

# Peruvian Strategic Culture

by Joseph S. Tulchin and Brian Fonseca  
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FINDINGS REPORT

**FIU**

Applied Research Center

Latin American and Caribbean Center

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

### **The FIU-SOUTHCOM Academic Partnership Strategic Cultures Assessments**

Florida International University's Applied Research Center (FIU ARC), in collaboration with the United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and FIU's Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC), has recently formed the FIU-SOUTHCOM Academic Partnership. The partnership entails FIU providing the highest quality research-based knowledge to further explicative understanding of the political, strategic, and cultural dimensions of state behavior and foreign policy. This goal will be accomplished by employing a Strategic Culture approach. The initial phase of Strategic Culture assessments consists of a year-long research program that focuses on developing a standard analytical framework to identify and assess the Strategic Culture of ten Latin American countries. FIU will facilitate professional presentations of the following ten countries over the course of one year: Venezuela, Cuba, Haiti, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina. In addition, a findings report on the impact of Islam and Muslims within Latin America will be produced.

The overarching purpose of the project is two-fold: to generate a rich and dynamic base of knowledge pertaining to the political, social, and strategic factors that influence state behavior; and to contribute to SOUTHCOM's Socio-Cultural Dynamics (SCD) Program. Utilizing the notion of Strategic Culture, SOUTHCOM has commissioned FIU ARC to conduct country studies in order to explain how states comprehend, interpret, and implement national security policy *vis-à-vis* the international system.

SOUTHCOM defines Strategic Culture as follows: "the combination of internal and external influences and experiences—geographic, historical, cultural, economic, political and military—that shape and influence the way a country understands its relationship to the rest of the world, and how a state will behave in the international community." FIU will identify and expound upon the strategic and cultural factors that inform the rationale behind the perceptions and behavior of select states in the present political and security climate by analyzing demography, history, regional customs, traditions, belief systems, and other cultural and historical influences that have contributed to the development of a particular country's current security rationale and interpretation of national security. To meet the stated goals, FIU ARC will host a series of professional workshops in Miami. These workshops bring subject matter experts from all over the US and Latin America together to explore and discuss a country's specific history, geography, culture, economic, political, and military climates *vis-à-vis* Strategic Culture. At the conclusion of each workshop, FIU publishes a findings report, which is presented at SOUTHCOM.

The following Peruvian Strategic Culture Findings Report, authored by Dr. Joseph S. Tulchin and Brian P. Fonseca is the product of a working group held in Miami on June 17, 2010, which included the presentations and intellectual contributions of 8 prominent academic and private sector experts in Peruvian history, culture, economics, politics, and military affairs.

The views expressed in this findings report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the US Government, US Department of Defense, US Southern Command, FIU-ARC, or Florida International University.

On behalf of FIU-ARC, we wish to acknowledge and thank all of the participants for their contributions, which made the Peruvian Strategic Culture workshop a tremendous success.

*Preliminary Report*

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## **Executive Summary**

- Ernest R. May, in his text *The Lessons of History*, defines “nightmares” as deep-seated emotions – traumas – and convictions that drive action or prevent more reasonable policy decisions. In the case of Peru, the single most vivid nightmare refers to the loss of national territory in the south at the hands of Chile and the possibility that this trauma may be repeated. For Peruvian strategic culture this “nightmare” is the principal threat to national security, a spur to military planning, and the possible provocation for armed action. Whether that nightmare reflects today’s reality, however, is a matter of debate.

- History, geography and ethnicity have created geographic and social cleavages that divide the Peruvian people. The Andes has represented a significant barrier to communication and, in effect, created two separate regions – one dominated by a political and economic elite (whites and mestizos), and the other by mainly indigenous peoples residing in relative poverty.

- Since its independence from Spain, Peru has lost territory to all of its neighbors – Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia, and Chile. The most traumatic of these losses was the War of the Pacific, when Chile invaded Peru, sacked the national library in Lima, and took the valuable mining areas of the southern region of Peru as spoils. The northern border with Ecuador and the southern border with Chile became the focus of conflict and the sites of territorial loss that have framed threat-perception, fostering a sense of victimization that is central to Peruvian strategic culture. Peru envisions itself as a victim; it is always invaded, never the invader. This is held to be true even in the case of Ecuador, where Peru twice has been the invader (1980, 1995). This ambiguity toward Ecuador may help explain why Chile is the principal nightmare.

- Instability and party weakness contribute to a dysfunctional strategic culture: before President Alberto Fujimori was elected in 1990, there had been 71 presidents of Peru, 51 of them military and 26 of them assumed power through coups. With the exception of APRA, no political party has managed to remain viable for more than a

decade in the last hundred years. No political party has a foreign policy agenda that expresses the strategic culture of the country.

- In such a fragmented political context, it is not surprising that public opinion is divided. Divided public opinion weakens strategic culture. That may account for the growing dissonance between strategic culture and the strategic reality in which Peru operates. There is little likelihood that any political leader or any candidate in the coming 2011 elections will be able to mobilize support for any specific foreign policy.

- Democratic consolidation and continuing stability will be the key factors in changing strategic culture. Stability will lead to a clearer sense of nation building that focuses on including the geographic regions of the sierra and Amazon basin, and the indigenous population that lives there.

- Recent investments in infrastructure may change strategic culture: new investments within the framework of IIRSA planning (IDB) with strong Brazilian support suggest a possible transition to a more coherent, pragmatic strategic culture.

- Success in collaboration between USSOUTHCOM and the Peruvian military will depend on persuading the Peruvian armed forces to move beyond its historical obsession with a Chilean invasion. To the extent that the Peruvian armed forces will accept the fact that an invasion from the south is increasingly unlikely, it will be willing to collaborate in joint maneuvers with the U.S., will be more active in peacekeeping efforts, and will be more effective in helping to control arms purchases in the region; an important policy initiative of the current government.

## Introduction

In his path-breaking book on the role that historical, geographic, and cultural factors play in a nation's strategic culture, Ernest R. May asked us to consider a nation's "nightmares."<sup>1</sup> By drawing our attention to the subconscious fears or anxieties of everyone or anyone in the country, he intended to draw a distinction between longstanding and powerful forces in a nation's past that we might expect to last over a long period of time, and less significant issues that might be the subject of explosive rhetoric, but were of less lasting significance. In this manner, he was drawing our attention to strategic issues, issues of great staying power, and away from issues that might flare up at any time but lacked staying power. It was nightmares, he believed, that would drive action in response to provocation or threat.

