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Beyond Sovereignty: Collectively Defending Democracy in the Americas

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How this force might fight a "future war" is described in a fictional scenario set in Southwest Asia. While incorporating next-generation technologies, the author points out the dangers of overreliance on "silver bullets": when the enemy manages to field passive systems able to detect stealth platforms, "dominant battlespace knowledge has turned out to be an illusion!" The message is clear. Precision guided systems and information warfare will matter greatly, but war will still be messy, plans will fail, and the clash of arms on the ground will remain at the heart of mankind's continuing fascination with war.

Many of Macgregor's proposals push the envelope hard. Still, upon reflection, much of his thesis intuitively compels. The arguments and counterarguments to come (and there will be many) will be based as much on the response of threatened communities within the Army as on implications for warfighting.

To be sure, Macgregor is vulnerable to criticism on the merits. A career cavalry officer, his dismissal of light infantry reflects a measure of branch bias at odds with the realities of combat in close terrain. His superficial treatment of logistics and sustainment is a weakness that is sure to draw close scrutiny. Eliminating the division as an echelon of command, absent a hard and objective look at the downside (the obvious disadvantage being an inherent span of control problem, with numerous groups reporting to a single joint task force), will not attract much support from senior leaders who are well aware of the division's proven flexibility and staying power.

Yet *Breaking the Phalanx* is an important book that may well endure. Though most military professionals realize that the United States stands at the dawn of a new era in warfare, few step "out of the box" with Macgregor's force, clarity, and relish. Highly readable, always interesting, his thrusting logic grapples resolutely with the possibilities. Douglas Macgregor has put a mark on the wall and challenged the system to do better. His book deserves careful reflection by all professionals concerned with the common defense.

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Farer, Tom, ed. *Beyond Sovereignty: Collectively Defending Democracy in the Americas*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996. 416pp. \$19.95

The United States is fortunate to be in a hemisphere relatively free of the recent troubling regional trends. One such trend is the deterioration of states, resulting in the unraveling of economies and the breakdown of civil society and its complementary form of democratic government. Perhaps, however, the withering away of the state is creating a positive effect in Latin America and the Caribbean. As *Beyond Sovereignty* reveals, state sovereignty is diminishing as a result of this hemisphere's growing dedication through "collective defense" to the full political institutionalization of democracy. *Beyond Sovereignty* explains this regional trend, which the United States must apprehend as one of the most positive

geopolitical dynamics within the current "Revolution in Security Affairs."

Beyond Sovereignty is a collection of studies by distinguished scholars on Latin America and the Caribbean. They focus on the institution of democracy and its "collective defense" in the region by a variety of state and nonstate actors. They are the result of an exploration by the Inter-American Dialogue of a call by the Organization of American States (OAS), in Resolution 1080, for "collective" responses to violations of the democratic process within the Americas. The studies examine the roles of governments and political movements within the various countries, the effects of U.S. policies, and the political forces within international and nongovernmental organizations that are subsuming state sovereignty in terms of the region's adherence to the strengthening of democracy. The book features case studies of a retrospective nature on Chile, El Salvador, Haiti, and Peru, and the struggles within those countries relative to the establishment of democratic political practices. The book also provides studies that look toward the futures of Mexico and Cuba and what they may hold with regard to the respective enlargement and the eventual establishment of democracy in those countries.

Beyond Sovereignty correlates the rise of democracy's strength, as a political institution in Latin America and the Caribbean, to the decrease of state sovereignty based on collective defense. In the region, the state and its sovereignty is giving way to political and suasive power from international organizations, principally the OAS, but

also the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as the World Bank. These external actors share a focus on building democracy as a political institution within the region—the OAS from its political "peer pressure," and the NGOs by aiding the positive social forces that support the growth of sound, expanding economies and the formation of civil society. The OAS and proliferating regional political forums are growing intolerant of any tendency by states to dismiss democracy as the preferred political system. These forums' ability to effect their political will in support of democracy is what defines collective defense.

The book also examines related political and governmental institutions necessary for the success of a democratic country: fully representative political parties that permit and encourage pluralistic expression, an effective independent judicial system, and a competent civil service. The strength of these related components is vital in a democracy. The new crumbling of state sovereignty in favor of regional interest in democratic politics is resulting in less internal dependence upon agrarian reform and labor movements, the clash of class interests, and guerrilla activity as the principal source of pressure on states in the region to democratize fully.

