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Abstract

The article takes an overview about the concept of Multidimensional Security and the implications addressed to the Armed Forces. So, it refers to how the meaning of Security has been widening through time since World War II, the Declaration on Security in the Americas, which are the military core tasks and how the military forces are affected by this conceptualization of Security. The article presents an evaluation on how military forces should be conducted and what should be their roles in Multidimensional Security, and finally it discusses some concerns on the employment of military forces to address Multidimensional Security.

Resumen

Este artículo hace un resumen respecto del concepto de Seguridad Multidimensional y sus implicancias para las Fuerzas Armadas. Por lo tanto, trata de como el significado de Seguridad se ha ampliado desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial, la Declaración de Seguridad de las Américas, cuales son las principales funciones militares, y como las fuerzas militares se ven afectadas por esta conceptualización de la Seguridad. El artículo presenta una evaluación en cómo se debe conducir las fuerzas militares y cuál es su rol en la Seguridad Multidimensional, para finalmente discutir algunas preocupaciones respecto del empleo de fuerzas militares para enfrentar la Seguridad Multidimensional.

Key Words: Armed Forces/ Multidimensional Security/ securitization/ militarization

Palabras claves: *Fuerzas Armadas/ Seguridad Multidimensional/ securitización/ militarización*

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Introduction.

Currently the world is facing many struggles to improve security, resilience, and development. To come over these struggles, from environmental issues and a pandemic disease towards civil and international conflicts being addressed by heavy weaponry, they should be confronted with the best available tools and actors.

The International Community, through International Organizations, NGO's, and academia, has developed different sets of definitions and tools to face with the difficulties of societies and individuals, associated with these harmful phenomena. Some of them are specific (oriented in time, topic or geographic areas), while others are generic or more comprehensive in their approach, trying to fulfill the broadest set of issues that affects, slightly or strongly, the security of people and societies.

The OAS has coined the concept of Multidimensional Security to address the threats, concerns and challenges affecting the hemisphere, which encompasses almost any issue affecting development, being a wide term that can mislead the efforts to solve them, with the use of wrong tools, such as military forces, to subjects that should be dealt with other organizations, whilst the militaries can be considered as another asset to support the main effort to solve these issues.

Declaration on Security in the Americas (Mexico 2003).

This Declaration was signed by all the countries belonging to the OAS in October 2003, after the attack of the World Trade Center in September 2001. It is probably the most relevant document in the hemisphere related to security after the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance signed in 1947, but with a complete different focus.

While the Treaty of 1947 was conceived to avoid wars among American countries and defend any signatory country from an armed attack or invasion from countries or alliances coming from outside the Hemisphere;² the Declaration of 2003 was intended to give a new approach to security issues considering a multidimensional scope. This multidimensionality includes “traditional and new threats, concerns, and challenges to the security of the states.”³ Even before than checking which are the traditional and new threats, concerns and challenges,

² Organization of American States, “Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance” (1947), <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/sigs/b-29.html>.

³ Organization of American States, “Declaration on Security in the Americas”, October 28, 2003, http://www.oas.org/dsd/FIDA/documents/declaration_security.htm art. 2.

something seems suspicious in this document; it does not define which is the meaning of security that will be dealt in it.

Both documents share some specific topics: the renunciation to war as a way to solve interstate conflicts, and the cooperation to protect the Hemisphere (interstate or ideological threats from outside the region in the former, and from diverse threats in the latter).

Since the Summit of Santiago in 1991, the OAS has tried to expand the topics regarding security to have better institutions in this field. With this purpose they have worked until 2002 when the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegations agreed on some definitions necessary to address the concept of Multidimensional Security in the Declaration of Bridgetown, affirming that security threats, concerns and challenges to the Hemisphere have a diverse nature and a multidimensional scope. Henceforth, the concept of security—undefined— should be broadening to encompass “new and non-traditional threats, which include political, economic, social, health and environmental aspects,”⁴ being this the closest reference to a definition of security, given in the DECLARE paragraph.

Back in the Declaration of 2003, there is a list of traditional and new threats, concerns and challenges in subparagraph m, paragraph 4 without stating what belongs in which category. From my personal analysis they could be grouped as it is shown in Table 1.

