Revolution, began late that same year in Tucumán Province. It quickly foundered, but others followed. All of the guerrilla *focos* lacked local support and once detected, the security forces easily defeated them. Urban insurgency, on the other hand, proved both more enduring and more violent. Argentina's urban guerrilla era began in the aftermath of the *cordobazo*, a spontaneous uprising in the city of Córdoba in 1969. Argentine security forces eventually defeated the urban guerrillas after several years of internal strife and violence, but the methods they used imposed a horrific cost on Argentine society.

Latin American agency once again demonstrated considerable power. Argentina resisted American efforts to establish a regional military alliance during the early 1950s. The country only relented and signed a formal military assistance agreement with

---

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Chudnovsky and Andrés López, *The Elusive Quest for Growth in Argentina* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 24; David Rock, *Argentina 1516-1982, From Spanish Colonization to the Falklands War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 333, 383.

Washington in 1964 – more than a decade after most of its South American neighbors. When the Argentines did sign, they did so for their own reasons. In a time of severe economic constraints during the mid-1960s, political and military leaders in Buenos Aires parlayed Washington’s Cold War fears into a successful effort to have the American government fund much of their military modernization efforts. Argentina accepted conventional American military equipment and training, but the nation’s generals had little interest in U.S. internal security doctrine.

While Cuba’s revolution inspired Southern Cone Leftists, the Brazilian army’s “success” at achieving internal stability and the country’s “economic miracle” captured the attention of Argentine military officers. General Juan Carlos Onganía seized power in Buenos Aires in 1966. He sought to implement an “Argentine Revolution” modeled on the Brazilian Revolution of 1964. Onganía’s internal restructuring program faltered in the aftermath of the 1969 *cordobazo*. Other Argentine generals toppled him in an internal military coup d’état in 1970. They too proved unable to impose stability and eventually relinquished authority to civilian politicians once again, allowing new elections in 1973.

Those elections led to the return of Juan Perón, who had been living in exile since his ouster by the military in 1955. The seventy-eight year old former dictator assumed the presidency and negotiated a social pact that brought calm to the nation. Stability proved fleeting. Perón died in July 1974 and the social compact crumbled. By 1975 violence again wracked the country as armed groups on the Left and Right terrorized one another through bombings and assassinations. The Argentine Army seized power once more in 1976 and unleashed the most brutal military regime in the Southern Cone.

As was the case in Brazil and Chile, American counterinsurgency doctrine held little appeal in Argentina. The nation confronted urban unrest, and later urban terrorism,

during the 1960s and 1970s. Generals in Buenos Aires perceived the return of Peronism as the most immediate threat to their country and their institutions, not rural insurgency. Consequently, Argentina sent few students to American internal security courses. For example, Argentina sent just seven students to the School of the Americas counterinsurgency courses between 1961 and 1964. During the same time period Peru boasted seventy-one graduates while Venezuela counted seventy-nine.

Argentina also shunned most Special Action Force mobile training teams related to counterinsurgency. Between 1962 and 1973, Argentina received a total of twenty-nine MTT visits from the Canal Zone-based Green Berets. Four of those missions related to counterinsurgency, but only one taught tactics. Eighty-six percent of the Special Action Force mobile training teams that Argentina accepted related to civic action and conventional military skills, not internal security. Moreover, Buenos Aires did not request military assistance from Washington when facing internal unrest. Why did Argentine military leaders reject American counterinsurgency training if it was readily available and funded by the United States?

Generals in Argentina, like their Brazilian and Chilean counterparts, replaced their elected democracies with dictatorships implementing nation-specific versions of the National Security Doctrine. These countries did not receive those doctrines from the United States; instead they crafted their own concepts. Argentina received an infusion of counter revolutionary warfare theories directly from French veterans of Indochina and Algeria. Paris dispatched several army officers to serve in a military advisory mission, established in Buenos Aires in 1957. Those same French officers taught internal security courses in the Argentine Army's Escuela Superior de Guerra (ESG) and helped draft

Argentine Army field manuals related to internal security in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Argentina's path to the "dirty war" took place over the course of two military dictatorships. Those regimes represent a continuation and evolution of the National Security Doctrine in Argentina. The 1966 and 1976 dictatorships both restricted political competition and civilian participation in government. Both also pursued a technocratic plan of national development managed by military officers. Neither pursued winning the hearts and minds of the population. General Onganía's 1966 "Argentine Revolution" sought to pre-empt the outbreak of a subversive war by legislating morality and ending the country's bitter political competition. That effort failed. However, it did have important implications for the next succeeding and last dictatorship.

By the mid-1970s, unrest in Argentina verged on an outright civil war. Residents of Buenos Aires endured assassinations and bombings on a daily, even hourly basis.<sup>2</sup> Army General Jorge Rafael Videla seized power in 1976 and unleashed a brutal internal war on his country to reestablish order. The failure of the legalistic approach of the 1966 regime helped convince Videla and his generals to adopt extra-constitutional and illegal measures. Videla's regime undertook the widespread use of torture, disappearance and murder to eliminate their enemies and intentionally created a climate of fear to terrorize the population into obedience. It also attempted to conceal its repressive enterprise to avoid the human rights backlash that the military regimes in Brazil and Chile had faced.

Why was the dirty war in Argentina several times more deadly than in Brazil and Chile? Like their neighbors, generals in Buenos Aires responded to the threat of revolution with home-grown National Security Doctrines and French counter

---

<sup>2</sup> Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 110.

revolutionary tactics. The tactics and doctrine the Argentine Army used were similar, but its leaders greatly expanded the number of “enemies” they chose to attack. Beyond the armed guerrillas, Argentina’s generals also fought religious, economic and cultural adversaries in an effort to achieve an enduring victory in their three decade long battle against Peronism.

### **THE ORIGINS OF COUNTER REVOLUTIONARY DOCTRINE IN ARGENTINA**

Nature endowed Argentina with a wealth of natural resources; among the most important are its fertile Pampas which have long shaped its economy. Before the 1930s, the nation’s economy was still primarily agricultural and driven by export-led growth.<sup>3</sup> The country first sought to manufacture previously imported simple consumer goods and agricultural tools in the 1930s as a response to the disruption of imports during World War One and the Great Depression.<sup>4</sup> Like other Latin American nations it implemented elements of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI), a nationalistic economic policy that seeks to replace dependence on imported goods with the ability to manufacture such products domestically. However, like its neighbors, Argentina also learned that pursuing ISI becomes increasingly more problematic in its latter stages. The increased costs of implementing these policies usually forces a corresponding reduction in expenditures directed toward the popular sector and social spending, which often results in social unrest and economic turmoil.

Argentina’s industrialization gained momentum in the late 1940s and 1950s. The military administration that took power in June of 1943 encouraged the development of

---

<sup>3</sup> Chudnovsky, *The Elusive Quest*, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Simón Teitel and Francisco E. Thoumi, “From Import Substitution to Exports: The Manufacturing Exports Experience of Argentina and Brazil” *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vol. 34, no. 3, (Apr. 1986), 456; Chudnovsky, *The Elusive Quest*, 4.

the manufacturing sector of the economy for the first time, whereas previous governments – usually led by agricultural elites – sought to prevent it.<sup>5</sup> However, it was not until the presidency of Juan Perón (1946-1955) that state-directed industrialization became government policy.

Perón also changed the rules of the political game and exacerbated social conflict. He crafted a powerful coalition of working-class labor, the bureaucratic middle-class (the military and government employees) and industrial elites. He then set his new coalition in direct opposition to the country's traditional agricultural elites. Perón's vision for the nation rested on two pillars: industrialization (to create jobs - and thus more supporters) and the redistribution of agricultural export earnings (to fund industrialization while increasing wages and lowering prices for his followers).

Perón presided over dramatic changes in the composition of Argentina's economy and its productive sectors. Labor unions surged in membership as the National Labor Confederation (Confederación General del Trabajo - CGT) grew from 520,000 in 1945 to almost 2.3 million in 1954. Perón also greatly expanded the public sector. The Army grew from 30,000 in 1943 to 100,000 by 1945. Public sector civilian employment also expanded from 243,000 in 1943 to 541,000 by 1955 – in part due to an effort to mask growing unemployment. By 1955, Perón's policies had generated an economic crisis, and in September the military removed him from power.<sup>6</sup>

Juan Perón's nearly decade-long tenure as president made an enduring impact on Argentine politics, society and economy. First, he implemented state-direction of the economy. Second, he led a political mobilization of the working class and a polarization

---

<sup>5</sup> Gary W. Wymia, *Argentina in the Postwar Era: Politics and Economic Policy Making in a Divided Society* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), 31.

<sup>6</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 263, 251, 265-6, 317.

of society into two opposing factions (the agricultural sector and the urban middle-class aligned against the working-class). Lastly, he converted control of the government into a “winner-takes-all” concept whereby whoever won the presidency would no longer share the fruits of the economy equitably. Instead, political groups expected the chief executive to distribute those gains as “rents” or spoils to political supporters and favored sectors.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the new system encouraged the opposition to undermine government policies and force them from office in order to gain another turn at controlling the rents. For his supporters, Perón became an almost mythical savior. After his fall, they longed for his return to power. Many military officers, on the other hand, saw him as a dangerous demagogue and a threat to the social order.

Instability stalked Argentina after Perón’s ouster in 1955. No president equaled his almost ten years in office until the election of Carlos Menem in 1989. Instead, Argentina suffered a series of military governments and interrupted civilian presidencies. An interim military government led by General Pedro Eugenio Aramburu followed Perón. In the first of many attempts to break the power of Peronism, Aramburu dissolved the Peronist party and imposed government control of the CGT labor federation.<sup>8</sup> On the economic front, Aramburu de-emphasized industrialization and shifted economic policy back in favor of agricultural exports, redistributing income from consumers to the rural sector dominated by elite landowners. After some initial success, the economy turned downward again and Aramburu had to schedule new presidential elections.<sup>9</sup>

Arturo Frondizi won the presidency in 1958 – without the participation of the Peronist party. Frondizi shifted the country back onto a developmentalist track, but he

---

<sup>7</sup> Wynia, *Argentina in the Postwar Era*, 10, 80.

<sup>8</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 334.

<sup>9</sup> Wynia, *Argentina in the Postwar Era*, 147-9; Rock, *Argentina*, 336-7.



also implemented a “deepening” of ISI funded by public and foreign investment.<sup>10</sup> His economic policies had a dramatic effect: real income of industrial workers dropped 25.8 percent in 1959 while real income from beef production rose by 97 percent. Nevertheless, Frondizi’s administration also generated a political and economic crisis, and the military ousted him from office in March 1962.<sup>11</sup>

The military government that followed Frondizi held power only until new elections in July 1963. Again the military banned Peronist party participation. Arturo Illia, a small town country doctor, won the election, but he garnered only twenty-five percent of the votes cast. During his tenure, Dr. Illia sought to break the country’s cycles of instability through greater political inclusion and an attempt to forge a working relationship with labor and the Peronists. However, his economic policies led to spiraling inflation. Agriculturalists, industrialists and organized labor united in opposition to the Illia government as the economy worsened in early 1966. President Illia’s policies of inclusion and compromise ultimately failed.<sup>12</sup> The military regime that replaced him instead chose to rely on exclusion and forced compliance. Army General Juan Carlos Onganía seized power in 1966. He then set about implementing an Argentine version of the National Security Doctrine.

Meanwhile, Washington had little common ground to form a military alliance with Buenos Aires in the 1960s. The two countries endured problematic relations throughout much the Twentieth Century and World War Two was no exception. The Argentine military’s pro-German sympathies caused some American policymakers to

---

<sup>10</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 337; Chudnovsky, *The Elusive Quest*, 35.

<sup>11</sup> Wynia, *Argentina in the Postwar Era*, 99; Rock, *Argentina*, 342.

<sup>12</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 345-6; *The Review of the River Plate*, January 22, 1965, 70.

view the nation as a potential adversary, rather than a potential ally.<sup>13</sup> Argentina's political leaders did eventually join the Allies, but only in the waning days of the war when it was certain that the Axis powers faced defeat. Unlike other regional countries, the United States and Argentina had no wartime alliance on which to base their military relations in the Cold War era.

The United States began forging a regional military alliance in the early 1950s as a bulwark against possible encroachment into the Western Hemisphere by the Soviet Union. Argentina resisted those efforts. Ecuador, Chile, Colombia, and Peru signed Mutual Defense Assistance Agreements (MDAAs) with the United States in 1952. Brazil and Uruguay followed in 1953. Bolivia tarried and did not sign an accord until 1958. Yet Argentina held out. Buenos Aires again refused to follow Washington's lead, and declined to sign an MDAA during the 1950s. Because of the lack of an agreement, the country did not receive a U.S. Army mission until 1960. Buenos Aires finally relented and signed a formal military assistance agreement with Washington in 1964 – more than a decade after most other South American nations.<sup>14</sup>

In the interim, Buenos Aires looked to France for military advice. In 1956, the military government of President Aramburu sought to form a relationship with the French armed forces. Paris agreed. In response, the French Army dispatched three colonels to Buenos Aires in 1957 to serve as military advisors. Those officers, all veterans of

---

<sup>13</sup> Edwin Lieuwen, *U.S. Policy in Latin America: a Short History* (New York: Praeger, 1965), 78.

<sup>14</sup> James C. Haahr, "Military Assistance to Latin America" *Military Review*, May 1969, 14. The United States Navy and U.S. Air Force operated advisory missions in Argentina prior to 1960, but the U.S. Army did not. See Department of Defense, "Military Assistance Plan: Argentina" dated 15 July 1963 (hereafter cited as MAP Argentina1963), United States Army Heritage and Education Center (hereafter cited as USAHEC), Narrative C, 1. "On 10 May 1964 the U.S. and Argentine governments signed a military assistance agreement culminating negotiations that been underway for more than a year," United States Southern Command, "Historical Report Calendar Year 1964," n.d., (hereafter USSOUTHCOM CY64), U.S. Army Center of Military History (hereafter cited as CMH), VIII-7. See also John Child, *Unequal Alliance: the Inter-American Military System, 1938-1978* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), 122-123.

Indochina and Algeria, provided a direct link to the French Army's experiences in counter revolutionary warfare. The French colonels also taught courses at the Argentine Army's War College (Escuela Superior de Guerra). In another sign of the burgeoning bilateral military relationship, Buenos Aires sent sixty senior officers to attend the French Army's Ecole Supérieure de Guerre (Superior War College) in Paris in 1958. The Argentine students also visited Algeria, just one year after the "Battle of Algiers."<sup>15</sup> However, attending the French Army's Superior War College was not new. "Argentina traditionally sent its Army staff officers for education abroad," Argentine historian Diego Llumá explains. "The selection was made according to an order of merit list for each promotion group: the first place officers travelled to France, the second tier went to Spain, the third to Germany, and the fourth group visited the United States."<sup>16</sup>

Although military officers in Argentina had the same access to French works on revolutionary war as did their Brazilian and Chilean counterparts, they also absorbed the writings of their French advisors in Buenos Aires. French Lieutenant Colonel Patricio de Naurois published the article "Guerra Subversiva y Guerra Revolucionaria" in the October-December 1958 edition of the *Revista de la Escuela Superior de Guerra*. de Naurois' countryman, Lieutenant Colonel Henri Grand d'Esnon delivered a lecture on "Guerra Subversiva" at the Argentine Army's Escuela Superior de Guerra in May 1960. He later published a copy of his remarks, also in the school's magazine or *revista*.