Peru appears to be a perfect case to study the way in which national nightmares shape strategic culture. The single most vivid nightmare refers to the loss of national territory, and, more specifically, to the War of the Pacific with Chile at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which resulted in the loss of large, resource-rich regions in the south. Nationalist rhetoric continues to refer to the threat of future invasion by Chile, and military planning focuses almost exclusively on responding to an invasion from the south. Yet, there is a growing body of evidence that Chileans have ended their own obsession with Peru, and that they no longer entertain a conflict hypothesis with Peru.

At the same time, it is remarkable that until the last two or three years, no government in Peru, military or civilian, has done anything to secure the nation's territory. For decades there has been a broad consensus among political leaders that integrating indigenous communities in the mountains and the Amazon basin into the national mainstream was the only effective manner to secure the nation's borders, until the recent road-building projects with Brazil, nothing had been done to reduce the historic cleavages between the coast and the interior, between the white/mestizo elite and the indigenous majority of the population.

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest R. May, *The Lessons of History*. [NY: Holt, 1975].

Current military doctrine views Chile as the major threat to national security. Training, arms purchases, and war gaming is centered on the southern boundary in Peru. Nationalist rhetoric stirs resentment against Chile, not only in terms of potential armed conflict, but also in terms of refusing to sell strategic energy (natural gas) to Chile. In the last presidential election, Ollanta Humala, a former senior army officer, mixed nationalism and ethnicity to stir public opinion in the southern regions against Chile. Peruvian military doctrine holds that the nation's military strategy is "dissuasive," but it is not clear what has been done in the past or is done today to dissuade any neighbor of anything specific.

The civilian government of Toledo, in its effort to assert control over the military, began to publish a White Book of strategic doctrine during this decade and emphasized the task of nation building, but little has been done on this score either. Nevertheless, given the fact that Chile and Argentina publish annual White Books and that such disclosure by civilian, democratically elected governments fits the pattern of a peaceful hemispheric community fostered by the United States and buttressed by periodic defense ministerial summits, consolidating civilian control over the military in Peru will facilitate the evolution of Peru's strategic culture. As tying the nation together becomes a stronger part of state policy, the invocation of the possible threat of loss of territory may be expected to diminish.

What holds a nation together? In the classic literature, territory and infrastructure are the primary factors, with social and cultural policy functioning to create a sense of national community as a secondary factor.<sup>2</sup> Since its independence from Spain, the history of Peru has been a remarkable sequence of losses of territory and the persistence of broad cleavages between geographical regions and ethnic groups. All of Peru's neighbors have taken parts of its initial territory, all except Brazil, through military conquest and the diplomatic consequences of its defeat on the battlefield. In almost every case, Peru was not prepared for conflict. Even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the humiliation of Chilean troops sacking the national library in Lima, the Peruvian military was unprepared for conflict with Ecuador in 1995, despite having provoked the hostilities.

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<sup>2</sup> The European literature, especially the German authors, spoke of race as a unifying factor. Clearly, that is not the case in Peru.

At the rhetorical level, strategic policy focuses on the recovery of the territory lost in the north and the south, and on providing sufficient armed deterrence to prevent further loss of territory. Pedagogical texts used in the armed forces academies and the National School of Advanced Strategic Studies (CAEM) repeat or paraphrase the classic European doctrines.<sup>3</sup> In operational terms, military calls for preparedness focus on a potential armed conflict in the south. But, since the Alvarado government of forty years ago, no actual purchases have been made to enhance the armed forces capacity for conflict in the south. So extreme has the armed forces' focus been on the south that when actual conflict erupted in the northern jungle the army was woefully unprepared and suffered ignominious reverses.

In addition to scenarios of conflict and statements of preparedness, security doctrine in Peru since 1950 also calls for nation building, although little had been done until the last two years to accomplish this goal. The call for nation building as part of the strategic doctrine recognizes that the principal challenge facing the Peruvian state is to overcome the historic, geographic, and cultural cleavages that divide the country. The process of nation building, according to Peruvian strategic doctrine, must have three dimensions: protection of existing national territory; construction of an infrastructure that ties the territory together; and policies of social inclusion that bring the nation's indigenous majority into the mainstream of national life.<sup>4</sup> However, threat scenarios and war-gaming does not take these factors into account. In fact, it is clear that the focus on dissuasive strategy and the loss of territory made it difficult for the armed forces to organize a coherent campaign against the local insurgency, Sendero Luminoso. That insurgency used indigenous domination as one of its rally cries.

This is the theory of Peruvian strategic culture. What is the reality? If we go back before the arrival of the Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, we find the region was the seat of a sprawling empire held together by tribute and trade. For several thousand years, there was a set of regional power centers held together by trade and mutual fear; by the 14<sup>th</sup> century, these regional centers were consolidated by the Incas and their precursors.

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<sup>3</sup> Paper prepared for the Peruvian Strategic Culture Study by General Carlos R. Dominguez Solis, Florida International University, Miami, June 17, 1010. The classical study of the CAEM is Alfred Stepan, Jr.

<sup>4</sup> Papers prepared for the Peruvian Strategic Culture Study by Lucia Dammert and Farid Kahhat, Florida International University, Miami, June 17, 1010.

Effective imperial control extended from the Isthmus of Panama to the glaciers of Patagonia. Of course, at the northern and southern extremes, control from the center was more a matter of convenience and courtesy than it was a matter of practice. Still, at the center, this was a rich and proud empire.

The Spanish did their best to maintain the trappings of empire and to impose their authority over the existing power structure. The Spanish moved the capital of their dependency from the mountains, where it had been for several centuries, to the coast in order to accommodate the maritime exchange with the mother country. Where valuable minerals were exploited, as in Bolivia or Southern Peru, the degree of control was formidable. Elsewhere, control was more symbolic than enforced. In both cases, tribute was extracted from the indigenous population. But, by the end of the colonial period, the Spanish had decentralized their imperial administrative structure. They created major subdivisions of the viceroyalties, called *intendencias*, and acknowledged a significant degree of administrative independence at the peripheries of the empire, as in Patagonia, the eastern slopes of the Andes, and the northern frontiers. The same things happened in New Spain (Mexico) as in Peru. As a consequence, by the end of the colonial period, the east coast of Peru, the seat of imperial government and administration, with its large population of bureaucrats, both Spanish and Creole, and merchants who earned their living either as representatives of the crown or as contrabandists, had become separated from the indigenous centers of population in the mountains and in the jungle settlements of the upper Amazon. The Spanish virtually conceded their administrative control over the periphery.