Traditional Threats	New Threats	Concerns	Challenges
Non stated in the Declaration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Interstate wars) • (Civil wars) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrorism. • Transnational organized crime. • Asset laundering. • Illicit trafficking in weapons. • Trafficking in persons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global drug problem. • Natural and man-made disasters. • HIV/AIDS and other diseases. • Health risks. • Environmental degradation. • Potential damage in a maritime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption. • Extreme poverty. • Social exclusion.

⁴ Organization of American States, “Declaration of Bridgetown. The Multidimensional Approach to Hemispheric Security”, June 4, 2002, http://www.oas.org/xxxiiga/english/docs_en/docs_items/agcgdoc15_02.htm.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attacks to cyber security. 	<p>transport of hazardous materials (including petroleum, radioactive materials and toxic waste).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible access and use of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery by terrorists. 	
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Table 1: Traditional and new threats, concerns, and challenges.⁵

Watching this “threats, concerns and challenges” table is possible to notice that according to the OAS there is no explicit reference to an interstate conflict or an internal conflict between two armed parties, that can be considered as traditional threats; so traditional threats, even named in many parts of the document, are not really considered as security issues, probably because it has been stated in the Declaration —and previous declarations of the OAS— that the Hemisphere countries will manage their differences peacefully. This approach is strengthened by the subordinate Secretariats and Departments that belongs to the OAS Secretariat for Multidimensional Security; these organs are:⁶

- a. the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission,
- b. the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism,
- c. the Department of Public Security, and
- d. the Department against Transnational Organized Crime.

As it can be seen, none of these security concerns are related to interstate or civil wars, which are mainly faced by the armed forces.

⁵ Adaptation from Organization of American States, “Declaration on Security in the Americas”, para. 4, subpara. m.

⁶ Organization of American States, “OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development”, August 1, 2009, <http://www.oas.org/en/about/sms.asp>.

The new threats are mainly criminal actions against society or part of it that have to be faced with police forces and within the law enforcement system and the rule of law. The concerns are all the possible cases that can affect the normal functioning of the State through hazards that are not voluntarily originated by some rational actor and has to be contested, whether in the State or the international level, by a comprehensive approach encompassing many actors. The challenges are deep aspects of political, social and economic roots that block the path of the State to development and should be addressed with political and/or development tools.

The declaration states that “the basis and purpose of security is the protection of human beings.”⁷ In subparagraph k, these new threats, concerns and challenges are considered transversals, so they should be addressed with an inter organizational approach, with the participation of public and private sector. And many of them are also transnational, so the states are obliged to cooperate among each other to face them in proper ways.

Having analyzed the whole document, there is a feeling that nothing has been said about security, but a lot about politics. Threats (traditional and new ones), concerns and challenges are nearer the political side of problems that are facing the region than to security aspects: they require political solutions in the short and long term instead of security solutions that can be achieved with the main participation of military or police forces.

In January 2021, the OAS Permanent Council address two questions to member states, regarding if the Declaration of Security in the Americas, held in 2003, is still relevant to new threats, concerns and challenges appeared after that date, and if it is not, which are these new threats, concerns and challenges that should be considered in a newer Multidimensional Security approach,⁸ reinforcing the questions addressed to its member states in October 22nd, 2020.⁹ At the end of the month, only Mexico and the United States have proposed amendments, which are not stated in the summary of the meeting.¹⁰ Nevertheless, this document keeps referring to some issues on Multidimensional Security such as Transnational Organized Crime and Trafficking in Persons, which were explicitly stated in the Declaration of 2003.¹¹ Under this predicament, there is no change in the scope of Multidimensional Security and the means

⁷ Organization of American States, “Declaration on Security in the Americas”, para. 4, subpara. e.

⁸ Comisión de Seguridad Hemisférica, “Implementación del mandato establecido en el párrafo 2 de la resolución AG/RES. 2950 (L-O/20), referente al examen de la Declaración sobre Seguridad en las Américas” (Organización de Estados Americanos, January 15, 2021).

⁹ General Assembly, “Advancing Hemispheric Security: A Multidimensional Approach (AG/RES. 2950 (L-O/20))” (Organization of American States, October 22, 2020), para. 2.

