

New Concepts of Security?

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Panel Goal:

“Los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de las Américas encargaron a la OEA un análisis sobre el significado, alcance y proyección de los conceptos de seguridad internacional en el Hemisferio con el propósito de desarrollar los enfoques comunes más apropiados que permitan abordar sus diversos aspectos. La evolución del concepto de seguridad internacional y su aplicación en la Américas.”

“Science is social process that develops, refines, and rejects ideas.”

Pete Katzenstein

Introduction

The OAS's initiative, sponsoring this seminar, upon the mandate given by the Heads of the States of the Americas, is important and must be enthusiastically supported; this is the right place and this is the right time to discuss the hemispheric security. Moreover, this is a rare opportunity for diplomats and government officials, practitioners by convocation, to promote the interchange of ideas with scholars, theoreticians by conviction.

The title of this panel—the hemispheric security notion aiming the threats of the new millenium—suggests three initial challenges. First, we must define a regional security conception when, in the rest of the world, we are still puzzled by the lack of definition to the international security. Within either the theoretical or the practical

spheres, concepts and policies have reflected changes related to the end of the Cold War but new conceptual approaches are still lacking. Second, there is the challenge of the future; the panel demands that we conceive a political architecture capable of guaranteeing the regional security in the new millennium, i.e., it requires us a prospective capacity. Finally, there is the more delicate question of timing. We must think about regional security when there is a perception in the region that security is not such a big deal; no common threat is perceived around here. Furthermore, some countries do not show much enthusiasm in engaging in a security debate. Either they are struggling with more compelling internal security problems or they prefer not to nurture an issue that could lead to a renewed interference of the United States in their internal affairs. The result is that, purposefully or not, some countries prefer to avoid this debate.

Notwithstanding, there is another reason for promoting such a debate. Multilateral organizations in disagreement with their environment may quickly be discredited and will be of no value when a crisis breaks; and crises are common, not rare, in international affairs. Consequently, searching for a conceptual North while remodeling the existing multilateral arrangements is important. Yet, because the concerns of the North are currently driven to the East, and, in the South, we want to define a security arrangement which is not necessarily driven by the North, we are somewhat "Northless" in this region of the planet.

This paper focuses on the issue of the "new concepts of security." It develops the argument around four questions: (1) what is the meaning of the current conceptual anxiety over international security? (2) what is wrong with the concept of international security)? (3) What are advantages and disadvantages of the conceptual options that have

been launched? (4) Why is it important to consider hemispheric security approaches with an eye in the future in this particular moment?

Before taking issue with the conceptual anxiety on international security, I launch a methodological warning regarding the prospective nature of the challenge proposed by this panel: I clarify my position before the expression new millenium. Next, I discuss the recent anxiety caused by the concept of international security and the appearance of many concepts for international security. Following, I identify in the motives for the appearance of so many ideas associated to the notion of international security—truly, thematic securities—a weakness in the traditional concept of international security. Indeed, this weakness is revealed by the old concept's inability to encompass all these demanded meanings, which are related to different and important threats present in the current concern of the states and non-state organizations. On this matter, I criticize the "new concepts of security" by comparing the logic behind this idea with the traditional—or, at least, the one existing during the Cold War—notion of security, particularly, the notion of national security. I conclude this discussion arguing that "new concepts of security" contribute neither to modernize the concept of international security nor to clarify the understanding of the international environment. And, I suggest that more useful is to broaden the traditional concept of security. We can perform such a conceptual broadening in four steps: (1) by revising the associated perception of sovereignty; (2) by purging it from the East-West bias; (3) by incorporating to it values, identity and norms; and, (4) by revisiting the notion of national interest.

Upon this basis, the inter-American system may be reorganized in a way to better tackle with these emerging problems for the regional security. Even if the countries in the

hemisphere do not have the same motivation that, in the past, was provided by the communist threat, this is an important moment to rethink and modernize the inter-American system.

A Hemispheric Security for the New Millenium?

