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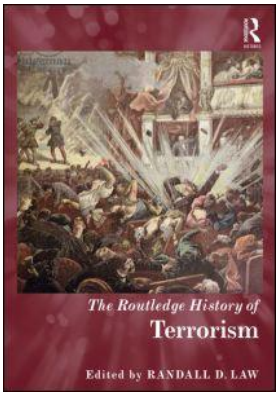

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The Urban Guerrilla, Terrorism, and state terror in Latin America

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THE URBAN GUERRILLA, TERRORISM, AND STATE TERROR IN LATIN AMERICA

Jennifer S. Holmes

Since the mid-twentieth century, Latin America has suffered from some of the highest incidents of terror, both state and non-state. From Mexico to the southern cone, Latin America has had more terrorist incidents than all other regions of the world, making up more than a quarter of the world's attacks (according to the Global Terrorism Database, and including the Caribbean). As a region, the groups that have carried out these attacks have been both homegrown and inspired from abroad. Latin America has also suffered from some of the most brutal examples of state terror, including the notorious cases of Argentina and Guatemala. Typically, violence from small groups was met with indiscriminate repression, which then spawned more violent groups, creating a cycle of escalation and human rights violations.

The decision to call these groups terrorists, guerrillas, revolutionaries, or insurgents has been controversial given the academic and political uses of the term terrorism. Some of the groups discussed in this chapter may not be universally labeled as terrorist or, at least, not at all times. For example, in Colombia, FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia/Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) violence can be labeled as terrorist, guerrilla, or revolutionary, given that the group targets both civilians and the government forces in the same campaign. Moreover, after the September 11 attacks on the United States, it became more common to label non-state violence as terrorism. Nonetheless, in each case discussed, typically groups engaged in activities that could either be called terrorist, revolutionary, or insurgent.

What kind of terror

Latin America is recognized as having suffered from many different types of violence, including rural insurgencies, urban terror, and state violence. Martha Crenshaw, one of the first academics to study terrorism, counsels scholars to situate terrorism in its context and to identify the "causal relationship between terrorism and its political, social and economic environment" and the "impact of terrorism on this setting."[1] Following this advice, it is prudent to examine the emergence of non-state terror and state terror in their historical contexts, instead of extracting similar types of attacks and treating them as causally equivalent acts. One of the best typologies of terrorism was created by David Rapoport. Rapoport situates most Latin American terrorism in the third wave, which is anchored by

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groups inspired by the success of the Vietcong against US forces in Vietnam. Rapoport specifically includes the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and the Colombian M-19 revolutionary groups in the third wave.[2] In fact, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, an Argentine who became one of the heroes of the Cuban Revolution and the author of *Guerrilla Warfare*, once stated a desire to make multiple Vietnams in the region.[3] The success of the 1959 Cuban Revolution inspired many to try to unseat their own governments. Che advocated a "*focista*" approach, in which a "small cadre of revolutionary fighters in the countryside, or *foco*, would create this subjective condition by igniting the spark of rural based revolution."[4] In response, many governments attempted to implement land reform to pre-empt possible peasant unrest in the countryside. Some groups were inspired by the urban Uruguayan Tupamaros. Certainly, groups learned from each other and earlier experiences. However, other groups, like the Colombian FARC, had historical antecedents decades older than the 1959 Cuban Revolution. This entry will examine four main types of Latin American terror: violence in the Cold War context, groups responding to regimes with low legitimacy, urban terrorism, and state terror.

Cold War and Latin American terror

Latin America was a strategic battlefield for much of the Cold War. Che Guevara did try to foment revolution in countries such as Bolivia, while Fidel Castro's Cuba attempted to incite uprisings and revolutions throughout the region. Dozens of guerrilla movements influenced by the Cuban example emerged, such as the ELN in Colombia, but the process did not stop there. According to the historian Hal Brands, "By the early 1960s the Cuban revolution had stimulated the Left, terrified the Right, and intensified existing internal conflict throughout the region."[5] The leftist groups generally failed in their desired impact, and the Cuban attempt to instigate revolution was abandoned by the early 1970s. In general, the government response was harsh and there were few converts to a foreign-led insurgency.

