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of the 1950s, the Korean War, the formation of NATO, and the deployment of forces overseas in peacetime. Claxton was unique in Canadian defence politics: he was active, inventive, competent, and wise.

CANADA IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Is Canada an Atlantic regional nation or a western hemispheric nation? This question is odd, maybe even heretical and easily dismissed by Canada's international history. But in 2005, it is a question that deserves more than a passing regard. Many factors, including the fundamental changes to the structure of the North Atlantic alliance since the end of the Cold War, a more assertive European community, and increased trade and economic relations with Central and Latin America, have disturbed the easy assumption that Canada's interests can best be seen by looking out over the Atlantic Ocean.

By far the most disruptive factors, however, were created by the 9/11 attacks on North America. In an instant "defence of the homeland" became the sentinel issue in United States defence policy. Military commands were reorganized and bolstered, standing defence arrangements were realigned or new ones invented, and officers were redeployed to new duties. The most obvious and immediate change affected NORAD, its plans, organization and procedures. The second most significant change was the establishment of United States Northern Command. Although a Canada-United States Regional Planning Group has existed within NATO since its earliest days, planning for the defence of the continent has mostly been an air defence concern directed by the Pentagon and, after the end of the Cold War, not much of a concern at all. After 9/11, homeland defence became a wide-ranging national security responsibility embracing most departments and agencies of the United States government.

Continental defence, however, required Canadian cooperation, and gaining that cooperation required modifications to standing defence structures, including bringing NORAD into U.S. Northern Command and the integration of Canadian Forces officers and units into the new Command's plans and procedures. These changes fit easily into customary NATO, NORAD and Canada/United States (CANUS) organizations and understandings. Officers trained to watch over the northern approaches adapted readily to watching other horizons. Nevertheless, the customary threat assessments and lookouts did not address completely the threats

and vulnerabilities planners perceived following the attacks on New York and Washington. National defence required lookouts facing in every direction – to the south as well as to the north.

This basic conclusion turned the eyes of Pentagon planners towards Mexico and the Caribbean. Continental defence for the first time became a trilateral matter and, for Canadian Forces officers especially, introduced an entirely unfamiliar strategic dimension to Canadian defence policy and Canadian Forces operations.

Before the end of the Cold War, Canada had no Canadian Forces liaison officers in any capital south of Washington, although dozens of officers were deployed in Europe. Senior officers during this period attended meetings of various chiefs of staff sponsored by the Organization of American States, but until recently only as 'observers.'

Her Majesty's Canadian Ships paid port calls in the region from time-to-time, but interaction between military units from south of the United States and the Canadian Forces were sparse. When U.S. Northern Command drew Mexico inside its boundaries, the Canadian Forces were not well situated to understand the implications of this new arrangement.

Understanding the new arrangement involves more than discovering the military capabilities of the Mexican armed forces. Rather, the demands of continental defence outside the usual NATO context demands that Canadian Forces officers and government officials embark on a comprehensive investigation of the cultural, political, and military history of this large state. These studies, of course, provide the fundamental background to understanding of Mexico's defence interests, policies and the "politics of national defence policy." It is the politics of policy that is at the heart of international defence relations, for they define what might be possible (or impossible) when nations attempt to change policy intentions into viable outcomes.

Mexico shares with Canada and the United States a common history and many political concepts that shape its government, political culture and its armed forces. But there are important differences as well. If Canadian defence policies and bilateral military relationships are to prosper and provide for each state the defence outcomes they desire, then officers and officials need to become familiar with the history and the political culture of each others armed forces. This *Claxton Paper* is a step in this direction. It attempts to explain important aspects of Mexican military history and especially the changing nature of Mexican civil-military

The *Claxton Papers* could not be produced without the continuing support of the dedicated members of the School of Policy Studies. Particular thanks are due to Lois Jordan, my ever well organized assistant. John Marteinson, former editor of the *Canadian Military Journal*, carefully edited this paper, adding to it his vast experience of things military and the demands of academic work. Mark Howes and Valerie Jarus, as usual, are commended for their usual, careful and helpful preparation of this publication.

Contents

Acronyms

CENDRO	Centro de Control de Drogas / Drug Control Planning Centre
FFA	Fuerzas Federales de Apoyo / Federal Support Forces
FEADS	Fiscalía Especializada de Delitos Contra la Salud / Special Prosecutor for Drug Crimes
IFE	Instituto Federal Electoral / Federal Electoral Institute
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officers
PAN	Partido Acción Nacional / National Action Party
PGR	Procuraduría General de la República / Office of the Attorney General
PFP	Policía Federal Preventiva / Federal Preventative Police
PRD	Partido Revolucionario Democrático / Democratic Revolutionary Party
PNR	Partido Nacional Revolucionario / National Revolutionary Party
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional / Institutional Revolutionary Party
PRM	Partido de la Revolución Mexicana / Party of the Mexican Revolution
ROE	Rules of Engagement
SEDENA	Secretaría de Defensa Nacional / Ministry of National Defence
SEGOB	Secretaría de Gobernación / Ministry of the Interior
SM	Secretaría de Marina / Ministry of the Navy
TRIFE	Tribunal Federal Electoral / Federal Electoral Tribunal
UN	United Nations

Figure 1


San Diego
Tijuana
Ciudad Juarez
UNITED STATES
Dallas
400 km
New Orleans
Houston
Chihuahua
Guaymas
Monterrey
Gulf of Mexico
La Paz
Mazatlan
Pacific Ocean
Tampico
Puerto Vallarta
Guadalajara
Mexico City
Merida
Veracruz
MEXICO
Acapulco
Santa Cruz

CHAPTER ONE

North American Security and the Mexican Military

INTRODUCTION

Since coming to power in December of 2000, Mexican President Vicente Fox has continually expressed a willingness to pursue further North American integration beyond the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). At the Quebec City Summit of the Americas in 2001, for example, he declared his hope of moving toward a "North American Union" – an arrangement similar to the European Union that would involve a common currency, a customs union, new political institutions, the harmonization of a wide range of policies, and the establishment of a North American Regional Development Bank. The then-Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien received the proposal somewhat coolly, stating his view that North American integration should be strictly economic. U.S. President George W. Bush did not appear any more receptive to the idea. Fox has continued, nonetheless, to express his interest in further North American integration, but, despite having developed a close personal relationship with President Bush, his proposals have not got far: Bush has indicated that cooperation may be limited only to an immigration agreement.

The terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001 significantly changed the foreign policy priorities of the Bush administration, to the extent that even an immigration agreement between the U.S. and Mexico may not now be achievable. Since September 2001, the U.S. has focused on issues concerning security and terrorism, and other parts of the world such as the Middle East have taken precedence over North American issues. Fox's desire for closer North American integration does not appear to have abated, however, and he has in fact added a defence

component to his vision of a more integrated continental system. Soon after the attacks of September 11, he declared:

> [W]e consider that the struggle against terrorism forms part of a commitment of Mexico to Canada and the United States, as a result of the need to construct the framework of the North American Free Trade Agreement within which we build a shared space for development, well-being and integral security. At the hemispheric level, Mexico considers that the current struggle against terrorism is a basic component of our regional security that demands a redefinition of a doctrine of continental security and a redesign of the legal and diplomatic instruments for our legitimate defence.[1]

More recently, at a meeting between Presidents Bush and Fox in Crawford, Texas in March of 2004, Fox spoke about a "North American Initiative" – a proposal to increase trade flow further and coordinate policies more closely, especially in the energy sector, as well as establishing a regional security framework that could protect the three countries from terrorism.