Let us begin by framing the problem of the “new millennium.” And, let me consider this question of future time in two ways: (1) vis-à-vis the present time—i.e., the implications of rethinking international security in this peculiar moment in history; and (2) the prospective analysis required, as expressed in the title “new millenium.”

With these two meanings of time in mind, we should initially perceive that, to what matters for the theme “international security,” the expression “new millenium” makes little sense. From the international security viewpoint, new millennium is an expression as dramatic and mysterious as it is worthless. For some believers—although not particularly believers of scientific evidence—the idea of new millennium raises the apex of insecurity for the world: they believe that the world will end by this passage to the new millennium. Dramatically enough though. In addition, since the idea remits us to the uncertain future it raises obscurity or clarity depending on our imagination and optimism. Mysterious enough though.

Yet, for international security studies, the notion of new millenium is worthless. For international security studies, this is a moment strongly related to the recent past, this is still the moment of the post-Cold War. Everywhere, there is a clear perception that a historical cycle closed when the iron curtain raised, ten years ago. For international

security concerns, the fall of the Berlin's wall meant the implosion of many concepts and schools of thought. And new ones have not replaced them yet.

Consequently, there is a difference of pace between the conventions of time counting and the reality of international security. In the time watch, the new millenium will begin soon. However, for the international security, a new millenium—considered as a period marked by extraordinary transformation in the concepts, values, and norms related to international security theories—has already began. Nevertheless, nothing in the future is conceptually clear and we have to keep going back to the past in search for clarity.

What is wrong with the concept of international security?

A time of many insecurities

This is a time of many securities. For almost fifty years, we lived both under a major threat and over a single concept of security. During these last few years, both politicians and scholars became prolific producers of associated securities, sometimes designed as “new concepts of security.” “Environment security,” “energy security,” “citizen security,” “democratic security,” “drugs security,” etc., have been extensively introduced in both the political and the academic lexicon.

The fact that so many concepts have appeared at the same time is certainly revealing. At least this fact tells us that something changed in the international security arena. And it affirms that the existing conceptual framework is not appropriate to offer consistent, operationally useful, references capable to encapsulate facts and situations related to international threats and security. Indeed, it was clear that new threats,

motivating new security needs were not captured by the existing concepts for international or national security. Additionally, on the other hand, even within the exclusive realm of military threats—to what the old notion was entirely related—the concept seemed increasingly outdated to incorporate new forms of intra-state conflict, religiously or ethnically motivated and prone to cause insecurities to neighbor states.

Two Disruptive Tendencies: new threats and the end of the Cold War

Therefore, two simultaneous tendencies, disruptive for the old concept could be observed: the end of the Cold War, and the appearance of new threats. With regard to the end of the Cold War, for example, Robert H. Dorff suggested that this fact heightened the scholar awareness of the shortcomings in the field of international security. For him, the 1991 Gulf War had momentarily reinforced optimistic arguments and approaches to international security, particularly those related to prospects for collective arrangements. Yet, the emergence of conflicts elsewhere in the world, notably in the former Yugoslavia, proved the inadequacy of the existing concepts and paradigms to analyze the international environment through the existing security perspective.¹ Finally, new threats to states survival, appearing outside the traditional realm of military threats, had become more evident and appealing.

The Effect of the end of the Cold War: Realist paradigm and the US

The causes for such effects of the end of the Cold War on the international security concept are easily perceived. On the one hand, the old concept had been heavily inspired

¹ Robert H. Dorff, "A Commentary on Security Studies for the 1990s as a Model Curriculum Core," *International Studies Notes*, Vol. 19, no. 3, fall 1994.

by a paradigm defined both by the Realist vision of the world and by the U.S. national security doctrine; and this paradigm had accused a powerful hit in the end of the Cold War. For Western realists or neo realists the end of the Cold War had been a victory with a sour flavor; an almost undesirable victory, since it had revealed the lack of predictive power of that school of thought. In addition, realism was proving quickly to be inadequate to distinguish complex power interactions among players that are not anymore exclusively states. For the realist paradigm², the concept of international security admitted only states as actors. Competing states within a chaotic international environment (because there is no world government and the relative distribution of power among states is the primary determinants of state behavior) organize themselves into collective alliances when facing common threats. The communist Soviet Union became this common threat, at least for the Western world, and states dominated the international security environment as the major players. Moreover, the survival of states was permanently at risk and security was states' main concern. Upon this perception of international relations, that was a more dangerous world; for the academic understanding though, that was a very clear and sharp methodological picture. Currently, the relative reduction of the state power vis-à-vis the appearance of other institutions turned more complex and problematic the power relations within the international environment.

