

Number 12, October 1996

Challenges Facing the Cuban Military

By Phyllis Greene Walker

The shoot-down earlier this year of two small planes flown by members of the Cuban exile group Brothers to the Rescue stands as one of the more dramatic uses of military force in this hemisphere in recent memory. In the wake of the international attention that the event generated, the shoot-down has prompted renewed interest in the Cuban military and has raised serious questions about the position of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR-Revolutionary Armed Forces) in the post-Cold War era. The most important of these concerns are focused on the Cuban military's changing institutional role and responsibilities and its concomitant adjustments to the new political and economic realities of the late twentieth century.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the onset of the island's economic crisis in the early 1990s, the Cuban military was faced with some of the most serious challenges in the history of the institution. During the difficult years following the government's declaration of the "special period in time of peace"; in 1990, the FAR demonstrated great resilience in adapting to the new climate of economic austerity. The size of the armed forces was cut dramatically, the term of military service was shortened, and the defense budget was sharply reduced. In addition, plans for the purchase of new military hardware were put on indefinite hold, while intensive efforts were made to retool spare parts in order to keep existing equipment operational. Many of the returning troops who had just completed their internationalist service in Africa were immediately redeployed from the fields of combat to Cuba's agricultural fields. These measures were carried out in accordance with contingency plans that were developed and agreed upon very early in the crisis by the military institution's leaders. By the end of 1994, the FAR had successfully carried out the most difficult adjustments necessitated by the new domestic and international environments.

During the first half of the 1990s, the military's willingness to adapt itself to the new conditions was critical in helping the Cuban regime weather the long crisis. However, the present easing of the domestic economic crisis, as suggested by official data released for 1995 and projections for at least a 5 percent economic growth rate during 1996, will not necessarily translate into improved conditions for the FAR. On the contrary, despite indications that the worst of the economic crisis is past, the military is not apt to enjoy significant benefits from the turnaround in the short-term. At a time when the Western Hemisphere's militaries search for missions to justify their budgetary outlays, it is unlikely that the FAR will expand its personnel under arms or undertake ventures that increase its burden on the national budget.

Rather, owing to the changes in recent years, the FAR must now contend not only with the challenges that stem from the past half-decade of crisis but also be prepared to grapple with new dilemmas that may arise as a result of the long awaited economic recovery. For the most part, the challenges arise from the military's efforts to successfully execute its formal mission-related responsibilities and at the same time define and adapt itself to a new role and position in national life. Thus, in evaluating the challenges that the institution now faces, it is necessary to consider in some detail the armed forces' missions and responsibilities.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces

Since its creation after the victory of the Revolution, the first and most essential of the FAR's missions has been to provide for the defense of the "socialist fatherland," a responsibility that the Cuban leadership has described as the FAR's *raison d'être* and most sacred mission. This mission is aimed at ensuring Cuba's defense against foreign enemies. The United States is seen as the principal potential aggressor against which the armed forces must be prepared to fight.

The three Cuban military services responsible for this defense include the troops of the Ejército Revolucionario (Revolutionary Army), the Defensa Antiaérea y Fuerza Aérea Revolucionaria (DAAFAR-Antiaircraft Defense and Revolutionary Air Force), and the Marina de Guerra Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Navy). In late 1995 the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated the size of the active-duty armed forces at 105,000 personnel, of whom some 85,000 were army troops. This reflects the dramatic decrease in the number of military personnel that has taken place during the past five years. As affirmed in the FAR Military Council's April 1996 report, the armed forces have been cut by approximately 100,000 troops since the peak of military manpower in the late 1980s, with the leadership, logistics, and services areas most directly affected by the reductions.

The adherence to the military doctrine of the Guerra de Todo el Pueblo (War of All the People), which has guided the FAR's planning and preparations since its adoption in 1980, has helped the effect of these personnel cuts on the country's defense capabilities. Under this doctrine, the troops of the regular military are not the only forces responsible for protecting the nation against foreign aggression; rather, the defense of the island is construed as the duty of the entire population. Thus, the regular troops serve as the "professional vanguard" of the armed population, which includes the two-million strong Milicia de Tropas Territoriales (MTT-Territorial Troops Militia). The MTT is designed to provide tactical and logistical support for the regular military and is intended to act as a deterrent to potential aggression.