Despite the lack of desired direct impact, there was a large unwanted influence through the external meddling of competing foreign powers like the United States and the Soviet Union (or its proxy, Cuba). External actors also began to fight Cold War battles on Latin American terrain. Both Cuba and the Soviet Union provided a range of assistance to friendly governments, including arms, training, and diplomatic support. The United States supported the other side, often anti-communist authoritarian regimes (including interventions in Guatemala in1954, Dominican Republic in 1965, Chile under Pinochet in 1973, Nicaragua in the 1980s, etc.).

Nonetheless, it would be incorrect to assume that the unrest emerging in Latin America was due primarily to foreign intervention. Inadvertently and indirectly, interventions had long-lasting effects when US or Latin American governments assumed that all credible terrorist activity was sponsored by other governments. The Cold War context encouraged the assumption that "insurgencies had a strong element of the ideological conflict between the East and West, and involved, directly or indirectly, the support for the insurgents of the prime Communist states . . . on the one hand, and Western governments . . . on the other. Almost inevitably, they equated insurgencies with revolutionary, Communist movements."[6] This faulty assumption often resulted in mischaracterizing fundamental causes of unrest in the region. The Cold War lens through which the US viewed internal turmoil in the region understated how domestic pressures, such as long-standing exclusion and inequality, could result in formidable violent movements. Although the majority of Latin American countries

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gained their independence around 1820, independence was not accompanied by significant social or economic change. Additionally, most Latin American countries maintained a hierarchical society, inherited from colonial rule, based on race and class that perpetuated an unequal distribution of land and wealth.[7] Political and social openings were often met with backlash. In other words, many countries were ripe for rebellion without any foreign instigation.

However, the Cold War perspective did influence how groups were perceived by governments. For example, in Peru when Sendero Luminoso (the Shining Path) emerged, government "officials thought Senderistas were common criminals or a product of an international subversive movement. . . . The left thought they were part of a CIA plot to discredit them. The right believed that Sendero was merely a covert arm of the left."[8] In fact, despite the end of the Cold War, not all Latin American countries experienced a decline of terrorism or guerrilla conflict as many expected. Other internal factors were present to encourage conflict.

Rural unrest, grievance, and weak states with legitimacy problems

Many countries, such as Colombia and Uruguay, experienced upheavals due to stagnation in the agricultural sector or rural unrest. Long-standing land conflict was the spark for much conflict. One of the longest-lived groups, the Colombian FARC, emerged out of periods of rural discontent in the 1920s and a mid-century civil war. After its official founding in 1964, it increased its foothold during periods of crisis in certain commodities such as coffee. Other groups emerged out of frustration with closed political systems, regimes with weak legitimacy, or festering unresolved conflicts. Andreas Feldmann and Maiju Perälä state that "nongovernmental terrorism in Latin America has been more likely to occur in weakly institutionalized regimes, characterized by some measure of political and civil liberties but concomitantly by a deficient rule of law and widespread human rights violations."[9] Some of the most active terrorist groups emerged in countries with historical challenges of exclusion, inequality, and weak legitimacy. Moreover, many rebels, guerrillas, and revolutionaries justify their violence by attacking the legitimacy of the targeted regime, further undermining them. Two of the most fearsome terrorist groups in the region, Shining Path and the FARC, shared a frustration with relatively closed political systems (until 1980 in Peru and 1991 in Colombia), a weak state, and accusations of clientelism in government. However, even efforts to democratize did not always stifle the growth of existing groups (like the FARC) or the emergence of new ones (like Shining Path in Peru).[10]

Peru

In the twentieth century, the Peruvian state was still weak, unstable, offered few services, and excluded the participation of the indigenous through restricting the suffrage of illiterates (until 1980). Moreover, the state was widely viewed as corrupt. The main populist political party, APRA, was banned or prevented from winning major elections for much of the time from its founding in 1924 until the return to democracy in 1980. In the twentieth century, no regime lasted longer than twelve years. In the 1960s, there were short-lived Cuban-inspired rural guerrilla movements that were quickly defeated by the police or the military. In 1963, Hugo Blanco led an uprising in Cuzco. In 1965, both the MIR (Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria/Leftist Revolutionary Movement) and the ELN (not to be confused with the

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Colombian group of the same name) were active for a few months before being dismantled by government forces. Peru had a military regime from 1968 to 1980 that attempted major land reform but still failed to quell dissent.