In addition, the concept of international security had been conceived to reflect the U.S. perception of threat. Thus, the United States' national security doctrine for the Cold War influenced the concept and led the entire Western Hemisphere to incorporate the same concept and the same perception of threat. Indeed, behind the generic notion related

² Kenneth N. Waltz is the leading contemporary realist. See *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

to the Cold War influence is the existence of both the U.S. bias and the U.S. capacity to project power and manifest its hegemony over the hemisphere. Under this condition, perceived threats to the U.S. national interest became threats, respectively, to the national interests of all the other states within the hemisphere. In the same line of thought international security would be secured if national security was achieved. As explains Seyom Brown, “for nearly four decades, most foreign policy officials and scholars, to the extent that they did concern themselves with world security, tended to regard what was good for the security of the U.S. as good for the world. If there *were* world interests, they were derivative of national interests.”³ The complexity of the current relations of power leads to a different conclusion: arrangements capable of assuring the international security—and regional security—will project security over the national sphere.

On the other hand, the Cold War had artificially congealed complex issues including culture, identity, and values in different states and regions.⁴ The end of the Cold War allowed not only the resurgence of dormant conflicts but also showed some distortions caused by the encapsulation of the running processes to the American strategic interests. The end of the Cold War and the subsequent reduction of the U.S. hegemony over the Hemisphere—or at least, of the military hegemony—led the concept to lose explanatory power.

³ Seyom Brown, “World Interests and the Changing Dimensions of Security” in Michael T. Klare and Daniel C. Thomas (eds.) *World Security: Challenges for a New Century* (2nd ed.) op.cit. pp. 24-25.

⁴ See, for example, Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): “In the context of a bipolar, ideological struggle, the Cold War made relatively unproblematic some of the cultural factors affecting national security. Theories that abstracted from these factors offered important insights. Now, with the end of the Cold War, the mix of factors affecting national security is changing. Issues dealing with norms, identities, and culture are becoming more salient. An institutional perspective permits us to investigate more closely the context, both domestic and international, in which states and other actors exercise power” (p. 2).

Indeed, with the end of the cold war, disruptive tendencies were unleashed in several regions. These tendencies quickly revealed the inappropriateness of the old conceptual framework to explain these new, or rather forgotten, conflicts. Conflicts in Africa or in Yugoslavia, although being somewhat related to military confrontation, challenged the explanatory power of the existing notion of international security and fed demands for a revision.

Demands for Revision

Demands for revision of the international security concept—which dominated the Western strategic thinking during the last decades—had appeared, although timidly, even before the end of the Cold War. They appeared upon the observation that facts and situations, mostly related to environmental threats and global access to information, were reshaping the pattern of international threats. After the end of the Cold War, these demands intensified proportionally to the diminishing influence of the conceptual framework designed during that period.

Consequently, the awareness that the old concept based upon the U.S./Realist paradigm was only adequate to explain the former peculiar relations of power among states joined to its inability to offer new operational concepts. This awareness built consensus on the need of new conceptual tools capable better to explain events related to the international security.

Yet, although consensus on the need of a new conceptual paradigm was easily built, no consensus was built around the concept itself. Two main lines have been followed. Initially, many scholars were forced to take a ride with the policymakers. Upon the absence of comprehensive theoretical tools able to explain the most recent

phenomena within the international arena—probably scholars were trying to recover from their self-deception due to their incapacity to predict the end of the Cold War—policymakers, particularly within the environment⁵ area, came up with new tag names.