It remains to be seen whether a security system such as envisioned by Fox will ever be created. Formidable barriers – sensitivities in both Mexico and Canada about sovereignty – would first have to be overcome, and there has been little interest within the current political leadership in Canada or in the U.S. However, even if a continental security structure is not created, it is possible that cooperation among the three countries will increase. Indeed, at the Monterrey Summit of the Americas, Prime Minister Paul Martin declared that stronger relations with Mexico were a priority for his government. In terms of security, there has already been increased cooperation in areas such as the sharing of intelligence and the

especially in regard to operations relating to the fight against drug trafficking, have grown in recent years, and there are signs that Mexican and Canadian military officials have at last increased interaction.

Whether the armed forces of Canada, Mexico and the U.S. take an active role in any continental security structure, or cooperate in foreign peace-keeping missions, one aspect of the relationship between Canada and Mexico that stands out is the scant knowledge that exists about the Mexican armed forces within the Canadian armed forces in particular, and the Canadian public more generally. This has in part been because the Canadian Forces has for decades worked mainly with the armed forces of NATO members, as well as because of the 'inward' orientation of the Mexican forces (unlike other Latin American countries that have taken part in foreign missions, such as Chile and Brazil, the Mexican military has focused almost entirely on internal matters such as drug trafficking and crime). This has resulted in very little understanding outside Mexico of the structure, doctrine, equipment or professional development of the Mexican armed forces.

Because of the possibility that the interaction between the Mexican and Canadian armed forces might increase – within or outside a continental security structure – or as a result of geographic proximity and the growing economic interdependence of both countries, better mutual understanding of the structure and inner workings of the other country's armed forces is not only desirable, but is also likely to be necessary in the future

The aim of this paper is to provide a general overview of the Mexican armed forces, with the intention of acquainting those in Canada, both military and civilian, with the Mexican armed forces and the changing nature of civil-military relations in Mexico. The authors hope that this will contribute to a better understanding in Canada of the history, structure and doctrine of the Mexican forces. We believe that this is long overdue, especially because of widespread misperceptions about the Mexican military that have been fuelled by allegations of human rights abuses and corruption within the officer corps. Although in some instances abuses certainly occurred, it should also be known that in Mexico the military is one of the most respected of national institutions among the population, and one on which many Mexicans depend, especially in rural areas, for things such as the delivery of medical services and natural-disaster relief.

The Mexican armed forces, we believe, are professional and well-respected institutions that are little understood outside Mexico, and about which the Canadian military ought to learn more.

The paper is divided into six chapters. The first places the formation of the Mexican military in historical perspective. This is important in that the distinctive characteristics of the Mexican armed forces are the result of very specific historical circumstances. Mexico is, after all, the only Latin American country not to have exper2orsMe
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CHAPTER TWO

Historical Context: The Mexican Military under the 'Perfect Dictatorship'

which they emerged, this chapter presents an historical overview of the armed forces in Mexico and their relationship with the PRI.

and forcing into exile those who opposed him. Díaz also co-opted potential opponents by promoting them to high-ranking positions, he established a personal constabulary (*rurales*) to crush opposition, and, to prevent enlisted soldiers developing strong personal loyalty to local commanders, he regularly shifted the commanders from place to place in the country's eleven military districts. At the same time, Díaz embarked on a process of professionalizing the armed forces, and he dramatically reduced the size of the Army. By the end of his term, there were only 20,000 enlisted soldiers and 4,000 officers, in a country of 14 million people.

While Díaz was successful in consolidating control over the military, he failed to appease civilian opponents. The centralization of power

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While the size of the military increased during the revolution, two general officers belonging to the revolutionary family became president in succession, Alvaro Obregón (1920 – 1924) and Plutarco Elias Calles (1924 – 1928). Both initiated a series of reforms intended to reduce the size and budget of the forces as well as to make them more professional. This was done in an attempt to de-politicize the forces and bring them firmly under civilian control. First, as had been done prior to the revolution, both purged the armed forces of rivals, or perceived rivals, by retiring hundreds of generals, arranging the mysterious disappearance of others, and bribing the rest. They filled the vacancies thus created with promising young officers who had graduated from the Colegio Militar at Chapultepec (created in 1917), dispatching some to areas where loyalty to the new regime was tenuous, sending others for training to military schools in Spain, Germany, France and the United States, and enlisting young men who had exhibited some loyalty to *caudillos* (regional strongmen). Second, with the assistance of the French, the Commission of Military Studies and the Superior War College were created in 1926 and 1932 respectively, with the intention of increasing both efficiency and professionalization. Third, the budget of the armed forces was cut almost in half.

While these reforms were successful in pacifying opposition, they were not enough to eliminate it completely. General Calles therefore decided to create a political party – the National Revolutionary Party (PNR)[5] – with the aim of assuaging the political rivalries that remained among the various military *caudillos*. Controlled by the President himself, the PNR became a centralized political institution that forced military rivals to resolve their differences within the party in exchange for personal security, material goods and control over their regional areas. The establishment of the PNR coincided with the beginning of the Great Depression of the 1930s. As this global economic downturn severely affected the commodity-dependent Latin American countries, Mexico and the rest of Latin America adopted measures such as high tariff barriers in an attempt to protect their markets from foreign competition and spur internal production and consumption. What ensued was a process of state-led urbanization and an increase of the size of labour and popular organizations.

It was during this time of economic crisis (a third of the workforce was unemployed by 1933) and enormous social change that a well-respected general, Lázaro Cárdenas, was elected president. Cárdenas introduced

far-ranging changes to the political system that resulted in the consolidation of the national party and the establishment of a corporatist system with a populist veneer. These changes realigned forces and created political institutions that would last for several decades. Indeed, some of them, such as corporatist mechanisms of mediation, are still present. In 1938, Cárdenas renamed the party and integrated the labour movement as well as the peasant and popular organizations into the party's leadership. By this means sectoral leaders representing the various corporate groups (e.g., labour unions and the peasantry) exchanged party loyalty for material benefits. With remarkable political skill, Cárdenas managed

first civilian president, Miguel Alemán, came into power in 1946, he accepted the authority that the generals of the revolution had given him in return for his absolute respect for the integrity of the military institution. For their part, the armed forces would give unconditional backing of the revolutionary elite and the revolutionary goals, unconditional loyalty and obedience to the civilian power. A fundamental component of this 'pact' was the significant level of internal autonomy that the military retained in both legal and real terms with regard to internal functioning, training and promotions, along with a high level of discretion in making expenditures.[7] The pact was facilitated by a generalized rejection of violence by the population in the wake of the excessively violent period of the revolution, as well as by the successful professionalization of the forces in which the values of loyalty, discipline and subordination were emphasized.

