



It is an honor for me, in my capacity as Chairman of the XVI Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas (CMDA), to present to you this year a new and long-awaited edition of the Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean, prepared by the Latin American Security and Defence Network.

Throughout its history, RESDAL has been a great contributor -from its role- to building a democratic, secure and peaceful environment across the Hemisphere, in line with the Williamsburg Principles agreed upon in 1995 on which this Conference is based.

Over 30 years, in 16 Defence Ministerial Conferences, the highest authorities of the areas of Defence and Security have gathered to promote the exchange of knowledge, analysis, debate and ideas and experiences in these areas. Their purpose has been to enhance collaboration and contribute to the development of Member States from this sector.

Within the framework of the current Conference of Defence Ministers, where this new publication is being presented, its Member Countries will have the opportunity to discuss various topics of importance to the region. It is precisely through these exchanges, as well as through Confidence and Security Building Measures, joint exercises, and the production and dissemination of information -to which organizations such as RESDAL make a significant contribution- that we help consolidate such democratic, secure, peaceful and stable environment so longed for.

This is of particular interest given the current unstable international security environment, which presents multiple threats, where inter-state armed conflicts coexist with the proliferation of transnational criminal organizations, resulting in additional concerns regarding hemispheric stability. These threats are multidimensional in nature and require an interagency dynamics between defence and security, giving rise to a broader conceptualization of the notion of deterrence, calling to work in an integrated manner on the causes and effects of such threats.

We must also mention the different situations that are taking place in our region, calling us to work strongly together. Namely, the presence of terrorist organizations, acts of violence perpetrated by criminal gangs affecting the populations, crimes that affect the environment -such as illegal fishing, poaching and illegal mining and forestry-, natural disasters, migratory flows, and many other challenges having an impact on security and defence agendas.

Thus, this Atlas is not only a fundamental input to reflect upon cooperation policies between our countries, but also offers quality information that can contribute to reducing uncertainty in an unstable world.

I greatly appreciate the fact that we can have this valuable resource –the product of a significant and prolific effort–in this Conference of Ministers convened in the city of Mendoza.

Dr. Luis Alfonso Petri
Minister of Defence of the Argentine Republic

**A Comparative Atlas
of Defence
in Latin America
and Caribbean**

2024 Edition



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Presentation

● When the Comparative Atlas of Defence was first published in 2005, it responded to the needs and challenges faced at the time. Before, there were no comparative sources that could cross-reference hard data with institutional aspects and activities in other regions of the world. That made the Atlas a reference source not only for Latin America, but also for other regions. As of 2010, the inclusion of the Caribbean gave it a hemispheric nature, continuing to promote and sustain cooperation and the advancement of defence, while accompanying the process of the Conferences of Defence Ministers of the Americas (CDMA). In this edition, Costa Rica, Haiti and Panama, which were previously part of a special section and play an active part in the CDMA, are included as chapters.

The institutional progress made in the past twenty years is evident, as shown in the information portrayed in successive editions. In 2016, RESDAL considered that a phase had been completed, namely the promotion of institutional capacities and transparency, an area that already placed the region at a level only comparable to NATO, and decided that it was time to wait for the development of some emerging trends being observed. Hence, as the twentieth anniversary of the Comparative Atlas was near, it undertook to offer the region a new edition that would present both permanent data as well as consolidated trends. This is reflected in the layout of its chapters, comprising topics that were previously part of other sections, such as women, peace and security (WPS), and risk and emergency management, which are already embedded in the daily life of institutions and deserve to be further developed in the future. Overall, both in these chapters and in others, the main challenge

of this publication is the abundance of existing information. What is presented here is a snapshot of a very broad spectrum, which we invite you to consult through the various sources cited.

The region's Armed Forces are highly professionalized and well organized. It comes as no surprise when observing the wide range of their activities and programmes, that they are in such high demand to assist in matters that are key to the life of the countries, such as risk and emergency management, or activities linked to the presence of the State and to development.

The portrayed budgets show sustainment of capabilities, as well as Ministries of Defence and military institutions that carry out their work with a low burden to the public treasury. Some investment initiatives even respond to projects that are aimed at the community as a whole. The institutions walk hand in hand with society, and an important example of this is the increased number of women in the military. Some impressive facts such as the evolution of the officer corps makeup, and other leading trends, such as protocols and statements on sexual abuse and harassment, show the focus now placed on the environment in which personnel perform their duties. Educational structures are complex and developed, in order to address ongoing issues and current trends. Military service, compulsory in several countries, could already be considered voluntary in practical terms, given the number of people who sign up for it. Activities in support of the community are ongoing and distributed throughout the territory. As in other aspects, the risk and emergency management role is already present in institutional structures, units created and training courses. Transparency is particularly worth noting, including the

open willingness of Defence institutions and Armed Forces to provide their data in a cordial and cooperative manner, indicating both their desire and pride to show their institutions and to contribute to confidence-building.