Though the threat of an imminent invasion by the United States may seem implausible to many foreign observers, it is deemed credible by the FAR's hierarchy and is a key aspect of Cuban defense planning. Precisely because the military hierarchy views foreign aggression as a real possibility, its import in military planning and calculations must be

taken seriously. The February 1996 orders for the DAAFAR's attack on the planes piloted by the Cuban exile group, for example, were carried out in accordance with this defensive mission. Despite the seemingly benign challenge posed by the Brothers to the Rescue's aircraft left little question regarding its resolve to defend national territory against invading United States forces or presumed incursions

by exiles. As described in a March 1996 Washington Post editorial by retired U.S. Army Major General Edward B. Atkes who, only weeks before the shoot-down visited the island as part of a delegation that met with Cuban military officials, the Cuban perception of this threat "closely resembles [the United States'] own perception of the threat posed by the Warsaw Pact at the height of the Cold War ... [when] we did not necessarily consider [aggression] likely, but the risks on the downside were so great that we had to devote substantial resources and effort to deterring it and to preparing a viable defense." Concern with the FAR reactions to perceived threats emanating from U.S. territory has led some within the U.S. defense community to advocate improved communications and other confidence building measures, similar to those used with the Soviet military, to minimize the chance that unforeseen events might lead to an armed crisis.

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Against the backdrop of the external threat that requires perpetual vigilance, the concerns and problems generated by the economic crisis have brought renewed attention to the FAR's second formal mission of helping maintain domestic order and internal security. Along with its responsibility for external defense, the military has also been assigned this mission since the Ministerio de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (MINFAR - Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces) was created in 1960. The FAR shares overlapping responsibilities in the area of domestic order and internal security with forces under the Ministerio del Interior (Ministry of Interior). Contrary to some expectations, this situation has changed little since late 1989, when the MININT was brought directly under the MINFAR administrative and organizational mantle. At that time, the head of the MININT was convicted of negligence and misuse of government funds, dismissed, and imprisoned. The conviction was based on the minister's reported role in a purportedly poorly conducted investigation of drug trafficking involving FAR General Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez. Ochoa, a known and decorated FAR officer who had led Cuba's internationalist troops in Africa, was court martialed and executed by firing squad in July 1989. His execution is believed to have had a profound impact on the military institution, especially on the general officers who sat in judgment of him at his court martial. In the reorganization of the that followed, nearly all the officers of the formerly independent ministry were dismissed and replaced with career military personnel. Yet despite the consolidation of domestic security functions, the forces of the FAR remain the primary guarantors of domestic order, with responsibilities that continue to revolve around criminal matters, the patrol of the country's borders, and political surveillance.

Even though the military's domestic security responsibilities have not been expanded, the concern over the need to deploy the armed forces in the event of serious domestic disturbances has grown since the onset of the economic crisis. Such concern became particularly intense at the time of the *balsero* (rafter) exodus in summer 1994, when thousands of Cuban rafters attempted to make their way to U.S. territory. Throughout this difficult period, the Cuban leadership remained intent on keeping the military aloof from participation in internal security or police functions, such as might be required in quashing a demonstration or suppressing a riot, and has thus far been successful. Few reports have surfaced in recent years to indicate the involvement of military personnel in street incidents, which are almost invariably handled by the officers of the MININT's National Revolutionary Police. Nevertheless, the FAR's commanders have not ruled out the possibility of using military force against the Cuban population if the need should arise, particularly if the incident were seen as provoked by foreign agents. In a statement widely viewed as a sign of this resolve, the FAR's chief of general staff cautioned in August 1994, "[W]e would rather use our weapons against the foreign aggressors, but we warn its internal fifth column that our revolutionary people have never had a vocation to be puppets. If anyone tries to strike our cheek, we will not turn the other. Instead, we will act with firmness.