After independence, the new country immediately began to lose territory to its neighbors and to further lose whatever administrative hold it had on the geographic peripheries of the new nation. This cleavage was exacerbated by the ethnic divisions that separated the elite from the subordinate indigenous populations, kept in thrall by a tight network of laws and customs that preserved the dominance of the white/mestizo elite. These cleavages persist to this day.

As we have indicated, little has been done in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to carry out the mandate of the nation's strategic doctrine or to avoid its national nightmares.

Nationalism has been used to defend certain policies, as in the debate over sale of the nation's natural gas to foreign customers. In the months prior to the outbreak of hostilities with Ecuador in 1995, there was little talk of the border conflict and no military preparation for conflict. Once the shooting started, President Alberto Fujimori used nationalist rhetoric to win public support and to justify his willingness to accept the intervention of regional powers to achieve peaceful resolution of the conflict. It is a tribute to how much Fujimori had consolidated his power and had compromised the leadership of the armed forces that he was able to get away with a peace settlement that awarded most of the territory in dispute to Ecuador, even though the nationalist rhetoric he had used made a peace settlement more difficult. Fujimori could invoke the nation's nightmares without actually provoking military action because he had undermined the professionalism of the armed forces through corruption. Through the manipulations of his sinister counselor, Montesinos, he had effectively emasculated the army in political terms.

In the case of Peru, we must ask if the rhetoric of lost territory is what drives strategic policy. If it does, then Peru cannot be a useful strategic ally for the U.S. However, if we look at the policies and the actions of the last three governments in Peru (i.e., since Fujimori was forced from power) we can see that the rhetoric is different from the policy. Indeed, it is hard to find echoes of the rhetoric in the foreign policy or the national security policy of Paniagua, Toledo, or Garcia.

There is among the military conflicting concepts of national security that affect the way in which the military approaches its mission, and considerable confusion. The minority, progressive concept, represented by General Juan Velasco Alvarado and other graduates of the military studies academy (CAEM) focuses on national integration of the indigenous population and development policies that consolidate the national territory. Those who follow this concept tend to be nationalistic and sympathetic to anti-imperialist or anti-systemic rhetoric, as well as social policies that benefit the indigenous population.

The more traditional, conservative concept of national security focuses on the potential threat to national territory posed by historic enemies, especially Chile. However, as the strategic reality has changed over the past decade, under civilian governments, this

tendency within the military has demonstrated greater willingness to participate in international peacekeeping and to be more open to cooperation with the United States. Over the past two decades, both factions have shown a willingness to accept greater civilian control over the armed forces and the police. The current government of Alan Garcia has attempted to restore the professionalism of the armed forces that was undermined by corruption and ambiguous use of the military in the campaign against the insurgency of Sendero Luminoso that characterized the Fujimori government.

The very slow pace of judicial reform has frustrated effective civilian control of the armed forces. The rule of law has not been established throughout the national territory, which has complicated efforts to integrate the indigenous populations into the national mainstream. Police reform, begun under the first Garcia administration and taken up by Toledo, has had considerable success in dealing with domestic insurgencies, such as Sendero Luminoso. Because of the slow pace of judicial reform, the national police has had less success in dealing with organized crime and drug trafficking. Dealing effectively with the renewed expansion of coca cultivation, (a function of the success of Plan Colombia), will be a test of Peru's ability to cooperate with elements of the U.S. government other than the armed forces, although the air force is crucial to the surveillance operations of counter-narcotics.

The efforts of the Garcia government have been buttressed by clear policies to open the country to international trade and investment. Over the past few years, significant amounts of Chilean capital have been invested in Peru, and there are suggestions – not yet put to the test – that such economic integration will reduce the historic fear of cooperation with Chile; one of the most popular airlines in Peru is Chilean owned LAN.<sup>5</sup> This tendency is supported further by Chile's new strategic doctrine which has turned away from protecting the border with Peru and which has emphasized Chile's role in world affairs. Clear evidence of this tendency is Chilean willingness to have the maritime dispute with Peru settled through international arbitration and efforts to resolve the dispute with Bolivia by brokering a trilateral agreement with Bolivia and Peru to provide Bolivia with an outlet to the Pacific. Chile understands that it cannot take

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<sup>5</sup> Papers prepared for the Peruvian Strategic Culture Study by Moses Arce, Lucia Dammert, and John Youle, Florida International University, Miami, June 17, 1010.

advantage of its considerable stock of soft power to play a role in world affairs if it continues to allow itself to be held hostage by the boundary disputes with Bolivia and Peru. If efforts to resolve the trilateral border issue bear fruit they will have a dramatic impact on Peru's historical strategic doctrine and on current policy debates over export of natural gas from Peru and Bolivia. Although not confirmed, there is little doubt that the high plateau that Peru shares with Chile and Bolivia contains valuable deposits of lithium, with its growing demand on the international market.

## **Historical Antecedents**

Historically, the nightmares that shape Peru's Strategic Culture include: foreign intervention, the War of the Pacific, the "desborde popular" phenomenon, and domestic insurgency, viz., Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). From the inception of the Peruvian nation-state, foreign actors have played important roles. Peruvian independence, for instance, was not orchestrated nor won by Peruvians alone; many observers contend that it was the leadership and efforts of Simon Bolivar of Venezuela and Jose de San Martin of Argentina that ensured Peru's independence. Peter Klaren argues that, "foreigners have also exploited Peru's natural resources, from silver in the colonial period to guano and nitrates in the nineteenth century and copper, oil, and various industrial metals in the twentieth century."<sup>6</sup> In the realm of foreign intervention and entanglements, the War of the Pacific is arguably Peru's most profound nightmare, often cited in Peru to evoke a sense of unity and nationalism that otherwise might not exist. The outcome of the War, that is, loss of valuable territory, fuels the image Peru holds of itself as a victim because of the sentiment that Peru was forced to enter into a war that it was woefully unprepared for. Additionally, besides annexing a huge swath of land, Chile wreaked havoc and caused massive damage within Peru. Peru's professional military was destroyed trying to defend against Chilean offensives. Therefore, further loss of territory or the possibility for loss of territory is a fear utilized in nationalistic rhetoric to justify military planning for preparation against potential attacks. Currently, military strategic policy focuses on anti-Chilean propaganda and armament in the south to prevent any future loss of territory.