Processes of change in institutions with more than a century of history continue their natural evolution once they have been introduced. For RESDAL, it is an honor to reflect all these realities in this Comparative Atlas, published in Spanish and English, to help in the dissemination in other regions and in the transfer of the region's experience.

RESDAL has also undergone changes. The person who spearheaded the Comparative Atlas and who was its main advisor for years, our President Juan Rial, passed away during the preparation of this publication. As on other occasions, the institution has adapted to the new circumstances and persists. This edition is both a tribute and a token of our ongoing commitment to defence and security and to the institutions that provide their input to this source of public use, and who are the true protagonists of this publication. To all of them, we extend our special thanks.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the Ministry of Defence of the Argentine Republic. From the beginning of this edition's preparation, the Ministry has provided immediate support and granted the opportunity for this edition to be presented at the Conference of Defence Ministers, consolidating the contribution to hemispheric defence and confidence-building. This support has also contributed to the motivation that a team needs to undertake an endeavour of this scale, and reinforces our gratitude to the ministerial authorities of the Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas 2024.

This publication has been possible largely because of the financial support furnished by Global Affairs Canada, to whom we are also grateful. RESDAL's project under the Elsie Initiative, on operational environments, harassment and abuse in defence and security institutions, inter-regional in nature, has contributed to this publication at the regional and global level and will surely provide new tools and forums of debate that will continue to promote new progress in the defence area. Canada has supported the Comparative Atlas throughout its history, thus contributing to the environment attained in the Hemisphere.

On behalf of the team that has produced this Comparative Atlas from various countries, eager to discover information and present it in a user-friendly way, and proud to have had the opportunity to learn more about the institutions, we wish to express our sincere appreciation. We hope you find these pages as enlightening as we do.

Andrea Chiappini
Marcela Donadio
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Board of Directors













In Memoriam. Juan Rial, 1943-2024

The Latin American Region

ARGENTINA	BOLIVIA	BRAZIL	CHILE	COLOMBIA
Population: 45,773,900	Population: 12,388,600	Population: 216,422,400	Population: 19,629,600	Population: 52,085,200
Territorial Extension: 2,780,400 km ²	Territorial Extension: 1,098,580 km ²	Territorial Extension: 8,515,770 km ²	Territorial Extension: 756,700 km ²	Territorial Extension: 1,140,620 km ²
GDP (US\$): 604,260,000,000	GDP (US\$): 49,334,000,000	GDP (US\$): 2,331,391,000,000	GDP (US\$): 333,760,000,000	GDP (US\$): 386,076,000,000
GDP per capita (US\$): 13,200	GDP per capita (US\$): 3,982	GDP per capita (US\$): 10,772	GDP per capita (US\$): 17,002	GDP per capita (US\$): 7,412
Armed Forces Personnel: 88,090	Armed Forces Personnel: 15,368	Armed Forces Personnel: 344,103	Armed Forces Personnel: 67,146	Armed Forces Personnel: 267,709
Defence Budget (US\$): 4,459,699,868	Defence Budget (US\$): 474,685,054	Defence Budget (US\$): 25,857,311,288	Defence Budget (US\$): 2,345,824,000	Defence Budget (US\$): 8,131,785,035
% of GDP: 0.74%	% of GDP: 0.96%	% of GDP: 1.11%	% of GDP: 0.70%	% of GDP: 2.11%
COSTA RICA	CUBA	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	ECUADOR	EL SALVADOR
Population: 5,212,200	Population: 11,174,600	Population: 11,333,000	Population: 18,190,500	Population: 6,364,900
Territorial Extension: 51,100 km ²	Territorial Extension: 109,880 km ²	Territorial Extension: 48,200 km ²	Territorial Extension: 256,370 km ²	Territorial Extension: 21,040 km ²
GDP (US\$): 96,058,000,000	GDP (US\$): 26,393,429,167	GDP (US\$): 127,356,000,000	GDP (US\$): 121,592,000,000	GDP (US\$): 35,333,000,000
GDP per capita (US\$): 18,429	GDP per capita (US\$): 2,361	GDP per capita (US\$): 11,237	GDP per capita (US\$): 6,684	GDP per capita (US\$): 5,525
Public Force: 12,091	Armed Forces Personnel: -	Armed Forces Personnel: 57,629	Armed Forces Personnel: 40,519	Armed Forces Personnel: 24,023
Security Budget (US\$): 582,910,575	Defence Budget (US\$): 118,850,000	Defence Budget (US\$): 1,006,052,087	Defence Budget (US\$): 1,632,679,062	Defence Budget (US\$): 261,429,393
% of GDP: 0.61%	% of GDP: 3.54%	% of GDP: 0.79%	% of GDP: 1.34%	% of GDP: 0.74%

Note: For the cases of Costa Rica and Panama, data for security forces and Ministries of Security are considered.