Since the incidents in 1994 that prompted the general's warning, there has been much speculation on the island and abroad as to whether military troops, if so commanded, would indeed carry out orders to fire on fellow citizens participating in an unruly demonstration or uprising. This question is central to the FAR's own perception and promotion of itself as a popular institution that maintains close identification and contact with the Cuban people. In contrast to the perception of the personnel assigned to the MININT, the military's troops are seen as being "of the people." This "popular myth" of the Cuban military appears to be much closer to reality than fiction when compared to many Latin American countries, where a social chasm often separates the military from the general population.

Nevertheless, the Cuban military is recorded as a highly trained and professional force, whose members' loyalty to the institution and adherence to revolutionary duty could assume primacy over any personal misgivings. At best, it might be surmised that the troops' willingness to comply with orders to fire on Cuban citizens would depend upon the situation surrounding their issuance, including such subjective factors as the integrity and respect accorded the unit's immediate commander. While the regime would clearly prefer to rely upon the FAR, exclusively for external defense, it refuses to rule out the possible need to deploy its troops domestically. Much as with the command's response to past perceived threats, such as the provocations that led to the February shoot-down, underestimating the FAR's resolve in this regard could have grave consequences.

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While the defense of national sovereignty and the maintenance of domestic order are longstanding responsibilities similar to those assigned to nearly all Latin American armed forces, the FAR's internationalist mission represented one of the rare occasions in which the region's armed forces have been deployed outside the hemisphere in a combat theater of operations. The internationalist mission, which was initiated on the heels of the Soviet sponsored professionalization of the institution in the early 1970s, came to an end after the return of the last Cuban troops from Angola in 1991. This new responsibility quickly assumed great importance within the institution, and the performance of internationalist service soon became one of the requisites for upward mobility within the ranks. During the sixteen-year period that the mission was in effect, more than 300,000 Cubans carried out military service abroad. The majority of these personnel were conscripts and activated reservists who were deployed to fight either in the Angolan conflict or in the Ethiopian-Somali war, the other major theater of foreign combat operations in which Cuba was active.

As might be expected given its duration, the internationalist mission profoundly affected the character of the Cuban military institution. Members of the officer corps who were deployed abroad gained valuable field experience commanding combat troops and honed their technical expertise operating the often sophisticated military equipment that was supplied by the Soviets. This experience also affected the perception of the institution by outside observers: The FAR was no longer seen as only the military of a small island nation, but acquired international stature and was often counted among the best trained armed forces in the Western Hemisphere, if not in the Third World.

Since the end of the internationalist mission, the FAR leadership has attempted to maintain the professional ethos developed by the institution over the preceding two decades. While the general level of professionalism within the institution may remain intact, however, the FAR is now a qualitatively different military. This difference is most evident at the level of the individual officers, many of whom were commissioned in the late 1970s and the 1980s. Their professional expectations and personal aspirations are distinct from those of their predecessors, whose career prospects had included the possibilities of training in the Soviet Union's top military schools and commanding troops in combat. By contrast, the professional skills now demanded of the members of the officer corps are managerial and business skills, which require markedly different personal attributes than those for heroism under fire. It is likely that this change in institutional ethos and in career opportunities may have been factors that led to the retirement of many of the older commissioned officers during the early 1990s.

The Economic Mission

At the same time that the FAR's internationalist mission was drawing to a close, the deepening crisis of the early 1990s prompted the military to assume a new task: the expansion of its participation in the domestic economy. As early as 1991, Fidel Castro affirmed that "[O]ne of the Armed Forces' missions at this time is to help the economy." Since then, the new role has become increasingly important, as the military has extended

its involvement into each of the main sectors that make up Cuba's socialist economy; namely, the agricultural sector, the productive (or manufacturing) sector, and the service sector, which includes the growing tourism industry.

The institutional interest in economic matters, however, is not entirely new for the Cuban military. From the 1960s to the early 1970s, military officers were routinely assigned to civilian bureaucratic posts which often required the oversight and management of economic activities. Throughout the early years of the Revolution, FAR troops were also regularly mobilized to help with the annual sugar harvest. It is not surprising, then, that several years before the onset of the current problems, the military institution was already poised for greater involvement in the economy. The first public signs of this renewed institutional interest in economic affairs may be traced to around the time of the Communist Party of Cuba's Third Congress in 1986. The FAR's initiative was then widely thought to have been spurred by Minister of the FAR Raúl Castro's personal interest achieving greater efficiency in production.