The other line of thought, which I prefer, advocates for the broadening of the traditional concept of international security. By broadening the old concept, including new threats, new actors, and new relations of power is possible. But, let us examine first what is the problem related to the adoption of several concepts.

What is wrong with the proliferation of concepts?

Essentially nothing is wrong with the—so labeled—“new concepts,” except for the fact that they are not concepts. They are new attachments of ideas—representing threats—to the old concept of security, which filled the conceptual vacuum left by the end of the Cold War.

In all these new expressions, observing that the word “security” keeps being the core concept is important. The adoption of these composed expressions as finished concepts implies that the word “security” transmits the same notion to everybody else. Yet, this is not true. The lack of both clarity and precision in the “security” concept, formerly discussed here, not only will remain but it will be transferred to the new composed concept. So, for example, the expression “environment security” transmits, as it is obvious, some concern with the environment. Due to the lack of precision of “security” though, the dimension of the threat, to whom it affects and how it affects,

⁵ Probably the first “new concept” to appear in the current international security environment was the concept of “environment security.” The 1972 United Nations Conference for Human Environment (Stockholm) led to an intensification of the debate on environment changes “threatening the future of humankind.” With the emergence of concerns with the global climate change (including stratospheric

remain largely diffuse and imprecise. For many scholars security relates to the threat, use and management of the military force, and so they will relate the "environment security" to. As a conceptual theory, the expression "environment security," and so far any other similarly composed expressions, defines the near genre of the threat, i.e., the environment. It defines, therefore, a thematic distinction as opposed to the political distinction of the old concept, but it is incapable of present a good specific difference able to single out the new concept. All the other "new concepts" that derive from "security" will present the same problem.

Nevertheless, before going ahead, warning about a peculiar nature of these concepts is necessary. Such a nature confers to the concepts related to security some looseness and imprecision not usually accepted by a good theory of definition. In addition, it somewhat explains why good scholars write entire treaties about national security without taking the risk of offering a narrow definition for the expression. Hence, we must take into account two main caveats regarding the nature of concepts of security. First, concepts of security, national or international, do not result from rigorous causal theories. Second, security includes a psychological, highly erratic component, associated to the way that either individuals or groups perceive threats.

As to the issue of the causal theories, Michael Klare and Daniel Thomas sustain that because these concepts are not drawn from "neither causal theories—that is, theories that seek to explain particular outcomes in terms of particular causes—nor statements of fact"⁶ they function as organizing principles that help to assess global trends. In this sense, they warn, a concept of security "cannot be disproved; it can only be adopted or

ozone depletion), acid rain, forest devastation, environmental policy gained space in the public agenda of many countries. Soon, this concern led to the coinage of the expression "environment security."

rejected depending upon its analytical usefulness and its consistency with one's own normative or theoretical inclinations." They also suggest that an appropriate response to the challenges represented by new threats, or old threats with new strength, includes doing more than just adding new issues to the global agenda. For them, we should change our way of thinking about the nature and pursuit of security.⁷ It is necessary to change the nature and goals of international security in the face of the current and future threats.

As to the psychological content of the concept, if we reduce the concept of "security" to its simplest meaning, we must convey that "security" is an individual perception—related to perceived threats. As such, it is a highly personal and imprecise—because no reliable way of measuring this psychological reaction exists—human reaction. Although the need for security is a basic human need, humans react differently to similar threats. Expanded to the social universe, this lack of precision and regularity of response is exponentially increased. Consequently, this same imprecision is present in the concepts of national security and international security.

A second alert relates to the crisis in the existing paradigms. When dealing with international security, the two main analytical perspectives on international relations have provided our analytical tools: neorealism and neoliberalism. Both perspectives, though, face criticisms raised upon their inability to foreshadow the recent and deeply dramatic international changes.⁸ Consequently, international relations specialists, whatever their theoretical orientation, have been disagreeing on how to interpret the consequences of

⁶ Klare and Thomas, *op.cit.*, p.2.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ See Sean M. Lynn-Jones, ed., *The Cold War and After Prospects for Peace* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991); John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992)

change.⁹ The main outcome of this disagreement is the absence of reliable analytical tools that could help us to understand the new challenges to the international security.