---

<sup>15</sup> Diego Llumá, "Los Maestros de la Tortura," *Todo es Historia*, no. 442, 6-8; Eric Steiner Carlson, "The Influence of French 'Revolutionary War' Ideology on the use of Torture in Argentina's 'Dirty War'" *Human Rights Review*, July-September 2000, 76; David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, its History and its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 196. For the number of Argentine students visiting France and Algeria see Llumá, "Los Maestros de la Tortura," 8 and Alex A. Taylor del Cid, "Purging the Bad Blood: Argentina's Long March Towards the 'Dirty War, 1930-1985'" (unpublished dissertation, University of Calgary, 2005), 292 note 60. Llumá claims 120 students travelled to Paris and Algeria while Taylor del Cid cites the number as 60. I have chosen to use the lower figure.

<sup>16</sup> Llumá, "Los Maestros de la Tortura," 1.

Argentine authors soon took up the pen themselves and added their views about subversive war in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Argentine Army Lieutenant Colonel Manrique Miguel Mom authored the article “Guerra Revolucionaria: El Conflicto Mundial en Desarrollo” in 1958, while Argentine Colonel Osiris J. Villegas wrote *Guerra Revolucionario Comunista* in 1962 and Jordan Genta penned *Guerra Contrarevolucionario* in 1963.<sup>17</sup>

Yet the French advisors and their Argentine acolytes did more than just write about counter revolutionary war, they also worked to disseminate their theories beyond Argentina. French and Argentine army officers hosted the first “Inter-American Course on Counter Revolutionary War” in Buenos Aires in October 1961. One hundred and thirty-three officials and officers from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and Argentina” participated in the course, according to the official history of the Escuela Superior de Guerra, which hosted the event.<sup>18</sup>

Afterwards, the French Ambassador to Argentina sent a message to his superiors in Paris informing them of the course and lauding his officers. “The role of the French advisers in the conception and preparation this course has been determinant [i.e. decisive],” Ambassador De Blanquet du Chayla wrote. There was more. He also informed the Foreign Ministry that the Americans were “jealous of the French advisors’

---

<sup>17</sup> See Carlson, “The Influence of French ‘Revolutionary War’ Ideology,” passim. See also Worldcat database.

<sup>18</sup> José Luis Picciuolo, *Historia de la Escuela Superior de Guerra* (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar República Argentina, 2000), 203. Diego Llumá also includes Americans as students at the event although United States’ participation is not mentioned the *Historia de la Escuela Superior de Guerra*. See Diego Llumá, “Los Maestros de la Tortura,” 10.

influence with the Argentine Army staff and in the Escuela Superior de Guerra in Buenos Aires.”<sup>19</sup>

This direct French interaction with the Argentine Army in the late 1950s and early 1960s strongly shaped Argentine officers’ views. French officers helped draft Argentine Army doctrine in field manuals such as “Operations Against Irregular Forces” and their concepts influenced national policy like Plan CONINTES (Plan for Civil Insurrection Against the State) during the late 1950s.<sup>20</sup> The French advisors also helped design several Argentine Army counter revolutionary war exercises beginning in 1959.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, like their Brazilian army counterparts, the Argentine Army had developed its own counter revolutionary doctrine and was conducting its own internal security exercises before the United States Army began formally teaching counter guerrilla (and later counterinsurgency) courses in 1961. “For three years the French military advisers prepared the pillars of the doctrine of the dirty war,” Diego Llumá argues, “and ideologically formed some officers who would become generals in the decade of the seventies.”<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, the French Ambassador was correct. The United States’ military influence was minimal at best.

Argentina faced its first rural *foco* at the end of the 1950s. Inspired by the recent Cuban Revolution, young revolutionaries took to the hills in Tucumán and Salta Provinces in the country’s remote northwest in October 1959. Argentines knew them as the “Uturuncos” or Tiger-men, because their leader chose that Quechua word (meaning *tigre*) as his guerrilla nom d’guerre. The would-be revolutionaries successfully attacked a

---

<sup>19</sup> Diego Llumá, “Los Maestros de la Tortura,” 10.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.; Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, 196.

<sup>21</sup> Taylor del Cid, “Purging the Bad Blood,” 269-270; Ernesto López, *Seguridad Nacional y Sedición Militar* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1987), 158.

<sup>22</sup> Llumá, “Los Maestros de la Tortura,” 7.

remote police station, seizing weapons and uniforms, but the project foundered soon after. Despite their ferocious sounding title, the hardships of the guerrilla life proved too much for the Tiger-men, most of whom were middle class students. This first rural *foco* collapsed under the pressure of the local security forces and the arrival of the rainy season. The guerrilla force was too small and too fleeting to require the deployment of the country's military forces. However, the generals did use the Uturunco threat as a pretext to force civilian President Arturo Frondizi to implement Plan CONINTES in March 1960. Military leaders swiftly used their expanded powers under the plan, but not to respond to rural guerrillas. Instead, they declared emergency zones in urban areas like Buenos Aires, intervened in labor unions, and arrested hundreds of striking workers.<sup>23</sup>

The U.S. Army established its first advisory mission in Buenos Aires during that same year of 1960. It did not take American officers long to recognize the preeminent role of their French counterparts regarding internal security. Consequently, U.S. Army officers in Argentina adopted a position unique in the hemisphere. "The major policy objective of the USARMIS [U.S. Army Mission to Argentina] is to increase Argentina's internal security capabilities by enhancing the effectiveness of its Army in all roles traditionally assigned to a ground military arm," the American officers contended in July 1962. They then proposed a list of conventional military goals. "Achievement of the foregoing objectives," they argued, "will meet the requirements of Internal Security Training."<sup>24</sup> No other U.S. Army mission in South America adopted this indirect approach for meeting its internal security goals. French officers' dominant role in

---

<sup>23</sup> Brown, "Origins of Argentina's Armed Struggle," (unpublished book chapter), 1-4; Martin Edwin Andersen, *Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparecidos and the Myth of the "Dirty War"* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 43.

<sup>24</sup> United States Army Mission (hereafter cited as USARMIS) to Argentina, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 11 July 1962, National Archives II, College Park, MD, Records Group 548, Records of U.S. Army Forces in the Caribbean (hereafter cited as NAAFC), n.pag.

providing internal security training to the Argentine Army meant that the American officers in Buenos Aires were unable to fulfill their duties in that area. U.S. Army officers were under pressure from policy makers in Washington and military authorities in Panama to disseminate counterinsurgency training and doctrine. Argentine authorities rejected that training.

Therefore, the American officers in Buenos Aires developed an indirect approach to solve their dilemma. They argued that making the Argentine Army more effective in its conventional role would also make it capable of dealing with any internal threats. That conceptualization provided them a way to address the pressure from their superiors while recognizing the situation in Argentina in which their internal security training was unwanted.

American officers in Buenos Aires did attempt to impart U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine to their Argentine counterparts, but without much success. The entrenched French advisors were not the only obstacle they faced. Economic and political crises, endemic in Argentina, affected U.S. military assistance and training. Resistance also arose from unexpected sources. Unlike his French counterpart, the American Ambassador in Buenos Aires apparently did not wholeheartedly support the efforts of his military officers. A survey for a counterinsurgency mobile training team mission “will be requested as soon as [the] U.S. Ambassador concurs in its desirability,” American Army officers wrote in 1962. “There has been some difficulty in obtaining full concurrence.”<sup>25</sup> The survey mission did eventually take place, but not until three years later in 1965.

In the meantime, a new rural *foco* opened in Salta Province in 1963. Argentine revolutionary Ernesto “Che” Guevara sponsored the Salta *foco* from his position in Cuba,

---

<sup>25</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 11 July 1962, NAAFC, n.pag.

although he did not lead them in person. Fellow Argentine Jorge Masetti, known as “Comandante Segundo,” directed the revolutionaries while preparing for Guevara’s eventual arrival. Once back in Argentina, Che would presumably become “Comandante Primero” and assume command of the group. By 1962, some 500 Argentines had travelled to Cuba. An unknown number of those visitors received training in techniques of guerrilla warfare from Cuban military personnel, but few of them participated in the 1963 insurgency attempt.<sup>26</sup> Guevara hand-selected five new guerrilla candidates instead. He chose them from among the nearly four hundred of his countrymen in Cuba that he had hosted at his Gran Asado (barbecue) in May 1962. Che directed a cadre of Cuban veterans that had served under his command during the revolution to train his new guerrilla recruits. Masetti himself had earlier received training from Cuban veterans. Ironically, Masetti also received urban guerrilla training in Algeria from National Liberation Front (FLN) revolutionaries.<sup>27</sup> He did so at roughly the same time that French officers in Buenos Aires were instructing their Argentine counterparts in the counter revolutionary tactics they had devised to “defeat” those same FLN urban terrorists during the “Battle of Algiers” in 1957.

Guevara dispatched his guerrilla *foco* on its mission to Argentina in late 1962, just as the missile crisis with United States began to unfold. Unexpectedly, the trip took six months to complete and included an extended layover in newly-independent Algeria. The beleaguered revolutionaries finally made their way to South America in May 1963 and landed in La Paz, Bolivia by way of São Paulo, Brazil. Bolivian Communist Party members helped the men of the new *foco* infiltrate the Argentine frontier and make their

---

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan C. Brown, “To Make the Revolution: Solidarity and Division among Latin American Guerrillas in the 1960s” *Asian Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, (2015), 7; Brown, “Origins,” 19.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-21.



way into Salta Province. Once back on Argentine soil they recruited another thirty would-be guerrillas, many of them students from the University of Buenos Aires. The insurgents named themselves the Ejército Guerrillero del Pueblo (Guerrilla Army of the People – EGP) and worked to establish an urban support network.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, the Salta *foco* did not succeed. In an effort to train the “troops” of his guerrilla army, Comandante Segundo took them on arduous marches in the rugged Andean foothills. The revolutionaries also established several base camps and supply caches during their training. However, local peasants soon reported *barbudos*, bearded men in uniforms, buying supplies to the security forces. Salta’s Rural Police dispatched a small eight-man patrol to investigate. The provincial policemen captured two insurgents who turned out to be guerrilla infiltrators from the Federal Police. Armed with insider knowledge, and joined by additional Rural Police members, the security forces captured several EGP guerrillas, confiscated arms and supplies, and even located the main rebel base. Meanwhile, Masetti and another twenty or so guerrillas managed to evade capture.

Yet the *foco* survivors’ ordeal had just begun. “Over the course of the next month,” one historian notes, “the guerrillas wandered through the *selva* seeking food and refuge and finding little of either. Three died of hunger ... thirteen fell into the hands of police with little or no resistance.” Three others died in firefights with the security forces. The fate of Jorge Masetti and one luckless recruit remain unknown. Presumably they died in the wilderness, but no one has ever found their remains.<sup>29</sup> Once again local security forces succeeded in eliminating an embryonic rural *foco*. Argentine Army units did not deploy for action against the guerrillas.

---

<sup>28</sup> Brown, “Origins,” 21-23, 25.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-8.

Despite these early insurgencies, few Argentine officers availed themselves of the opportunities for American counterinsurgency training in the early 1960s. The French dominance of internal security played a major role, but Argentine officers' pride also had an effect. "The Argentine Army sends NCO students [sergeants] to courses at Fort Gulick," American officers explained. "Since the advisors from the French Army Mission teach internal security at the Escuela Superior de Guerra, officer students do not attend courses in the Canal Zone. This mission encourages officer attendance. However, the Argentine Army prefers to request officer spaces in schools in CONUS [the continental United States]."<sup>30</sup> Just seven Argentine students attended the School of the Americas counterinsurgency course in Panama between 1961 and 1964 – out of an army of over 80,000 men. Meanwhile, nineteen officers received instruction at the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The available records do not detail what courses the Argentine students attended at the center. However, later reports hold a clue. The U.S. Army mission in Buenos Aires sent another four officers to Fort Bragg for training in 1964. All four "will attend the Special Warfare Staff Officers Course," the Americans reported, one of the four will "also attend the Psychological Warfare Officers Course."<sup>31</sup> None took the counterinsurgency course.

Although the Argentine Army had little use for American counterinsurgency training, its officers continued to plan and conduct their own internal security exercises. U.S. Army officers in Buenos Aires were aware of these efforts and remarked on them to their superiors in Panama. U.S. officers did not claim any credit for these activities, but they did describe them using American terminology. "Counterinsurgency exercises were

---

<sup>30</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, "U.S. Army Mission Program Report," dated 14 July 1964, USAHEC, n.pag.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.; United States Central Intelligence Agency (hereafter cited as CIA), "National Intelligence Estimate: Argentina," dated 7 December 1967, Central Intelligence Agency, Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, online database, (hereafter cited as CIA FOIA), 9.

included in the CPXs [Command Post Exercises] held during November [1964],” American Army officers reported. They then included some uniquely Argentine aspects, “[O]nly regular army personnel, including both officers and NCOs [non-commissioned officers] participated. Soldier conscripts are not given counterinsurgency training of any kind.”<sup>32</sup> In the politically charged atmosphere of the mid-1960s, Argentine Army officers did not fully trust their conscript troops.

Military relations between Washington and Buenos Aires improved in 1964 with the signing of a formal military assistance agreement. However, the preponderance of American military assistance focused on conventional military equipment and training rather than internal security. Moreover, the signing of the agreement represented a brief marriage of convenience more than it did a deep commitment by either party. Washington wanted to draw Argentina into its regional anti-communist alliance. For the Argentine military, this desire on the part of the Americans represented a golden opportunity. “During recent months the Government of Argentina has evidenced interest in concluding a Military Assistance Agreement with the United States,” American officers reported in mid-1963. However, the same officers judged that the Argentine initiative was “motivated largely by a desire to obtain on a grant [U.S. funded] or credit basis the equipment needed in the [country’s military modernization] plans.” In other words, for the Argentine generals the agreement was a means to gain American-funded military equipment during a period of “pressing budgetary restrictions.”<sup>33</sup> Argentina’s political leaders also saw the agreement as way to benefit at the expense of the United States. “President [Arturo] Illia,” one historian who later interviewed him writes, “was

---

<sup>32</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” dated 5 January 1965, USAHEC, n.pag.

<sup>33</sup> MAP Argentina 1963.

particularly attracted to [the agreement] because it provided the wherewithal to promote beneficial civic action projects.”<sup>34</sup>

On 10 May 1964, Washington and Buenos Aires signed the agreement. In a show of goodwill on the part of the United States “an impact package was delivered to Argentina within 60 days of the signing of the military assistance agreement,” American officers in Panama explained. “The total value of the package was \$2 million and included items for all three [Argentine military] services.” As part of the package, the U.S. military delivered five armored personnel carriers, ninety trucks and trailers, four boats, five light aircraft, two cargo planes, radios, rocket launchers and recoilless rifles.<sup>35</sup> Yet the honeymoon was short-lived. “Although the expeditious delivery of Grant Aid [U.S. purchased] equipment created a favorable impression among the Argentine Military Forces,” Canal Zone officers reported in 1965, “some dissatisfaction has been shown during the year because of the long lead times for delivery of MAP [Military Assistance Program] material.” Regardless of the grumblings, the United States shipped another thirty armored personnel carriers to Argentina in 1965. The two countries also signed a credit agreement for fifty A-4 fighter jets and extended the loan of two U.S. submarines.<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile, the Special Action Force conducted its first mobile training team mission (MTT) to Argentina in 1964. Three Green Beret teams taught military intelligence and engineer skills and conducted airborne training (military parachuting) with the Argentine Army that year. The country finally received its long awaited

---

<sup>34</sup> Frank Robbins Pancake, “Military Assistance as an Element of United States Foreign Policy in Latin America, 1950-1968” (unpublished dissertation, University of Virginia, 1969), 246.

<sup>35</sup> United States Southern Command, “Historical Report Calendar Year 1964,” n.d., (hereafter cited as USSOUTHCOM CY64), U.S. Army Center of Military History (hereafter cited as CMH), VIII-7.