At that time, a special study group was formed within the institution and tasked to develop recommendations for boosting production at the various enterprises managed by the FAR. The new business techniques advocated, which were inspired by such icons of capitalist management as Peter Drucker and William Edwards Deming, the originator of the concept of "total quality management," emphasized greater managerial autonomy and worker participation in decision-making, improved quality control, and a reduced work force. In addition, job performance, as opposed to seniority, was recommended as one of the primary criteria for promotion. By the time that the economic crisis was underway in 1990, the new management techniques had been put into practice at all the military's enterprises and were being selectively introduced at civilian-run firms.

The deepening of the country's economic difficulties led to the decision to expand the military's participation into other areas of the domestic economy. When the "special period in time of peace" was announced in September 1990, the military was already active in food production, which was then aimed only at providing for the troops' own consumptive needs. The FAR was also discussing ways to increase foreign exchange earnings through the formation of joint investment ventures with foreign partners. The five-year plan that laid out the Military's objectives for 1990-1995 emphasized increasing institutional self-sufficiency. Many of the troops returning from Angola were sent to work at the military's farms in the effort to achieve full self-sufficiency in foodstuffs and minimize the institution's drain on resources from the national economy. Others with a more technical background were assigned to help identify alternatives to imported fertilizers and pesticides or to help develop domestically engineered spare parts for Soviet-built military equipment.

Following the decision to open the Cuban economy to foreign investment, the military quickly became involved in helping develop the tourism industry. Through the establishment of the Gaviota Tourism Group, S.A., the military became a joint partner with foreign investors in developing numerous tourist hotels and luxury resorts throughout the island, a move that helped provide the institution with its own hard

currency earnings and also employment opportunities for selected retiring officers. By 1994, Gaviota reportedly had an annual income of some \$220 million, an amount that represented nearly 15 percent of the country's total hard currency earnings for that year. This success in the tourism industry has prompted the FAR to expand its holdings under Gaviota with the formation of several new subsidiary firms. Their activities, as well as others related to the military's economic ventures, have been overseen by General Julio Casas Regueiro, a long-time Politburo member and the former chief of the DAAFAR. In January 1995, journalist Santiago Aroca, writing in *El Nuevo Herald*, reported that Texnotec, one of the recently established companies, is dedicated to importing information technology and electronic equipment; another, Turcimex, is a messenger and cargo company. Perhaps the most unusual venture in which the FAR is now said to be participating is TRD Caribe, a fast-growing chain of department stores.

Thus far, the military appears to have been successful in its efforts to hold down spending and otherwise help contribute to the national economy. By the end of 1994, the FAR had managed to keep its expenditures beneath its budgeted allocation, which reportedly allowed the regime to redirect the difference to programs in health and education. A year later, the FAR's leadership reported that it "self-financed" some 30 percent of its expenses and reduced its 1996 burden on the national budget to 701 million pesos, a drop of 5 percent over the preceding year's funding level. Yet as FAR Minister Raúl Castro noted in remarks at the conclusion of the Military Council's April 1996 meeting, there are limits to the extent to which the FAR can continue cutting its budget. The difference, then, between the institution's needs and its allocated budget have to be made up by achieving greater economic efficiency and through self-financing efforts.

The FAR's External Mission

As suggested by the overview of the FAR's missions, the prolonged economic crisis has resulted in the emergence of a series of challenges that have tested the FAR's ability to successfully carry out its responsibilities. The FAR faces numerous challenges in carrying out its traditional responsibility to provide for external defense. The most important aspect of this challenge is set by the overarching need to build institutional self-sufficiency, a concern that has preoccupied the FAR's leadership since the first signs of the impending collapse of the socialist bloc were apparent in the late 1980s. The military's effort to meet both continuing and emerging challenges is likely to affect not only the internal institutional dynamics of the armed forces but also the FAR's role in national life.