A third alert relates to sovereignty. A common place in academic debates on international security is the request for the revision of the concept of sovereignty—formerly understood as a concept closely associated to territorial borders and, today, broadened to include the notion of control on the basic objectives of the nation-state. The request rises from the observation that the current threats—new or old—have a transnational nature that sharply extrapolates territorial borders. Because of the new pattern of international communications, the argument sustains, transnational relations, including economic as well as cultural aspects, are increasingly taking place in areas well beyond state control.

For example, Jessica Mathews¹⁰, a respected scholar interested in environmental threats, writing in 1994, suggested the necessity of new conceptualization for “national security.” She contended that, in the 1970s the original concept had been expanded to include international economics as it became clear that the U.S. economy was more vulnerable to other countries’ economic policies. Hence, she argues, “global developments now suggest the need for another analogous, broadening definition of national security to include resource, environmental and demographic issues. The assumptions and institutions that have governed international relations in the postwar era are a poor fit with these new realities. Environmental strains that transcend national borders are already beginning to break the sacred boundaries of national sovereignty,

⁹ Robert O. Keohanne, Joseph S. Nye, and Stanley Hoffman, eds., *After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989-1991* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Pos-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

previously rendered porous by the information and communication revolutions and the instantaneous global movement of financial capital. The once sharp division between foreign and domestic policy is blurred, forcing governments to grapple in international forums with issues that were contentious enough in the domestic arena.” Mathews’ argument is powerful enough and summarizes well the reasons to redefine national security, which is correctly considered the core concept for “international security.” In addition, her point regarding the vulnerability of the territorial borders is well observed. The risk of a sophism exists in the extrapolation that, since the borders are more porous, then sovereignty became less important for nation-states. The opposite is true; because of the sensation of reduction of control on what is happening inside its borders, governments have become more sensitive and interested in preserving the sovereignty of their respective states.

Broadening the Concept

We have seen that the necessity for a revision in the concept of international security appeared as an outcome of the end of the Cold War. “New concepts” that showed up before the end of the Cold War appeared despite the absence of demands for a revision of the militarily driven, old concept. However, even before the end of the Cold War, at least one demand for revision was registered. In an article published in the early 1980s, Richard Ullman suggested the need of a more comprehensive concept for national security.¹¹ He describes national security as a national goal assuming different trade-off values according to the situation. He contended that the national security was being

¹⁰ Jessica Mathews, “The Environment and International Security,” in *World Security: Challenges for a New Century*, ed. Michael Klare and Daniel Thomas (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994).

threatened by consequences of non-military events, raising non-military responses, but degrading the quality of life of state and non-state actors alike. Because these events could potentially narrow significantly the future range of political choice, they were clearly threatening the national security of many states. As the existing concept of national security ignored these threats and their outcomes, Ullman demanded for the broadening of the existing concept of national security.¹²

In the meantime, in the policy-making arena, the emergence of new threats was simultaneously registered as a perception of those threats and as a confession of the inadequacy of the existing security doctrine to explain such threats. For example, when appointed the U.S. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher referred to a new set of dangers appearing in the wake of the reduction of the nuclear threat. He observed that "ethnic and religious conflicts threaten to ignite widespread hostilities in Central and Astern Europe. Weapons of mass destruction may reach the hands of untested and unstable powers, and new threat spring from old rivalries in the Middle East, in Europe, and in Asia. At the same time, we face a world where borders matter less and less, a world that demands we join with other nations to face challenges that range from overpopulation to AIDS, to the very destruction of our planet's life support system."¹³

All these previous positions acknowledge that "national security" is the core-concept to be updated. Accordingly, as I argued before in this paper, national security is the root for either "international security" or "regional security." Even the solution of associating

¹¹ Richard Ullman, "Redefining Security," *International Security* 8, no.1 (Summer 1983): 129-153.