¹⁰ Committee of Hemispheric Security, “Summary of the Meeting of January 28, 2021 (CP/CSH/SA-343/21)” (Organization of American States, January 29, 2021), para. 2.

¹¹ Committee of Hemispheric Security, para. 3.

to address it. It is amazing that the political unrest of many countries in the region, since 2019 (e.g. Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia and Colombia), has not been considered as part of the new threats, concerns and challenges of the hemisphere.

Definition of Security through history.

Security cannot be defined as an isolated subject; it has to be related to the political environment and can be referred to external and/or internal threats. It is considered as a new science, but it was a common aspect covered in political philosophy since the Ancient Times until the upcoming of Enlightenment philosophers.

Machiavelli in the sixteenth century advice the Prince to only keep in mind the art of war and its appendixes (institutions and discipline) as the solely tool to keep his principality.¹² He is advising a political leader whose main threat is other princes or political actors who are trying to overthrow him from his position, conquering his realm or toppling him to replace him. Under this circumstance, it is an absolutely logical pattern to focus security towards the threats against the prince own position, something more related to personal security than to a matter of State Security and does not differentiate external or internal threats. Even considering that Machiavelli coined the term State in its modern sense, his contemporaries were still engaged in wars regarding who will rule over each State, conquering or annexing other realms or toppling the prince through wars, revolts or *coups d'état*. Most of his time, especially in Italy, if we see through a twentieth or twenty-first century prism, wars would look closer to gang wars than interstate wars.

During the first half of the seventeenth century, Europe was devastated in the Thirty Years' War. The war ended with the Peace of Westphalia, known as the foundation of International Relations based on states instead of any other kind of political organization. Since this moment, at least in Europe, there was an agreement that only states can be international actors and that warfare was a matter of interstate relations. So, warfare, the main concern of previous regimes, became a resource of only sovereign states, political entities that do not recognize any power above them. Being a State was like being part of an exclusive club having the monopoly of violence inside its territory.

Between the Thirty Years' War and the Second World War, appeared the most important strategy theorists like Clausewitz, Jomini, Mahan, Corbett and Douhet. They wrote

¹² Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Peter Bondanella, Oxford World's Classics (Suffolk: Oxford University Press, 2005), 50.

from a military approach, regarding military strategy as a subject that has to be surrendered to politics, but the term strategy was still reserved to the use of military force. Except for Clausewitz and the maritime strategy writers (Mahan and Corbett), the interaction between politics and strategy is not a substantial part of the writings of these and other theorists. Mahan and Corbett wrote about international politics and commerce; war at sea was considered as part of a maritime competition around the main powers.

At the Second World War, for the first time civilians were involved in strategy planning. The field was dominated by American scholars and government officials, which gave their national perspective in security issues. That involvement was the beginning of the first wave of Security Studies, strengthened after the war, and which main concern was how the nuclear weapons will change conflict. Some other topics researched in this period of Security Studies were the causes of stability, the potential value of arms control, and the role to play by conventional forces in a nuclear or a limited war.¹³ The security was viewed mainly in terms of military conflict, neglecting threats of non-military nature.¹⁴ With this kind of approach, security is done by the military, and diplomats in prevention of military conflicts; diplomats can be seen as the main actor before and after the war, but are relegated to secondary position in war times.

Current definitions of Security.

As it has been stated in the prior topic, the main concern of security studies is war, assuming that interstate conflicts can occur anytime. And war is related with the use (or at least, the threat of use) of military force,¹⁵ but militaries are not the only actors in national security. That is the reason why security studies include another aspects of what can be called “Statecraft” such as diplomacy, and arms control.¹⁶

From the Peace of Westphalia until the end of the Cold War, the security was centered in the State and the main principle was State Sovereignty. So, security was about territorial integrity, political stability, military arrangements and economic activities.¹⁷ This approach,

¹³ Stephen M. Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies”, *International Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (June 1991): 214, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600471>.

¹⁴ Walt, 215.

¹⁵ Walt, 212.

¹⁶ Walt, 213.

