

resources currently being spent on military affairs could be better spent on civilian endeavors. The point here is that this notion is one which must be cultivated within government and civil society and not appear to be imposed from the multilateral institutions and the donor community. Indeed, there is no reason why Latin America's governments should chiefly rely on restraint in Washington or other arms exporting countries in order to contain national defense budgets. Much the same could be said in regard to conditioning aid. These external factors simply divert attention from a government's own weakness or lack of determination. One must first examine concerns of military expenditures into the context of domestic political factors and principally the democratic necessity of insuring domestic civilian control over the military, including its budget.

From the donor's standpoint, the question therefore should be what support can be offered for the domestic, democratic attainment of this tendency. And at the same time support discussions at the level of civil society and the legislatures as to the type of defense policy each country really needs with a view to drawing up guidelines on weapons purchases. In the final analysis, the resources and activities which are the focus of the conversion effort (including military bases) are also the product of national and international discussions and decisions related to security. Civilian sectors must participate in these debates in order to have an impact on the decisions over the if, when and how of reallocation.

In this regard, civil-democratic supremacy extends well beyond simply keeping the military budget in line or the military itself in barracks. It implies imposing effective budget not only of the budgets, but also to intervene effectively in the redefinition of existing security doctrine, force mission, goals and structures to make them consistent with civil rule, and in general improving information and intelligence as the basis for effective monitoring and expertise in military and defense issues. These are not tasks to be assumed by external donors, but by national civic (governmental and non-governmental) sectors. What external cooperation can support is capacity creation at the level of government and civil society recognizing at all times that the degree of civilian control is historically situational.