This relationship between the PRI and the military became a strong and harmonious one that lasted for several decades. Just as in the case of the other corporate groups – labour, the peasantry and business – the armed forces were one of the pillars that sustained the regime. Unlike the practice in most other Latin American countries, the Mexican armed forces did not get involved in political matters, accepting subordination to the President in accordance with his constitutional mandate. This, some analysts believe, was one of the sources of political stability of the Mexican political system under the PRI.[8] The armed forces, then, were the guardians not only of the Revolution, but also of the revolutionary elite.

While retaining its internal autonomy, the military was indeed called on by the PRI to assist in maintaining internal security. This was the case in 1958, when they were tasked to suppress a railroad workers' strike, in 1968 when they were asked to intervene against a student movement; and throughout the 1960s, when they were ordered to put down guerrilla uprisings, especially in the southern state of Guerrero. But these interventions were all temporary affairs, and the forces returned to their barracks once the situations were stabilized. What is important to note in all these

guardians of the revolutionary family. In some cases these increased responsibilities sometimes put a severe strain on the civil-military pact. spontate and adher3(a8(Fortoe ci)2ondon)-9n Tmplicit5on ciact.

CHAPTER 3

Structure and Organization of the Mexican Armed Forces

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the structure of the Mexican forces is that there are two distinct components, instead of the usual three found in most countries. The largest, best funded and most important is the Army, which includes the Air Force as a subordinate entity. The second is the Navy. The two components do not come under a single unified commander at any level below the President. That is to say, there is no Minister of Defence as the term is usually understood. Instead, a Minister who is a serving officer – a four-star General in the case of the Army and an Admiral in the case of the Navy – heads each of the component parts. Each minister serves in a dual capacity: as a full cabinet member reporting to the President, and as the operational commander of his force. (The Presidential Guard is a separate entity.) The ministers are handpicked by the President, and may or may not serve in that position for the entire *sexenio*, (period of office) of the incumbent president.[10] In the halcyon days of the PRI as ruling party, the selection of ministers was generally a pro-forma exercise, with strict attention being paid to seniority. In the past two *sexenios*, however, both Presidents Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000) and Vicente Fox (2000 to the present) strayed from the norm and reached down into more junior levels to select what some have described as 'more progressive' officers to lead the forces during times of change and, of course, support the President's agenda. It is certainly true that after 1994 the military as a whole has come under much more intense public scrutiny, both domestically and internationally, and the challenges to the leadership to permit greater openness, better fiscal accountability to the public, and more productivity in pursuing new missions will no doubt persist.

The current Ministers, General Vega García and Admiral Peyrot, are considered by most observers to be progressive and academic in nature and background, although they have not strayed far from the monolithic image usually associated with the Mexican military. The public does not get much insight into whatever internal debates and dialogue may be occurring within the institution, and both services continue to be responsive instead of proactive in terms of public relations. The armed forces have indeed developed public access websites, but the content of these is essentially limited to basic information.

Returning briefly to the matter of the subordination of the Air Force to the Army, it must be pointed out that although there is a *de facto* Air Force commander, he and his staff are embedded in the Army headquarters, and never has an Air Force officer risen to the most trusted senior positions within the hierarchy. This subordination has allowed the Army to use the term 'National Defence' (SEDENA) for its organizational structure, and General Vega García and his predecessors have held the title of Minister of Defence (much to the annoyance of the Navy).

ORGANIZATION

Both the Army and Navy are organized on a regional dispersion basis. There are centralized national headquarters in Mexico City, and many subordinate regional headquarters. Historically, this has proven to be effective, as the military's main employment has been on domestic missions. Troops are stationed throughout the country to serve as an ongoing

selected by lottery. Those so selected attend weekend training that emphasizes education, history, physical fitness and discipline. These recruits also act as a labour pool for a variety of public works social programs, such as tree trimming, clean-up of urban areas, painting schools, etc. Officer candidates from all three services are trained in a military college, in Mexico City for the Army, in Guadalajara for the Air Force and in Veracruz for the Navy. Officer candidates are generally selected from the lower and middle classes, and this therefore is seen as a mechanism for upward social mobility for the less privileged and less educated sectors of the population. The military colleges are not universities, but rather provide significant technical training related to employment after graduation in the various branches of the services. Great emphasis is also placed on military ethos (patriotism, honour, loyalty) and history, discipline, physical fitness and perpetuating the institution. The Armed Forces, among the most respected institutions in the country, enjoy a very positive domestic image in the *pueblo*.

THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE

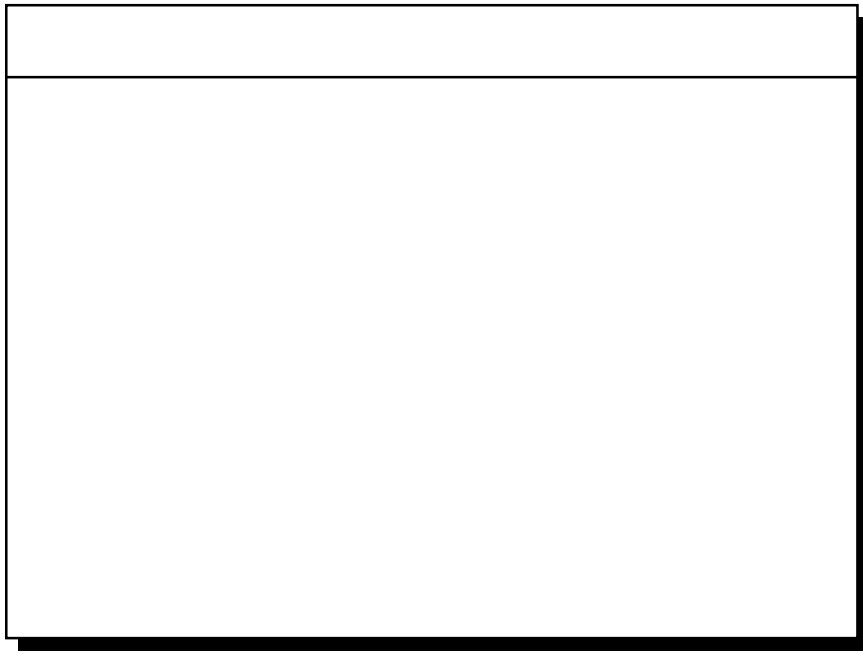
There are three main components of the Army: a national headquarters, territorial commands, and independent units. The Minister of Defence commands the Army by means of a very centralized system and a large number of general officers. The Army uses a modified continental staff system in its headquarters. The headquarters structure is depicted in Figure 2.

At present there are twelve Military Regions, which are further broken down into forty-four subordinate Military Zones. In both cases, a numbering system is used for designation. There is no set number of zones within a region, and these can therefore be tailored to meet operational needs, with a corresponding increase or decrease in troop strength. The military zones are listed in Figure 3.

Chief among the independent troops is an Army Corps consisting of two mechanized infantry brigades located in Mexico City, with a full complement of combat and support troops. In addition, there are two brigades of the Corps of Military Police, Special Forces units, Presidential Guards (another motorized brigade) and a parachute brigade – all located in Mexico City where they act as a ready reserve and as centres of excellence.