<sup>36</sup> United States Southern Command, “Historical Report Calendar Year 1965,” 29 April 1966, (hereafter USSOUTHCOM CY65), CMH, XII-7-8.

counterinsurgency survey mission (deferred since 1962) in 1965. Another MTT returned to Argentina and conducted a course on counterinsurgency tactics later that same year. It was the only Special Action Force mission that taught American internal security tactics to the Argentine Army.<sup>37</sup>

Four additional Green Beret instructor teams visited Argentina in 1965. All of them taught conventional military skills. The first three missions focused on artillery maintenance and repair, marksmanship, and engineer training classes. The fourth team provided instruction on the Argentine Army's newly-acquired U.S. equipment. "Captain Charles H. Fry and Master Sergeant Isabelino Vasquez-Rodriguez, both of Company A, 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne), trained Argentine personnel in the operation and maintenance of 90-millimeter recoilless rifles," the *Southern Command News* reported in September 1965. During their six-week mission the two men trained fifty-three officers, non-commissioned officers and civilian maintenance technicians on the "newly developed weapons [that] were provided to the Argentine Army through the U.S. Military Assistance Program."<sup>38</sup>

As was the case throughout the hemisphere, Latin American officials chose what military training they accepted from the United States, and Argentina was no exception. Five Special Action Force teams visited the country in 1966. None taught counterinsurgency tactics or doctrine. Instead, Argentine Army officials sought technical training from their American counterparts. Three Special Action Force teams visited Argentina that year in support of intelligence training. The first mission was a single Green Beret officer assigned to conduct a survey for "Military Intelligence in support of

---

<sup>37</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, "Historical Report 1965" (hereafter cited as SAF 65), USAHEC, n. pag. Information derived from Special Action Force unit histories, USAHEC.

<sup>38</sup> SAF 65; *Southern Command News*, 10 September 1963, 3.

Counter-insurgency.” The purpose of the mission was to “develop recommendations for a course of instruction to portray the use of military intelligence in counterinsurgency operations.” The survey mission led to a follow on visit “to conduct a senior officer course of four weeks duration...to emphasize [intelligence] operations during the primary stages of insurgency.” The Special Action Force team of three officers and one warrant officer who taught the course deemed their visit a success. “[T]he students are now better prepared to meet and take action against incipient insurgency through the use of applied intelligence,” the team leader reported to the Canal Zone. “The students were also prepared to use their instruction in the event of actual guerrilla warfare.” The final intelligence related mission of 1966 took place late in the year and instructed Argentine students on techniques of photographic imagery interpretation.<sup>39</sup>

Two conventional skills Special Action Force teams also visited Argentina in 1966. The first taught an orientation conference on medical-veterinary civic action. The other mission provided Argentine army troops with instruction on newly-arrived U.S. equipment. One Green Beret officer and two enlisted men arrived in Buenos Aires in June 1966 with the task of training twenty-seven “officers and men of the Argentine Army in the operation and maintenance of the M-41A3 Tank.” Once again the needs and desires of the host nation army set the agenda. “The object of the mission,” the team leader confided, “was to enable the Argentines to drive their tanks in their Independence Day parade.” Political turmoil affected what might otherwise have been an uneventful mission. “[T]he team was in the country during the June 27-28 coup d’etat when Lt. General Ongania was installed as the provisional president of Argentina,” the team members reported. “However, by the end of the course all class members were capable of

---

<sup>39</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, “Historical Report 1966” (hereafter cited as SAF 66), USAHEC, n. pag.

operating and maintaining their tanks.”<sup>40</sup> The Green Beret instructors departed the country on the third of July. They missed seeing the students drive their tanks in the Independence Day parade by just six days.

Although it did little to disrupt the tank operation training mission, the June coup d'état did interrupt the broader Military Assistance Program with Argentina. The United States suspended all grant aid and military assistance sales to Argentina on 28 June. Washington recognized the new government in Buenos Aires on 22 July and resumed military training support three days later. However, material assistance support to Argentina did not resume until late October. That same month the United States delivered the first twelve (of a planned fifty) A-4B fighter aircraft to Argentina. But earlier in the year Washington informed Buenos Aires that, “the second 25 of 50 A-4Bs being sold to Argentina had to be deferred due to Southeast Asia requirements.”<sup>41</sup> America’s growing military commitments in Vietnam trumped the needs of its reluctant South American ally.

#### **PREEMPTIVE COUNTER REVOLUTION IN ARGENTINA: THE ONGANÍA REGIME**

General Juan Carlos Onganía ousted civilian President Arturo Illia during an economic and political crisis, as had his army predecessors throughout the century. Yet his was to be no normal military caretaker government awaiting the next round of elections. Onganía instead sought to impose revolutionary change. “There is considerable indirect evidence that many [Argentine] military [officers] have convinced themselves that in removing Illia government they would be fulfilling basically identical role in Argentina that armed forces performed in Brazil in ousting Goulart,” American Ambassador Edwin M. Martin to confided to Washington. They also “believe that they

---

<sup>40</sup> SAF 66.

<sup>41</sup> United States Southern Command, “Historical Report Calendar Year 1966,” n.d., (hereafter cited as USSOUTHCOM CY66), CMH, XII-9.

would be acting with [an] identical spirit of renovation, of anticommunism, anti-corruption, anti-inefficiency and of unreserved support for pro-Western foreign policy.”<sup>42</sup> The Onganía government’s “implicit model was the military regime that had been established in Brazil in 1964,” historian David Rock argues. “Following the Brazilians, Onganía sought to create a modernizing autocracy that would change society from above, with or without popular backing.”<sup>43</sup>

Onganía named his new government the “Argentine Revolution,” and like his Brazilian predecessors, he founded the regime on the tenets of the National Security Doctrine. His government replaced democracy with a dictatorship, it restricted political and social rights, and it sought to impose economic development by decree rather than by consensus. Historians tend to focus their efforts on either the 1966 “Argentine Revolution” or the later 1976 Proceso de Reorganización Nacional. However, in order to best understand the roots of the “dirty war” it is necessary to view these two military regimes as a continuation and evolution of the National Security Doctrine in Argentina.

The economic plan adopted by the Onganía regime focused great effort on economic stabilization. It also pursued development. Dr. Adalbert Krieger Vasena, Onganía’s minister of economy, implemented an economic plan that consisted of three goals: “first, the deepening of the industrial structure through local production of intermediate inputs, capital goods, ancillary infrastructure; second, the expansion of the consumer durables sector; and third, the promotion of non-traditional exports.” The plan also relied on an even greater state intervention in the economy through wage and price

---

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Telegram from the Embassy in Argentina to the Department of State,” dated June 8, 1966, Department of State, Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, online database (hereafter cited as DOS FOIA).

<sup>43</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 346.



controls.<sup>44</sup> In pursuit of his objectives, Krieger Vasena devaluated the currency by forty percent. He also reduced tariffs, promoted industrial exports, and stabilized wages and prices. The plan initially showed good results. It reduced inflation and stimulated a recovery.<sup>45</sup>

The Krieger Vasena economic plan also created conditions that contributed to a future revolt in 1969. The public sector, and especially the military, made impressive gains. “Government employees, including underpaid teachers, military and police forces,” Central Intelligence Agency analysts observed, “received a raise averaging 20 to 25 percent.”<sup>46</sup> Labor paid much of the bill. Krieger Vasena’s policies suppressed real wages with workers taking a ten percent cut in 1968. Social pressure began to grow due to the harsh repression the military junta applied to political parties, students and labor unions.

As Onganía implemented his economic policies, his “Argentine Revolution” faced almost no armed opposition. Therefore, it had no need to employ counter revolutionary warfare, at least initially. Onganía and his generals legislated their repression instead. In one of the new government’s first acts, just six days after seizing power, it banned all student political groups. That same day, security forces assaulted the National University of Buenos Aires, violating its historic sovereignty and beating students, faculty, and administrators alike. The policemen also arrested more than four hundred students. In August 1967 the regime outlawed Communism. The new law granted federal agents “the right to arrest anyone linked to spreading, harboring or

---

<sup>44</sup> William C. Smith, *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 74, 81.

<sup>45</sup> Wynia, *Postwar Era*, 169, Chudnovsky, *The Elusive Quest*, 36.

<sup>46</sup> CIA, “Special Report: The First Three Years of the ‘Argentine Revolution,’” 16 May, 1969, Nixon Presidential Library, National Security Council, Country Files – Latin America, Boxes 768-799, 3, 6.

engaging with communist materials... as well as anyone with ‘communist ideological motivation,’” historian Cyrus Cousins explains, “and imprison them from one to eight years.” The government also passed other laws relating to morality and censorship.<sup>47</sup> Like the early Brazilian dictatorship, Onganía’s government attempted to counteract subversive influences and activities through its deployment of the legislative and judicial powers of the state.

Meanwhile, rural insurgency did again menace the country – albeit briefly. The last rural *foco* attempt of the decade took place in 1968. Once more the revolutionaries chose the remote Tucumán Province, but local security forces easily quashed the nascent guerrillas. Local peasants denounced a group of “muchachos extraños” (strange men) in September 1968. Fourteen men of the Peronist Armed Forces (FAP) had been conducting their first reconnaissance march in the Taco Ralo region of Tucumán Province. Alerted by local residents, the Gendarmería (Border Guards) dispatched a one hundred man patrol which captured all of the unarmed guerrillas.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, the most noteworthy Special Action Force visit of 1968 was a course on supply accounting procedures.<sup>49</sup>

The illusion of calm in Argentina broke the very next year. In May of 1969, the industrial city of Córdoba erupted in a working class revolt that lasted several days. Ending the uprising necessitated the deployment of 5,000 Army troops to supplement the 4,000 local police. The toll for regaining order was costly. “In the end,” one historian notes, “up to 60 people lay dead, hundreds were wounded, and 1,000 arrested.” The

---

<sup>47</sup> Cyrus Stephen Cousins, “General Onganía and the Argentine [Military] Revolution of the Right: Anti-Communism and Morality, 1966-1970” *Historia Actual Online*, no. 17, (October 2008), 73-75.

<sup>48</sup> Brown, “Origins,” 39.

<sup>49</sup> Special Action Force for Latin America, “Historical Supplement 1968-1969” (hereafter cited as SAF 68-69), USAHEC, n. pag.; *Southern Command News*, 5 April 1968, 3.

*cordobazo* shattered the all-powerful image of the military regime. Within days Onganía dismissed Krieger Vasena. Other generals in turn ousted Onganía a year later.<sup>50</sup>

Although it did initially force compliance, Onganía's political and economic repression also created simmering resentment. Students in Córdoba, many of them also night shift workers in the factories, joined with laborers to oppose the military government during the *cordobazo*. Other workers and students across the country took note – especially the Peronists. The radical youth elements of the Peronist movement now rejected compromise, strikes and protests, and increasingly turned towards armed insurgency.

The country received its first bitter taste of French counter revolutionary warfare tactics later in 1969. Other members of the Peronist Armed Forces (FAP) took up arms after the *cordobazo*. One group in Buenos Aires attacked a few police stations and stole a cache of weapons, which they used in later assaults. Meanwhile, a different cell in the Córdoba region ran afoul of the military. Army troops captured several members of that FAP cadre in August, and immediately subjected them to torture. Many of the new urban guerrillas died from abuse suffered while in custody.<sup>51</sup> It was a harbinger of the repression to come.

Rather than taming the country's instability, Onganía's term dramatically increased its intensity. The armed forces installed General Roberto Levingston as president in June 1970. Levingston eliminated Krieger Vasena's wage freezes in favor of indexing (adjusting wages based on the cost of living), but a second riot in Córdoba in 1971 ended his brief term of office. General Alejandro Lanusse took office in March

---

<sup>50</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 349-351, 333; Jonathan C. Brown, *A Brief History of Argentina*, (New York: Checkmark Books, 2011), 230.

<sup>51</sup> Brown, "Origins," 41.

1971 with the objective of setting the conditions for the return of civilian rule. Lanusse's "policy of 'institutionalization,'" one historian notes, was "effectively a retreat by the military to pave the way for a return of Perón."<sup>52</sup> "Perón's restoration," another author argues, "was an admission of political bankruptcy by a military now prepared to clutch at any straw to contain the radical left."<sup>53</sup> The Argentine military "are disillusioned with their own record of failure in governing," analysts of the CIA later wrote, "and acutely aware of widespread public contempt for their leadership."<sup>54</sup> Although the military relinquished political control due to internal disunity and a loss of credibility, its counter revolutionary "war" against internal enemies soon accelerated.

The Army did not proscribe the Peronists from competing in the hastily called elections of March 1973, but they did disallow Juan Perón's participation as a candidate through a 1972 residency requirement provision to the electoral law. The effect of the exclusion was short-lived. The Peronist candidate, Hector Campora, won the elections with forty-nine percent of the vote. Campora's term was brief and destructive. In one of his very first acts, he declared an amnesty and released all imprisoned guerrillas – some 2,200 in total. "The political amnesty decreed by the new government," one historian judges, "immensely strengthened the hand of the guerrillas."<sup>55</sup> It was also the death knell of the military's adherence to legal norms and reliance on the judiciary as a method to

---

<sup>52</sup> James D. Rudolph, ed., *Argentina, A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), 62; Ronaldo Munck, "The "Modern" Military Dictatorship in Latin America: The Case of Argentina (1976-1982)" *Latin American Perspectives*, issue 47, vol. 12, no. 4, (Fall 1985), 54.

<sup>53</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 360.

<sup>54</sup> CIA, "Prospects for Argentina," dated 31 January 1974, Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library, online database. Accessed 3 July 2016 online at: <https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/virtuallibrary/releases/jun12/declass24.pdf> 4.

<sup>55</sup> Donald C. Hodges, *Argentina's "Dirty War": an Intellectual Biography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 101.

confront subversion. Shortly thereafter, the military circumvented the legal system and began developing “parallel organizations” to wage war on the armed guerrillas.

President Campora resigned from office in July amid worsening civil unrest, triggering new elections in September. No longer proscribed from running, Perón won with sixty percent of the vote and took office in October 1973. The Peronists return to power coincided with an upturn in world commodity prices generating a sixty-five percent increase in export earnings in 1973. “As throughout the postwar period,” David Rock observes, “improving economic conditions invariably favored greater political calm.”<sup>56</sup> In this atmosphere of economic success, Perón used his charisma and power to incorporate unions, industrialists and the rural sector into a “Social Contract.” He included them in crafting policy objectives and replaced exclusion, protest and opposition with inclusion, negotiation and bargaining mechanisms.<sup>57</sup> The plan represented a novel approach in country more accustomed to coercion and forced compliance.

Fate gave Perón’s “Social Contract” little time to succeed. The Peronist champion died from a heart attack on 1 July 1974. Juan Perón’s death shattered the fragile alliance he created. Upon his death, the presidency of Argentina passed to the vice president - Perón’s third wife. Rather than restoring calm and regaining control, María Estela (Isabel) Martínez de Perón presided over a rising level of political and economic chaos in the country. Instability and violence surged. The country increasingly became ungovernable as the economy fell into crisis and rival factions of Peronism engaged in urban guerrilla warfare.<sup>58</sup> Rather than oust Isabel Perón at the first sign of trouble, the military left her in office and allowed the government to flounder in an effort to discredit

---

<sup>56</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 361.

<sup>57</sup> Wynia, *Argentina in the Postwar Era*, 217.

<sup>58</sup> Smith, *Authoritarianism*, 228-9; Rock, *Argentina*, 326, 363-4.