The mission-related challenges focus on the more concrete, or practical, tasks that the armed forces must carry out in fulfilling its designated institutional role. With respect to the armed forces' primary mission to defend national sovereignty, the challenge of maintaining the armed forces' capabilities for external defense is foremost. These capabilities may be broadly evaluated by considering the FAR's equipment and material resources as well as the human resources at its disposal. Despite general acknowledgment that these capabilities have been affected by the economic crisis, it is difficult to determine the extent to which they have been compromised. The Cuban regime clearly has little interest in portraying anything less than a positive picture.

The maintenance of existing equipment and materiel appears to remain a critical concern for the armed forces, as suggested by repeated public declarations by FAR officials of achievements in this area and meetings of the "spare parts forums" that are held regularly throughout the country. Foreign defense analysts, for example, speculate that nearly one-fourth of the aircraft in the DAAFAR's inventory may no longer be operational; and only three of the six MiG-29s that were delivered just before the break-up of the Soviet Union are still flying. Following the U.S. demonstration of its use of air power against enemy targets during the Persian Gulf War, the FAR began to store much of its existing inventory in the network of underground tunnels constructed by military personnel throughout the island. In addition to obtaining the hoped-for benefit of sparing the items from destruction in the event of an air attack by the United States, storage in the tunnels also saves the equipment from the slower ravages of Cuba's tropical climate and the unexpected threats posed by hurricanes. After the Gulf War, the FAR hierarchy authorized additional measures aimed at updating the military's radar and other detection systems, along with its command and fire systems. At around the same time, in an effort to improve operational capabilities in the event of a national emergency, the command and control of all three armed services were consolidated under the authority of the chiefs of the island's three territorial armies.

The FAR has also sought to improve its capabilities with respect to the domestic production of military items. The military has maintained its own industries and manufacturing plants since the early 1960s. It has long been producing its own ammunition and small arms, many of which have been destined for the members of the MTT, and some ground-to-air missiles. These are believed to be built at the Ernesto Ché Guevara Military Industrial Enterprise in Villa Clara, one of the first plants at which the FAR's new managerial techniques were introduced. More recently, the military has begun producing its own aircraft, such as the multi-use AC-001 Comas planes that are being built at the Yuri Gagarin Military Industrial Enterprise, one of the FAR's oldest plants which was opened with Soviet assistance in the mid-1960s.

The extent of the FAR's success in its production efforts has prompted its leadership to continue to dedicate resources to this area, despite recent reports of accounting and cost problems. Yet even though the military has proven itself resourceful and inventive in the development of its industrial capabilities, the older materiel in its inventory remains hard to maintain. The older armored equipment, for example, is routinely cannibalized. The FAR's best hope is that the Russians will comply with their side of the lease agreement for the Lourdes electronic intelligence facility, which provides for payments in spare military parts and other supplies in lieu of hard currency.

The maintenance of the FAR's capabilities that depend on human resources has also been a challenge since the onset of the economic crisis. As discussed earlier, the size of the active-duty armed forces has been cut nearly in half during recent years. Despite retirements in the upper and middle ranks of the officer corps which have helped reduce expenditures, the FAR continues to seek new recruits, and in 1993 inducted the highest number in the institution's history. Even with the scope of the personnel changes that

have taken place in the regular armed forces, the FAR remains highly dependent on the support of nonmilitary personnel for the execution of its external defense mission, as defined by the military doctrine of the "War of All the People." Thus, the need to maintain readiness has meant that the FAR has continued to regularly carry out tactical defense exercises involving civilians, reservists, and regular troops.

That these exercises have been continued despite the constraints posed by limited financial resources is indicative of the FAR leadership's priorities. These exercises appear to serve the dual purpose of supporting cooperation and coordination between military units and the civilian population as well as reinforcing the public belief in the imminence of a U.S. invasion. So long as the United States refrains from invading, the regime is able to point to the apparent effectiveness of this popular deterrent. The danger of the FAR's reliance on such extensive human resources, however, is the possible onset of what might be called "mobilizational exhaustion," brought on by the ever-continuing demands on an individual's personal time. Since the beginning of the economic crisis, personal time has become all the more precious as more hours are spent pursuing the necessities of life.