GUATEMALA	HAITI	HONDURAS	MEXICO	NICARAGUA
				
Population: 18,092,000	Population: 11,724,800	Population: 10,593,800	Population: 128,455,600	Population: 7,046,300
Territorial Extension: 108,890 km ²	Territorial Extension: 27,750 km ²	Territorial Extension: 112,490 km ²	Territorial Extension: 1,946,380 km ²	Territorial Extension: 130,370 km ²
GDP (US\$): 110,035,000,000	GDP (US\$): 24,046,000,000	GDP (US\$): 37,355,000,000	GDP (US\$): 2,017,025,000,000	GDP (US\$): 18,830,000,000
GDP per capita (US\$): 6,081	GDP per capita (US\$): 2,050	GDP per capita (US\$): 3,526	GDP per capita (US\$): 15,702	GDP per capita (US\$): 2,672
Armed Forces Personnel: 19,276	Armed Forces Personnel: 512	Armed Forces Personnel: 19,786	Armed Forces Personnel: 259,813	Armed Forces Personnel: 14,496
Defence Budget (US\$): 411,683,024	Defence Budget (US\$): 25,132,573	Defence Budget (US\$): 461,868,166	Defence Budget (US\$): 19,612,396,324	Defence Budget (US\$): 105,733,270
% of GDP: 0.37%	% of GDP: 0.10%	% of GDP: 1.24%	% of GDP: 0.97%	% of GDP: 0.56%
PANAMA	PARAGUAY	PERU	URUGUAY	VENEZUELA
				
Population: 4,528,000	Population: 6,861,500	Population: 34,352,700	Population: 3,423,100	Population: 28,838,500
Territorial Extension: 75,320 km ²	Territorial Extension: 406,750 km ²	Territorial Extension: 1,285,220 km ²	Territorial Extension: 176,220 km ²	Territorial Extension: 912,050 km ²
GDP (US\$): 87,350,000,000	GDP (US\$): 45,820,000,000	GDP (US\$): 282,458,000,000	GDP (US\$): 82,605,000,000	GDP (US\$): 97,116,000,000
GDP per capita (US\$): 19,291	GDP per capita (US\$): 6,595	GDP per capita (US\$): 8,222	GDP per capita (US\$): 24,131	GDP per capita (US\$): 3,367
Security Forces: 27,721	Armed Forces Personnel: 17,267	Armed Forces Personnel: 78,296	Armed Forces Personnel: 22,822	Armed Forces Personnel: 339,514
Security Budget (US\$): 946,109,041	Defence Budget (US\$): 316,676,584	Defence Budget (US\$): 2,307,434,970	Defence Budget (US\$): 599,470,431	Defence Budget (US\$): 671,767,913
% of GDP: 1.08%	% of GDP: 0.69%	% of GDP: 0.81%	% of GDP: 0.73%	% of GDP: 0.66%

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2023, ECLAC (Territory and Population, 2023). IMF, World Economic Outlook Database (GDP, April 2024).

ANALYSIS PAPER

A Complex International Situation: Interconnected Challenges in Contexts of Uncertainty

Francisco Rojas Aravena | Rector, University for Peace-United Nations

The promotion of peace becomes a crucial objective in this new cycle of the international system.¹ Sustainable peace is essential to promote harmony and peaceful coexistence, as well as to develop democratic societies. Stability and sustainability are only possible in contexts of peace. Promoting peace requires an emphasis on the political-diplomatic dimension; it fosters international, regional and bilateral agreements aimed at effectively preventing global and regional threats, as well as global and national polarization.

We need to reflect on the need to develop a *capital of peace*. This requires affirming the importance of multilateralism, under the leadership of the United Nations, in order to create spaces for dialogue and global and regional agreements aimed at fostering peace and stability, and generate national dialogues that can make use of the *dividends of peace capital* to produce reconciled societies based on civic friendship.

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in an international cycle that has devalued peace, failing to respect international institutions or the authority of the United Nations. It undermines global goals and resolutions that could benefit the most vulnerable. We must be part of the change and contribute to the construction of a better world. Each one of us has a role to play in this endeavor.