Peronism. The generals' intransigence also served to increase support for intervention.<sup>59</sup> "For more than a year surging inflation had been accompanied by growing violence—the classic scenario for a coup d'état," David Rock explains, "While intensifying the war on the guerrillas, the Army waited until the last vestiges of the government's popular support had crumbled and Peronism lay shattered."<sup>60</sup>

As president, General Onganía and his supporters sought to prevent the outbreak of a subversive war in Argentina by legislating morality and eliminating political competition.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, the regime attempted to end the nation's boom and bust economic cycles by imposing economic stability measures. Both efforts failed. Those reversals led to the return of Juan Perón, but they also sowed the seeds of the much harsher dictatorship of General Jorge Rafael Videla in 1976. Videla and his followers, well aware of the failings of Onganía's earlier revolution, eschewed legality and adopted extra-constitutional tactics in response to the rise of urban terrorism. Videla's regime also implemented state control of the economy – not to pursue development or stability – but as a weapon to break the power of the working class and industry; the traditional pillars of Peronism.

#### **COUNTER REVOLUTIONARY WAR UNLEASHED: THE VIDELA REGIME**

The 1969 *cordobazo* marked a turning point in Leftist opposition to the government in Argentina. It inspired disturbances in other cities and touched off an increasing wave of strikes and "revolutionary direct action" (kidnappings, bombings and assassinations) across the country. The working class continued to demonstrate its power through strikes. Meanwhile, radical students and the youth element of Peronism began

---

<sup>59</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 366; Brown, *A Brief History*, 240.

<sup>60</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 366.

<sup>61</sup> For the Onganía administration's efforts to impose morality see Cousins, "General Onganía," passim.

the transition to armed insurgency. “Some Peronists and other extremists in the labor and student sectors have long engaged in occasional acts of urban violence,” analysts of CIA explained in 1971, “but the phenomena of bank robberies, kidnappings, and other spectacular acts of urban terrorism are relatively new” (see Table 10.1).<sup>62</sup>

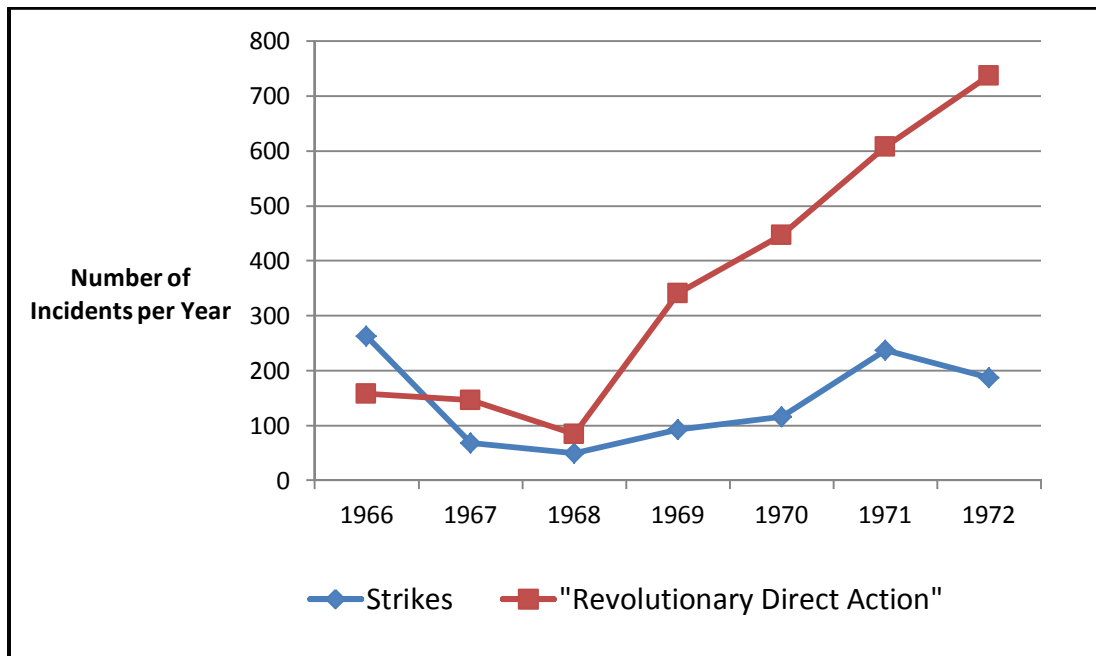
The *cordobazo* triggered the rise of urban insurgency. Argentina’s new city-based revolutionaries drew many of their tactics from the theories of Carlos Marighella. Although Brazilian security forces killed Marighella in a shoot-out in November 1969, his influence continued to grow – especially among radical students in the major cities of the Southern Cone. Fidel Castro published Marighella’s *Mini-manual of the Urban Guerrilla* two months after his death making it widely available across the region. “The Argentine guerrillas are not known to have developed any new theories of revolution,” CIA analysts later reported, “and apparently look for guidance to Carlos Marighella, slain Brazilian tactician, rather than to Lenin, Mao, or Guevara.”<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> CIA, “The Latin American Guerrilla Today,” dated 22 January 1971, CIA FOIA, 9. Table data derived from Chudnovsky, *The Elusive Quest*, 35.

<sup>63</sup> CIA, “The Latin American Guerrilla Today,” 3; CIA, “The Roots of Violence: The Urban Guerrilla in Argentina,” dated 9 June 1975, Digital National Security Archives, Georgetown University, online database. Accessed 1 July 2016 online at: <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/dnsa/docview/1679039163/fulltextPDF/36F070B7EFFC4959PQ/1?accountid=7118>, 7.

Table 10.1: Indicators of Social Protest in Argentina, 1966-1972.



By the early-1970s, uncoordinated acts of “revolutionary direct action” had coalesced into the disciplined activities of urban guerrilla organizations. “[T]wo leftists groups have emerged as particularly significant,” analysts of the Central Intelligence Agency wrote in 1975, “the People’s Revolutionary Army [Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo -ERP]...and the Montoneros.” “[C]urrent estimates place the strength of the ERP at 500-700,” the American analysts explained, “while the Montoneros are believed to have approximately 1,500 militants in the Buenos Aires area alone, and at least 15,000 sympathizers nationally.”<sup>64</sup>

The Trotskyist ERP “is the most widely feared leftists-extremist group,” the CIA judged. However, the guerrillas of the People’s Revolutionary Army, led by Roberto Santucho, were capable of more than just assassinations, bombings and kidnappings. They also conducted actions to embarrass and undermine the authorities. In early January

<sup>64</sup> CIA, “The Roots of Violence,” 4.



1971 the group distributed stolen toys to poor children living in a Buenos Aires *villa miseria* or shantytown. “This particular operation was especially effective,” one author writes, “since the police, acting on behalf of the vandalized company, subsequently had to take the toys away from many children.”<sup>65</sup>

The second major urban guerrilla group, the Montoneros, took their name from Argentina’s gaucho horsemen of the previous century. Led by Fernando Abal Medina and Mario Firmenich, the “Montoneros burst upon the scene in May 1970,” analysts of the Central Intelligence Agency wrote, “with the abduction, ‘trial,’ and ‘execution’ of former President Pedro Aramburu – the same general who had sent Peron into exile in 1955.”<sup>66</sup> Aramburu, as former junta president, was also responsible for inviting the first French officers to teach counter revolutionary warfare in Argentina.

The dictatorship that followed Argentina’s brief return to Peronism became the most notorious government in the nation’s history. The military junta, under the leadership of Army General Jorge Rafael Videla, named itself the Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (National Reorganization Process). The new dictatorship expanded the “dirty war” begun in late 1974 after Isabel Perón’s declaration of a state of siege.<sup>67</sup> Between 1974 and 1983, military and police forces murdered and disappeared the bodies of between 10,000 and 22,000 citizens (some human rights groups estimate as many as 30,000), while torturing thousands more.<sup>68</sup> The Proceso employed central elements of French counter revolutionary doctrine, but it adapted those elements to fit Argentine circumstances. It also implemented a brutal restructuring of the economy

---

<sup>65</sup> CIA, “The Roots of Violence,” 6.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 364.

<sup>68</sup> Smith, *Authoritarianism*, 231; Brown, *A Brief History*, 243.

designed to de-industrialize the nation as a means to help end the menace of Peronism and the cripple the power of the working class.

Videla's Proceso regime demonstrated all four hallmarks of French "revolutionary war" doctrine. First, it conceptualized threats to the nation's internal security as being part of a global total war for the survival of Western Civilization. "A terrorist is not just someone with a gun," Videla once remarked, "but also someone who spreads ideas that are contrary to Western and Christian civilization."<sup>69</sup> Second, Videla's government viewed the use of torture and executions as legitimate means to counteract the terrorism waged by urban insurgents. Third, the regime created specialized intelligence organizations to implement systematic repression in order to defeat the insurgency. But unlike the named and officially acknowledged intelligence units in Brazil and Chile, Argentine generals created a decentralized network of clandestine detention centers to conduct their dirty war. Finally, the 1976 Proceso dictatorship is perhaps most notorious for the way it applied counter terror. It used disappearances and executions to create a nation-wide climate of fear in which anyone could become the next victim. The purpose was to intimidate the population into obedience and coerce them away from supporting the guerrillas.

Although General Videla did not assume the presidency of Argentina until after the March 1976 coup d'état, the Army, under his command, began implementing key elements of the "dirty war" the year prior.<sup>70</sup> The Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP) began preparing Argentina's last rural *foco* effort in June 1974 when it established the Ramón Rosa Jiménez Mountain Company. Disregarding the region's history of being

---

<sup>69</sup> Carlson, "The Influence of French 'Revolutionary War' Ideology," 79.

<sup>70</sup> President Isabel Perón appointed General Videla as army commander in late August 1975. See Paul H. Lewis, *Guerrillas and Generals: the "Dirty War" in Argentina* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 118.

inhospitable for rural insurgency, Santucho and the ERP leadership formed the new company in the mountains and jungles of Tucumán. The ERP guerrillas did not end their urban operations, but the militants' infatuation with Che Guevara's revolutionary theory drove them to pursue a rural *foco* effort as well. The guerrillas of the *Compañía del Monte* harangued local villagers, attacked police and army installations and soon declared much of the province as a "liberated territory."

Prior to 1975, the police forces constituted the official response to the guerrilla threat, while right wing death squads operated in a state of semi-official approval.<sup>71</sup> By 1975 the Army had had enough. The increasing number of attacks on military installations and the murders of military officers drove senior generals to pressure the civilian leadership for action. On 5 February 1975, they got their orders. President Isabel Perón signed a decree directing the armed forces "to carry out the military operations considered necessary and/or annihilate subversive elements active in the Province of Tucumán."<sup>72</sup> The Argentine Army considered this their "transition to the offensive." The dirty war now began in earnest.

The Army deployed 1,500 troops to Tucumán just four days after the presidential decree. General Acdel Edgardo Vilas commanded all forces for "Operation Independence," which included the bulk of his 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. However, the national decree also activated Argentina's war time provisions which subordinated its Gendarmería and Federal Police to military control in combat zones. Vilas' total force numbered between 3,000 and 3,500 men. "By the time the army moved into Tucumán," historian Paul Lewis writes, "the [ERP's] *Compañía del Monte* controlled about a third of

---

<sup>71</sup> CIA, "The Roots of Violence," 8.

<sup>72</sup> Hodges, *Argentina's "Dirty War,"* 175.

the province.” Some one hundred armed militants comprised the Mountain Company, four hundred supporters aided their operations and the group had amassed “around 2,500 sympathizers and occasional collaborators.”<sup>73</sup>

General Vilas rejected American counterinsurgency tactics which dictated a response centered on elite counter guerrilla battalions to out maneuver the insurgents in the dense jungles and mountainous terrain. Instead, he implemented an Argentine version of French counter revolutionary war. “From the beginning of Operativo Independencia,” Vilas later explained, “everything centered in the cities of San Miguel de Tucumán and in Concepción.” Rather than chase the guerrillas in the mountains and forests, Vilas drew them into the cities and subjected them to torture to break their organization. He modeled his operation on the French experience in Algeria. “Vilas was enamored with the works of French Army Colonel Roger Trinquier,” historian Martin Andersen argues, and Trinquier’s writings served as Vilas’ “principle guide” during Operation Independence.<sup>74</sup>

At the same time, American military relations with Argentina were in decline. The U.S. Army assigned twenty-eight American officers and enlisted men to its mission in Buenos Aires in 1964. A Brigadier General commanded them. Another twenty-four Argentine officers, non-commissioned officers and conscripts supported the U.S. Army Mission. By 1975, the same mission counted just twelve members.<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile, the Special Action Force conducted its last mobile training team missions to Argentina in

---

<sup>73</sup> Lewis, *Guerrillas and Generals*, 105-107.

<sup>74</sup> Andersen, *Dossier Secreto*, 131, 133.

<sup>75</sup> USARMIS to Argentina, “U.S. Army Mission Program Report,” 5 January 1964, USAHEC, n.pag. Brigadier General David O. Byers, Jr. reported his unit’s personnel strength as sixteen American officers and twelve enlisted men, augmented by one Argentine captain, five NCOs and eighteen conscripts in this report. 1975 USARMIS personnel strength information from Taylor del Cid, “Purging the Bad Blood,” 414, note 56.

1972. The Green Berets taught a course on airmobile (helicopter) operations and provided training on an English language laboratory.<sup>76</sup>

Back in Tucumán in 1975, Vilas' methods clearly showed the elements of French counter revolutionary war theories. First, Vilas and his officers rejected the rule of law. "Operación Independencia can't just consist of a roundup of political prisoners," Brigadier General Luciano Benjamin Menéndez, one of Vilas' staff officers, argued. "Because the army can't risk the lives of its men and lay its prestige on the line to act as a kind of police force that ends up by turning over X-number of political prisoners to some timorous judge... who will apply lenient punishment which in turn will be cancelled out by amnesties granted by ambitious politicians courting popularity. We're at war, and war obeys another law: he who wipes out the other side wins."<sup>77</sup> Vilas and his officers next rejected government controls. Among the security forces, "everyone understood there existed a parallel government situated in the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade," Vilas later admitted. A key rationale for the creation of a "parallel government" was to obscure the army's responsibility and to facilitate torture.

The Argentine armed forces learned an unintended lesson from the human rights outcry against the abuses of the neighboring military regimes in Brazil and Chile. Rather than moderate their behavior, the Argentine generals simply sought to obscure any official links to the repression. "[I]n Tucumán the Army was in an operations zone for anti-guerrilla activity," the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons later concluded, "and had to take great care to avoid any link being established between the

---

<sup>76</sup> Security Assistance Force Historical Summary 1972, USAHEC, 6, 32.

<sup>77</sup> Lewis, *Guerrillas and Generals*, 108.

clandestine groups working in the secret detention centers and the official face of the Armed Forces.”<sup>78</sup>

Like the French in Algeria, General Vilas established clandestine torture centers in his zone of operations. He eschewed naming specialized intelligence units (as in Brazil and Chile) and instead opted to conceal the entire enterprise. The Clandestine Detention Centers “functioned as intelligence nodes as well as extermination camps,” one researcher grimly noted. Argentine prosecutors later concluded that the tactics employed during Operation Independence included “kidnapping, torture, forced-disappearances and murders of 270 victims.”<sup>79</sup> It was to be the model for the nation.

The Argentine Army in Tucumán Province targeted far more “enemies” than just the armed revolutionaries. The security forces arrested “labor and student activists, left-wing political figures, journalists, teachers, and anyone else identified as having suspicious connections,” one historian explains. “The great majority of [those] arrested were tortured, questioned, and then they ‘disappeared’ (i.e., were shot).”<sup>80</sup> “It is a war [in Tucumán] in which there are apparently no prisoners,” journalist Juan de Onis reported to the *New York Times* in November 1975, “and in which the military make little distinction between guerrillas carrying weapons and collaborators serving as couriers or supplying men in the hills.”<sup>81</sup> Soon the military was fighting the same war, using the same tactics, all across the country.