Figure 2

Figure 3
Military Regions



The Navy's operational forces are organized as two independent groups: the Gulf (East) Force and the Pacific (West) Force. Each has group has its own headquarters, a destroyer group, an auxiliary vessel group, a Marine Infantry Group and a Special Forces group. The Gulf and Pacific Forces are not mirror images of each other, as independence of organization is permitted. Both are subdivided into regions, with Regions 1, 3 and 5 on the Gulf, and 2, 4 and 6 on the Pacific. Each region is further divided into sectors and zones, so there is a proliferation of headquarters and senior officers. The Navy also has an air arm with troop transport, reconnaissance and surveillance aircraft.

The Navy has recently ceded most of its riverine responsibilities (formally handled by the Marines) to the Army, and has reduced the size of the Marine force, putting them back aboard ships where they play a vital role in drug interdiction and boarding of suspect vessels in territorial waters. The Navy maintains some impressive infrastructure, including naval dockyards that have the capability of building ships, such as the Holzinger class gunboats. These have a significant employment and economic impact in country.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK[11]

The constitutional framework under which the Mexican armed forces operate is established by the following articles of the Mexican constitution:

***Article 29*:** In the event of invasion, serious disturbance of the public peace, or any other event which may place society in great danger or conflict, only the President of the Mexican Republic, with the consent of the head officials of the State Departments, the Administrative Departments, and the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic and with the approval of the Congress of the Union, and during the adjournments of the latter, of the Permanent Committee, may suspend throughout the country, or in a determined place the guarantees which present an obstacle to a rapid and ready combating of the situation; but he must do so for a limited time, by means of general preventive measures without such suspension being limited to a specified individual. If the suspension should occur while the Congress is in session, the latter shall grant such authorization as it deems necessary to enable the Executive to meet the situa-

tion. If the suspension occurs during a period of adjournment, the Congress shall be convoked without delay in order to grant them.

***Article 34, Sec. IV*:** [Among] the rights of the citizens of the Republic are to bear arms in the Army of National Guard in the defence of the Republic and its institutions, under the provisions prescribed by the law.

Article 36, Sec. II: [Among] the obligations of citizens of the Republic are to enlist the in National Guard.

Article 55, Sec. IV: [Among] the following are the requirements to be a deputy [or senator]: Not to be in active service in the federal Army nor to hold command in the police or rural *gendarmería* in the district where the election is held, within the last ninety days prior to the election.

Articles 73, Sec. XII, XIII, XIV, XV: [Among] the duties of Congress are:

- To declare war, in the light of the information submitted by the Executive;
- To enact laws pursuant to which the capture of enemy forces on sea and land must be declared; and to enact maritime laws applicable in peace and war;
- To raise and maintain the armed forces of the Union, to wit; army, navy and air force, and to regulate their organization and service; and
- To prescribe regulations or the purpose of organizing, arming and disciplining the national guard, reserving to the citizens who compose it the appointment of their respective commanders and officers, and to the States the power of training it in accordance with the discipline prescribed by such regulations.

foreign troops through the national territory, and the visits of squadrons of other powers for more than a month in Mexican waters;
– To give its consent for the President of the Republic to order he national guard outside its respective States, fixing the necessary force.

***Article 82, Sec. V*:** In order to be President it is required [among other things]; not to be in active service, in case of belonging to the Army, within six months prior to the day of the election.

***Article 83, Sec. IV, V, VI, VII and VIII*:** [Among] the exclusive powers of the President are:
– To appoint, with the approval of the Senate, the colonels and other high-ranking officers of the army, navy and air force, and high-level employees of the Treasury;
– To appoint the other officers of the army, navy, and air force, as provided by law;
– To dispose of the national guard for the same purposes, under the terms indicated in Section IV of Article 76; and
– To declare war in the name of the United Mexican States, pursuant to a previous law of the Congress of the Union.

Article 118, Sec. II and II: Nor shall the States, without the consent of the Congress of the Union:
– Have at any time permanent troops or ships of war; and
– Make war themselves on any foreign power, except in cases of invasions and of danger so imminent that it does not admit of delay. In such cases, a report shall be made immediately to the President of the Republic.

***Article 129*:** No military authority may, in time of peace, perform any functions other than those that are directly connected with military affairs. There shall be fixed and permanent military commands only in the castles, forts, and warehouses immediately subordinate to the Government of the Union; or in encampments, barracks, or arsenals established for the quartering of troops outside towns.

***Article 132*:** The forts, barracks, storage warehouses, and other buildings used by the Government of the Union for pubic service or for common

use shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Federal Powers in accordance with provisions to be established in a law enacted by the Congress of the Union; but in order that property acquired in the future within the territory of any State shall likewise be under federal jurisdiction, the consent of the respective legislature shall be necessary.

More specific laws include: the Código de Justicia Militar (Code of Military Justice), the Ley Orgánica del Ejercito y de la Fuerza Aérea Mexicanos (General Law for the Army and Air Force), and the Ley Orgánica de la Armada (General Law for the Navy).

CHAPTER FOUR

Doctrine, Equipment and Professional Development

Mey hasuteveloped over time asua response to the histors70l reality of events since independence. It hasualways been extremely inward looking,ualthough there are now inds70tions that this may be slowly changing so asuto allow at least discussion, if not adop-

given the *de facto* umbrella of U.S. protection, similar to that enjoyed by Canada, this is not a major consideration. The Mexicans are correctly focused on internal defence. Should Mexico decide to play a role on the wider world stage, there would have to be significant changes. Currently, the Army/Air Force has five general missions assigned:

all at no cost to the recipient. This work is a major reason for the overall high approval rating the military has amongst the population at large. Another vital service is the provision of on-site potable water to rural locations.

V. Assistance to the Population in case of Natural Disasters

This form of assistance, provided under terms of Plan DN-III-E, is also a vital service to the nation. The geographical reality of Mexico, and most of Central America, is that natural disasters occur frequently, with the resulting negative effects on the population and the economy. The regional territorial commands of the Mexican forces are the prime responders in time of disasters, and they are leaders in subsequent reconstruction. The forces train hard for this role, and are regularly tested by devastating hurricanes, floods, mudslides, forest fires, volcanic eruptions, droughts and outbreaks of disease. In recent years the Mexican forces have deployed some of this capability and expertise to assist their neighbours in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and even Venezuela.

The Mexican Navy has two main stated missions, both derived from the Constitution – the use of Naval power to ensure external defence and to assist in internal security. The Navy further breaks this down into fifteen sub-missions, but, with the exception of such things as oceanographic scientific investigation and maritime contamination, their focus, and use by the government, is the same as the Army.

EQUIPMENT

Although rich in both natural and human resources, Mexico is not a wealthy nation and the equipment of its armed forces reflects this reality. In general, they have a plethora of too many different types of vehicles, weapons and equipment, and many of those are obsolete. This has resulted in units that are generally poorly equipped to meet the threats and challenges the country faces, such as small rural insurgencies and well-equipped drug traffickers. These latter two problems are, however, being actively addressed. Most notably, there has been emphasis on forming, training, equipping and deploying airmobile and amphibious Special Forces units/groups (GAFES/GANFES) in the war on drugs. These are serious soldiers who do well in their internal mission, and compare favourably to

within the Army/Air Force on acquiring airborne surveillance platforms, light aircraft, rotary wing aircraft and rapid troop transport. The Navy has obtained fast patrol boats and launches to interdict drug runners, it has built a fleet of fast gun boats, it has acquired shipborne helicopters, and it is replacing engines in its aging destroyers to make them more effective in fishery protection and drug interdiction.