However, the major Peruvian terrorist group was not related to these earlier Cuban-inspired groups, nor was it related to Cold War interventions. PCP–Sendero Luminoso (Partido Comunista del Peru–Sendero Luminoso/the Communist Party of Peru in the Shining Path of José Carlos Mariátegui), became one of the most brutal groups in the hemisphere. Sendero had two main influences. First, they were inspired by the Peruvian intellectual José Carlos Mariátegui (1894–1930), who believed in a nationalist, democratic revolution as a step towards socialism. Mariátegui founded the Peruvian Communist Party and was author of *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (1928), which painted rural Peru as a neo-feudal hacienda system. Second, its founder, the charismatic philosophy professor Abimael Guzmán, was influenced by Mao and made numerous trips to China in the 1960s and 1970s.[11] Despite this influence, the group received no international support. According to William Ratliff, "Sendero seems to have no international ties; even its friendship with China was directed toward Mao Zedong rather than the present Chinese leadership."[12] The group, founded in 1970 by Guzmán, became the PCP–SL after splitting off from the Communist Party of Peru, which had rejected arguments for clandestine organization and armed struggle advocated by Guzmán. The early base of the new Sendero organization was universities in highland provinces, such as the rural Universidad de Huamanga in Ayacucho, but not among the indigenous. The Cold War, however, influenced how the group was perceived. Despite the initial assessments, as noted above, by the government and the left, Sendero was an entirely Peruvian movement that would kill tens of thousands in the next twenty years.

Shining Path was estimated to have approximately 10,000 active members with a peak network of 50,000 to 100,000 supporters. Sendero grew out of a movement mobilized on the historical exclusion and neglect of the rural areas, gained some support from coca growers frustrated with eradication efforts, and took advantage of the government's early reliance on arbitrary repression and brutal force. Sendero's plan was to develop the movement in the rural areas, cut off supply lines, and then take over the cities, with support from workers and peasants. The initial state response under President Fernando Belaúnde was indiscriminate repression against the indigenous and rural populations, who were assumed to be friendly to Shining Path because the group was in the area. In reality, the indigenous were attacked by both the government and the Shining Path. Instead of reducing Shining Path violence, the government counter-insurgency (COIN) campaign reduced government support and reinforced old distrust. The group increased its activities in the 1980s and pushed the country to the point of a civil war. After the election of President Alberto Fujimori in 1990, the government began to have more success with a more targeted counter-insurgency strategy. However, Fujimori quickly turned to authoritarian means. Under the guise of responding to a corrupt state, Fujimori closed Congress and dissolved the judiciary in 1992. The new regime benefited greatly when Guzmán was captured in September 1992 with many important files. This intelligence jackpot facilitated more government victories using police tactics (as opposed to COIN) and the eventual surrender of thousands of Sendero members. According to the Peruvian Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (Truth and Reconciliation Committee – CVR), 69,280 Peruvians were killed from 1980 to 2000, most by Shining Path. The most human rights violations inflicted by the state paradoxically occurred during the democratic period of President Belaúnde (1980–85) and President Alan Garcia (1985–1990). Under

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Belaúnde, rural peasants were attacked by Sendero members and then suffered from indiscriminate counter-insurgency operations by the Peruvian military. Under Garcia, mutinous prisons were shelled by the air force. There were egregious violations as well under Fujimori (1990–2000), including those carried out by the Colina Group which targeted suspected insurgents, but the repression was not as widespread or indiscriminate as during the previous ten years. Nonetheless, serious violations occurred and Fujimori was later convicted and imprisoned for ordering killings and kidnappings.