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Klaren, <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/petoc.html>>

Internal demographic changes have also significantly shaped Peruvian strategic culture. Huge population increases during the 1950s and modernization resulted in a big wave of migration in the 1980s from the mountains and center regions to the big cities, particularly Lima. The “Andeanization” of the coast altered the demographic composition of the nation. Anthropologist Jose Matos Mar has referred to this phenomenon as the “desborde popular” (i.e., overflowing of the masses). This altered the face of the urban cities from a traditionally Creole presence to a significant influx of indigenous peoples populating the urban landscape. This trend of “Andeanization” has and continues to alter the social, political, and economic landscape and cleavages that Peru has experienced since colonial times, as the government has attempted to include the country’s indigenous groups into the mainstream national arena.<sup>7</sup> However, in the last few decades the influx of migrants into the major cities has managed to erode the already weak governmental ability to deliver even basic public services. Moreover, deteriorating governmental control and economic policies have led to the stagnation of democratization and the rise of insurgencies by guerrilla groups (the Shining Path). With the aim of rectifying this situation, Peruvian strategic doctrine calls for nation building because it recognizes that in order to overcome the geographic and cultural cleavages that divide the country, the government must create an inclusive political, social, and economic environment for the historically subordinated ethnic and social classes.

The rise of Sendero is reflective of the need for the state to create a unified nation. Born of the teachings of university professor Abimael Guzman, the communist guerrilla group *El Sendero Luminoso* (the Shining Path) was formed in the late 1960s in Peru and is known as the most brutal and violent insurgent group in Latin America. The 1980s were marked by Sendero’s continued violence against government officials, innocent citizens, and Peruvian infrastructure to destabilize and overthrow the government. This terrorization caused mass migration into Lima and its surrounding cities, contributing to the chaos and police brutality of peasants suspected to be Senderistas (SL members). After Guzman’s capture in 1992, and Fujimori’s extreme campaign against anyone thought to be an enemy of the state, the guerrilla’s activity declined resulting in a

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<sup>7</sup> Klaren, op.cit.

decrease of violent acts and a split within the organization – between those who wished to continue with Guzman’s proposed peace deal, and the ones who did not.

Alarmed by what is considered the bloodiest year in a decade, in August of 2008 the government intensified the counterinsurgency campaign, but the killings only escalated. The revival of this threat demonstrates how crucial it is for the Peruvian forces of law and order, specifically the relatively new National Police, to regain control of regions the state has generally lacked influence/control over, and the importance of the war against drugs in a country internationally known for its prominent coca production. The role of the National Police will be especially important in any expanded cooperation with U.S. counter-narcotics agencies.

## **Geographic Considerations**

Peru’s geography has directly contributed to dividing the nation along economic, social, and political lines. Historically, the geographic landscape has given rise to a Peru divided between a “semi-feudal, largely Native American highland interior and a more modernized, capitalistic, urbanized, and *mestizo* coastal regions. “At the apex of its social structure, a small, wealthy, educated elite came to dominate the vast majority of Peruvians who, by contrast, subsisted in poverty, isolation, ignorance, and disease ... The inability of the Peruvian state in more recent times to overcome [deep divisions in the nation] have prevented not only the development but also the effective integration and consolidation of the Peruvian nation to this day.”<sup>8</sup>

Three prevailing geographic considerations driving Peruvian strategic culture are: the historically contentious northern and southern borders, Peru’s territorial waters in the Pacific – both of which, due to lack of government control, have and continue to be perceived by many observers as possible threats to Peruvian national security – and the social, political, and economic divisions created by the Andes. Geography has played a fundamental role in the development of notions of security, and the articulation of national security interests. After the Spanish conquest and destruction of the Incan

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<sup>8</sup> Klaren, op.cit.

Empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the administrative and economic center of Peru moved from the interior to the strategically defensible city of Lima and its nearby Pacific coastal city of Callao. The move sought to better facilitate trade and communication between the Spanish authorities in Peru and Spain. However, the Andes mountain range, dividing the coastal region from the Eastern parts of the country, created nearly insurmountable difficulties for communications and logistics, hindering the Spanish from imposing their will across the colony as a whole. As a result, the Spanish colonial administration began to lose influence over the interior and eventually conceded the interior of the country to the native population. These geographical challenges to Spanish consolidation of power over Peru enabled various indigenous rebel movements to effectively unite and attack isolated Spanish towns—and even besiege Lima.

The legacy of this strategic challenge has remained in contemporary Peru. Although urban migration has significantly changed the demographics of the coastal regions, the Andes still separate the indigenous interior and the *criollo* elite and predominantly mestizo coastal regions, and thus create large social and economic cleavages along geographic lines. More importantly, in the context of national security policy the interior lends itself to the internal security threats perceived by Peru. The most destructive insurgency in the country's modern history – *Sendero Luminoso* – originated in the northeastern jungle regions of Peru and eventually crossed the Andes to threaten the political and economic stability of Lima in the late 1980's and 1990's. "By 1985 its so-called 'people's war' had claimed about 6,000 victims, most of them innocent civilians killed by the guerrillas or the army. Resorting to extraordinarily violent means, the Shining Path succeeded in challenging the authority of the state, particularly in the more remote areas of the interior, where the presence of the state had always been tenuous."<sup>9</sup> Sendero remains an active though seriously weakened threat to Peruvian national security and political integrity.