ARMY EQUIPMENT

paying private sector and flying hours are low for pilots. Procurement of Russian rotary wing equipment at bargain basement prices has recently provided a boost to troop transport and rapid reaction capability but it has not solved the longer-term requirement. The Air Force is overdue for a major rationalization of its fleets, but senior Air Force officers do not have much of a voice in the hierarchy.

NAVAL EQUIPMENT

The Mexican Navy values its self-image as a blue-water navy, but suffers from the same problem as the Air Force – a hodgepodge of too many different types of vessels. Many of its larger ships are obsolete ex-United States Navy vessels of Second World War vintage. Among its newer acquisitions are eight Holzinger class gunboats, the first two coming into service in 1999. These were designed and constructed at the Navy's own shipyards, which are an important national strategic infrastructure. In addition, Swedish fast launches have been procured for interdictions close to the coastlines.

The Navy, with a strength of 37,000, has 11 principal surface combatants (3 destroyers and 8 frigates), 109 patrol and coastal combatants (44 offshore patrol, 41 coastal patrol, 6 inshore patrol and 18 riverine patrol), 3 amphibious LSTs (tank landing ships), 19 support vessels, as well as a host of auxiliary and training vessels. Naval aviation consists of 8 combat aircraft, several transport aircraft of different sizes, and helicopters of at least seven different types and ages.[14]

The Marines are organized in 3 brigades, each of 3 battalions, 2 airborne battalions, 1 Presidential Guard battalion, 11 regional battalions and miscellaneous coastal defence units.

The Navy suffers from the same logistics and maintenance challenges as the Air Force, but its network of naval shipyards provide a significant in-house maintenance and construction capability.

Notwithstanding the age and utility of some of this equipment, the Mexican armed forr9Tw [(in-ho)ncp50.0125 T -1.18my8(2 a8(60119f 4thie(Me)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The 1994 Zapatista uprising had two effects on the Mexican military, principally the Army, that persist to this day. First, it served as a wakeup call for a proud institution that found itself held at bay by a group of lightly armed peasants, which brought international scrutiny upon the country and its security policies and forces. Second, it provided sound justification for additional funding for modernization. This was quickly recognized and taken advantage of by the military hierarchy. In addition to significant equipment purchases, the institution embarked upon a thorough review of its professional development of the officer corps, as well as of its training and organization.

The senior leadership of the Armed Forces recognized that mere perpetuation of the status quo was not enough to ensure their utility in the future, and that a far more focused approach was needed. Over the period of ten years, massive improvements to barracks and training facilities have been made throughout the country, and new courses for Special Forces and the Army in low intensity warfare developed. The most significant changes have, however, been in the field of professional development for officers. Schools and courses were developed for all rank levels, with successful completion being a prerequisite for advancement. There is a course for Captains, a course for Majors and Lieutenant-Colonels, and a senior course for Colonels and Brigadiers, all based at least in part on the American equivalents. These closely resemble the Canadian Army's junior staff course, the Canadian Forces Command and Staff Course, and the defence colleges of most Western countries. The Mexicans enjoy an active and productive exchange student program at the officer cadet and field officer level with several Latin American countries (e.g., Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela), with Spain and France, and with the U.S. Recently an officer attended the National Security Studies Course at the Canadian Forces College. The Mexican forces have also introduced computer-based simulation equipment and exercises. They have built a superb National Training Centre in Chihuahua where brigade-size all arms exercises are regularly conducted. These exercises usually include practicing the road, rail and air deployment of the formations from their home location to the training centre. Language training has received increased emphasis, especially in the Navy, and in the Army selected officers are being taught indigenous dialects to assist in communicating with the local

residents when the Army is deployed to provide social services in remote locations. Of course, because of their long standing but rarely discussed relationship with the U.S., hundreds of Mexican officers and non-commissioned officers train in American military schools every year.

CHAPTER FIVE

Political Change and the Changing Nature of the Mexican Armed Forces

The coming to power of President Vicente Fox in December of 2000 was a momentous event in Mexican politics. After seventy-one years in power, the PRI was defeated at the polls, having received only 36.1 percent of the popular vote. The election of Fox to the Mexican presidency can be regarded as the culmination of a protracted and complex process of political change that the country has undergone since the mid 1980s. This process, as well as changing international circumstances, has affected the relationship between the civil authority and the Mexican military, as well as the roles the armed forces are asked to perform. This chapter looks at these important changes. So as to provide context for subsequent sections, the first part presents a brief overview of the process of political change in Mexico, highlighting the most important developments. The second section looks at the changing role of the Mexican armed forces. The several Central American crises of the 1980s, the emergence of drug trafficking as a threat to national security, and the Chiapas rebellion of 1994, have all contributed to growth in the size of Mexico's standing army, as well as expansion of its responsibilities, in what has been referred to as a 're-militarization of Mexico.' The last section points to the most important changes that have occurred in the way the military interacts with government. Both the process of democratization in Mexico and the increased responsibilities of the armed forces have altered this relationship.

POLITICAL CHANGE IN MEXICO

As was discussed in Chapter 2, by 1940 the structures had been put in place to sustain the 'perfect dictatorship' in Mexico, and between 1940

and the early 1980s, the PRI dominated all aspects of national life. Its authoritarian-corporatist structure allowed for the resolution of conflict within the party, thus maintaining political stability. Thirty years (1940-1970) of high and sustained economic growth[15] – the so-called Mexican miracle – provided the regime with the financial resources to distribute in

brief period of economic boom from 1976 until 1981, when the economy grew at an average of 8.5 percent each year. However, when international petroleum prices fell in 1981-1982, and the price of borrowing from international lenders increased, Mexico was unable to service its foreign debt or secure the foreign exchange necessary to pay for essential imports, thus forcing a steep devaluation in the value of the peso. The Mexican economy consequently crashed, and the old economic model crumbled. In 1982, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) dropped by 1.5 percent, inflation reached 100 percent, unemployment doubled to 8 percent, and the public deficit soared to 18 percent of GDP. This economic meltdown – the worst since the Great Depression – marked the onset of a new era of economic reform, and the beginning of the demise of the PRI's hegemony.

Mexico experienced profound change in the 1980s, adopting a new economic model based on neo-liberal tenets, and beginning a process of political transition. The administrations of presidents Miguel de la Madrid (1982–1988) and Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988–1994) implemented structural adjustment policies and a fairly radical series of market reforms that culminated in the country joining the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in January of 1994. The first years of the de la Madrid administration saw the adoption of radical stabilization programs. In 1985 this became a comprehensive program of structural adjustment reforms, which were accelerated during the Salinas administration. These included an extensive program of privatization of state-owned enterprises, as well as the liberalization of trade, exchange rates and industrial policy. By 1987, tariffs had been reduced to 20 percent from levels of 50 to 100 percent, and, with the accession of Mexico to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1986, virtually all import licenses had been eliminated by 1987.[17] The government also lifted restrictions on foreign direct investment, de-regulated both commercial and industrial activities, and eliminated numerous subsidies to targeted groups of consumers and producers.