¹² See Joseph S. Nye Jr. and Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "International Security Studies: A Report of a Conference on the State of the Field," *International Security* 12, no. 4 (Spring 1988): 5-27; and Lynn Eden, "New Approaches to the Study of Conflict and Peace in a Changing World: Report on a Conference Held January 16-17, 1992, Center for International Security and Arms Control, Stanford University" Stanford University, Center for International Security and Arms Control, 1992.

new threats to the idea of security assumed, behind every concept, the notion of national security. Therefore, as I contended, the problem of these associations, such as “environment security,” “citizen security,” or whatever, was that they implied a common assumption for national security when this assumption was impossible.

In 1992, Richard Shultz, Roy Godson, and Ted Greenwood organized an interesting debate on security—“Security Studies for the 1990s.”¹⁴ One point on which they coincided was about the need of maintaining focus on national, international, and regional security, as opposed to accepting new concepts of security. In addition, although they kept considering states the main actors in the international security realm, they concluded that states are not the only actors: international regimes and institutions were also considered.¹⁵ Consequently, the survival of a state is not exclusively threatened by military forces. Interestingly, this conclusion also implies the broadening of both the security dilemma and the interdependent nature of many contemporary security concerns. On the basis of the security dilemma, increasing the security of a given state effects a reduction in the security of other state. If the reasons to increase security come from others, rather than exclusively military motives, so will be the reasons for increasing insecurity of neighbor states. Therefore, by broadening the original concept, instead of

¹³ Quoted in Michael T. Klare and Daniel C. Thomas (eds.) *World Security: Challenges for a New Century* (2nd ed.) (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994, p. 1).

¹⁴ Richard Shultz, Roy Godson, and Ted Greenwood, eds., “Security Studies for the 1990s (New York: Brassey's, 1993).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* The authors offer two main reasons for their choice. First, they think that this approach still provides the best explanation to the way states and other actors perceive security issues. Even after the end of the Cold War, with the reduction of levels of conflict, “the balance of military forces among states, even if reduced, will remain an important determinant of the context of international relations, influencing both perceptions of security and the conduct of diplomacy” (p.2). Second, they warn against the lack of disciplinary rigor and conceptual boundaries caused by the excessive expansion of the concept. They correctly criticize this expansion as leading to a point that “every critical national and international problem comes to be defined as a security issue” (p. 2).

Also Joseph Nye and Sean Lynn-Jones in “International Security Studies: A Report . . .” use the same definition of security.

merely accepting new attachments to the old concept, we will truly revise the notions of national, international, and regional security, in order to face the challenges of the current world.

Another important aspect comes from the observation that the concept of national security dates from the World War II. Before, the concept capable of putting together similar meanings was the concept of national interest. During the years following the end of the war, however, national security not only acquired a legal status within the United States—in the 1947's National Security Act—but it was transformed in a dominant doctrine within the entire Western hemisphere. Thus, by then, “national security” had replaced the notion of national interest and had become the idiosyncratic concept of the Cold War period. According to the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, “few Americans used the term before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. By the time the war ended, however, national security was challenging the older concept of national interest for preeminence within the community of experts and policymakers involved in U.S. foreign policy. The circumstances of the Cold War determined the outcome of that competition. By 1950, national security was established as the leitmotif of U.S. foreign policy, with its own lexicon and supporting institutions. During the next four decades, national security completely eclipsed national interest as the standard for understanding, debating, and justifying American actions abroad. Preoccupation with national security transformed the policy-making process and altered the tone and substance of American politics. As Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan observed in June 1990: ‘The Cold War changed us We became a national security state’¹⁶

¹⁶ Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs Newsletter, March 1999.

Therefore, these arguments do not advise for the acceptance of "new concepts," since they derive from the same, and not revised yet, core concept. Accepting these new concepts may lead not only to imprecision; it leads to a technical mistake, for it incorporates the current disagreement of the core concept with the reality. A broadened concept must admit the existence of other threats, besides the military threats, and other actors, besides states, as relevant players in the international stage. In addition, a broadened concept could reduce the artificial division brought by the "new concept" for the international security issue.