With the exception of Brazil and to some extent Colombia – another example of how little the interior informs Peru's perception of external threats – Peru has always viewed its borders as highly vulnerable to attack by its neighbors. In fact, Lucia Dammert

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<sup>9</sup> Klaren, op.cit.

argues that, “the border with Colombia and Brazil is highly irrelevant in Peruvian strategic culture, mostly due to lack of real human settlements or relevant national interests.”<sup>10</sup> Throughout Peru’s history territorial disputes have been common, with the state having to cede territory to most of its neighbors in various armed conflicts where Peru was the loser. The most sensitive borders, by far, are those with Ecuador and Chile; the borders with each of these historical adversaries have involved the most contentiousness and violent exchanges. A major conflict involved Peru’s loss of territory in the War of the Pacific. During the War of the Pacific (1879-83) Chile invaded Peru, annexed part of its territory, and appropriated much of its riches. Another occurrence involving borders was the conflict with Ecuador in 1995, when then-President Fujimori managed to resolve hostilities diplomatically while awarding most of the disputed territory to Ecuador. These events have highly influenced Peru’s perception of itself as a victim in the international arena.

Historically, the case of the Pacific Coast has functioned as a double-edged sword for Peru. On the one hand, it has accounted for the nation’s rich economy based on its fisheries; on the other hand, the Pacific Coast holds a legacy of military invasions from its neighbors and negative natural consequences from El Niño. Additionally, in recent years, disputes regarding maritime boundaries with Chile have become crucial. Consequently, while it’s Pacific Coast has been considered vulnerable to military invasion, the importance of Peru’s national security lies in the ability to maintain the maritime borders it desires in order for its fisheries to continue providing the basis for economic growth.

The impacts of the above-discussed military and social conflicts have been so heavily imprinted in the national psyche as to comprise Peru’s most enduring nightmares. To this day Peru’s leaders assert rhetoric involving armaments purchases and protection against its aggressive neighbors, particularly Chile. As a result, Peru has always seen itself as the victim – yet there seems to be a disconnection between how Peru prepares for and how it reacts to these conflicts.

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<sup>10</sup> Dammert, *op.cit.*

## **Ethnic and Cultural Considerations**

Among the most important socio-cultural considerations in Peruvian strategic culture are the class divide between the criollo elite and the indigenous population, and the rise of indigenous movements in Peruvian social and political spheres. Historically, the country's elite "took a flexible, pragmatic approach to matters at hand, often collaborating with foreign investors and frequently permitting new rich investors and military officers to join its social circles."<sup>11</sup> The geographic and socio-cultural cleavages between the elite and the indigenous population have produced a lack of consensus in the definition of a national identity exacerbated by geographical, cultural, ethnic, and economic factors, a phenomena which Peter Klaren refers to as "Andean Dualism."<sup>12</sup> "Divided among three dimensions: between workers and peasants, between coast and sierra, between non-Indian and Indian,"<sup>13</sup> Peru has historically been preoccupied with addressing these national cleavages. Arguably, this dualism has been the root of many of Peru's domestic political and security problems.

The struggle to incorporate the indigenous population into traditional Peruvian society is of utmost concern. Recent migration from rural to urban cities has created major infrastructure and security challenges for the government. This increased migration is a result of the Peruvian government's lack of attention to the interior parts of the country, leaving the rural population to deal with poor infrastructure, weak economic conditions, and public insecurity. Additionally, this "coast vs. sierra" notion accentuates the cultural division that has not permitted Peru to develop a consistent national identity. "The deep grooves of history plus geographical realities continue to weigh heavily on [the state's] capacity to develop with[in] the citizenry a fully formed sense of being part of a national project in which all participate as equals."<sup>14</sup> In Peru's 2006 presidential elections the anti-system candidate, Ollanta Humala, proposed a corporatist solution that takes some ideas from the Chavez Bolivarian Revolution, which is socialist in nature, and the older indigenist ideology, which is corporatist. Humala came close to victory as a

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Skidmore, *Modern Latin America*, Oxford University Press, Seventh Edition, 2010, 161.

<sup>12</sup> Klaren, *op.cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Skidmore, *op.cit.*, pg 162.

<sup>14</sup> Palmer, *op.cit.*

result of support from Peru's rural and indigenous communities. The socio-cultural divide in Peru thus impacts the political landscape and creates fragmented national identities that are reflected in policy-making institutions, including the institutions responsible for the formulation of national security policy, although security policy is not formulated to take these ethnic issues into account. As we have indicated previously, this is part of the disconnect that characterizes Peru's strategic culture.

## **Indigenous Movements in Peru**

Over the last decade, indigenous movements have evolved from being local and tribal in scope to gaining national influence and challenging traditional notions of culture and politics in Peruvian society. Despite these efforts, anthropologist Rodrigo Montoya describes a "Peruvian Exception" or rather a paradox in indigenous representation that is characterized by the current lack of an established and unified indigenous voice. Furthermore, those indigenous movements that do have influence in Peru are antagonistic towards each other. He adds that unlike successful movements in Ecuador and Bolivia, Peru lacks indigenous intellectuals and a powerful indigenous bourgeoisie to truly influence politics. One of the few organizations that hold enough importance is the National Coordination of Peruvian Communities Affected by Mining (CONACAMI), which is not limited to being, but is considered, an indigenous coalition. This indicates an absence of unity within the indigenous community and the failure of indigenous groups to create a purely ethnic association, further deepening the longstanding coast-sierra divide. Moreover, a recent proliferation of localized and regional groups has been a cause of concern for the Peruvian government, yet there has been a lack of appropriate or timely government response. "Multiple groups ... have generated hundreds of social conflicts in the countryside that the central government has often ignored or tried to repress."<sup>15</sup> For example, the government successfully intimidated individuals who

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<sup>15</sup> Palmer, op.cit.

opposed mining when in 2004 six hundred communal landholders were persecuted and tried, and two leaders were assassinated.<sup>16</sup>

A controversial matter surrounding Peru's indigenous community is the production of coca. Recent reports suggest that Peru will soon be the top coca producer in the world, surpassing the current long-standing leader – Colombia.<sup>17</sup> What makes this matter so contentious is the link between coca production and narco trafficking that provides financial support to insurgencies – in Peru's case the Sendero Luminoso. Because coca cultivation takes place in the interior and remote areas of Peru, most of the cultivators are members of the indigenous communities; driven to coca production by economic hardship and insecurity. During the 1990s, successful eradication efforts were made by the government, and coca production diminished significantly in Peru. The towns that were dependent on this sector of the economy such as the town of Tingo María, in central Peru, were hard-hit. Now, despite ongoing eradication efforts, coca production is on the rise in Peru and the town has regained some life and stability. Although “it is highly unlikely that local indigenous people would be interested in getting involved in illegal coca crops or the drug mafias operating in the area,”<sup>18</sup> Sendero Luminoso is re-establishing ties with farmers to exploit opportunities in the drug trade. Most alarming is the relationship the Shining Path has with the villagers; more paternalism than terrorism.<sup>19</sup> For now coca production is perceived to be vital to the livelihood of members of the indigenous communities in Peru, particularly in areas where the government is failing to meet the needs of the people. This issue will continue to challenge Peruvian national security.