The crash of 1982 and the ensuing economic deterioration, along with the series of economic reforms introduced during the 1980s, together had a severe impact on social conditions: unemployment increased, real wages dropped, and standards of living generally declined. This economic downturn had serious repercussions for the regime. Within the PRI, the economic meltdown strained the party's heterogeneous coalition, as it could no longer afford to provide resources to its various allies – the

peasants, organized labour, the federal bureaucracy and the employees of state-owned enterprises. This provoked infighting within the party over national economic policy. The internal struggles culminated in 1987, when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano (son of former president Lázaro Cárdenas) defected from the PRI and launched an independent presidential bid in 1988 – the first real challenge to the PRI since its coming to power. The elections of 1988 were marred by widespread allegations of fraud, further eroding the PRI's legitimacy. For the business community the economic downturn fractured their relationship with the regime and exposed the necessity for fundamental economic structural change. Perhaps more important, the economic crisis gave rise to large-scale social mobilization, as citizens began to withdraw from the corporatist structure of the party and place their demands directly on the state. By the end of the 1980s, the PRI had effectively lost legitimacy with the Mexican population, and the old regime was in crisis.

Faced with the collapse of the party's legitimacy, President Salinas attempted a difficult balancing act – restructuring the system through a deepening of economic reform, and establishing new institutions without ceding power to the opposition.[18] Part of his strategy was to achieve economic reform while still retaining power. He took several measures to weaken the influence of organized labour on policy, such as creating new interlocutors in the labour movement under the banner of 'new unionism,' reconstructing the popular bases of the PRI at its expense, and reducing its influence on social policy. Although he appeared to have been partially successful in regaining support for the PRI in the midterm legislative elections of 1991 – the PRI received 61 percent of the vote – his attempts to revive the party through economic reform and neo-authoritarianism proved totally unsuccessful. A sluggish recovery exacerbated socio-economic inequalities, popular mobilization accelerated throughout the country, the media became increasingly critical, and opposition parties became viable governments-in-waiting. Moreover, in 1994 a guerrilla movement emerged in Chiapas, and the political infighting that had began to brew in the party in the 1980s, culminated with the assassination of two prominent party officials. Political chaos deepened in late 1994 when Mexico's economy was again thrust into crisis, prompting another precipitous devaluation of the peso. By the end of 1995, the country was experiencing armed conflict, an unprecedented increase in incidents of violence, and the worst economic crisis in decades.

It was against this backdrop of severe political and economic crises that President Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000) began his administration. While Zedillo continued Salinas' economic policies, he agreed to bring about significant political reforms. In 1996, by negotiating with the country's main opposition parties, he got agreement to a major electoral reform (COFIPE) that granted the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) complete autonomy, and enhanced its power to oversee, supervise and administer elections. It also expanded the power of the Federal Electoral Tribunal (TRIFE), levelled the finance and media playing fields for all parties, and introduced restrictions on individual contributions to party financing and to media coverage. These reforms enabled opposition parties to make significant electoral inroads at the sub-national level, as they elected increasing numbers of municipal governments and state governorships – including the mayoralty of Mexico City in 1997 – as well as control over the Lower House of Congress in 1997, and, ultimately, the presidency in 2000.

Beyond the significant electoral reforms that Zedillo introduced, under his administration other significant changes took place, including a weakening of the centralization of power as it began to 'disperse' through the system. In terms of intergovernmental relations, for example, he introduced an important decentralization program under the banner of "New Federalism" that devolved power to state and municipal levels in areas involving education, health, poverty alleviation and development projects. It appears that Zedillo was either unwilling or unable to exercise the same degree of power as his predecessors. A good case in point was his refusal to intervene in a contentious election in the state of Tabasco, during which the PRI's candidate was accused of having significantly exceeded the spending limits (by almost 50 fold!).[19] He also curbed the power of the presidency in the selection of PRI candidates. Under the declared need to establish a 'healthy distance' between the state and the party, he essen-

from below, and international pressure to democratize, it is difficult to see how the president could have refused to bring about substantive electoral reform without risking serious social unrest.

THE 'RE-MILITARIZATION' OF MEXICO

During the PRI's hegemonic rule, Mexico's foreign policy was firmly grounded on the principle of non-intervention, and PRI leaders consistently disavowed the use of military force to solve international problems. The country in effect did not have an international military policy. This resulted, as has been shown, in a policy/doctrine in which the armed forces focused on the preservation of internal order. From the 1950s until the 1970s, they concentrated on maintaining order by policing both urban and rural areas and on the active suppression of dissident guerrilla activities. During the 1980s Mexico started to experience a process of re-militarization as international conditions changed and new internal threats emerged.

On the international front, Mexico's isolationist position began to change in the late 1970s as it attempted to prevent a spill-over of numerous Central American insurgencies. In 1979, after having withdrawn its support for the government of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, and soon after endorsing the Sandinista revolution, Mexico established foreign policy goals of maintaining stability and minimizing external influence in the region. In effect, it became an active player by becoming an ally of France (thorough the endorsement of Salvadorian insurgents as a political force), by openly opposing American support for the political elites of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, and by applying pressure on the Sandinista government not to change its economic policy. Most notably, Mexico was in the forefront of forming a regional alliance called *Grupo Contadora* that aimed at forming a common block with other countries that supported Mexico's position, such as Venezuela, Panama and Colombia. These actions affected the Mexican armed forces in a number of ways, but, most important, they resulted in the inclusion of generals in discussions about national security, about the deployment of troops to southern states, especially Chiapas, and about an increase in defence spending. Of special interest was the designation of a serving general, Abaslón Castellanos Domínguez, as governor of Chiapas from 1982 until 1988.

Domestically, the role of the armed forces began to change in the late 1970s. As the flow of illegal drugs through national territory increased,

mostly from Central and South America to the U.S., the Mexican government began to rely on the military to fight this new threat because of the notorious weakness and corruption-prone nature of its police forces. To put this significant effort into context, it is important to understand that the increase in the drug trade was largely the result of a continued increase in American consumption of drugs during this time. In 1977, the Mexican government instituted Plan Condor, an operation that assigned significant military resources in the anti-drug fight through direct action: it involved a force of close to 16,500 troops. By 1985, the number of military personnel involved had increased to 25,000, representing 18 percent of the active duty Army, a number that increased to 25 percent by 2000. By 1985, seven years after this struggle began, 315 military personnel had died in the 'war on drugs'.