¹⁷ “Human Security in Latin America - What Is Human Security?”, Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, accessed June 1, 2020, https://www.iidh.ed.cr/multic/default_12.aspx?contentid=ea75e2b1-9265-4296-9d8c-3391de83fb42&Portal=IIDHSeguridadEN, citing Jolly, Richard and Ray, Deepayan Basu: The

focused on the State, did not necessarily deal with the security of the people,¹⁸ and was known as National Security, which evolved after World War II into an ideological concept that allows the State to use any means —legal or illegal— to protect itself against communism.

But not only war threatens states or people: there are some topics, beyond the military ones, that also affect the capacity of a State to enhance or improve its resilience or path to development such as poverty, environmental hazards, etc.¹⁹ Dealing with these new subjects, the UN has coined a new concept: Human Security. “[H]uman security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people.”²⁰ Again, an international organization refers to security keeping it undefined. Then, the UN carry on saying that human security is integrated by the freedom of fear, freedom of want, and freedom of indignity.²¹ The threats addressed by this definition are: “natural disasters, violent conflicts, chronic and persistent poverty, health pandemics, international terrorism, and sudden economic and financial downturns.”²²

Assuming the vagueness of this definition, the lack of almost anything could be considered a security matter, putting security as a term encompassing political, economic, social, judicial, medical, logistical, climate aspects, and so on and so forth. So, from this perspective, security studies and security specialists should be prepared to deal with almost any phenomenon around the world, which goes beyond the capacity of any knowledge area.

This definition of security, much broader than the original meaning, was a consequence of the Human Rights Declaration of 1948. It asserts that everyone has the right to the “security of person”²³, and “the right of social security”.²⁴ Many of these rights need to be provided by someone, namely the State, the only sovereign entity (implicitly) recognized in the Charter of the United Nations.²⁵

Currently, the main effort in security studies, by any definition of security they use, is more related to peace than to war. Today security scholars —including some active duty

Human Security Framework on National Development Reports, UNDP, NHDR Occasional Paper 5, United Nations Development Programme, 2006, p. 3.

¹⁸ “Human Security in Latin America - What Is Human Security?”

¹⁹ Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies”, 213.

²⁰ United Nations General Assembly, “UN Resolution 66/290”, September 10, 2012, para. 3.

²¹ “Human Security in Latin America - What Is Human Security?”

²² United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, *Human Security Handbook*, 2016, 5, <https://www.un.org/humansecurity/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/h2.pdf>.

²³ United Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, 1948, para. 3, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf.

²⁴ United Nations, para. 22.

²⁵ United Nations, “Charter of The United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice,” 1945, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>, art. 2, para. 5 and para. 6.

military officers— write about conflict transformation, peace (or stabilization) operations, energy supply, State institutions, etc. Under this approach, scholars stated that threats are not only military or political, but also environmental, economic and social issues; or security is defined as being free of worries or save from any damage.²⁶

Probably the only sub-field in which security studies are still focused in traditional terms is the new realm of cyber space, which is paradoxical due to its novelty. Reading about cyber defense or cyber security —setting aside technical terminology— looks more familiar to a regular military officer than all the theory created around these new security concepts. The realm of cyber space has its own defense and security sectors, blurred because it is not easy to determine if it is a threat against a state or to the society.

Security can be also determined by specific “targets.” Under this approach, it is possible to refer to public security and citizen security. These concepts “are part of a set that includes ‘Human Security’ and ‘Security of Persons’” focused on the people instead of the State as are “State Security” and “National Security.” Public Security is defined as “security of persons forged by the State” and Citizen Security, as part of the Public Security, which performs a “democratic citizenship” to live free of fear and want.²⁷

Regarding to Human Security, there are other definitions that are focused on more specific topics, such as economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.²⁸ They are implied in the broad definition of multidimensional or human security, which can be considered two different terms with very similar meanings. Even using different approaches, more systematic ones in the Human Security definition and more detail oriented ones in the Multidimensional Security definition, both of them consider security as a subject that goes beyond threats related with direct violence, including a lot of aspects not considered in traditional security studies.