Hence, the FAR's most important challenge in executing its external mission is to maintain both the premise of its defense doctrine, which depends on close civilian military cooperation, and the credibility of the foreign threat. Although the recent Helms Burton Law has bolstered Cuban nationalism and consequently provided motivation for this needed cooperation, the FAR leadership may find it increasingly difficult to meet the dual challenge with the passage of time.

The FAR's Domestic Mission

The FAR's efforts to carry out its domestic missions to provide for internal security and help support the national economy have also led to new and difficult challenges for the institution, in part owing to the new environment. The role the FAR plays in maintaining domestic order will have a direct effect on its image within Cuban society. In addition, the improving domestic economic situation is likely to create a new set of challenges for the institution that may be every bit as serious as those presented by the crisis of the last five years.

In the area of domestic order, the FAR's most important challenge is, paradoxically, to prevent the military from being drawn into a domestic security role. Avoiding such involvement depends on the FAR leadership's ability to keep the military's duties and responsibilities separate from those assigned to the personnel under the MININT. Meeting this challenge is critical to the maintenance of the "popular myth" of the armed forces. Maintaining the image of the armed forces as a popular institution is important not only for successfully supporting the FAR's doctrine but also for keeping military service an attractive option for Cuban youth. Even though the FAR has been successful in attracting qualified new recruits, this concern may be expected to assume greater import in the future given that the average age of the Cuban population is increasing.

All Cubans, regime supporters and dissidents alike, are well aware that in the event of a domestic crisis, the military would most certainly be called upon to act as the ultimate guarantor of domestic order. Thus, the specific challenges associated with this concern are twofold. First, the FAR's leaders are challenged to ensure that political and economic conditions on the island do not deteriorate to the point that social chaos might erupt. This is likely one of the factors that led to the armed forces' early support for economic reforms and to their more recent circumspect support for moderation in the pace of such reforms. Second, it is in the military's interest to ensure that the country's political police, who are organized under the MININT's Department of State Security and who now also fall under the FAR hierarchy's command, are able to obtain and act on intelligence to prevent provocateurs from instigating events that might spin out of control.

This rather convoluted situation, both in terms of the military's support for economic reform and in its ties with the MININT, suggests that serious contradictions have been generated by the regime's decision to move in the direction of an economic opening. While economic reforms have been essential for the salvation of the regime, they have also led to increasing popular pressures for political reform, which has no official support within the institution. In addition, some evidence suggests there are divergent views among the armed forces with respect to the pace and scope of the reform effort, despite the FAR's official position. Nevertheless, the FAR's leadership apparently believes that the pressures for change generated by the limited reforms can be contained, and therefore has readily pursued the new economic mission. Carrying out this new mission, however, has produced new and difficult challenges of its own for the institution.

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The challenges posed by the military's expanded participation in the domestic economy since the late 1980s may prove to be the most difficult for the institution to surmount. Unlike its other missions, in which the military's responsibilities are essentially preventive, its participation in the economy entails a high profile, pro-active role. Despite the benefits that the FAR may accrue by virtue of its economic role, the limits to gains in productive efficiency suggest that success may not necessarily correlate with the forces' preparation and efforts, even though the prestige of the institution may be on the line. The extensive scope of these challenges is also problematic, as reflected in the strategic tasks assigned the institution, which were laid out by Minister Raul Castro at the height of the economic crisis. In addition to the overarching aims of achieving self-sufficiency and self-financing and maintaining combat capabilities, the specific tasks included the FAR's development of fish farming as a renewable food source and of "green medicine" to reduce reliance on foreign drug imports. Such tasks are assigned in addition to the FAR's extensive efforts to achieve continuing gains in the production of military industries and agriculture at a time of shrinking resources.

