

States. Indeed, ever since 1938 it had expended considerable time, money, and effort to achieve hemispheric adoption of U.S. methods and equipment. It was to protect this investment in national security and hemisphere defense that the Truman administration, accepting the recommendations of the IADB, requested Congress in May 1946, to approve a continuing program of inter-American military cooperation. In this program, the United States would undertake to modernize Latin American military equipment, and to continue its wartime program of equipping Latin America's armed forces.⁴ Congress, however, apparently unimpressed by the administration's proposal and perhaps also swayed by its critics, failed to act on the bill in 1946 and delayed action once more when it was presented in 1947.

The inaction was characteristic of the early postwar period in which, except for the conclusion of the Rio Pact, little was done in the way of holding to any minimum level of hemisphere defense. The U.S. military mission program continued, but after the end of lend-lease it was hardly possible to maintain in Latin America even the existing defense posture. As the administration feared, the wartime program of standardization of material began to disintegrate, for now that Latin American governments had to pay for military equipment, they began to purchase where prices and terms were most favorable. All too often, in the opinion of the Pentagon, they turned to European suppliers.

World events, however, were taking a turn that soon served to reactivate a positive and vigorous U.S. security policy in Latin America. By 1947, in the face of repeated aggressive moves by the U.S.S.R., the United States felt itself obliged to concentrate heavily on containment of the Communist threat, at first in Europe and then throughout the entire world. The Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949 inaugurated a comprehensive system of military aid to NATO countries. Then, when open war came in Korea, Washington was forced to the unpleasant conclusion that defense against the persistent and worldwide Communist acts of aggression could be achieved only by programs of military, economic, and technical assistance for many countries throughout the non-Communist world. Congressional authorization for such a program was provided in the Mutual Security Act of 1951, the objectives of which were—

to maintain the security and to promote the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing military, economic, and technical assistance to friendly countries to strengthen the mutual security and individual and collective defenses of the free world, to develop their resources in the interest of their security and independence and the national interest of the United States and to facilitate the effective participation of those countries in the United Nations system for collective security.

Under this act, authorization was granted to furnish military assistance "to any nation whose increased ability to defend itself * * * is important to the security of the United States." Military equipment furnished under the act was to be used "solely" to maintain the internal security and legitimate self-defense of the recipient nation, or to permit it to participate in the defense of its area or in collective arrangements and measures consistent with the charter of the United Nations. Assistance programs were to be administered under four separate titles—I Europe, II Near East and Africa, III Asia and the Pacific, and IV

⁴ New York Times, May 7, 1946, p. 1.