There are also other definitions of security in the international scenario. In these cases, we can consider Cooperative Security, Collective Security and Collective Defense. All of them are related with the primary concept of security as “absence of threats that put life, property, interests, values or the particular way of being of who perceives it at risk”,²⁹ but at the

²⁶ Claudia Sisco Marcano and Oláguer Chacón Maldonado, “Barry Buzan y la teoría de los complejos de seguridad”, *Revista Venezolana de Ciencia Política* 25 (June 2004): 128.

²⁷ Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, “The Concepts of Public Security and Citizen Security in the OAS Context” (Organization of American States, May 11, 2011), quoting Commitment to Public Security in the Americas, adopted at the First Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas, held on October 7 and 8, 2008.

²⁸ “Human Security in Latin America - What Is Human Security?”

²⁹ Hector Saint Pierre, “Defence and Security”, in *A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America*, ed. RESDAL (RESDAL, 2008): 59, <https://www.resdal.org/parlamento-y-defensa/art-donadio-fasoc.pdf>.

international alliance level instead than in the State or the people level. While Cooperative Security focuses in a preventive internal security among the member of the alliance, the Collective Security does it against threats amongst the members, and the term Collective Defense means the protection against external threats to the alliance.

Military core tasks.

According to Colin S. Gray, “armed forces can serve many purposes, what defines them uniquely is their ability to damage things and injure or kill people as a legitimate instrument of the polity.”³⁰ So, even considering that the armed forces can fulfill many duties, they core task is to use violence as a legitimate resource of the State.

The same approach is followed by the Inter American Defense Board, which using a clausewitzian definition, declare that the Armed Forces belong to the State in order to protect the national interests as “the last resource [...] to impose its will and defend its interests.”³¹ In the same paragraph, it declares that “external threats have traditionally been addressed by the military and those that have arisen within the territory borders have been handled by security forces.”³² Under this definition, the boundaries between military and police roles are equated to the national frontiers and are related to the geography and not to the threat, which can be broadly accepted as the difference between defense and internal security, as it is mostly defined by Latin American countries.³³

Huntington wrote in his book *Soldier and the State* (1957) about how “military organizations are shaped by both functional and societal imperatives.”³⁴ The functional imperatives are driven by the necessity of the State to protect itself from external threats, and the societal imperatives are modeled by the society’s culture.³⁵ In the next paragraphs we will see how the functional imperative of the military forces is shifted by the societal imperative outside of their core chores, using them as a replacement of nonfunctioning or nonexistent state institutions.

³⁰ Colin S. Gray, *Hard Power and Soft Power, the Utility of Force as an Instrument of Policy in the 21st Century*, SSI Monograph (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2011), 1.

³¹ Inter American Defense Board, “The Changing Role of the Armed Forces in Accordance with the Respective National Laws and Constitutional Norms to Face the Challenges and Emerging Threats in Matters Related to Multidimensional Security”, April 12, 2018, 2.

³² Inter American Defense Board, 2.

³³ Marcela Donadio and María de la Paz Tibiletti, eds., *A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America* (Buenos Aires: RESDAL, Red de Seguridad y Defensa de América Latina, 2008), 54–56, <https://www.resdal.org/ebook/AtlasRESDAL2008-eng/print/atlas-completo.pdf>.

³⁴ Suzanne C. Nielsen, “Civil-Military Relations: Theory and Military Effectiveness”, *Public Administration and Management Ten*, no. 2 (2005): 65.

³⁵ Nielsen, 65.

So, by definition and history, military core task is war. The Armed Forces were born before the institutionalization of the State, being many times the first “State” apparatus. Military forces are present in almost every ancient political organization; it can be a group of warriors or an established army; it can be dedicated to protect a tribe from their neighbors, or to create an empire, as it was in Rome, or to fight against the metropolis to gain independence, which was the case of the Continental Army in the US and the patriot armies in Latin America against Spanish dominion.