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<sup>16</sup>Indigenous Movements: Between Neo-liberalism and Leftist Governments.  
<<http://www.worldpress.org/Americas/2358.cfm>>

<sup>17</sup> Peru's coca cultivation up 6.8 percent; coca production overtakes Colombia. June 22, 2010 by Andean Air Mail and Peruvian Times <<http://www.peruviantimes.com/perus-coca-cultivation-up-6-8-percent-coca-production-overtakes-colombia/226716>>

<sup>18</sup> Milagro Salzar, “Native Groups Hemmed in by Coca Threat” October 6, 2008  
<<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=44140>>

<sup>19</sup> Simon Romero, "Cocaine Trade Helps Rebels Reignite War in Peru", Published: March 17, 2009.  
<[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/world/americas/18peru.html?\\_r=2&pagewanted=1&ref=shining\\_path](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/world/americas/18peru.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1&ref=shining_path)>

## The Peruvian Military

Despite suffering major losses throughout its history, the Peruvian military considers itself the guarantor of national sovereignty, whether against external or internal threats. Its most enduring nightmare comes from the defeat suffered during the War of the Pacific, as well as a failure to protect Peru's territorial integrity. Johan Cronehed argues that, "neither the Peruvian army nor Sendero Luminoso are representatives of cultural multiplicity. Both sides represent – from different ideological angles – a solution of homogeneity. In the case of the army; the nationalism of the white life-world and in the case of Sendero; a communistic society of utopian equality."<sup>20</sup>

The creation of the National School of Advanced Strategic Studies (CAEM) in Peru in 1950 helped usher in a new breed of military intellectuals that believed in expanding traditional military roles to include nation-building and public programs to promote social progress. In 1968, the military overthrew the conservative Fernando Belaunde government and General Juan Velasco Alvarado assumed the presidency and began to institute reforms intended to include the indigenous population and build an integrated nation. The reforms included agrarian reform, nationalization of major economic sectors, and the creation of the National System for Social Mobilization (SINAMOS) as a tool for manipulating political participation of Peru's civil society. Largely unpopular and unsuccessful, the military only exacerbated the already present social and economic issues plaguing Peruvian society. Furthermore, the violent manner in which the military has engaged with the Sendero Luminoso, creating high civilian casualties, has negatively affected their image in society.

Ultimately the intellectual contributions of CAEM, that is, the role of the military in promoting social reform to address political and security issues, remains an important feature of the Peruvian military today,<sup>21</sup> although there have been very few policy initiatives by the military to put this element of their mission into practice. In the past few years, it has been the civilian government, through civilian administrative organizations

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<sup>20</sup> Johan Cronehed, *Identity and Nationalism in Peru: Quechua Indians, the Mirror of the Conflict*, 1996.

<sup>21</sup> DeShazo and Palmer, *op.cit.*

that has begun to reach out to the indigenous communities. Despite being preoccupied with the fear of loss of territory, the armed forces remain concerned with newly formed factions of Sendero Luminoso and dissatisfaction amongst the indigenous peoples. On the other hand, the three civilian governments since the overthrow of Fujimori have attempted to impose greater civilian control over the military and to operationally subordinate the armed forces to the National Police in the effort to suppress Sendero. The scandals of the Fujimori era seriously undermined the professionalism of the armed forces and have led to efforts by the Garcia government, in collaboration with U.S. Southern Command, to restore the professionalism of the armed forces. As the objective strategic facts change, it is remarkable that the military maintain their strategic fixation on Chile. This continuing obsession feeds into the use of nationalist rhetoric by Humala in his campaign speeches.

There is no question that the strategic culture has been functional for the armed forces. The focus on Chile is a function of the fact that the threat from Ecuador, in the north, is not sufficient to warrant a bigger budget or greater prestige. Since its inception back in the 1960s, Sendero Luminoso has been a less attractive target or threat than the threat of future Chilean invasion. As the Chilean threat diminishes in objective terms, the Peruvian military will have to adjust or it will lose even more prestige.

It is interesting to compare the Peruvian obsession with lost territory and the profound sense of victimization to the case of China. The Chinese dwell on the Opium War and their various defeats at the hands of the Japanese in what they call “the century of humiliation.” The difference between the two cases is striking. Chinese governments since the Maoist revolution have acted with consistent determination to make sure the humiliation is never repeated. That determination informs their behavior on the international stage. The opposite is the case in Peru. Little has been done to remove the humiliation of the past and victim-hood remains a persistent tone in the public statements of the military’s mission.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> We are grateful to Professor Jack Snyder for suggesting this comparison.

## **The Legacy of History**

The legacy of history weighs heavily on Peru's national consciousness and has produced a strategic culture that is coherent yet inoperable. There is a powerful sense of victim-hood in the discussions of foreign and national security policy. Peru is always invaded, never the invader; it is always the one to lose territory; it is always preparing for the next invasion, yet never prepared for the conflict that actually occurs. Nationalism is always frustrated and little or nothing is done to close the cleavages that have divided regions and ethnic groups for centuries. Military training and studies emphasize the southern frontier and the supposed threat of Chilean invasion.

In military operational terms, historically, arms purchases and doctrine were designed to deal with potential conflict in the south. This reached a peak during the Alvarado administration, when the government purchased arms from Russia that were intended exclusively for a conflict in the desert, on the frontier with Chile. More recently, however, arms purchases have followed the lead of the U.S. and are designed to suit a mission that takes into account general frontier security and cooperation with U.S.-led anti-drug campaigns. The military never purchased arms intended for the mission of subduing internal subversion, such as the campaign against Sendero Luminoso. In the past decade, both Toledo and Garcia have preferred to use the newly reformed National Police in the campaign against what remains of the insurgency.