By contrast, the military's participation in the service sector appears to be the least challenging and costly venture for the institution in terms of the commitment required and resources dedicated. The organization inherent in a military gives it a comparative advantage over other state actors. Apart from the military's influence at the pinnacle of political power, representatives of the institution are well positioned in the state bureaucracy and ensure the armed forces can take advantage of emerging opportunities in this area. As a result of these factors, the military's greatest opportunities for expansion beyond its traditional roles may be in the service sector of the economy. It should also be kept in mind that such expansion could prove very controversial, particularly if it took place at the expense of civilian actors in the government or in the party, a development that could fuel popular resentment against the institution.

In sum, it appears that the FAR may have few opportunities in this area that do not also have costs. The challenge for the institution's leadership is to accurately weigh the risks they entail against expected gains. It will become more and more difficult for the FAR to continue to achieve productivity gains from increased efficiency in agriculture and industry. In addition, the institution's expanded role in the economic sphere may itself generate problems for the institution, including possible disgruntlement among members of the civilian elite who may consider themselves better prepared than military personnel. A more problematic issue is that the new economic mission is not necessarily compatible with the traditional role and responsibilities of a professional armed forces, and could contribute to an institutional identity crisis. As a tactical response, this economic involvement has helped ensure the military's institutional salvation during the "special period" but it may not be the long-term panacea for which the FAR's leadership might hope. Rather, serious problems could develop should the FAR be seen willing to sacrifice military professionalism for the sake of economic gains.

The improving economic situation may also generate new challenges for the FAR. Even though limited economic growth is expected to continue beyond 1996, the FAR is unlikely to benefit sufficiently from this to support efforts to regain the stature it had achieved before the onset of the crisis. Though defense spending might no longer contract in absolute terms, the FAR's share of the government budget is not apt to increase significantly. Likewise, there is no new patron on the horizon who appears willing to supplement its funding as did the Soviets. In spite of the rhetoric regarding the importance of institutional self-financing, the FAR's leadership would be hard pressed to minimize the sense of relative deprivation, and the resultant damage to morale, if the military were not assigned government funding increases roughly commensurate with those of the rest of the public sector.

Such a situation would generate unprecedented pressures for the institution to act to preserve its interests and could prompt further role expansion. One possibility is that the institution might turn outward and attempt to enhance its domestic profile by pursuing greater international involvement through, for example, participation in peacekeeping, a venture in which there has already been some interest expressed. Another possibility is that the FAR might seek to become a more forceful domestic actor, which could lead to

greater participation in the party and governmental apparatus, whether at the municipal, provincial, or national level.

Conclusions

The continuing challenges reflected in the FAR's recent efforts to carry out its missions stem directly from the loss of support from its long-time benefactor, the Soviet Union, and from the domestic economic crisis that followed the socialist bloc's demise. During the past five years, the FAR has successfully adapted to the new environment and met the new challenges that have arisen. Dramatically cutting its personnel and spending levels, it has carried out perhaps the most difficult tasks for any military institution. In addition, the lasting impact of the adjustment in institutional self-perception that came with the end of its internationalist mission should not be discounted. Having weathered these recent changes, the FAR's leadership now has all the more incentive to ensure the continuing success of the military's new economic mission and to achieve self-sufficiency and self financing.

By all outward signs, the FAR has adapted to the new domestic austerity and has incorporated its new economic mission with relative ease. Yet even though the military's expansion into the economic realm has created opportunities for the institution, it has also led to a range of new problems, challenges, and contradictions. Indeed, the challenges now at hand are greater and much different from those that the institution has confronted in the past.

In responding to these challenges, the FAR may now be moving in a new direction, a development that may be expected to eventually affect its national role and identity. In the process of adapting to meet the new and emerging challenges, the military institution appears to be slowly changing itself. The fundamental challenge for the institution remains for it to carry out successfully both its traditional missions of guaranteeing external defense and internal security, and its new economic mission. Yet, in an environment of economic constraints (which will continue despite the recent economic turnaround), limited resources and heightened competition could combine to create the potential for schisms within the institution and mounting tensions between it and other government actors. In height of these considerations, the ultimate challenge may be for the FAR to continue to maintain its core identity as a professional military institution.

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