Civil wars and violent conflicts generate more inequality, greater exclusion, more polarization and recurrent conflicts. Hatred and its discourse and actions are transmitted inter-generationally, hindering the recovery of civic friendship and the reconstruction of peace in the post-conflict period. Conflicts are thus perpetuated.

The history of mankind is riddled with wars. At this point in history, the dangers that threaten to destroy humanity are present with great force. The danger of a nuclear holocaust is a reality, although its dire consequences are not visualized or perceived. The international system is changing at a fast pace. New global and regional challenges and threats are arising. New international actors with power over some regions are also emerging.

The global order created after World War II, supported by the establishment of the United Nations, achieved and maintained key balances during the Cold War. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the changes gained momentum and instability increased. This was evidenced by global terrorism, the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York, and its subsequent expansion throughout the world.

The 2020 pandemic was the breaking point for global cooperation, world solidarity and the responsibility of States for the welfare of humanity. New fears emerged with different intensities. States sought autarchy rather than cooperation. Fear of the Covid 19 pandemic swept the world. Deaths escalated. Humanity did not matter, there was no global coordination. The partnership for cooperation founded on solidarity was drastically reduced between North and South.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the tensions in Africa and in the Korean peninsula, followed by the wars in the Middle East, have finally broken down a rules-based international system. The international order is crumbling and the geopolitical order is undergoing a profound mutation; the global rule system is weakening and norms are no longer enforced. Disrespect for international standards has increased. This was strongly evidenced in the Russia-Ukraine war and in Israel's war against the non-state terrorist force Hamas. Even the essential legitimacy of the UN has been called into question. The paralysis of the Security Council and the non-binding nature of General Assembly resolutions reduce opportunities for action, generating frustration and greater uncertainties in the multilateral system. It remains essential to agree on a change in the rules of procedure to account for changing power relations, while establishing inclusive rules in the decision-making process.

Alternative views -from China- point to the need to move towards a multipolar system, claiming that this process is advancing at a fast pace. This would produce a "democratization of international relations" instead of power politics. These views reaffirm the importance of the United Nations Charter.

¹ Francisco Rojas Aravena. Report to the Council of the University for Peace. Malaga, Spain, June 2024.

No single State, not even a group of powerful States, can effectively address global risks and threats such as the nuclear danger, the Anthropocene, global human mobility, and the effects stemming from the use of new technologies and artificial intelligence. All these threats can be faced only through global cooperation. Political will to partner in order to address these threats and develop mitigation and prevention measures is essential. Parliamentary assembly multilateralism has been undermined.

The absence of cooperation impairs and reduces collaboration for peace. Without peace there is no cooperation. Without peace there is no development. In the absence of peace, in contexts of war and violence, there is only destruction and suffering. In situations of war, it is not possible to exercise any right.

It is essential to build mutual trust as a basis for partnership. Cooperation makes it possible to design paths to advance towards stability, harmony and peace. Fear prevents collaboration and cooperation. On the contrary, fear drives confrontation and the use of violence. Fear and polarization set the trends. The possibilities of conflict transformation and limitation are reduced. The cessation of hostilities and violence is nowhere in sight. War prevails.

A Global System Undergoing Deinstitutionalization

Deinstitutionalization is emerging in every major multilateral sphere, at both global and regional level. It is growing and gaining strength day by day. Mistrust among nations is on the rise. Transactions are slowing down and opportunities for agreements are becoming more and more limited. Multilateral rules and structures are losing relevance.

War seems to be advancing unchecked. Conflict and tensions have become the dominant feature of the international system, while efforts to promote peace are hampered by lack of will and the omnipresence of war. This scenario is exacerbated by the resurgence of increasingly intense wars in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, including militarized tensions in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Speaking at a conference of the Organization of American States², I pointed out that today's wars are characterized by their hybrid nature. The main victims are civilians, especially the more vulnerable groups such as the elderly, women and children. The concept of hybrid threats arises in a context of changes in international power structures, where global links and their regional expressions are becoming more and more blurred and complex. Non-state actors, especially transnational organized crime, play an increasingly important role in these threats, undermining social cohe-

sion, hindering governance and weakening the rule of law and democracy.

A recent UPEACE-Press book³ noted that transnational organized crime is closely linked to corruption, money laundering, terrorism and other wide-ranging crimes. They represent a significant obstacle to international peace and stability, as well as to democracy. Their spheres of action are becoming increasingly broad. To address this problem effectively, it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation and develop comprehensive strategies aimed at addressing the underlying causes of transnational crime and its national roots.