---

<sup>78</sup> “Nunca Más” (Never Again) - Report of the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons CONADEP 1984 (hereafter cited as CONADEP), “Part 1, The Repression: Secret detention centres in Tucumán Province,” accessed online 23 May 2016 at:

[http://www.desaparecidos.org/nuncamas/web/english/library/nevagain/nevagain\\_152.htm](http://www.desaparecidos.org/nuncamas/web/english/library/nevagain/nevagain_152.htm)

<sup>79</sup> Bruno Rosignolli, “Archaeology of State Terrorism: Exploring the Territorial Strategies of Clandestine Repression in Argentina (1976–1983)” *Archaeologies*, vol. 11, no. 2 (August 2015), 3; *Buenos Aires Herald*, “Historic Operation Independence trial begins in Tucumán,” 6 May 2016.

<sup>80</sup> Lewis, *Guerrillas and Generals*, 108.

<sup>81</sup> Juan de Onis, “Guerrillas in Argentina Battle Army in a War Without Prisoners” *New York Times*, 11 November 1975.

General Rafael Videla seized power in March 1976 and by later that same year his forces had devastated the main guerrilla organizations. “The Montonero’s fighting capacity was in rapid decline,” Paul Lewis explains. “By the end of 1976 they had lost 80 percent of their combatants ... [the] ERP’s organization fell apart even faster ... By mid-July the organization was in a shambles and the leadership badly depleted.”<sup>82</sup> The Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo’s leader, Roberto Santucho, died in a shootout with police on 19 July 1976. Montonero leader Mario Firmenich survived the onslaught longer, but fled Argentina for Cuba in late December.<sup>83</sup>

Yet despite the security forces’ success in disrupting and depleting the guerrilla formations by late 1976, the repression continued. Why the seeming disconnect? The explanation is that the Argentine generals continued to target suspected guerrilla supporters and sympathizers, as they had done in Tucumán, rather than just the armed militants. Therefore, they had many more “enemies” to confront even after the armed guerrillas were dead or in exile. “We are going to have to kill 50,000 people,” one general bluntly explained, “25,000 subversives, 20,000 sympathizers and we will make 5,000 mistakes.”<sup>84</sup> General Videla was less precise, although no less explicit. “As many people as necessary must die in Argentina,” he explained, “so that the country will again be secure.”<sup>85</sup> Data compiled by the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons validates the fact that the generals targeted many persons who were not armed

---

<sup>82</sup> Lewis, *Guerrillas and Generals*, 159-160.

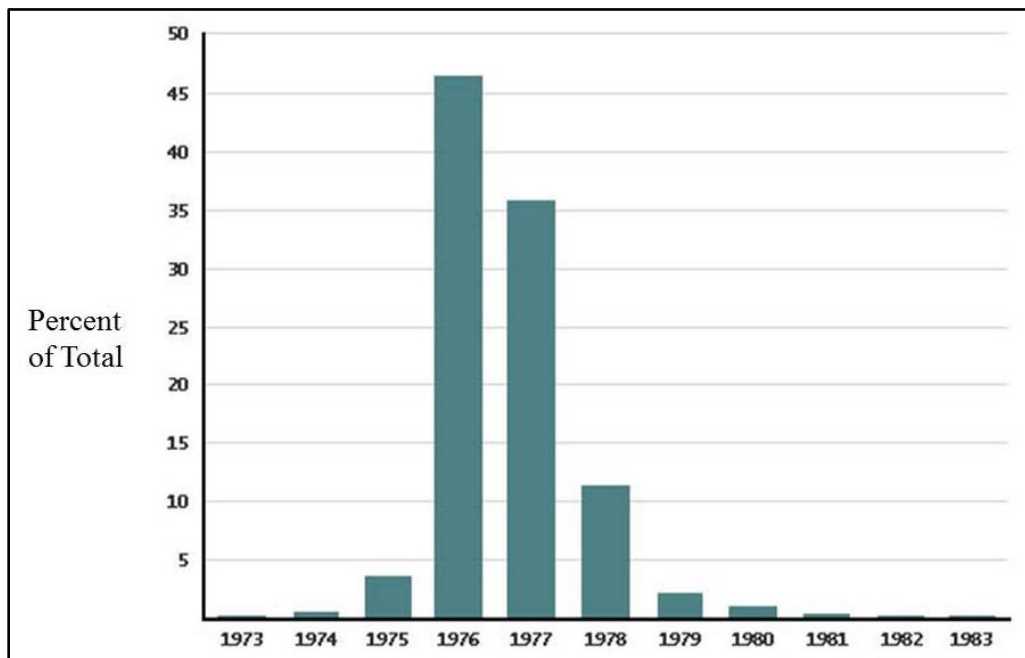
<sup>83</sup> Anderson, *Dossier Secreto*, 233; Lewis, *Guerrillas and Generals*, 160.

<sup>84</sup> Brands, *Latin America's Cold War*, 123.

<sup>85</sup> Jorge Rafael Videla, from a speech in Montevideo in 1975, quoted in Adam Bernstein, “Jorge Rafael Videla, Argentine Junta Leader, dies at 87” *The Washington Post*, 17 May 2013.

guerrillas. Roughly one half of all forced disappearances took place in the year 1977 and later— long after the decapitation of the ERP and the Montoneros (see Table 10.2).<sup>86</sup>

Table 10.2: The Disappeared in Argentina, 1973 to 1983.



Whom the Argentine military targeted for apprehension and transfer to its Clandestine Detention Centers differed from the Brazilian model. The Argentine generals – facing uncontrolled urban terrorism – more closely followed the path of their Chilean counterparts in adopting an expanded definition of their “enemies.” Argentina’s generals followed Trinquier’s 1964 maxim literally. The security forces branded as a traitor “any individual who favors the objectives of the enemy” and subjected men, women and children to their wrath.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>86</sup> CONADEP, “Part II: The Victims, The Disappeared 1973-1983.”

<sup>87</sup> Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: a French view of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 28.



The generals in Buenos Aires also embarked on a much wider war. They used the 1975 guerrilla war as the rationale or trigger for “going on the offensive” as they stated. But the offensive they undertook targeted more than just the armed guerrillas. The generals also fought a hidden war against Peronism and working class militants using repression and union interventions as well as economic policy. The military had been on the “defensive” against Peronism since the late-1940s and sought a definitive and final victory in 1976.<sup>88</sup> The generals also fought a religious and cultural war against the intelligentsia whom they blamed for spreading Marxist and anti-Christian beliefs, which they saw as another form of subversion and equated with Peronism.

Another clue to the larger death toll in Argentina is the size of the Peronism itself. Salvador Allende won the Chilean presidency with just thirty-six of the votes cast— the Left was a minority. In contrast, Hector Campora won the Argentine presidency with forty-nine percent of the vote. Juan Perón later outdid him garnering the votes of sixty percent of the electorate. The Left in Argentina was not a minority. Moreover, it was immensely popular so the generals could never openly declare they were at war with Peronism without losing a great degree of public support and potentially triggering a much larger rebellion. The Argentine generals’ expansive view of their “enemies” and the much larger hidden war they undertook against Peronism helps to explain the greater suffering nation endured.

Attacking such a broad number of enemies required a large and elaborate infrastructure of repression. The National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons later chronicled a total of 340 Clandestine Detention Centers that operated during the 1976 “dirty war” dictatorship. Tellingly, the military established the sites throughout

---

<sup>88</sup> See for example, David Pion-Berlin and George A. Lopez, “Of Victims and Executioners: Argentine State Terror, 1975-1979” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 1, (March 1991), 63-86.

Argentina's national territory, not just in the few largest cities which were the terrain of the urban guerrillas.<sup>89</sup>

Like their colleagues across the Southern Cone, Argentine officers adopted rhetoric and policies that dehumanized their "enemies" and facilitated stripping them of their legal and human rights. "One cannot and should not recognize the Marxist subversive terrorist as a brother," one commander explained. "It is not enough that he be born in our country. Ideologically, he has forfeited the right to call himself an Argentine." The country's president and senior military officer agreed. "I want to clarify that Argentine citizens are not the victims of the repression," General Videla claimed. "The repression is against a minority that we do not consider Argentine."<sup>90</sup> By declaring subversives and their supporters "non-citizens" and "traitors," the military regime created a legal and moral fiction that allowed them to justify employing illegal tactics against their own citizenry.

The generals deemed a wide segment of the population non-Argentines and targeted them for repression. Students made up the overwhelming majority of the armed insurgents, but they were not the only victims of disappearance, arrest and torture (see Table 10.3).<sup>91</sup> The military authorities also attacked the intelligentsia whom they saw as the purveyors and propagators of Marxist and anti-Christian values and ideals.<sup>92</sup> "[W]e consider it a serious crime to attack the Western and Christian way of life and try to

---

<sup>89</sup> CONADEP, "Part One: the Repression, D. Secret Detention Centres (SDCs)"; see also Rosignolli, "Archaeology of State Terrorism," 3.

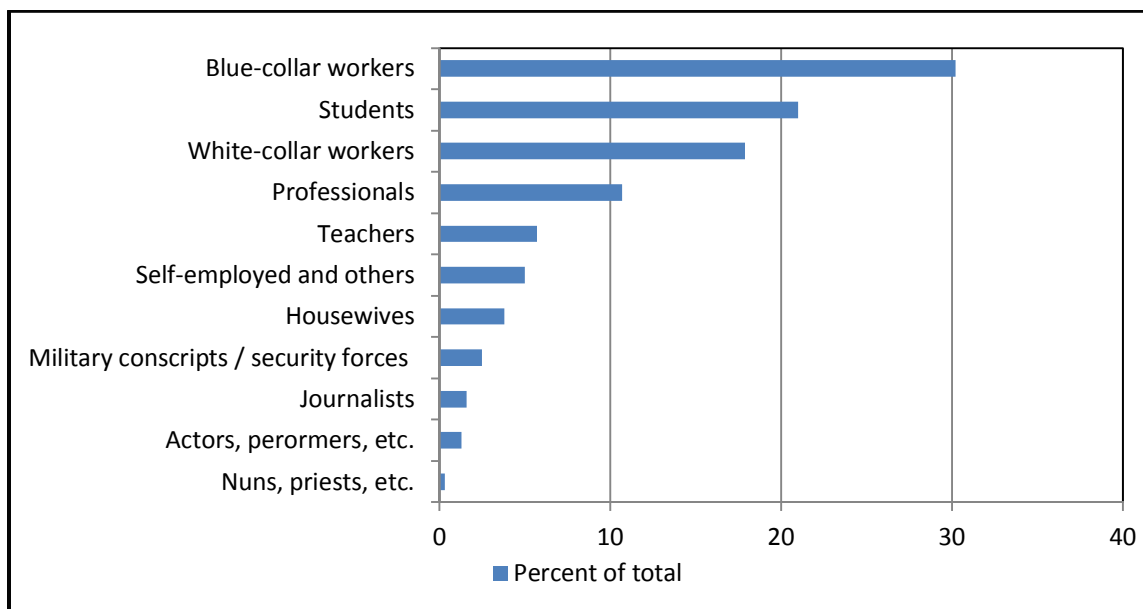
<sup>90</sup> Hodges, *Argentina's "Dirty War,"* 182.

<sup>91</sup> This chart details the victims of repression as compiled by the Argentine National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons. It lists victims still missing and those later released. Armed guerrillas killed in confrontations with the security forces are not included. Source: CONADEP, "Conclusions."

<sup>92</sup> See for example Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, passim; and Mark J. Osiel, "Constructing Subversion in Argentina's Dirty War" *Representations*, vol. 75, no. 1, (Summer 2001), 119-158.

change it for one that is completely alien to us,” General Videla declared. “The aggressor in this type of struggle is not just the bomber, the gunman or the kidnapper. At the intellectual level, it is anyone that tries to change our way of life by promoting subversive ideas; in other words, [anyone] who tries to subvert, change or disrupt [our] values ... A terrorist is not just someone who kills with a gun or a bomb, but anyone who spreads ideas that are contrary to Western and Christian civilization.”<sup>93</sup>

Table 10.3: Victims of Repression in Argentina by Occupation.



President Videla’s plan to restructure the country went beyond just eliminating subversion and ending the country’s civil war, the dirty war also included an economic component. As was the case in Chile, the workers in Argentina suffered the brunt of the political repression. But that was not enough. Videla also used the economy as a weapon against his working class Peronist “enemies.” Videla’s selection of José Martínez de Hoz

<sup>93</sup> María Belén Riveiro, Luciana Rosende and Lior Zylberman, “Genocide on Trial: Case Note and Extracts of ‘Circuito Camps’ Judgment *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2013), 63.

as Minister of the Economy foreshadowed the approach. Although a Harvard trained economist, Martínez de Hoz was also a son of the rural agricultural elite.<sup>94</sup>

While Videla's military and police *patotas* (the arresting units of the clandestine detention centers) disciplined the urban guerrillas, workers, and intelligentsia through torture, disappearances and murder, Martínez de Hoz set out to discipline the economic sectors of the country. Central to the new approach would be a drastic shift away from industrialization in favor of a return to the primacy of agricultural exports. "The essence might be described as a rejection of the kind of society shaped by thirty years of conflict over industrialization," economist John Sheahan argues. "Argentina's national troubles were identified as the end product of a dissolution of national life that dated back to 1946. The goal became no longer economic growth, or industrialization, but a complete transformation of Argentine society such that a repetition of populism and the subversive experiences of the first half of the 1970s would be impossible."<sup>95</sup>

Martínez de Hoz implemented free market policies that resembled many of those adopted by the Chicago Boys in Chile. He reduced the role of the state in the economy through privatizations and reduction of government expenditures. He eliminated import tariffs and subsidies, liberalized monetary and exchange policy, and imposed a drastic reduction in real wages.<sup>96</sup> Yet rather than using a gradual approach, Martínez de Hoz implemented his policies in an abrupt and damaging manner making them more punitive than corrective.

---

<sup>94</sup> Smith, *Authoritarianism*, 231; Rock, *Argentina*, 368.

<sup>95</sup> John Sheahan, *Patterns of Development in Latin America: Poverty, Repression and Economic Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 197-8.

<sup>96</sup> Munck, *The Case of Argentina*, 58.

Industry and urban labor—the foundations of Peronism—were the main targets. In 1976 the government “reduced real wages by nearly 50 percent in relation to the previous five years,” while the elimination of tariffs and subsidies led to a twenty-six percent decline in industrial employment between 1975 and 1980. These policies led to the “virtual destruction” of textile manufacturing and the “collapse” of the tractor industry. “By 1981 some observers estimated that industry was operating at only 50 percent of installed capacity,” Ronaldo Munck argues. “It is hardly an exaggeration to speak of deindustrialization in Argentina.” Industrial employment shrank by 240,000 positions between 1976 and 1980. Over the same time period, the public sector eliminated 500,000 workers and the textiles industry contracted from 120,000 jobs to a mere 40,000.<sup>97</sup> “Representing the accumulation of decades of frustration about grievances unattended,” David Pion-Berlin explains, “the *Proceso* went to political and economic extremes hitherto unwitnessed to ‘cleanse’ the nation of its problems. Unprecedented levels of state terror directed at a cross-section of the population, coupled with sweeping economic changes that left industries and trade unions paralyzed, were primary features of this de facto regime.” Videla and Martínez de Hoz sought to tame instability in Argentina, not through sound policy, but instead by killing their political foes and attempting to destroy their economic base.<sup>98</sup>

By 1980 the military had eliminated the guerrilla threat and the *patotas* had returned to the barracks and police stations, but the country faced yet another economic crisis. Changes in banking laws in 1977 and 1978 led to a rapid expansion of finance companies or *casas financieras*. Overall, the financial sector grew by forty-five percent

---

<sup>97</sup> Munck, *The Case of Argentina*, 60, 61, 65.