The military's role in the anti-narcotics campaign accelerated in the late 1980s under the Salinas administration, after he declared drug trafficking to be an issue of national security.[20] The armed forces increased their interdiction efforts by establishing checkpoints along all major roads and highways, seizing maritime vessels suspected of carrying drugs, patrolling beaches, and increasing surveillance of the maritime approaches.[21] Under the Zedillo administration (1994-2000), the role of the armed forces in counter-narcotics activities continued to grow. The Defence Ministry (SEDENA) issued what is known as the 'Azteca Directive' as a result of modification of the Constitution and the Criminal Code. This established the military's permanent campaign against drug-trafficking, with programs to eradicate drug crops, confiscate illegal drugs, and combat organized crime.[22] It was during this time that the 'Plan to Combat Drug Trafficking' was established and the Drug Control Planning Centre (CENDRO) created. Zedillo sent the first of several thousand young men to the U.S. to study anti-narcotic tactics and apply them at home.[23]

The armed forces increased their role in the fight against drug trafficking as successive presidents placed military officers in charge of civil institutions with responsibilities for law enforcement, public security and intelligence gathering. Since the Zedillo administration, for example, the Drug Control Planning Centre (CENDRO), the Federal Preventative Police (PFP) and the National Institute to Combat Drugs have been headed by military officers, and the Centre for National Security and Intelligence – Mexico's intelligence agency – has increasingly been run by the military. Moreover, when Zedillo established the PFP in 1999, he 'borrowed'

military personnel while new civilian officials were selected and trained. The number of soldiers within this institution has steadily increased, some of whom have been drawn from the Federal Support Forces (FFA) – which is made up of military police and members of the Navy. Eight entire Army units were transferred to the FFA, and 1,600 members of naval battalions were also added to the PFP.

Although President Vicente Fox pledged during his election campaign that he would reduce the military involvement in the fight against drug trafficking, it appears that quite the opposite has occurred. The armed forces have in fact been given responsibility for activities previously under the purview of civil institutions. Since he came to power, Fox has used special battalions and military intelligence in pursuing and arresting drug traffickers, and the Army has been directly involved in dismantling and tracking cartels and staging commando operations. Perhaps the clearest example of the increased penetration of the armed forces into the civil branches of government was the appointment in 2000 of Brigadier General Rafael Macedo de la Concha to be Attorney General, the first time in Mexico's history that a military officer has ever served in that office. Since that time, several other senior military officers have been named to counter-narcotics and intelligence positions within the Attorney General's Office (PGR). By late 2002 there were at least 227 military officers in the institution, 20 of whom headed up important bureaus overseeing intelligence, eradication, interdiction and seized assets. Overall, 107 members of the military were assigned to the Special Prosecutor for Drug

assist the population in times of natural disasters through the provision of medicine, potable water and other basic necessities. For example, from 1997 until 1999 the military provided help to more than 115,000 victims of natural disasters. Also, from 1995 until 1999, Army and Air Force elements were responsible for fighting forest fires in a vast area.[25]

These changes in the role of the armed forces have resulted in an increase in government spending on the forces allowing the size of the military to double from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s. In 1990, total government expenditure on the military (through the Ministries of Defence and the Navy) was .48 percent of GDP (See Figure 5). This increased to 0.57 percent in 1994, the year the Zapatista rebellion broke out. Despite a small decrease in 1995 and 1996 (the years following the Peso Crisis), the amount increased again, reaching 0.60 percent in 1999. This is roughly in line with the Latin American spending average, which is 0.542 percent, but it should be noted that Mexico, unlike the other large countries in the region, does not participate in expensive international operations. As a percentage of total government spending, there was an exponential increase in the military budgets during the 1990s, as can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5
Expenditure on the Armed Forces

Year	*As a percentage of GDP*	*As a percentage of total government expenditure (budget)*
1990	0.48	1.96
1992	0.52	–
1994	0.57	3.93
1995	0.56	3.60
1996	0.56	3.68
1997	0.58	3.50
1998	0.58	3.60
1999	0.60	3.34

Based on figures from *The Military Balance*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies for the years cited.

The size of the Mexican armed forces also increased as a result of the expansion of their responsibilities and increased funding (Figure 6). While in 1985 the total number of active personnel stood at approximately

Figure 7
Important Institutional Changes and Events

Year	*Change or Event*
1977	– Creation of the Airborne Special Forces Groups (GAFEs) – there are approximately 64 GAFE units across the country, 2 per military region and one per military zone – Plan Condor is established
1988	– President Salinas declares drug trafficking a threat to national security
1994	– Deployment of troops to the state of Chiapas – President Zedillo declares drug trafficking "the most severe" threat to national security – Promulgation of the Azteca Directive
1996	– Creation of the Drug Control Planning Centre (CENDRO) – Establishment of the Plan to Combat Drug Trafficking
1997	– The Special Anti-Narcotics Prosecutor (INCD) is disbanded and replaced by the Special Prosecutor for Drug Crimes (FEADS)
1999	– Creation of the Federal Preventive Police (PFP)
2000	– General Rafael Macedo de la Concha is appointed Attorney General
2001	– Reinforcement of Navy surveillance of oil installations in the Gulf of Mexico against terrorist threats – Federal Judicial Police (PFP) replaced by the Federal Investigation Agency (AFI) – Creation of two schools for Special Forces Training
2002	– Re-organization of GAFEs through the integration of three brigades and nine special forces units. – Leader of the Tijuana Cartel, Benjamin Arellano Felix, is arrested
2003	– Establishment of 'Smart Border' with the U.S. and increased co-

As can be seen, the changes that have taken place within Mexico and internationally have altered and expanded the traditional role of the Mexican armed forces, which in turn has resulted in an increase in their size. The most salient aspects of their changing roles are perhaps the increased responsibility they have acquired in the fight against drug trafficking and in maintaining public security, and the increased influence they have had in the running of civilian institutions. This, in turn, has also affected the civil-military relationship that has characterized the country for several decades.

Since Vicente Fox came into power, he has instituted several important changes to the structure and organization of the armed forces.[26] He

actively encouraged officials from all services to participate in inter-institutional efforts to establish federal policies, similar to the way inter-agency groups operate in the United States.[27] Staff Sections 2 and 7 of SEDENA (Army Intelligence and Military Operations) have taken over responsibility for investigating drug cartels' leadership structures, and President Fox has involved special forces battalions in supporting regional commanders' 'high impact' operations.[28] The appointment of a general officer as Attorney General has meant that there has been an increase in contact between that office and the armed forces (202 members of the armed forces were assigned to the PGR in 2003). It must also be noted that the Minister of Defence and the Minister of the Navy have both also

in assignments dealing with public security are not in violation of consti-

Committee. But, the decisions of both committees must now be ratified by the Senate. As recently as the late 1990s, and part of the civil-military pact that under the PRI, the promotions process was mostly conducted within the armed forces by the top brass without significant input from the civilian authority. These changes point to a reduction in autonomy in the internal running of the military, and a positive step toward a better civil-military relationship.

The other salient aspect that characterized the civil-military pact was the secrecy within which the forces tended to operate. In this regard, there also appear to be important changes brought about by the process of democratization: transparency is now demanded of the armed forces. In 2003, President Fox enacted the Law of Access to Information (similar to the Canadian Access to Information Act) which requires that all federal government agencies disclose information to the public upon request. This has forced the armed forces to release information on, among other things, equipment procurement, the selection of private contractors, and all expenditures, a practice never before even considered. Both Ministers have been willing to comply.