Despite the possibly distracting reference to "collective defense," this book does not focus on the military problem of defense but rather on the political problem of defending democratic political institutions. In this vein, its studies circumspectly characterize the military as a historically

counter-democratic force. Plentiful regional historical evidence demonstrates that the military has been ambiguously involved in some countries' internal "nation-building" activities. This contributed to the regional model for a military *junta* system of government that cynically manipulated social conditions to sustain itself and thereby formed the greatest threat to the political institution of democracy in the region.

Given this unfavorable conclusion about the military's role in the region's various countries, themes in this work should concern the military-minded readers of the *Naval War College Review*. Included are discussions of the troubled history of civil-military relations in the countries of the region. But with the establishment of democracy in the region has come the placement of the military in its proper role as an instrument of the government's political will, and not the other way around. Also, there is focus on the international approach toward preserving democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean. The "collective defense" alluded to is the intervention by fellow Latin American countries in support of democracy in a region where the most significant threats to that political institution generally have derived not from external state sources but disruptive internal politico-military actors. Consequently, *Beyond Sovereignty* exposes the region's growing political tendency to recognize the obsolescence of the military with regard to defending democracy in the context of the state's power. The ascendancy of regional adherence to (and political enforcement of) the ideal of democracy is supplanting the state and

its associated Clausewitzian military complement.

With plentiful history to draw upon, *Beyond Sovereignty* is not ambiguous about the worst effects of U.S. policy toward the region. It has applied its heavy hand in the region many times. Offering explicit support for various authoritarian regimes during the Cold War, the United States traded away democracy for the expediency of anti-communism. The book is forthright in asserting that this region is not likely to tolerate further applications of a unilateral, coercive U.S. approach. The studies emphatically demonstrate, through analysis of recent regional collective defense efforts, that the region's countries are determined to choose appropriate internal measures for application of democratic political principles, and not tolerate U.S. hegemonism.

This particular phenomenon implicitly exposes a significant problem with which the United States will have to struggle, since one of the top OAS priorities is to stop illegal drug trafficking in the region. A strong case can be made that internal U.S. social conditions are behind the hemisphere's illegal drug problem, which is now the most severe condition imperiling the institution of democracy. In this light, regional political dynamics are bound to increase insistence that the United States solve its internal problems, which threaten the region's ability to have responsible democratic government and the political conditions that sustain it. With an eye to the "collective defense" approach, the United States eventually will have to address its drug problem in

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the context of the threat it poses to democracy in the hemisphere.

The importance of the ideas in this work is abundant. For years the United States has paid little more than lip service to the cause of democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean. History shows no room for doubt that U.S. intervention in the region has been problematic in the political realm, and often disruptive to social forces struggling to find expression for their interest in democracy within the countries that received U.S. "help." Yet *Beyond Sovereignty* demonstrates that in this hemisphere, effective regional cohesion around the idea of democracy has never been more powerful than it is now. In a world in which regional forces are shaping the future, the United States must devise policies to promote this positive force for democracy in its own geopolitical neighborhood.

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Wiarda, Howard J. *Democracy and Its Discontents: Development, Interdependence, and U.S. Policy in Latin America*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995. 367pp. \$27.95

Two major approaches dominate comparative politics research—a universalistic, scientific approach that emphasizes similarities and regularities among the world's political systems, and a more traditional "area studies" perspective that emphasizes distinctive features of different geographical areas. The first approach (deeply influenced by the so-called rational choice or public choice

theory) seeks to develop social-scientific theories and hypotheses that can be empirically tested and verified. Traditional area studies, by contrast, seek to explain the behavior of political actors and governmental institutions based on the history, religious values, cultural traditions, and the social and economic structures of a particular region. For area studies specialists, understanding the politics of developing nations, especially non-Western states, is impossible without first studying their language, culture, and history.

Howard Wiarda, a political science professor affiliated with the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, is a scholar of the traditional area studies school. Long regarded as a leading specialist on Latin America, Wiarda has written extensively and incisively on the politics and government of the Western Hemisphere, as well as on U.S.-Latin American relations. The book under review is a wide-ranging collection of previously published essays covering key issues in contemporary Latin American politics and relations with the United States. Some of the important themes discussed are legal and political traditions, the notion of the state, political reform, democratization, human rights, and U.S.-Caribbean relations.

As a traditional area-specialist, Wiarda writes that to understand Latin America's struggle for democracy "one has to go back to history." For him, this means understanding the region's distinctive traditions, social values, and cultural norms that have evolved since the Spanish conquest. Wiarda argues that Latin America's tradition of a strong