<sup>98</sup> David Pion-Berlin, *Through the Corridors of Power: Institutions and Civil-Military Relations in Argentina* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 53; Rock, *Argentina*, 368-9.

between 1976 and 1980. After an interlude of easy money and quick profits, the first *financiera*, Banco de Intercambio Regional, failed. Others followed and “by October 1980 the financial system was reported ‘close to collapse.’”<sup>99</sup> In March 1981, General Roberto Viola assumed the presidency. Martínez de Hoz resigned and Lorenzo Sigaut replaced him as minister of the economy. Sigaut attempted to restart the industrial sector by announcing a twenty-three percent currency devaluation and an injection of new credit, but General Leopoldo Galtieri ousted Viola and Sigaut in December.<sup>100</sup>

Galtieri faced a titanic economic crisis. “With a huge public deficit, high inflation, continuous currency devaluations, and an external debt crisis,” one author notes, “conditions in the country in 1981-1982 were even worse than those that had prevailed in 1975 before the coup.” Galtieri’s economic minister, Roberto Alemann, implemented a return to the policies of Martínez de Hoz. Alemann reopened the economy, cut public spending, raised taxes and sought to stimulate exports.<sup>101</sup> In any event, Alemann’s economic policy was for naught. In April 1982 Galtieri bet his political future on the invasion of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands in what one author eloquently termed “a suicidal move to rally popular support for the government.” The gamble ended in disaster and defeat a few short months later. General Reynaldo Bignone forced Galtieri from office in July 1982. He quickly began efforts to end the Proceso and return the country to civilian rule.<sup>102</sup>

Argentina would never be the same as it was before the Proceso regime. The brutal methods used by the military officers of the 1976 dictatorship caused deep wounds

---

<sup>99</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 372, 373; Munck, *The Case of Argentina*, 59.

<sup>100</sup> Rock, *Argentina*, 374; Munck, *The Case of Argentina*, 67-8.

<sup>101</sup> Chudnovsky, *The Elusive Quest*, 57; Smith, *Authoritarianism*, 245.

<sup>102</sup> Rudolph, *A Country Study*, 72, 75; Smith, *Authoritarianism*, 247.

in the society they had sworn to protect and defend. The application of French counter revolutionary war tactics also inculcated hatred rather than eliminating it. The psychological wounds of the dirty war lasted long after the generals relinquished power and returned to the barracks in disgrace.

## CONCLUSION

Argentina endured recurrent political and economic crises during most of the early Cold War era. Military officers cut short several governments they deemed ineffective from 1943 to 1976. The presidency of Juan Perón triggered much of the instability. Perón introduced populism to Argentina. He activated the working class as political base of support and pursued industrialization as a way to develop the country and increase his power. Yet Perón also transformed Argentine politics. Control of government became a “winner takes all” proposition. Those in power distributed the country’s wealth as “rents” to their supporters. Opposition groups sought to undermine the sitting government and force it from office in order to gain another turn at controlling the spoils of office. The military ousted Perón from office in 1955 and forced him into exile. Much of the country’s instability over the next two decades emanated from efforts by the military to control the lingering effects of Peronism and prevent Perón’s return.

From 1959 to 1976, Argentina also had to contend with rural insurgencies. Most rural *focos* quickly collapsed due the efficiency of the security forces, but also because the countryside lacked much revolutionary potential. Even the famed Argentine guerrilla champion Ernesto “Che” Guevara failed in his efforts to establish a *foco* in his home country. Comandante Segundo, Guevara’s designated stand-in, presided over a disaster that ended the *foco* before Che could arrive and take charge. The urban working class held explosive power in Argentina; the rural peasantry did not.

Meanwhile, Buenos Aires spurned Washington's attempts to include the country in America's Cold War military alliance. Most South American nations signed military assistance agreements with the United States in the early 1950s. Argentina held out until 1964. When Buenos Aires finally relented it did so not because of a desire to follow Washington's lead, but because it sensed opportunity. Argentine authorities capitalized on American Cold War fears and manipulated the regional hegemon into funding the modernization of its military forces. Argentina accepted conventional American military equipment and training, but rejected U.S. counterinsurgency.

Argentina looked to France for military advice instead. French veterans of Indochina and Algeria taught internal security doctrine and tactics in Buenos Aires beginning in 1957. Those same officers also helped draft Argentine Army field manuals and design exercises for countering insurgencies. When U.S. Army officers first established an advisory effort in Buenos Aires in 1960 they found the door to internal security training closed. The Argentine Army sent few students to American counterinsurgency courses and accepted only one Special Action Force mobile training team mission to teach counterinsurgency tactics. That mission took place in 1965 – a decade before the Argentine Army commenced counter insurgent operations in Tucumán.

Argentine officials also eschewed American assistance with their internal security. The country again faced an economic and political crisis in 1966. General Onganía overthrew the elected president in June of that year and took power, but he needed no American military advice. Instead, Argentine officers requested a mobile training team to provide training on their newly-arrived American tanks. The generals' impetus was not security fears; they wanted their soldiers to drive the tanks in the country's Independence Day parade.



Argentine generals rejected American counterinsurgency doctrine and instead followed the tenets of the National Security Doctrine developed in Brazil. After toppling the civilian government, General Onganía sought to replicate the Brazilian revolution of 1964. He and his subordinates ended political competition, restricted social and political rights, and imposed an economic restructuring program. Because they faced no armed opposition, they had no cause to employ their French counter revolutionary war techniques. However, Onganía's political repression and economic policies created simmering resentment. Social pressure boiled over in 1969 in a spontaneous uprising in the industrial city of Córdoba. The *cordobazo*, as Argentines dubbed it, led to the demise of Onganía's "Argentine Revolution" and ended the country's first effort to implement the NSD. It also spawned urban guerrilla movements advocating armed revolution.

Onganía's failure led to the return of Juan Perón. The elderly former-president won re-election in late 1973. Perón crafted a "Social Contract" that brought a brief stability to the country, but he died in office in 1974 and insecurity again gripped the nation. The country appeared to be in the midst of a civil war by 1976. In March of that year the military again seized power and implemented a second National Security Doctrine regime. The new dictatorship, under the command of Army General Rafael Videla, embraced French counter revolutionary war tactics and unleashed a "dirty war" on the nation. Videla and his supporters adopted an expansive definition of their enemies and dehumanized them as traitors and non-citizens.

The combination of a National Security Doctrine government and the widespread use of French counter revolutionary war tactics against the population resulted in the most lethal dirty war regime in the Southern Cone. In the space of just six short years Videla and his accomplices murdered and disappeared as many as 30,000 Argentines

while torturing tens of thousands more. The Proceso dictatorship forever stained the reputation of the Argentine military and caused deep wounds in the society it had sworn to protect and defend. The regime's brutal tactics also inculcated lingering hatreds rather than healing the nation.

## Chapter Eleven: Conclusion

Havana's "export of revolution" and Washington's "counterinsurgency era" under President Kennedy set the international stage for Latin America's Cold War during the 1960s. Both nations fought a hidden war -- one seeking to replicate revolution, the other working to prevent the spread of Communism. However, the agency of local actors in South America often thwarted the efforts of both of these outside actors. Unique internal factors in each nation proved of much greater impact than external influences. South American leftists adapted and transformed Che Guevara's theories to fit local circumstances. Militants in Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia and Peru all sought to replicate Fidel Castro's rural-based revolution, although without success. Others modified the Cuban model. Brazilian Carlos Marighella transformed Guevara's rural *foco* strategy into an urban terrorism doctrine that influenced city-based guerrillas in several other countries. Numerous leftist insurgent groups accepted at least some Cuban financial and guerrilla training support. Yet almost all insurgent groups rejected Cuban control.

Similarly, South American political leaders chose whether to accept or reject U.S. internal security doctrine and training. Venezuela and Colombia embraced American counterinsurgency and sought U.S. Army assistance in confronting internal insecurity. Brazil, Argentina, and Chile shunned the American "model." Instead, they each developed local variants of what was later termed the National Security Doctrine, which they based in large part on French theories of counter revolutionary war. These Southern Cone armies also confronted internal insurgencies in their own unique ways. Each army

developed distinctive counter revolutionary tactics. They adopted practices and tactics from the French experience in Algeria, but they also derived lessons from the experiences of their regional neighbors and adapted their tactics to fit their own histories and goals.

Declassified U.S. Army documents and American government records form the foundation of this dissertation. These records open the “black box” of American foreign military training and allow the opportunity to demystify counterinsurgency. Unit histories of the Special Action Force, course catalogs and attendance records of the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and the School of the Americas in Panama bring new facts to old debates. For the first time these documents allow us to understand what the U.S. Army actually taught under the rubric of counterinsurgency, who they trained and when, and to what degree regional armies accepted or rejected that training.

These declassified documents also provide new insights into how Washington sought to disseminate its counterinsurgency doctrine in South America. The majority of that effort took place through U.S. Army schools and mobile training team missions. However, both activities soon confronted barriers of nationalism and resistance to change in regional armies. Political and economic crises at the national level often interrupted U.S. military assistance even in countries that sought American help. Meanwhile, the problems of perishability inherent in training conscript-based armies, many of whose soldiers were illiterate, plagued U.S. Army efforts across the region and throughout the decade.

The U.S. Army overcame these obstacles and instilled enduring counterinsurgency capabilities in Venezuela and Colombia through a three-tiered process. American instructors taught individuals, they trained units and, most importantly, they developed local instructor cadres. These partner army instructors were then able to

sustain and expand U.S. counterinsurgency tactics and doctrine within their organizations. In Bolivia, American trainers only instructed individuals and selected units. The Bolivian Army chose not to integrate American internal security tactics and concepts into its schools systems. Thus the capabilities of its two Special Action Force trained counterinsurgency battalions withered over time. When Che Guevara targeted the country for revolution in 1967, Bolivian and American policymakers lacked confidence in the Bolivian Army's counterinsurgency-trained units. Instead of relying on these formations, they directed the Special Action Force to train yet another new counterinsurgency battalion from scratch. That unit eventually helped defeat Che Guevara's guerrilla *foco*, but it also exemplified the perishability of American counterinsurgency training. Because the Bolivian Army did not instill a counterinsurgency instructor capability in its schools, it was not able to sustain the proficiency of its counterinsurgency battalions. When the conscript soldiers manning those units completed their one-year term of service they departed – and they took their advanced skills with them. The next batch of conscripts had no formalized means of receiving counterinsurgency training from within the Bolivian Army, thus the proficiency of the counterinsurgency battalions rapidly declined. Other armies that lacked an internal counterinsurgency instructor capability faced the same dilemma. Training only individuals and units was not enough to overcome the perishability obstacle.

Washington's effort to spread its counterinsurgency doctrine also struggled against the often underestimated strength of Latin American agency. The United States did not dictate counterinsurgency for its regional allies. No regional army, even those most accepting of American military support, served as proxies of the United States. In fact, some countries outright rejected the American doctrine. Regional political leaders

determined what American military training they accepted, not Washington – and regional leaders overwhelmingly chose civic action and conventional military skills training over internal security.

The historiography of Latin America's Cold war has often overestimated the impact and durability of U.S. counterinsurgency training. Despite the claims by some U.S. Army School of the Americas administrators that all courses had applicability to counterinsurgency, the majority of instruction included only a cursory discussion of internal security doctrine. Likewise, far fewer students undertook counterinsurgency focused courses than previously understood. Although the School of the Americas trained more than a thousand students a year during the 1960s, the number attending internal security classes numbered less than two hundred in the apogee year of 1962. The same dynamic affected the Special Action Force's mobile training team efforts. During the peak years of its counterinsurgency training efforts in 1965 and 1966, internal security missions comprised less than twenty percent of its overall activity. The bulk of the Green Beret's missions in South America across the decade taught civic action and conventional military skills, not counterinsurgency.

The very fact that armies accepted U.S. training does not imply that South American political leaders ceded control of their military forces to the Americans. The Special Action Force was tasked to "develop, organize, train and direct native forces" among its primary missions, yet it never actually directed any regional military forces during its eleven-year lifespan. U.S. Army officers recommended a large influx of Green Berets to advise and direct Colombian Army battalions in 1962. Political leaders in Bogotá immediately rejected that proposal. Venezuelan and Bolivian presidents also proscribed American advisors from accompanying their military units into guerrilla

zones. Despite the widespread perception of American military hegemony in the historiography of Latin America's Cold War, U.S. military officers never directed South American army units during internal security or combat operations within their national territories during the 1960s. Special Forces trainers remained far removed when a company of the Bolivian Ranger Battalion they helped create captured Che Guevara.

These same declassified records also shed new light on how United States policymakers conceptualized counterinsurgency and how Army strategists converted theory into doctrine and tactics. New research helps bridge the gap between a discourse analysis and action. This dissertation connects what policymakers and military strategists said and wrote about counterinsurgency with how security forces in six South American nations actually implemented those policies and tactics on the ground. Washington conceived its counterinsurgency doctrine as a means to support friendly democratic governments facing the threat of Communism and external aggression while on the path to modernization. President Kennedy and his advisors developed their counterinsurgency doctrine as "preventative medicine" to avert another Cuba in the hemisphere.<sup>1</sup> American policymakers prescribed civic action and internal economic development under the Alliance for Progress as means to temper internal unrest and defuse the potential for revolutions. They also sought to avoid an internal war in a friendly nation that might require the commitment of American military forces. U.S. Army strategists, in turn, developed counterinsurgency doctrine and tactics that stressed concern for the local peasantry in an effort to "win the hearts and minds" of the populace. American strategists saw the peasantry as a potential bulwark against the revolutionaries. Meanwhile, army tactics focused on raising elite counter guerrilla battalions capable of

---

<sup>1</sup> Walt W. Rostow, "Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson," 11 October 1967, National Security Files, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library.

defeating the armed guerrillas in the remote countryside. In the Andean Ridge, Venezuela, Colombia and Bolivia adopted these concepts.

The armies of the Southern Cone rejected American counterinsurgency. Instead, the National Security Doctrine held sway at the Southern end of the continent. However, there was no single National Security Doctrine. Contrary to some authors' assessment, the United States did not export these concepts. Brazilian, Argentine, and Chilean military theorists developed their own unique internal security concepts, but there were strong similarities between these countries policies. These doctrines, although superficially similar to American counterinsurgency in their focus on internal security and internal economic development, differed dramatically in the methods they advocated. Southern Cone officers came to blame civilian politicians for much of the political, social and economic turmoil their nations faced during the 1960s. They viewed democracy as fractious, weak and ill-suited to overcome the threat of Communism. In turn, the National Security Doctrines they developed envisioned authoritarian government, led by military officers, as the best method to achieve internal security. Once they had brought their unruly populations and inept politicians under control, these officers reasoned, they would then be free to implement their economic policies without the hindrance of political competition. The Brazilian Army led the way. They seized the reins of government in 1964 and implemented an economic development agenda while restricting political participation and public freedoms. Argentina sought to emulate elements of the Brazilian program in 1966 but failed. Argentine military officers tried again in 1976 with disastrous consequences. Chile undertook its own authoritarian dictatorship and economic restructuring in aftermath of the 1973 coup d'état that ended the socialist presidency of Salvador Allende, again at high cost in human terms. The Southern Cone



armies' imposition of military dictatorship was the antithesis of Kennedy's counterinsurgency doctrine which sought to strengthen electoral democracies, not replace them.