As the first organized institution in archaic times, it became the natural corps of advisers to many tribes’ leaders, kings, etc. going beyond their natural duty to perform at war. This participation of militaries in tasks different than war was very obvious, considering that the main task of a ruler was to keep his power against internal or external threats, and it was not a cleavage between police and military roles. So, the “societal” imperative—in this case, a political imperative—was to employ the militaries in other fields of public administration and constabulary duties. In modern times, these additional tasks became so important that were needed specialists to manage them. For example, to manage the diverse State responsibilities, were created different offices to deal with these new duties. At this time, during the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century according to Huntington, militaries began to leave tasks not related to defense and security and they focused in their core task, the protection of national interests (at the beginning, very close with the interest of the monarchy, but it shifted to genuine national interests through time) and let other institutions take control of other topics.³⁶

Because of the important tasks that naturally belong to the military forces, they were well equipped and trained, and were developed as institutions with a rigid obedience system. The effort required to a soldier can reach up until giving his life to achieve the mission required by the State, being the only profession where dying can be part of the “contract.”³⁷ Because of these differences, they were separated from the rest of the society, becoming a social group by itself. They had their own discipline code and judiciary system, many times harder than the civilian counterpart for the same crimes, or even crimes that cannot be applied to civilians, because of its important and specific role.

The military forces are trained and prepared to achieve the mission objectives that were assigned to them. The equipment, logistics, discipline and training that they have, are meant to

³⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *El Soldado y el Estado* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1995).

³⁷ It is a very common opinion that people also dies in other jobs, such as miners, divers, medical staff, etc. which is true so there would not be difference with the militaries. But the difference with the militaries and these jobs is that deaths in those careers are provoked by accidents or bad decisions; in the military case, the death of an individual or group of people can be part of a maneuver to reach a tactical, operational, or strategic goal.

focus more on effectiveness than efficiency, which makes a huge difference with other organizations that are focused in an efficient use of limited resources. Training to fight in combat implies the possibility to die in pursue of the national interests, to serve your society further than in any other profession.

The function of a military force is to success in an armed combat, as it is stated by Huntington. To satisfy that function, military officers embrace, at least, the following duties: 1) organization, equipment and training of the military force, 2) planning its activities, and 3) lead its operations in and out of combat.³⁸ All these tasks seek to achieve the military goals given by the political ruler. All of these duties were learnt by modern civilian organizations, such as government agencies, corporations, NGO's, etc., which use them too. But the difference with military organizations is that the latter have to be prepared to work on them under strong stress, which is not the regular working condition of the priors.

In the ongoing times, the core task of the military forces is not well appreciated by the society, because there have been no major wars between states since World War II; they occur mostly in the domestic level, in some cases including external participation, usually as advisors more than as combatants. But if the forecasts about topics such as climate change and water scarcity become real, the states will be fighting against each other with the purpose of defend their societies, and these wars could be extremely violent because of their importance to societies' development.

Wars among states, even if this has not been the rule during the last 70 years, it cannot be considered as an issue that would not happen again.

Multidimensional Security and the Armed Forces.

The international environment has developed a different pattern to deal with conflict in the last century. The League of Nations, created after World War I, was the first attempt to institutionalize an international order with the purpose to maintain peace. World War II demonstrated the inefficacy of this institution, which was replaced in 1945, before the end of the war, by the United Nations.

This new organization was founded under the determination to avoid war, protect human rights, establish justice and promote social progress. To fulfill these purposes, it pledged to combine the efforts to achieve some human improvements through the practice of tolerance, living in peace, maintaining international peace and security, avoid the use of armed force

³⁸ Huntington, 23.

unless it was in the common interest, and promote social and economic advances to all the people.³⁹

The Organization of American States (OAS) is defined in its own charter as a regional agency within the United Nations. It was conceived to “achieve an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence.”⁴⁰

So, the armed forces cannot be considered a tool of aggressive policy by the states—according to international rules—but they can be used to defend the nation (or an alliance),⁴¹ and to ensure peace in a conflict area, developed as Peace Operations by a mandate of the UN.

Even under these circumstances, military forces are subordinated to the political leadership of their country. In democratic countries, military forces are subordinated to the elected political authorities; in authoritarian regimes, military forces are usually subordinated to political authorities, which grant them some benefits not available to a regular citizen. Even in the countries ruled by military dictatorships, the government leaders, being military officers, act as political leaders to the Armed Forces, so the institutions keep obedience to the political leadership. In such case, the military officers have one step less than in a democracy or civilian authoritarian regime, but it is the same logic, about military operational forces being subordinated to political leaders.