Since 2003, two remnants of Sendero Luminoso have been active, one in the Upper Huallaga Valley region that is loyal to the traditional leadership and another in the valleys of the Apurímac, Ene, and Mantaro rivers (known as the VRAEM) that is not. The second group tries to link Guzmán and Sendero with the atrocities committed against the peasants and the indigenous. It should be noted that Sendero is unusual in that the group killed more civilians than the government counter-insurgency forces – an uncomfortable fact that the VRAEM faction tries to distance itself from. This group is led by Victor Quispe Palomino, aka "Camarada José." The VRAEM group, which calls itself the Communist Party of Peru, rejects calls for peace and believes that the revolution can continue without the founder. It is increasing its activities and is regarded as a smart, well-equipped, and formidable foe. The other group is active in the Upper Huallaga Valley and was led by "Artemio" until his capture in 2012. This group should be considered coordinated with the traditional Shining Path-oriented, contemporary amnesty group, MOVADEF (Movimiento por Amnistía y Derechos Fundamentales/Movement for Amnesty and Basic Rights), which was founded by Guzmán's lawyers in 2010 and which advocates for the amnesty of imprisoned Sendero members. This group has been denied permission to run candidates by the Peruvian government, which views it as a terrorist front.

In addition to the Maoist Shining Path, there was another group, MRTA (Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaro/Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement), active in the country. MRTA is more of a *focista* movement that aims for a socialist revolution. MRTA first attacked a police station in Villa El Salvador, in the outskirts of Lima in January 1984. The group extended its activities to other departments, including San Martín and Cusco. In contrast to Sendero, MRTA's members portrayed themselves as the "good guerrillas." For example, when they invaded villages, they would often announce that they did not come to engage in summary executions, as Shining Path was known to do, but instead wanted to begin a conversation with the citizens. MRTA even suspended attacks at the beginning of the first Garcia presidency (1985–1990) in the hopes that he would comply with his campaign promises. MRTA's leaders, Luis Varesse and Víctor Polay Campos, issued demands that the Peruvian government stop debt payments, not cooperate with the International Monetary Fund, raise the minimum wage, declare an amnesty for all political prisoners, and end the "dirty war." MRTA's most notorious attack was the December 1996 takeover of the Japanese embassy and the capture of more than 400 hostages. Many of the hostages were released, but seventy-two were held for 126 days until Peruvian government forces stormed the embassy. All of the MRTA fighters, including leader Nestor Cerpa, were killed. In recent years, the group has been capable of only sporadic activity.

Colombia

Colombia has experienced political violence from the left and right, drug violence, out of control common crime, and state violence. The consequences of the violence were not

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limited to its direct targets but also affected state institutions and the state's ability to respond effectively to violence or crime. Current fault lines should be understood in a post-civil war context. The civil war, known as La Violencia (1948–57), was fought between the Liberal and Conservative parties and their supporters. Part of the agreement to end the conflict included a power-sharing pact called the National Front (1958–74). Guerrilla groups mobilized partially in response to the National Front period when the traditionally dominant Liberal and Conservative parties had a power-sharing agreement that excluded other political parties and popular movements. The pact's rigidity and exclusion encouraged the emergence of radical movements geared toward revolution.

Two groups still active today formed in this period. The ELN (Ejército Liberación Nacional/Army of National Liberation) formed after sixteen Colombian youth visited Cuba in 1962. An early member was the revolutionary priest Camilo Torres. The group raised substantial sums from extorting the oil companies in the area and was known for frequently bombing the oil pipelines. Infamous attacks include two from 1999: the kidnapping of 186 people in a church in Cali, and the hijacking of an Avianca plane, the passengers of which were held for a year. The FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia/the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) officially formed after an uprising and its violent but unsuccessful repression in 1964 in Marquetalia. The FARC is the one of the oldest and most active guerrilla groups in the hemisphere. The group is Marxist but does not identify as a *focista*, Cuban-inspired group. Both claim earlier precursor groups in the Liberal Party guerrilla movements of the 1940s and 1950s during the Colombian civil war. The FARC's long-time leader, Manuel Marulanda ("Tirofijo"), was active in campaigns waged by Liberal militias against the Conservatives. Eventually, in a context of continuing government repression and the absence of a political solution or significant reform, these militias evolved from unorganized peasant resistance into guerrilla groups. Despite the proclaimed commitment of the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) to peaceful change instead of supporting revolution, the party remained illegal and faced repression. In response, a group that initially called itself the Bloque Sur de Guerrilla separated from the PCC and eventually became the FARC. By the 1980s, the FARC had evolved from its rural origins, with both urban aspects and increasing involvement in the drug trade. Despite attempts to label the contemporary FARC as nothing more than a drug cartel, the extent to which the original ideological motivation has been subsumed by the lucrative drug business is a hotly debated topic. The reality is likely mixed, with some members and fronts participating more for illicit business opportunities and others out of their original demands for reform.