These National Security Doctrines of the Southern Cone derived much of their intellectual origin from French counter revolutionary war theory. Brazilian and Argentine officers, and later the Chileans, accepted the French premise that the political and social upheavals of the 1960s Cold War were much more than just struggles on the road to modernization. Like French military officers, they saw internal dissent and armed resistance as proof of an ongoing subversive war waged by Communism. At stake in this new global war was the fate of Western Christianity, which created a total war mindset. Anything was permissible to ensure the survival of the state – even the sacrifice of democracy. Southern Cone military dictatorships also adopted many of the harsh tactics the French Army applied during the Algerian War. Rather than focusing lethal military force only against the armed insurgents, as dictated by American counterinsurgency, Southern Cone armies went much further. They branded members of each of these groups as traitors against the state and dehumanized them as a “cancer” they must excise from the body of the nation or as “non-citizens.”<sup>2</sup> The Brazilian Army detained and tortured guerrilla supporters and sympathizers in later campaigns, although it restricted its killing to the armed insurgents. The Chilean and Argentine armies greatly enlarged the scope of whom they considered their enemies and unleashed torture, disappearances, and murder against the armed guerrillas, their supporters, and their sympathizers alike.

---

<sup>2</sup> Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: a French view of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 28. For dehumanization see for example, Brazilian President General Emílio Garrastazú Médici quoted in Thomas Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1988), 128; Argentine President Jorge Videla quoted in Sir Robert Thompson, ed., *War in Peace* (New York: Harmony, 1982), 178; and Chilean President Augusto Pinochet, in Augusto Pinochet *Chile on its Way to the Future* (Santiago: Impresora Filadelfia, 1976).

Meanwhile, the Venezuelan, Colombian and Bolivian armies all employed the American counterinsurgency model during the 1960s. None of these armies embarked on a “dirty war” against their own citizens. These historical case studies do not suggest that U.S. military aid or American counterinsurgency enabled democracy to survive. Bolivia again reverted to military dictatorship. Moreover, the survival of democracy has complicated causality that lies beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, these cases do cast serious doubt on the thesis that U.S. military assistance or American counterinsurgency caused coups d’état or human rights violations. The historical record shows that South American countries that accepted U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine fared much better than those that rejected it in favor of National Security Doctrines and French counter revolutionary tactics. Brazil, Chile and Argentina chose not to accept U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine and tactics. Military regimes in those nations conducted “dirty wars” against their own populations a result of their own choices, not because of their slight exposure to American counterinsurgency concepts.

## **Appendix: Types of Special Action Force Mobile Training Team Missions**

Army Forces Southern Command designated the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group the primary organization responsible for offering and conducting twenty-five types of mobile training team missions in its 1966 Regulation No. 551-5 *Foreign Nationals*.

1. Internal defense operations.
2. Counterguerrilla warfare operations.
3. Psychological operations.
4. Unconventional warfare operations.
5. Medical health, field sanitation, and first aid.
6. Unit supply.
7. Engineer construction.
8. Engineering equipment maintenance and supply procedures.
9. Well drilling.
10. Intelligence and counterintelligence.
11. Communications operations and maintenance.
12. Military Police operations.
13. Airborne training and operations.
14. Parachute maintenance.
15. Rifle marksmanship.
16. Weapons (small arms, mortars, and light artillery).
17. Small arms maintenance.
18. Demolitions and counter-demolitions training.
19. Small unit tactical training.

20. Basic unit training and advanced individual training, infantry and artillery.
21. Underwater operations.
22. Jungle operations.
23. Mountain operations.
24. Desert operations.
25. Ranger training.<sup>1</sup>

In its 1965 historical report, the Special Action Force listed twenty-five varieties of mobile training team missions that it had completed between 1962 and 1965. Each listing also contained a brief summary:

**Airborne:** To train personnel in airborne techniques, including basic airborne, free fall and packing and maintenance procedures.

**Artillery Repair and Maintenance:** To present detailed instruction on the operation and maintenance of the 90mm recoilless rifle, and instruct in the care and maintenance of ammunition.

**Automotive Foreman:** To train personnel in field of maintenance and supply systems, and techniques of instruction for supply and maintenance specialty courses.

**Counter-Guerrilla:** To present instruction in counter-guerrilla operations and special warfare techniques.

**Counterinsurgency:** To assist the host country in preparing and coordinating a national counterinsurgency plan. To assist in the preparation of a national civic action program, including civic works, public relations, health and sanitation. Also to conduct psychological operations training for officers and enlisted men of the armed forces.

**Engineer:** To conduct on-the-job training in improving and simplifying road construction techniques, and the present courses of instruction to officers and enlisted men on the

---

<sup>1</sup> USARSO Regulation 551-1, 4-5.

operation and maintenance of engineer equipment. To provide technical advice on repair and parts systems, and assist in the construction and inspection of civic action rural schools.

**Explosives, Ordnance and Demolitions:** Instruction to train members of the Latin American armed forces as EOD specialists for commercial and military explosives and unconventional explosives.

**Forestry:** To form a plan for the utilization of a proposed CCC-type [Civilian Conservation Corps] organization to be used in the fields of reforestation and soil conservation.

**Infantry:** Instruction in infantry weapons employment and maintenance. Also instruction in squad-level and platoon-level tactics and battle drills.

**Infantry Tactics:** To train cadre in small unit tactics and weapons proficiency, and advise on the conduct of basic individual training.

**Intelligence Technical Specialist:** To instruct in the use and maintenance of intelligence equipment kits.

**Logistics:** To provide detailed orientation to senior military logistics installation commanders and general staff officers on current U.S. Army doctrine and procedures for logistics at all echelons.

**Marksmanship:** To train a rifle team in all aspects of competitive marksmanship and coaching.

**Medical:** To advise armies on hospital administration, pharmacy operation and to train medical aidmen.

**Medical Equipment Repair:** To give training in the repair and general maintenance of various types of medical equipment.

**Medical Sanitation:** To construct a sanitary demonstration area, and conduct classes on basic sanitation for company level.

**Military Intelligence:** To instruct Latin American armed forces in intelligence collection and analysis, interrogation procedures and photographic interpretation.

**Military Police:** To develop a criminal investigation program. To provide select individuals with a working knowledge of correctional principles, and the theories and practices which apply to confinement facilities. Also to make a safety survey and advise concerning safety education.

**Ordnance, Ammunition:** To conduct physical security and ordnance ammunition surveys of storage sites and make recommendations to improve deficiencies.

**Ordnance, Maintenance:** To advise officers and enlisted men in the operation and maintenance of the five-ton wrecker and other heavy equipment.

**Psychological Operations:** To conduct assessments of actual and potential capabilities of the armed forces for psychological operations, civic action and printed media.

**Psychological warfare:** To organize and Information Office at the Ministry of War level, and train personnel in news writing, photography, radio, television, and internal information.

**Signal:** To conduct radio operator instruction and radio maintenance courses up to third echelon maintenance.

**Underwater Survey:** To conduct underwater surveys of rivers to determine the best method of destroying rapids to improve river navigation.

**Wheeled Vehicle Maintenance:** To instruct in the maintenance of tactical vehicles from troubleshooting to rebuilding engines.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> SAF 65.

## **Bibliography**

### **Archives Consulted:**

Central Intelligence Agency, Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, online database.

Declassified Documents Reference System, University of Texas at Austin, online database.

Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, online database.

Department of State, Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, online database.

Digital National Security Archives, Georgetown University, online database.

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, MA.

Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX

National Archives II, College Park, MD.

Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library, Yorba Linda, CA.

U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

U.S. Army South, Command Historian Files, Fort Sam Houston, TX.

### **United States Army Field Manuals and Pamphlets:**

U.S. Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Colombia*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 550-26, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 22 June 1964).

U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations Against Guerrilla Forces*, Special Text 31-20-1, (Fort Benning, GA: The Infantry School, September, 1950).

U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations Against Irregular Forces*, Field Manual 31-15, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, May 31, 1961).

U.S. Department of the Army, *Guerrilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations*, Field Manual 31-21, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, September 29, 1961).

U.S. Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces*, Field Manual 31-22, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, November 12, 1963).

U.S. Department of the Army, *Counter guerrilla Operations*, Field Manual 31-16, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, February 19, 1963).

U.S. Department of the Army, *Counter guerrilla Operations*, Field Manual 31-16, Change 1 to 1967 edition, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, July 25, 1969).

U.S. Department of the Army, *Counter guerrilla Operations*, Field Manual 31-16, Change 2 to 1967 edition, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, May 27, 1970).

#### **Unpublished Dissertations and Theses:**

Almeida, Thamyras F. T., “Araguaia: Maoist Uprising and Military Counterinsurgency in the Brazilian Amazon, 1967-1975” (unpublished thesis University of Massachusetts – Amherst, 2015).

Barber, Kenneth H., “U.S. Military Schools for Latin America: a Unique Plus for Uncle Sam” (Student Essay, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, April 22, 1966).

Davis, Douglas W., “The Inter-American Defense College: an Assessment of its Activities” (unpublished dissertation, University of Maryland, 1967).

Fox, Carlton T. Jr., “The U.S. Army School of the Americas and U.S. National Interests in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” (unpublished thesis Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2001).

Lauderback, David M., “The U.S. Army School of the Americas: Mission and Policy during the Cold War” (unpublished dissertation, the University of Texas at Austin, 2004).

Miller, Aragon Storm, “Precarious Paths to Freedom: The United States, the Caribbean Basin, & the New Politics of the Latin American Cold War, 1958-1968” (unpublished dissertation, the University of Texas at Austin, 2012).



Pancake, Frank Robbins, "Military Assistance as an Element of United States Foreign Policy in Latin America, 1950-1968" (unpublished dissertation, University of Virginia, 1969).

Perino, George Henry Jr., "An Analytical Investigation of the Role of the United States Army Special Forces in National Security, 1952-1966" (unpublished thesis, Stetson University, DeLand, FL., 1970).

Pierce, Barbara Eleanor, "The Argentine Military Junta's Ideology in the Dirty War: the Ongoing Battle to Conquer Barbarism" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1993).

Ramsey, Russell W., "The Modern Violence in Colombia, 1946-1965" (unpublished dissertation, University of Florida, 1970).

Taylor del Cid, Alex A., "Purging the Bad Blood: Argentina's Long March Towards the 'Dirty War, 1930-1985'" (unpublished dissertation, University of Calgary, 2005).

Waghelstein, John David, "A Theory of Revolutionary Warfare and its Application to the Bolivian Adventure of Che Guevara" (unpublished thesis, Cornell University, 1973).

### **Articles and Reports:**

Bauer, Charles J., "USCARIB's Biggest Little School" *Army Information Digest*, vol. 17, no. 10, (October 1962), 24-28.

Bawden, John R., "Gazing Abroad, The Chilean Military's Reading of International Events: Implications for Doctrine, Ideology and Behavior, 1945-1975" *The Latin Americanist*, vol. 56, no. 3, (September 2012), 5-30.

Bernstein, Adam, "Jorge Rafael Videla, Argentine Junta Leader, dies at 87" *The Washington Post*, 17 May 2013.

Betancourt, Rómulo, "The Venezuelan Miracle" *The Reporter*, 13 August 1964.

Blakeley, Ruth, "Still Training to Torture? US Training of Military Forces in Latin America" *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 8, (2006) 1439-1461.

Briscoe, Charles. H., "The Bolivia Mission, Site Survey, and MTT Mission Prep" *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, (2008), 46-51.

Briscoe, Charles. H., "Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X" *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, (2008), 62-67.

Briscoe, Charles. H., "Field Sanitation: Practicing Medicine and Civic Action in Bolivia" *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, (2008), 68-75.

Brown, Jonathan C., "To Make the Revolution: Solidarity and Division among Latin American Guerrillas in the 1960s" *Asian Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, (2015), 1-25.

Brown, Jonathan C., "Origins of Argentina's Armed Struggle," (unpublished book chapter).

Boulnois, Yves, "L'Operation 'Registro,' Rapport Mensuel de Mai 70" link posted in "Napalm no Vale do Ribeira" *Agencia Publica*, 25 de agosto de 2014, accessed online 12 April 2016 at <http://apublica.org/2014/08/napalm-no-vale-do-ribeira/>

Carlson, Eric Steiner, "The Influence of French 'Revolutionary War' Ideology on the use of Torture in Argentina's 'Dirty War'" *Human Rights Review*, July-September 2000, 71-84.

Center for Research in Social Systems, "Internal Defense Against Insurgency: Six Cases" (The American University, Washington, D.C., 1966).

Comissão Nacional da Verdade, "Capítulo 14: A Guerrilha do Araguaia" Relatório, vol. 1, (Dezembro de 2014), accessed online 12 April 2016 at <http://www.cnv.gov.br/todos-volume-1/658-documentos-sobre-a-guerrilha-do-araguaia.html>

Cousins, Cyrus Stephen, "General Onganía and the Argentine [Military] Revolution of the Right: Anti-Communism and Morality, 1966-1970" *Historia Actual Online*, no. 17 (October 2008), 65-79.

Cradock, Christopher M. and M. L. R. Smith, "'No Fixed Values:' A Reinterpretation of the Influence of the Theory of Guerre Révolutionnaire and the Battle of Algiers, 1956-1957" *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4, Fall 2007, 68-105.

Feldman, David L., "Argentina, 1945-1971: Military Assistance, Military Spending, and the Political Activity of the Armed Forces" *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, vol. 24, no. 3 (Aug 1982), 321-336.

Finlayson, Kenneth, "The 1960s: A Decade of Revolution" *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, (2008), 14-21.

Finlayson, Kenneth, "Turning the Tables on Che: The Training at La Esperanza" *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, (2008), 76-85.

Finlayson, Kenneth, "The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion and the Capture of Che Guevara" *Veritas*, vol. 4, no. 4, (2008), 94-97.

Gardner, Hugh H., "Jungle Warfare Training in the Canal Zone" (unpublished historical report, U.S. Army South, Command Historian Files, Fort Sam Houston, TX, 1968).

Georgetown Research Project, "Castro-Communist Insurgency in Venezuela; A Study of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency Operations and Techniques in Venezuela, 1960-1964" (Atlantic Research Corporation, Alexandria, VA, 1964).

Haahr, James C., "Military Assistance to Latin America" *Military Review*, May 1969, 12-21.

Holbrook, R., et al, "Counterinsurgency Studies in Latin America – Venezuela and Colombia" (Defense Research Corporation: Santa Barbara, CA, 1965).

Kirkland, Robert O., "United States Military Assistance to the Bolivian Military 1958-1964" MACLAS Latin American Essays, March 1998.

Klette, Immanuel J., "U.S. Assistance to Venezuela and Chile in Combatting Insurgency 1963-1964 – Two Cases" *Conflict*, vol. 3, no. 4, (1982), 227-244.

Llumá, Diego, "Los Maestros de la Tortura" *Todo es Historia*, no. 442, 6-16.

Martins Filho, João Roberto, "A Influência Doutrinária Francesa Sobre os Militares Brasileiros no anos de 1960" *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, vol. 23, no. 67, (Junho 2008), 39-50.

Martins Filho, João Roberto, "Military Ties between France and Brazil during the Cold War, 1959–1975" *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 41, no. 5, (Sep 2014), 167-183.

McCoy, Katherine, "Trained to Torture? The Human Rights Effects of Military Training at the School of the Americas" *Latin American Perspectives*, issue 145, vol. 32, no. 6, (Nov 2005), 47-64.

McPherson, Alan, "Courts of World Opinion: Trying the Panama Flag Riots of 1964" *Diplomatic History*, vol. 28, no. 1, (Jan, 2004): 83-112.

Moss, Robert, "Uruguay: Terrorism Versus Democracy" *Conflict Studies*, no. 14, August, 1971.

Munck, Ronaldo, "The "Modern" Military Dictatorship in Latin America: The Case of Argentina (1976-1982)" *Latin American Perspectives*, issue 47, vol. 12, no. 4, (Fall 1985).

de Onis, Juan, "Guerrillas in Argentina Battle Army in a War Without Prisoners" *New York Times*, 11 November 1975.

Osiel, Mark J., "Constructing Subversion in Argentina's Dirty War" *Representations*, vol. 75, no. 1, (Summer 2001), 119-158.