In almost every country, militaries are the last resource to protect their assets. Because in current times there are fewer wars among States, the military forces have expanded their role, being the providers of multiple tasks that do not imply the use of force against some threat. Under these circumstances, they are the “ideal” labor force to deal with many duties that exceed the usual capabilities of States, which are unavailable to fulfill their sovereign duties by their regular institutions. Their equipment, logistics, training, 24/7 availability, etc. give to the political leadership a tool to confront many non-military topics in a more effective way than with the regular institutions (if they exist). Such case can be shown with the use of military forces to protect boundaries, combat wildfires, build roads in isolated areas, protect critical infrastructure, or even taking control of standard time.⁴² If it is done for exceptional events, under their patriotic predicament, military should be available to help; but if these tasks become

³⁹ United Nations, “Charter of The United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice”, Preamble.

⁴⁰ Organization of American States, “Charter of the Organization of American States”, 1948, http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/docs/inter_american_treaties_A-41_charter_OAS.pdf, art. 1.

⁴¹ United Nations, “Charter of The United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice”, art. 51.

⁴² For example, in Chile, the official time is settled by the Chilean Navy, because that institution was the first one in the country to use precision clocks.

the regular condition of State operations, then the State is misusing their institutions and assets, not only by the military side, but also by the civilian side which should have the responsibility and provide the means to manage non-military threats, concerns and challenges.

But this pattern of using military force to achieve development or internal security issues is being promoted by international organizations with the concepts of Human Security, coined by the UN, or Multidimensional Security, in use by the OAS, blurring the difference between the tasks assigned to military forces, police security forces and other State institutions. Under this approach, along with the rise of security issues, the responsibilities of the security forces are increased to cope these new concerns and challenges in a way that can mean, to military personnel and civilian population, that the militaries are the only State institution available to rule the country, affecting democracy and the rule of law, an idea that goes against the interest of people and the International Community.

These requirements to use military forces in other topics not related with defense, does not seem that military forces, by the nature of their tasks, are prepared by their training, equipment and operations, to act mainly under International Humanitarian Law (IHL); any other task unrelated to defense, such as law enforcement, humanitarian operations and civilian assistance, have to be complied under Human Rights Law.⁴³

Some dangers in the concept of Multidimensional Security and similar terms.

There are two main risks if the concept of Multidimensional Security is applied in its whole meaning. These hazards faced different targets, but both of them compromise democracy and fairness. One of these dangers is the securitization of any issues affecting societies, and the other main danger is the employment of military personnel as a semi-slave workforce fulfilling the duties that are not provided by others State institutions entitled to do it.

Regarding the securitization of issues faced by current societies, it is a trend to treat every problem as a security threat, as it can be seen regarding the COVID pandemic. Following this approach, it is the menace that every problem has to be confronted within a security framework, which can lead to the employment of the security institutions to bring the solutions: the Armed Forces. This perspective reaches to the use of “military responses to problems that are not military in nature and in circumstances where military action is ill-suited or could cause

⁴³ “IHL and Human Rights Law | International Committee of the Red Cross”, International Committee of the Red Cross, October 29, 2010, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/ihl-human-rights-law>.

more harm than good.”⁴⁴ In such case, the assumed idea is that the military forces are able to give the solution, instead of being seen as supporters of the main effort done by the specialized institution.

This problem seems to be critical in societies where the militaries has been closely related to military dictatorships or authoritarian regimes, as it has been the case in most Latin American countries. But, even not considering that circumstance, the use of militaries in roles in which they are not fully trained, can make more harmful than the benefits that can be obtained. These duties can go from domestic security tasks, which can be considered a slight deviation of their role if the criminal organizations are undermining the capacity of the State to ensure people’s security, to harder deviations such as having a main role in the national logistics system or in the health system, replacing the regular State institutions that should provide those tasks.

Other option in militarizing solutions can be done without the use of military forces, but through the transformation of national institutions in some sort of militarized organizations, through resembling the hierarchy, discipline, and the system employed by the militaries. In such case, military forces do not address the tasks, but the solutions implemented have some military bias. This idea, even when has not been put in practice in its total meaning, can be seen in authoritarian regimes which do not allowed its people and bureaucracy to oppose to leaders’ guidance.