There were failed peace talks in 1982, 1984, and 1991–2. In 1984, some FARC members demobilized and formed a political party called the UP (Unión Patriótica/Patriotic Union), but the group was brutally targeted for assassination by paramilitary groups that will be discussed next. In the late 1990s, the FARC was granted control over a Switzerland-sized area of the country as a precondition of peace talks. Many in the country doubted that the FARC was sincere throughout President Andrés Pastrana's peace efforts. Instead, it was widely believed by many citizens and some within the security forces that the FARC used the opportunity of peace talks to plan attacks and dig in. In 2002, days after the FARC hijacked an airplane and kidnapped a prominent senator, Pastrana ended peace talks and ordered the military to retake the peace zone. His successor, President Álvaro Uribe instead focused on a military response to the FARC and no negotiations. The next president, Juan Manuel Santos, began a new round of peace talks in late 2012. The original motivation of land reform has remained strong. The FARC demanded that more than twenty percent of the

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country's land (62 million acres) be redistributed to the poor. Although peace talks have so far been successful in coming to agreements on land and rural development, talks on illicit drugs have been difficult, although the FARC has promised to end the drug trade if a final peace accord is reached.

Other groups emerged in Colombia as well. The EPL or (Ejército Popular de Liberación/Popular Liberation Army) was founded in Antioquía in 1967 but never grew into a large group. It attempted to demobilize in the 1980s, but its demobilized soldiers were targeted by paramilitaries. Most of the group disbanded in 1991. Finally, an urban guerrilla group, the M-19 (Movimiento 19 de Abril/Nineteenth of April Movement) emerged out of the ANAPO movement after it "lost" presidential elections in 1970, widely considered to be fraudulent. This group, drawn from students and urban residents, should be considered more nationalist. In fact, one of its first high-profile acts was the theft of the sword of the independence hero, Simón Bolívar. In 1985, thirty-five members of the group seized the Palace of Justice, demanding that President Belisario Betancur be put on trial. Instead, the government stormed the palace, resulting in more than 100 deaths, including the head of the Supreme Court, almost half the justices, and all the M-19 members. The M-19 later demobilized in an agreement that also included the government's commitment to a new constitution. Since 1990, M-19's members have participated in elections and held more than a quarter of the seats in the National Constitutional Assembly. They are now a legal political party (Alianza Democrática M19/the Democratic Alliance M19).

Partially in response to the government's inability to respond to guerrilla groups, privately funded paramilitary groups formed. The government encouraged this initially and considered them legal under decree 3398 of 1965 and Law 48 of 1968. Their purpose was to bolster Colombian counter-insurgency efforts. Many landowners created paramilitary groups, since they were on the front lines of the land conflict that fueled many guerrilla groups. However, as their violence increased, they were declared illegal in 1989. At the same time, drug-related violence increased in the 1980s and 1990s because of retaliatory cycles of violence and government crackdowns and a fight for dominance between the Cali and Medellín cartels. Additionally, many *narcos* bought land and inherited traditional land conflicts with groups like the FARC, while some paramilitaries entered the drug business to fund operations. Beginning in late 2002, the main umbrella paramilitary group, the AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia/United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia) declared a cease-fire with the government (despite not targeting government forces in the past) in preparation for peace talks and a demobilization effort under President Uribe (2002–10). Despite their illegality, there have been persistent concerns over government complicity in paramilitary violence. Francisco Leal Buitrago and Andrés Dávila Ladrón de Guevara have criticized the state as being captured by clientelism,[13] while others warn of state capture by violent groups.[14] Some human rights groups have accused the government of using paramilitary violence as an unofficial government strategy to contract out *mano dura* ("firm hand") COIN efforts and avoid responsibility for human rights abuses.[15] There has been success in professionalizing the government security forces since the 1990s, although questions remain about factions and individuals within the different agencies.[16]