Wars and violent conflicts increase inequality and generate a polarization causing deep wounds in the heart of societies, which take a long time to heal once *pro-peace* "agreements" have been reached. Achieving social cohesion in the wake of a conflict is a complex and difficult task. Domestic factors, such as poverty, inequality - and the associated contempt thereof -, corruption and lack of territorial control contribute to the fragility of the state and the growth of illicit activities at both global and domestic level.

The changes experienced in the new conflicts exceed the response capacity of the multilateral system. It is recognized that peace is limited, weak and fragile. In many places, violence continues to prevail, seeking to achieve a "military triumph" that is not possible. It was not possible yesterday; it is not an option today and will be even less so in the future.

Technological advances have given rise to new types of crime, such as cybercrime and online disinformation, which pose a threat to social cohesion and democracy. The lack of control over cryptocurrencies and financial opacity also opens the door to financial crimes and money laundering.

A Focus on Peace

We need to place peace, solidarity, compassion, and humanity at the forefront. It is urgent to rebuild a destiny, a path, a shared future for humanity. The light of peace and nonviolence through peace education must guide us. We need to recover peace and global stability to demand the fulfillment of every human being's rights.

The promotion of peace becomes a vital objective in this new international landscape. This ambition faces significant challenges due to increasing political polarization, populism, hate speech and the resurgence of nationalism. Peace building requires reconciliation, depolarization and a focus on dialogue, tolerance and cooperation between nations, cultures and communities.

² Francisco Rojas-Aravena. "The emergence of hybrid threats in the Americas," in CEERI Global Magazine, August 2022. Available at <https://www.ceeriglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Reflexiones-5-16.pdf>

³ Victor Guerra (Ed). *Criminal economies: multidimensional approaches*. Dike Publishing, 2024.

Francisco Rojas Aravena**A Complex International Situation:**

Interconnected Challenges in Contexts of Uncertainty

The international system faces significant challenges that require a collective, holistic, multidimensional, multilateral, coordinated and cooperative response. The promotion of peace and stability are fundamental to addressing these threats and challenges and promoting sustainable development. This will only be possible through cooperation and human solidarity.

Nationalism and barriers of all kinds - economic, commercial, technological, cultural and, above all, to people's mobility - reflect and express national interests.

Military spending is increasing in the world and the root causes of conflicts are not being addressed. According to SIPRI, from 2022 to 2023, military spending increased worldwide by 6.8%. Two regions increased their spending by more than 30%: Eastern Europe and North Africa. The military expenditure of Central Europe increased by 10%, followed by the Middle East (9%) and the Sub-Saharan region (8.9%)⁴.

The United States is the largest spender, with a 37% share of the global military expenditure, followed by China, with a share of 12%. European countries as a whole account for 13.8% of global spending (including the United Kingdom's expenditure of 3.7%). Russia's share is 4.5%, followed by India (3.4%) and Saudi Arabia (3.1%). In 2023, the world's military expenditure amounted to US\$ 2443.4 billion dollars.

The various wars have generated exponential military expenditures. Global tensions have economic impacts whose negative multiplier effects worsen the recession and international trade is reduced, more so because of the new barriers. Informality in economies is correlated with deficient social policies. This translates into a severe weakness of the states to face both new and old threats and risks. Uncertainties also dominate the economic spheres, such as trade, investment, and the different related policies, especially social and reactivation schemes. Hence, regaining

stability is fundamental to achieve democratic governance, stability and peace.

State leaders, government authorities and civil society need to recognize the importance of international cooperation as a key element in addressing global threats. Trust is fundamental to addressing threats and building a shared vision. It is necessary to forge and strengthen public-private partnerships to build state policies. Without them, it is impossible for the States to recover their strength, and the spaces for concerted action in which cooperation is the main tool are reduced.

The commitment of all relevant stakeholders is essential. Only with a comprehensive, holistic, collaborative and multidimensional approach can we build a safer and more prosperous future for generations to come.

Recovering peace implies:

- 1) Respecting international rules, international law and international humanitarian law.
- 2) Recovering sovereignty, national territorial control and the monopoly of force by the States.
- 3) Generating resilience in societies, particularly where States show great fragility.
- 4) Forging and implementing prevention measures as the main instrument.
- 5) Depolarizing and removing cancellation culture from social networks.
- 6) Developing educational policies at all levels.
- 7) Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence.
- 8) Promoting partnerships for international cooperation.
- 9) Implementing collaborative approaches involving various stakeholders, including government authorities, parliamentarians, religious leaders, business associations (including micro and small enterprises), and the community.

⁴ SIPRI. *World military spending reaches a new record high as European spending rises*. 2023. Available at <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/MILEX%20Press%20Release%20ESP.pdf>