The changes described may not amount to a complete reformulation of the civil-military pact – a demand made by some social and political circles soon after Fox's election to the presidency – but they constitute a significant alteration. There are, of course, other areas where further changes would be beneficial. For example, although Members of Congress have become more interested in military affairs, the fact that they are barred by the Constitution from running for a second term has a negative effect on their ability to develop expertise and thus be more effective in their oversight role. This is particularly the case with regard to the promotion process, as the lack of knowledge about military structures, the rank system and military life in general limits their ability to oversee the process.[33] Then too, there is still little control by civilian authorities over the internal allocation of resources. Finally, contrary to what some observers have suggested,[34] an informed and engaged 'defence community' – made up of civilians inside and outside government, academics and military officials – has yet to emerge. Such a community would facilitate the interaction and communication between civilian authority and the military. Regrettably, in Mexico there are only a handful of academics and journalists that are interested in military affairs, and rarely do they interact actively and openly with military officials.

Several points need to be made about the changing nature of the civil-military pact.[35] First, some observers are critical of the increased responsibilities the armed forces have been given, especially those relating to public security which in other countries fall under the jurisdiction of civil institutions.[36] This may be regarded as especially risky in a part of the world where the military has been an active political actor. What is important to note in the Mexican case, however, is that it is the civilian authority that has asked the armed forces to take on these new roles; this has not been a military initiative. It is because of the weakness of civil institutions such as the police forces that the military was directed by the government to broaden its political responsibilities. It is clear that the Mexican armed forces are firmly under civilian control, despite some shortcomings in oversight mentioned earlier, and there is absolutely no evidence of any diminished loyalty to the President. It is true that the Minister of Defence has become more outspoken and has begun to comment in public on matters of national political concern (such as the inability of Fox to cooperate with other political parties, and the failure to reduce poverty), but this can be seen as a part of changing and dynamic political relations between civilian and military forces described by Douglas Bland in his theory of 'shared responsibilities'.[37] The more active role can be considered a positive step toward healthier civil-military relations, as there has been an increased flow of ideas between the two.

corruption charges,[39] and, to limit the temptations that might arise if an individual were to develop intimate links in any one location, officers are

CHAPTER SIX

Toward Closer Cooperation between the Canadian and the Mexican Armed Forces?

This paper has been written for the express purpose of dispelling many of the common misconceptions about the Mexican armed forces, misconceptions that have resulted from its long-standing inward-oriented focus, from negative international press coverage, and because of the lack of knowledge outside Mexico about its structure and roles. In Canada, this is in part because for the past half century the Canadian Forces' external focus was on interoperability with the armed forces of other NATO member countries in Europe, or, to some extent, on foreign forces with which it worked in UN peacekeeping missions.

Despite problems and challenges of the past, the Mexican armed forces of today have made significant strides toward becoming vital and professional institutions within a country that is now taking its place alongside other democracies. The Army, Navy and Air Force are well-trained and dynamic organizations that are well respected by a significant number of Mexicans, and they are adapting well to the changing political circumstances. There are no doubt areas in which

and Canadian armed forces in the past? And, is greater cooperation possible? It is a fact, regrettable perhaps, that direct military-to-military relations between the Canadian and Mexican forces have been of a relatively minor nature. Perhaps the most important recent step in that relationship was the exchange of military attachés in the early 1990s, so the groundwork to facilitate future initiatives does exist. It is true that, unlike the Mexican military attaché in Ottawa, the Canadian attaché in Mexico is also cross-accredited to seven other Central American and Caribbean countries, but his priority is clearly focused on the bilateral dynamic with Mexico.

- Invite the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre to deliver courses, in Spanish, on site in Mexico and propose that Mexico in turn invite officers from other Central American countries to participate;
- Host reciprocal seminars on disaster relief operations;
- Organize small unit exchanges where, for example, Canadian troops participate in training in Mexico in mountain, riverine, anti-drug, desert and jungle warfare;
- Invite the Mexican Navy to conduct port visits in Canada;
- Organize reciprocal language training in both countries;
- Consider the exchange of intelligence on mutually agreed threats;
- Consider ways in which the Canadian 'defence community', especially the academic centers and NGOs that focus on security and defence issues, might help foster the development of a similar community in Mexico. This might be done through the organization of seminars, workshops and symposia at which information can be exchanged between civilians and military personnel;
- Encourage the exchange of officer cadets and academic faculty between the two countries' military educational establishments so as to encourage an exchange of ideas and the growth of personal friendships;
- Consider cooperation in natural disaster relief in areas (i.e., Central America and the Caribbean) where the Mexican military has experience and expertise.

This list is certainly not exhaustive, and may be slightly cavalier as it does not consider the administrative, diplomatic and funding implications inherent in the possible initiatives. However, these and similar types of activities demonstrate that there is room for mutual benefit, within our own continent, for enhanced military cooperation. Canada and Mexico share much in common in the areas of defence and security. Both are huge countries with diverse and challenging geography, immense wealth in natural resources, long and vulnerable coastlines, and shared borders with the U.S., to list just a few common characteristics. We should look to our neighbours. Indeed, in recent months President Vicente Fox has declared his desire to integrate the Mexican armed forces within U.S. Northern Command, despite original reservations. As the Martin administration implements the terms of its defence policy review, perhaps a closer look to the south might be in order.

Notes

[1]Declaration made by President Fox at the Meeting for the Evaluation of Coordinated Action for Border and National Security, Tijuana, Mexico, 3 October 2001.

[2]Mario Vargas Llosa, "Mexico: The Perfect Dictatorship" in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Winter 1991 (Vol. 8, No. 1), pp. 23-25.

[3]For one of the best descriptions of the Mexican political system during the 20th century, see Roderic Camp, *Politics in Mexico; The Democratic Transformation.* London: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[4]See Raúl Benítez Manaut, "Security and Governance: The Urgent Need for State Reform" in Joseph S. Tulchin and Andrew D. Selle, eds., *Mexico's Politics and Society in Transition.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003.

[5]The PNR was re-named the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM) in 1938, and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 1946.

[6]The terms Minister and Secretary, and Ministry and Secretariat are used interchangeably.

[7]See Benitez Manaut, *op. cit.*

[8]Roderic Camp, *Generals in the Palacio.* London: Oxford University Press, 1992.

[9]David Rondfelt, "The Mexican Military and Political Order since 1940" in D. Rondfelt, ed., *The Modern Mexican Military.* La Jolla, CA: University of California at San Diego, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.

[10]Presidential terms last six years, and presidents are constitutionally barred

[14]*Ibid.*

[15]The Mexican economy grew at an average rate of 6.5 percent a year from 1940 to 1960.

[16]Chappel Lawson,

[28]Sierra Guzman, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[29]Monica Serrano, "The Armed Branch of the State: Civil-Military Relations in Mexico" in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, May 1987, Vol. 27, pp. 423-426.

[30]Roderic Camp, *Politics in Mexico: The Democratic Transformation.* London: Oxford University Press, 2004.

[31]As stated by the Minister of National Defence in an interview with Camp in February 2004 (Camp forthcoming) and by several Members of Congress in interviews in July 2004.

[32]Camp, *Challenges to Ci*

Vargas Llosa, Mario, "Mexico: The Perfect Dictatorship" in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Winter 1991, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 23-25.

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