Urban terror

Whereas Guevara thought that rural areas would be the key to the struggle and any "suburban" guerrilla movements would never emerge independently because they should be

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considered in "exceptionally unfavorable ground,"[17] Latin America is also home to the most well-known urban terrorist groups. The success of groups like the urban Tupamaros quickly challenged Che's assumption, especially as most rural movements failed in countries including Venezuela, Argentina, and Bolivia. Paul Wilkinson notes the growing abandonment of rural guerrilla conflict and a growing adoption of terrorism as Cuban-inspired groups failed: "Furthermore, the revolutionaries came to realize that in heavily urbanized states like Brazil and Argentina where well over half the population was in cities, they had to win power in the cities as a condition for seizing state power."[18] Instead of Che's guide to rural guerrilla conflict, Carlos Marighella and his *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* became the inspiration and guide for another model of revolutionary activity pioneered by the Tupamaros of Uruguay. Soon, other groups began to imitate the Tupamaros and their urban rebellion. Even the Cubans took notice and began to distribute Marighella's *Minimanual*.[19] Marighella was a Brazilian guerrilla leader (Action for National Liberation – ALN) who was killed by the Brazilian police in 1969. Before his death, he wrote the short *Minimanual* to outline the role and strategy of urban guerrilla conflict, which he saw as the adaptation of Guevara's model to urban areas. According to Marighella, the urban guerrilla attacks the "government, the big businesses, and the foreign imperialists, particularly North Americans." Specific goals include targeting leaders from the security forces (military and police) and expropriation of the resources of the regime and its supporters. Marighella envisioned rural conflict as different from traditional peasant struggles. He did not believe that these conflicts would evolve into a rural guerrilla force. However, he did view the peasants as an ally when they saw the attacks against the landlord that would not go against their own interests: "The armed alliance of the proletariat, peasantry, and the middle class is the key to victory."[20]

Internationally, Uruguay had a reputation of being the Switzerland of the South because of its relative democratic stability and long-consolidated party system. However, the country had experienced a long period of economic stagnation since the 1950s. Strikes were responded to with states of siege, which were then used to respond to general unrest, including actions by the new urban terrorist group. The Uruguayan Tupamaros (MLN-T) (Movimiento de Liberación Nacional – Tupamaros) were founded by Raúl Sendic, Julio Marenales, and Jorge Maner Lluveras in 1962. Five years later, they started releasing communiqués to the public decrying the Uruguayan state as illegitimate and for the benefit of an oligarchy. The Tupamaros' actions were designed not to militarily defeat the government, but to increase their own support and delegitimize the government. Although delegitimizing the government is a classic goal of terrorist and guerrilla groups, in doing this, the Tupamaros more explicitly followed the advice of Marighella's *Minimanual*, according to which "the primary task of the urban guerrilla is to distract, to wear down, to demoralize the military regime and its repressive forces, and also to attack and destroy the wealth and property of the foreign managers." Among the tactics that Marighella advised for urban guerrillas were bank robberies; raids; the occupation of radio stations, schools, factories or other public places; prison breaks; kidnapping as propaganda; and the spread of propaganda in general. Throughout, the quest for popular support was paramount. "Where government actions become inept and corrupt, the urban guerrilla should not hesitate to step in and show that he opposes the government, and thus gain popular sympathy."[21] The principal strategy was to create a permanent political crisis and provoke the government into a repressive response. Before censorship was routine, the Tupamaros regularly released communiqués to the media, distributed leaflets and posters,

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and even took control of businesses and radio stations to deliver speeches to their captive audiences.