Revisiting the idea of national interest is probably the most important contribution the academia could bring to reshaping the existing concepts. In addition, the new concept would contribute by showing that the national security of a given state does not depend exclusively on the accomplishment of the national interests of that state; interests have become blurred, diffusely distributed, and increasingly dependent upon collective accomplishments. Although powerful, as some states may be, they became increasingly dependent upon the accomplishment of regional and global interests. On the other hand, regional or global instability, due to regional or global interests unsatisfied, may quickly spread and affect national interests.

Conclusion

Along this paper, I rejected the adoption of “new concepts” of security as a substitute for the concept of international security. I argued that these “new concepts” are neither clear nor precise enough to replace the old concept of international security. Yet, I strongly advocated for a revision of the old concept and I suggested that such a revision should be made upon the broadening of this concept. To broaden the concept we should add to the military concerns, main characteristic of the old concept, concerns with values, identity, and norms. In addition, we should consider impacts of a changed sovereignty notion on the states’ threat perception. Finally, I suggested that the notion of national interest should replace that of national security and threat perception as the

If I successfully proved that a new security concept—based on the broadening of the old security concept—is necessary, then I accomplished a remarkable goal in this paper. More remarkable though was the OAS’s initiative to promote the debate around this subject upon the awareness that the hemispheric security must be redesigned. Moreover, I intended to show that this is the right moment and this is the right forum to undertake this conceptual exercise.

The timing is suggested by the verification that we are already in a new age of the international affairs, and in a new age of the international security concerns. The fact that this hemisphere keeps being the most peaceful region of the world should not be a reason for accommodating to the situation. The moment, as Joseph Tulchin and Francisco Rojas Aravena emphatically defend, offers a rare “window of opportunity” through which Latin

American countries may design new security concepts and, hence, new security agendas, under less eternal pressures. They suggest that this new concept must include “issues not previously considered items of security concern, such as economics, environmental protection, human rights, international crime, disaster relief, political instability, and other such threats.”¹⁷

Both the Cold War and the East-West bias led many topics—which are out of this loop but are clearly perceived as threats to the international security—to be neglected by the academic thinking. Issues such as terrorism, drug trafficking, revolution, counter-revolution and other forms of low-intensity conflict, and regional security from the perspective of regional actors—and not of the superpowers’ perspective—did not receive enough attention from the academic community. Sensitive to this problem, Stephen M. Walt, for example, emphasized the importance of seeking a meaningful compromise between the artificial narrowness and separateness of the field. He advised for the importance to find an adequate balance between a theoretical and a policy focus on the one hand, and between a U.S. and a non-U.S. orientation, on the other.¹⁸

The importance of having this debate sponsored by OAS draws from the observation of the huge power asymmetry existing in the Hemisphere. In such a circumstance, the hegemonic power tends to impose its concept to the region. What is the problem of having a concept imposed by the hegemonic power?¹⁹ First, this concept will reflect

¹⁷ Joseph S. Tulchin and Francisco Rojas Aravena with Ralph H. Espach (eds.) *Strategic Balance and Confidence Building Measures in the Americas* (Washington, D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, p.2).

¹⁸ Stephen M. Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly*, no. 35, 1991.

¹⁹ For half a century, Latin America lived under the security concept that attended the U.S.’ interest. This fact had a profound influence on the regime and on the entire infrastructure of the countries in the region—is short, it was the basic force behind the installation and permanence of the military rules in the region. Moreover, the concept gave to the military a rationale, including an identity to be entrenched in the political power for so many years. Although one may argue about the need of these interventions in the name of the

threats as they are perceived by the hegemonic power, and not necessarily by the lesser powers. Second, the threats to the hegemonic power will turn on the threats for the lesser powers. Therefore, having this debate promoted by the OAS may potentially result in a more balanced outcome and, hence, in the formulation of a new conceptual framework useful for the modernization of the inter-American system.