In other words, there is growing evidence that Peru is slowly shucking off the legacy of its victim-hood and isolation. The economic policies of the current government and its predecessors bring Peru closer to Chile and make it less sympathetic to the governments of Bolivia and Ecuador which have moved to close their countries to the outside world and to renounce cooperation within the framework of the Andean Community and with the U.S. Recent investments by Brazil in massive infrastructure projects linking Peru to Brazil suggest that economic development will serve to improve national integration and precipitate a sequence of responses by the Peruvian state that will further dilute the historical legacy of its loss of territory and its sense of national victim-hood.

At the same time, it is important to emphasize that there is little evidence that the armed forces take this evidence into account when discussing their mission and little evidence that there has been understanding of how changing objective strategic reality might change strategic culture. The military did very little to prepare for nation building as they attempted to subdue Sendero in the 1970s. The nation building mission, included in the CAEM teaching materials since the 1950s, appeared not to influence strategic discussion of how to deal with an indigenous insurrection. Similarly, in the aftermath of the 1995 conflict with Ecuador, the military did very little to encourage tying the indigenous communities of the selva into the broader national society. Compare this to the active efforts of the Chilean military to incorporate Mapuche Indians in the south into the armed forces. Or, the similar efforts by the Venezuelan armed forces to bring communities on the western frontier with Colombia into the armed forces.

## **Political Instability and Public Opinion**

A good portion of the explanation for this apparently dysfunctional strategic culture is the virtually uninterrupted political instability that has made it difficult to create a national sense of community. Before Fujimori was elected, Peru had had 71 presidents, of which 51 came from the military and 26 assumed power through coups. With the exception of APRA, no political party in the last hundred years has managed to remain viable for more than a decade.

Most of the modern Peruvian state was created during the dictatorship of Augusto Leguía (1919-1930), who had a strong sense of public administration. To win support from the U.S., Leguía agreed to invite one of the famous “money doctors” to Peru to strengthen the nation’s public finance system. His work was expanded by the military dictator Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1974), who created the first national government agencies assigned to work in the sierra and the jungles with indigenous groups, and by Fujimori who decentralized fiscal authority to give greater power to regional governments. The effort to decentralize has had little impact on national integration,

however, because of the absence of comprehensive social policies that recognize the rights of people on the cultural and geographical periphery of the country.<sup>23</sup>

In the past few years, the Sendero Luminoso insurgency has re-appeared with disturbing characteristics. Following the example of the long-lived insurgents in Colombia, the FARC, SL now is working closely with drug traffickers and has become narco-terrorist in nature. Violence peaked in 2008, and the production of coca has skyrocketed. The Garcia government has been frantic in its efforts to have the National Police deal with the new threat, but the armed forces continue to lobby for the task. For a variety of reasons, the Garcia government prefers to keep the matter a question of domestic security and have the police and judiciary handle it. From the point of view of the Obama administration, dealing with civilian institutions in Peru will be closer to the objectives of current U.S. policy and will create a very important degree of symmetry between the two governments and their counter-narcotics agencies.

Politically, no political party has a national popular base. No political party has a foreign policy plank that expresses the strategic culture of the country. A few conservative elements in the press and in politics use nationalist rhetoric to stir public opinion; but their number is so small that it is difficult to consider them the keepers of the nation's strategic culture. The last two governments of Toledo and Garcia have downplayed the potential conflict with Chile and worked to strengthen cooperation with Peru's neighbors. Garcia, who represents APRA, which used to have a nationalist and anti-imperialist platform, avoids using inflammatory nationalist rhetoric. If the press or some conservative elements raise the issue in the media, he uses the head of the party to respond. He has spent considerable energy opening the country to trade and foreign investment, including significant recent investment by Chilean business interests.<sup>24</sup> He has indicated that this new openness can serve to weaken the traditional focus on territorial loss and potential conflict with Chile. The nationalist-popular candidate in the last election and the expected candidate in the 2011 elections, Humala, refers to the Chilean threat; but his principal interest lies in mobilizing the indigenous peoples in the southern sierra and jungle regions. For these people, the conflict with Chile is of little

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<sup>23</sup> Palmer, op.cit.

<sup>24</sup> Arce, op.cit.

concern.<sup>25</sup> This has been done in the past, by Garcia himself in his first election, and by Fujimori in 1995, as he tried to keep himself in power.

The persistent instability, at least until the Toledo government at the beginning of this century has served to facilitate the use of national nightmares as part of political discourse. Even though no party made the basic elements of strategic culture part of its platform, the lack of stable governments, parties, and political institutions, opened the way for continuing use of the fear of recurring threat as a political weapon. It was easy to use because there were no consequences in using it and it played well over a long period of time for leaders of different ideologies and different political goals. Instability led to irresponsible politics which led to using scare tactics. But, there were no military consequences to these invocations. It was the use of strategic culture as political bluff.

David Mares has suggested that these references to fear and threat by politicians “gives their nationalistic, but cost-conscious voters exactly the kinds of militarized disputes that they want.” Jack Snyder has suggested that the weakness of democratic government and the relative autonomy of the armed forces can lead to more assertive behavior by the military. That appears to be the case in the Peruvian actions in arming jungle outposts on the border with Ecuador in 1995. Fujimori went along with this. Once the hostilities had been brought to a halt by multilateral intervention he demonstrated his relative control over the military and his disdain for public opinion by accepting a peace accord that granted most of the disputed territory to Ecuador.<sup>26</sup>

The coming presidential election will be significant in the evolution of Peru’s strategic culture. It will be a test for existing political parties and indicate whether any of them can establish support outside of Lima or, in the case of Humala, outside of the southern Andean region. It will be a test, also, of current economic policies that have been successful in maintaining one of the highest rates of annual growth in Latin America. Moreover, the policies of the Garcia government have emphasized openness to trade and investment, especially investment by Chilean entrepreneurs. In addition, there have been significant investments by Chinese state corporations in the raw materials

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<sup>25</sup> Youle, op.cit.

<sup>26</sup> We are grateful to Jack Snyder for these suggestions.

sector. New investments by Brazil and by the IDB may turn out to be crucial in advancing national integration, pulling the Amazon and mountain areas into the national economy and society. If there is parallel progress in institution building that helps integrate the indigenous population into national society, it will help strengthen the rule of law and further the tendency away from the traditional strategic culture.