It can be seen that many courses around the world referred to security topics, have a lot of military officers as students, and are more related to multidimensional threats than to the conventional meaning of defense. Just as an example, in my career as Navy Officer or Defense and Security scholar, I attended courses in different countries, regarding security and defense topics. From all of these courses, that have the words ‘defense’ and/or ‘security’ in their title, academy’s name or indicated in many lectures titles, most of them does not have any lecture on the traditional tasks assigned to military forces, such as the protection of national interest against foreign countries, but many lectures on threats or concerns are more related to development that is encompassed in the term Human Security or Multidimensional Security. The problem is not militaries being aware of these issues, although it needs to be reinforced that they are complementary to development solutions.

⁴⁴ Gaston Chillier and Laurie Freeman, “Potential Threat: The New OAS Concept of Hemispheric Security”, Human Rights NGO, WOLA Special Report (Washington DC: Washington Office on Latin America, July 2005), 1, https://www.wola.org/sites/default/files/downloadable/Regional%20Security/past/Potential%20threat%20security_lowres.pdf.

The second burden is the use of military forces as a cheap labor force. They are not going to receive more payment by doing duties not strictly related to their core tasks but to other institutions; they work 24/7 in any climate conditions, and are prepared to perform many tasks useful for society, because they need those capabilities to achieve their goal: victory at war. Military forces need, among others, the capability to maintain sanitary standards to keep forces ready to fight; to build road infrastructure (bridges, tunnels, etc.) to deploy their forces; to search and rescue combatants in difficult terrains, etc. that can be useful to civilian society in search and rescue of civilians in danger; but their needs are focused on victory at combat, while the State has —or at least should have— other institutions to perform these activities (and others) to keep a functioning society. There are a lot of institutions in any modern states to struggle with public health, building road infrastructure, exercise sovereignty in isolated territories, but militaries are a cheap solution.

The concern about this employment of the military forces is multiple. They are doing jobs that can be performed by other people, belonging to the public or private sector, in better ways, undermining labor force employment. Also, they are underutilized (and used in tasks in which they are not fully prepared) regarding their skills and capabilities. And at the end, they are giving society a false feeling of security by neglecting their main tasks, under the assumption that they are not needed as military forces but as cheap labor force or other state institutions replacement.

In such three cases, military forces are preferred because they have the ability to move people and equipment quickly and to long distances, and then, start immediately working in groups led by competent personnel and well-equipped teams without complaints. There are no labor unions to protect their rights, only regulations enforcing them to fulfill the orders given by the political authorities. These factors make them an ideal labor force: cheap, obedient, and focused in accomplishing the mission. All that politicians needs to do to make them work under those circumstances is appealing to their patriotism, giving the militaries the tools they need to “secure” the country against some enemy and giving them some badges to enhance their honor, without increasing their salary.

Conclusions.

The State has different organizations to comply different tasks. The main task of the military forces is to win at war, and to comply with other purposes, the State has had to build an institutional system to attend these obstacles to society’s development.

The main objection to the “Declaration on Security on the Americas” can be summarized as a lack of definition of what would be understood as Security. If it is ‘defined’ as the sum of the threats, concerns and challenges of the States, then everything that a State is not able to manage properly in a simple way should be considered as a security matter, leaving security to the only preoccupation of the States. The whole document talks about a comprehensive approach, encompassing diverse perspectives in an interdisciplinary effort. But what is the purpose of that transdisciplinary labor? It has to be focused on security, so security needs to be defined to fulfill that task. That definition can be narrower or broader but needs to be addressed in order to face real security issues.

Also, the militaries should not be used as replacement for non-effective or nonexistent institutions to address non-military issues. There are two mainly reasons: it can undermine democracy because it put militaries on charge of almost every concern of the state and make use of the militaries as a semi slave workforce, employing it for different purposes than it was conceived, degrading its capabilities and keeping the State with an improper Defense System.

To summarize, the Armed Forces are not responsible, as the main actor, for the Multidimensional Security of the country, but can be employed as supporter of the main actors if the capabilities of a State are surpassed by the complexity of the issues and if it affects the availability of the State to respond to critical needs of the society.

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