Palacios, Margarita, "A Psychosocial Interpretation of Political Violence: Chile 1970–1973" *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, vol. 16, no. 3, (4 Sep 2011), 244–260.

Pázmány, Z., "Background for Counterinsurgency Studies in Latin America: Volume III, Notes on Violence in Venezuela and Colombia" (Defense Research Corporation: Santa Barbara, CA, 1964).

Pineo, Ronn, "Debating the School of the Americas" Council on Hemispheric Affairs, December 5, 2014, accessed online 8 February 2015 at <http://www.coha.org/debating-the-school-of-the-americas/>

Pinochet, Augusto, "Chile on its Way to the Future" (Address delivered in Santiago, Chile, September 11, 1976) (Santiago: Impresora Filadelfia, 1976).

Pion-Berlin, David and George A. Lopez, "Of Victims and Executioners: Argentine State Terror, 1975-1979" *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 1, (March 1991), 63-86.

Poole, Walter S., "The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1961-1964" (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011).

Poole, Walter S., "The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1965-1968" (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012).

Puckett, Ralph Jr., "Lancero" *Infantry Magazine*, July-September 1959.

Rempe, Dennis M., “Guerrillas, Bandits, and Independent Republics: US Counter-insurgency Efforts in Colombia, 1959-1965” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 6, no. 3, (Winter 1995), 304-327.

Rempe, Dennis M., “The Origin of Internal Security in Colombia: Part I – a CIA Special Team Surveys La Violencia, 1959-1960” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 10, no. 3. (Winter 1999).

Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation (also known as the Rettig Report), United States Institute of Peace, posted 4 October 2002, accessed 3 July 2016 online at:

[http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/collections/truth\\_commissions/Chile90-Report/Chile90-Report.pdf](http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/collections/truth_commissions/Chile90-Report/Chile90-Report.pdf)

*The Review of the River Plate*, January 22, 1965.

Riveiro, María Belén, Luciana Rosende and Lior Zylberman, “Genocide on Trial: Case Note and Extracts of ‘Circuito Camps’ Judgment” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, Vol. 8: No. 1 (2013), 57-65.

Rodrigues Sales, Jean, “A Ação Libertadora Nacional, a Revolução Cubana e a Luta Armada no Brasil” *Tempo*, vol. 14, num. 27 (2009) 199-217.

Romero, Simon, “Manuel Marulanda, Top Commander of Colombia’s Largest Guerrilla Group, Is Dead” *New York Times*, 26 May 2008.

Rosignoli, Bruno, “Archaeology of State Terrorism: Exploring the Territorial Strategies of Clandestine Repression in Argentina (1976–1983)” *Archaeologies* vol. 11, no. 2 (August 2015), 144–168.

Smallman, Shawn C., “The Professionalization of Military Terror in Brazil, 1945-1964” *Luso-Brazilian Review*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Summer 2000), 117-128.

St. George, Andrew, “Finally the Full Story: How the U.S. Got Che Guevara” *True* (April 1969).

Szulc, Tad, “Northeast Brazil Poverty Breeds Threat of Revolt” *New York Times* (22 October 1960), 1.

Taylor, Marcus, “From National Development to “Growth with Equity:” Nation-building in Chile, 1950-2000” *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 1, (2006), 69-84.

Teitel, Simón and Francisco E. Thoumi, "From Import Substitution to Exports: The Manufacturing Exports Experience of Argentina and Brazil" *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vol. 34, no. 3 (Apr. 1986).

*Time*, "Stamping Out La Violencia" 13 March 1964, 42.

*Time*, "A Changing Role" vol. 84, issue 21, 13 November 1964.

United States Army Center of Military History, "Counterinsurgency Training at the U.S. Army School of the Americas" unsigned memorandum dated 26 October 1965, Historic Manuscripts Collection, Box 8-2.9A AA (1963-64).

United States Senate, "United States Policies and Programs in Brazil" Hearings before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, May 4, 5, and 11, 1971 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971).

United States Senate, "Covert Actions in Chile, 1963-1973" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975).

Vigna, Anne, Luciano Onça, and Natalia Viana, "Napalm no Vale do Ribeira" *Agencia Publica*, 25 de agosto de 2014, accessed online 12 April 2016 at <http://apublica.org/2014/08/napalm-no-vale-do-ribeira/>

Wolf, Charles Jr., "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: New Myths and Old Realities" (Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, CA., 1965).

### **Books:**

Alexander, Robert J., *The Tragedy of Chile* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978).

Alves, Maria Helena Moreira, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil* (Austin: the University of Texas Press, 1985).

Andersen, Martin Edwin, *Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparecidos and the Myth of the "Dirty War"* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993).

Arruda, Antônio de, *A Escola Superior de Guerra* (São Paulo: Edições GRD, 1983).

- Aussaresses, Paul, *The Battle of the Casbah: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Algeria, 1955-1957* (New York: Enigma Books, 2002).
- Bacchus, Wilfred A., *Mission in Mufti: Brazil's Military Regimes, 1964-1985* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990).
- Barber, Willard F. and C. Neale Ronning, *Internal Security and Military Power; Counterinsurgency and Civic Action in Latin America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966).
- Beckett, Ian F.W., *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750* (New York: Routledge, 2001).
- Bezerra, Gustavo Henrique Marques, *Da Revolução ao Reatamento: a Política Externa Brasileira e a Questão Cubana (1959-1986)* (Brasilia: Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, 2012).
- Birtle, Andrew J., *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 2006).
- Black, Jan Knippers, *United States Penetration of Brazil* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977)
- Blaufarb, Douglas S., *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance* (New York: The Free Press, 1977).
- Bonachea, Ramón L. and Marta San Martín, *The Cuban Insurrection 1952-1959* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1974).
- Brands, Hal, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).
- Brown, Jonathan C., *A Brief History of Argentina* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2011).
- Centeno, Miguel Angel, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).
- Child, John, *Unequal Alliance: the Inter-American Military System, 1938-1978* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980).
- Chudnovsky, Daniel and Andrés López, *The Elusive Quest for Growth in Argentina* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Colombia, Ejército, VIII Brigada, *De la violencia a la paz; experiencias de la Octava Brigada en la lucha contra guerrillas* (Manizales: Impr. Departamental de Caldas, 1965).

Constable, Pamela and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile under Pinochet* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

Crenshaw Hutchinson, Martha, *Revolutionary Terrorism: the FLN in Algeria, 1954-1962* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978).

Davis, Sonny B., *A Brotherhood of Arms; Brazil-United States Military Relations, 1945-1977* (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1996).

Dinges, John and Saul Landau, *Assassination on Embassy Row* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).

Dosal, Paul J., *Comandante Che: Guerrilla, Soldier, Commander, and Strategist* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

Dulles, John W. F., *Unrest in Brazil: Political-Military Crises 1955-1964* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970).

Ensalaco, Mark, *Chile Under Pinochet: Recovering the Truth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

Galula, David, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CN: Praeger Security International, 2006).

Garrard- Burnett, Virginia et al, eds., *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow; New Histories of Latin America's Cold War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013).

Gaspari, Elio, *A Ditadura Envergonhada* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002).

Gaspari, Elio, *A Ditadura Escancarada* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002).

Gill, Lesley, *Peasants, Entrepreneurs, and Social Change: Frontier Development in Lowland Bolivia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987).

Gill, Lesley, *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

Gillespie, Charles G., *Negotiating Democracy: Politicians and Generals in Uruguay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).



- Gonzalez, Luis J. and Sanchez Salazar, Gustavo A., *The Great Rebel: Che Guevara in Bolivia* trans. Helen R. Lane (New York: Grove Press, 1969).
- Gott, Richard, *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America* (London: Thomas Nelsons and Sons, 1970).
- Grandin, Greg, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006).
- Grandin, Greg, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).
- Grandin, Greg and Gilbert M. Joseph, eds., *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America's Long Cold War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
- Guevara, Ernesto, *Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1961).
- Haggerty, Richard A., ed., *Venezuela: a Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1993).
- Hanratty, Dennis M. and Sandra W. Meditz, eds., *Colombia: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1990).
- Harmer, Tanya, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
- Heggoy, Alf Andrew, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972).
- Hodges, Donald C., *Argentina's "Dirty War": an Intellectual Biography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991).
- Hoe, Alan, *The Quiet Professional: Major Richard J. Meadows of the U.S. Army Special Forces* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2011).
- Hudson, Rex A., ed., *Brazil: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1998).
- Hudson, Rex A., ed., *Chile: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1994).

- Hudson, Rex A., ed., *Cuba: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2001).
- Huggins, Martha K., *Political Policing: The United States and Latin America* (Durham, NC: Duke University press, 1998).
- Huneus, Carlos, *The Pinochet Regime*, trans. Lake Sagaris (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007).
- Joes, Anthony James, *Urban Guerrilla Warfare* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2007).
- Kirkbride, Wayne A., *Special Forces in Latin America: from Bull Simmons to Just Cause* (Newport News, VA: Wayne Kirkbride, 1991).
- Kirkland, Robert O., *Observing our Hermanos de Armas: U.S. Military Attachés in Guatemala, Cuba, and Bolivia, 1950-1964* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
- Klare, Michael T. and Cynthia Arnson, *Supplying Repression; U.S. Support for Authoritarian Regimes Abroad* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1981).
- Lewis, Paul H., *Guerrillas and Generals: the "Dirty War" in Argentina* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002).
- Lieuwen, Edwin, *The United States and the Challenge to Security in Latin America* (n.p.: Ohio State University Press, 1966).
- Lieuwen, Edwin, *U.S. Policy in Latin America: a Short History* (New York: Praeger, 1965).
- Lieuwen, Edwin, *Venezuela* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).
- López, Ernesto, *Seguridad Nacional y Sedición Militar* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1987).
- Loveman, Brian, *Chile: the Legacy of Hispanic Capitalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
- Loveman, Brian, *For la Patria: Politics and the Armed Forces in Latin America* (Wilmington, DE, Scholarly Resources, 1999).

Lowenthal, Abraham F., ed., *Armies and Politics in Latin America* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1976).

Maran, Rita, *Torture: the Role of Ideology in the French-Algerian War* (New York: Praeger, 1989).

Marighella, Carlos, *Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerrilla* (Montreal: Abraham Guillen Press, 2002).

Maullin, Richard, *Soldiers, Guerrillas and Politics in Colombia* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1973).

Maullin, Richard L., *Soldiers, Guerrillas and Politics in Colombia* (published dissertation, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1972).

McClintock, Michael, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counterterrorism, 1940-1990* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992).

McSherry, Patrice J., *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2005).

Meditz, Sandra W. and Dennis M. Hanratty, eds., *Panama: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987).

Menjivar, Cecilia and Nestor Rodriguez, eds., *When States Kill: Latin America, the U.S., and Technologies of Terror* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

Morales, Waltrud Q., *A Brief History of Bolivia* (New York: Facts on File, 2003).

Nieto, Clara, *Masters of War: Latin America and United States Aggression from the Cuban Revolution through the Clinton Years* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003).

Nunn, Frederick M., *The Military in Chilean History, Essays on Civil-Military Relations, 1810-1973* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976).

Nyrop, Richard F., ed., *Brazil: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1983).

Paddock, Alfred H. Jr., *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins: Psychological and Unconventional Warfare, 1941-1952* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1982).

Page, Joseph A., *The Revolution That Never Was; Northeastern Brazil 1955-1965* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972).

Picciuolo, José Luis, *Historia de la Escuela Superior de Guerra* (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar República Argentina, 2000).

Pinheiro, Alvaro de Souza and William W. Mendel, *Guerrillas in the Brazilian Amazon* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 1995).

Pinochet, Augusto, *The Crucial Day*, trans. María Teresa Escobar (Santiago: Editorial Renacimiento, 1982).

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

Poggio Teixeira, Carlos Gustavo, *Brazil, the United States and the South American Subsystem: Regional Politics and the Absent Empire* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012).

Porch, Douglas, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Porzecanski, Arturo C., *Uruguay's Tupamaros: The Urban Guerrillas* (New York: Praeger, 1973).

Prado Salmón, Gary, *The Defeat of Che Guevara: Military Response to Guerrilla Challenge in Bolivia* (New York: Praeger, 1990).

Quirk, Robert E., *Fidel Castro* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993).

Rabe, Stephan G., *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

Rabe, Stephan, *The Killing Zone, The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Ramsey, Russell W., *Guardians of the Other Americas: Essays on the Military Forces of Latin America* (Lanham, MA: University Press of America, 1997).

Rempe, Dennis M., *The Past as Prologue: A History of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in Colombia, 1958-66* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2002).

Rock, David, *Argentina 1516-1982, From Spanish Colonization to the Falklands War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

Rock, David, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, its History and its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

Rodriguez, Felix I. and John Weisman, *Shadow Warrior* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989).

Rohter, Larry, *Brazil on the Rise: The Story of a Country Transformed* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Rudolph, James D., ed., *Argentina, A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985).

Ryan, Henry Butterfield, *The Fall of Che Guevara: a Story of Soldiers, Spies, and Diplomats* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Selcher, Wayne A., *The National Security Doctrine and Policies of the Brazilian Government* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 1977).

Shafer, D. Michael, *Deadly Paradigms; the Failure of U. S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

Sheahan, John, *Patterns of Development in Latin America: Poverty, Repression and Economic Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

Shultz, Richard H., et al., *Guerilla Warfare and Counterinsurgency: U.S.-Soviet Policy in the Third World* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989).

Sigmund, Paul E., *The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile, 1964-1976* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977).

Skidmore, Thomas E., *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

Skidmore, Thomas E., *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

- Skidmore, Thomas E., and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America* (New York: Oxford Press, 1997).
- Simpson, Charles M. III, *Inside the Green Berets: The First Thirty Years, A History of the U.S. Army Special Forces* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983).
- Smallman, Shawn C., *Fear and Memory in the Brazilian Army and Society, 1889-1954* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
- Smith, Peter H., *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S. – Latin American Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Smith, Peter H., *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- Special Forces Association, *Special Forces; the First Fifty Years* (n.p.: Faircount LLC, 2002).
- Stepan, Alfred, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971).
- Spooner, Mary Helen, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land: The Pinochet Regime in Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
- Sutherland, Ian D. W., *Special Forces of the United States Army, 1952/1982* (San Jose, CA: James A. Bender Publishing, 1990).
- Tarver Denova, H. Michael, et al., *Venezuelan Insurgency 1960-1968; A Successful Failure* (United States: Xlibris Corp., 2001).
- Thompson, Sir Robert, ed., *War in Peace* (New York: Harmony, 1982).
- Trinquier, Roger, *Modern Warfare: a French view of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Praeger, 1964).
- U.S. Department of the Army, *Special Warfare, U.S. Army: an Army Specialty* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962).
- U.S. Army School of the Americas, *Adelante: U.S. Army School of the Americas 1946-2000* (Fort Benning, GA: U.S. Army School of the Americas Public Affairs, 2001).
- Valenzuela, Arturo, *Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

Vazquez-Rodriguez, Isabelino, *Proud to Serve my Country* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2011).

Weil, Jean Louis, et al, *The Repressive State: the Brazilian "National Security Doctrine" and Latin America* (Toronto, Canada: Brazilian Studies, 1976).

Weil, Thomas E., et al, *Area Handbook for Bolivia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974).

Wesson, Robert, ed., *The Latin American Military Institution* (New York: Praeger, 1986).

Wolpin, Miles D., *Military Aid and Counterrevolution in the Third World* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1972).

Wright, Thomas C., *State Terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and International Human Rights* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).

Wynia, Gary W., *Argentina in the Postwar Era: Politics and Economic Policy Making in a Divided Society* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978).

Young, Jordan M., ed., *Brazil 1954-64: End of a Civilian Cycle* (New York: Facts on File, 1972).