## **Conclusions: Continuity and Change in Peruvian Strategic Culture**

Presently, recent investments in infrastructure and public transportation, within the framework of the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) planning (IDB), and with strong Brazilian support and investment, suggest a possible transition to a more coherent, pragmatic strategic culture. The transition to a more durable, pragmatic, and functional strategic culture, however, will depend upon political stability in the country and restoring the professionalism of the armed forces. As Peru's democracy becomes more stable and its institutions more robust, public opinion will probably become less divided. In that case, the traditional keepers of strategic culture – minor elements of the media, small conservative groups, and a faction of the armed forces – will be weakened. In that case, new keepers will emerge – those who represent the modernizing economy, with close ties to Chile and Brazil, members of the political center (APRA, AP and Peru Posible, Toledo's party), and the modernizing faction of the armed forces. Such a change would quite literally liberate the armed forces from the paralyzing confines of the nation's ongoing nightmare. In operational terms, it would facilitate a broader role for Peru in the Andean community and in the broader international community.

Current developments suggest that as Peruvian democracy is consolidated and as the country becomes more stable and the principal political parties take on increasing roles in the congress and in organizing national opinion, the inflamed nationalist rhetoric that emphasizes conflict with Chile will be toned down and replaced by a rhetoric of nation building that focuses on including the geographic regions of the sierra and Amazon basin, and the indigenous population that lives there; especially given that

Humala remains a very popular candidate among the indigenous populations and is expected to do well in the elections being held in April 2011.

The elements of the new strategic culture, if it continues to emerge, will be to end or reduce the plaintive note of victim-hood in discussion of the nation's role in world affairs. Ironically, Chile will become the model for the new Peruvian strategic culture – focused on the successes of economic growth, political stability, and an honest effort to incorporate peripheral regions and marginal groups into national life. Peru, more than Chile, can base its national pride on multi-ethnic assimilation. This new national integration, along with the openness to trade and investment will be the principal components of Peru's new soft power. Settlement of the maritime dispute with Chile in a peaceful manner, in an international forum, will also serve to pave the way for Peru to enter more fully into the international community. Peru will join Brazil and Chile as bulwarks of democracy and open economies, set as an example against the archaic rhetoric and self-defeating economic autarchy of the Bolivarian alliance.

The resurgence of Sendero Luminoso as a narco-terrorist group presents a problem for cooperation between the U.S. and Peru. The U.S. is anxious to mount a campaign against the increasing cultivation of coca. Such a campaign is virtually impossible without better integration of the indigenous communities in the sierra and the jungles. Such integration requires stronger public administration and public policies and a better trained, more effective National Police. A more effective judiciary would be of great value as well.

Success in collaboration between USSOUTHCOM and the Peruvian military will depend on persuading the Peruvian armed forces to move beyond their historical obsession with a Chilean invasion. To the extent that the Peruvian armed forces will accept the fact that an invasion from the south is unlikely, it will be willing to collaborate in joint maneuvers with the U.S., will be more active in peacekeeping efforts, and will be more effective in helping to control arms purchases in the region, which has been a policy of the current government. It would be helpful to the modernizers in Peru if the U.S. were to play a facilitating role in expanding areas of cooperation between Chile and Peru. Once the international arbitration of the maritime issue is resolved by the end of 2011 or

early 2012, the next major step forward would be naval collaboration among the U.S., Chile, and Peru. Similarly, joint efforts in disaster relief and in counter-narcotics will also become possible.

# About the Authors

Joseph S. Tulchin (Ph.D., Harvard) is a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University's David Rockefeller Center for Latin America Studies. Dr. Tulchin served as Director of the Latin American Program from 1989 through 2005. His areas of subject-matter expertise are U.S. foreign policy, inter-American relations, contemporary Latin America, strategic planning, and social science research methodology. Dr. Tulchin previously served as Professor of History and Director of International Programs at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he also edited the Latin American Research Review. Dr. Tulchin also served as a professor on the faculty of Yale University. He holds a Ph.D. in history from Harvard University, was a Reader of History at Peterhouse, Cambridge University, and received his B.A. from Amherst College. Throughout his professional career, Dr. Tulchin has taught at a host of colleges and universities, and has published over one hundred scholarly articles and more than seventy books.

Brian Fonseca is a Senior Political and Security Analyst at Florida International University's Applied Research Center, an Adjunct Professor of International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Relations, the Principal Investigator of the annual Western Hemisphere Security Colloquium series, and Co-Principal Investigator of the FIU-SOUTHCOM Academic Partnership. Brian Fonseca has authored various reports for United States Department of Defense, most recently "Emerging Relationships: Iran & Latin America"; "Emerging Relationships: China and Latin America"; "Identifying Opportunities for U.S.-Cuba Military Cooperation"; "Domestic Politics in the Dominican Republic After the Earthquake in Haiti"; "Human Smuggling and the Terrorist-Criminal Nexus"; and "Haitian Strategic Culture" co-authored with Eduardo Gamarra. Mr. Fonseca authored a chapter titled "Globalização e Contrabando de Seres Humanos no Hemisfério Ocidental" in the book *Segurança E Governança Nas Américas* (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, (2009, ISBN: 857716571).

Mr. Fonseca holds a MA in international business from Florida International University. He has attended Sichuan University in Chengdu, People's Republic of China; and is a graduate of the National Defense University's Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies' Advanced Transnational Security, Stability, and Democracy Program. He served in the United States Marine Corps from 1997-2004 and facilitated the training of several foreign military forces in both hostile theaters and during peace time operations in Kosovo, the Caribbean, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Brian Fonseca received several national awards recognizing his efforts and strategic thinking capabilities from the Secretary of the Navy.

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Dr. John Proni  
ARC Executive Director

Dr. Norman Munroe  
ARC Director of Research

Jerry F. Miller, Colonel, USAF (Ret.)  
ARC Associate Director

**STRATEGIC CULTURE STUDY FACILITATORS**

Brian Fonseca (Fonsecab@fiu.edu)  
Dr. Marvin L. Astrada (Mastrada@fiu.edu)  
Moisés Caballero (moises.caballero@fiu.edu)

**GRADUATE & UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS**

Michael Fernandez	Jessica Pino	Carlos Sarmiento
Juan Muskas	Yuliet Llanes	Pamela Pamela

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