The Tupamaros were an authentic and self-sufficient Uruguayan group. Arturo Porzencanski wrote that "no evidence has been found that the Tupamaros ever received either money or arms from other countries or from social movements abroad."[22] The Tupamaros explained:

> We do not go outside the country to seek financing for our revolution, but seize from our enemies the money to mount the necessary revolutionary campaign. . . . We must make a clear distinction between what the bourgeoisie's property and the worker's property really is. The former is, beyond a doubt, the outcome of workers' exploitation; the latter is a result of work and individual effort. Therefore, the bourgeoisie's property is our natural fountain of resources and we have the right to expropriate it without compensation.[23]

Some of their thefts were spectacular, including $6 million in jewelry and $400,000 in gold from a branch of the Banco de la República. They also raided army garrisons for weapons and ammunition and industry for chemicals and explosives.

The Tupamaros also kidnapped prominent and symbolically important officials, diplomats, businesspeople, and landowners. Some were held for ransom while others were put on trial and held in a Tupamaro "people's jail." In 1969, about ten were kidnapped, and this tactic increased each year through 1971, with more than thirty kidnapped that year. There were few murders, although one was of Dan Mitrione, a CIA agent who was alleged to have taught the police torture techniques. In 1972, the Tupamaros killed four officials who were alleged to be members of an anti-Tupamaro group, Caza Tupamaros.

The Tupamaros provided a vision of an alternate state. For example, after the kidnapping and trial of prosecutor general Dr. Guidi Berro Oribe, the Tupamaros released recordings to the press. The group also succeeded in outsmarting the police by avoiding capture and escaping when imprisoned. They had four successful mass prison breaks, some involving prison disguises, others using tunnels, and some with bribes or threats to prison workers.

Despite not having broad support for their illegal tactics, the Tupamaros did have wide support for their reform goals. According to a 1969 Gallup poll, about half of the respondents viewed them as a dangerous group. In April 1971, a presidential contender, Alberto Heber, from one of the main political parties (Blanco) suggested that the government should negotiate with the Tupamaros on policy issues. Some senators and representatives agreed with some of the Tupamaro policy proposals, although they disagreed with their means of achieving them. However, as their activity became more violent, the Tupamaros lost support. Their activity was also met with increasing brutality by the government forces, suspension of civil liberties, and the extensive use of torture by police in interrogations. Although the Tupamaros had basically already been crushed and defeated by a brutal counter-insurgency campaign, unrest was one of the main justifications given for a military coup in 1973. In short, both Tupamaro violence and the government's repression undermined democracy in this era.

Despite their defeat, the Tupamaros also inspired others in the region. The Colombian M-19 emphasized political tactics learned from the Uruguayan Tupamaros.[24] The Tupamaros themselves went on to have a significant second act. After the return to democracy in 1985, traditional (Colorado and Blanco) presidential candidates were elected until 2004,

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when Tabaré Vázquez of the Encuentro Progresista – Frente Amplio (Progressive Encounter – Broad Front) was elected. Prominent former Tupamaros became politically active within the Broad Front, including Nora Castro, who became the leader of the Chamber of Deputies, and José Mujica, who became leader of the Senate. Mujica, who was imprisoned for fourteen years (most of it in solitary confinement) during the military regime, was elected president in 2009.[25]

State terror, civil–military relations, and the national security doctrine

From the 1950s on, a pattern emerged in the region. Unrest was responded to with government crackdown, followed by a proliferation of violent groups across the ideological spectrum. Mitchell Seligson highlights the combustive nature of repression: "It may well be that massive repression launched by the state to root out what are initially small groups of guerrillas . . . initiates a cycle of violence that eventually brings others into the fray."[26] This cycle escalated in a region with tense civil–military relations, frequent military coups, and weak democratic accountability for security forces. Historically, a major issue in Latin American politics has been the phenomenon of politicians repeatedly "knocking on the barrack doors" and the belief of militaries that they are the ultimate protectors of the constitution, as they interpret it. J. Samuel Fitch described the main challenge of balancing security and democracy in Latin America:

> At a minimum, democratic governments must clearly delineate the lines between police and military roles in internal security. Insofar as possible, the armed forces should be removed from primary responsibility for internal security, without denying the need for trained counterinsurgency forces to intervene when antidemocratic forces attempt to establish a territorial base.[27]

However, when governments have put the military in charge of internal security without clear limits and guidelines on the use of force, bloody counter-insurgency often gave the guerrillas at least the moral victory of portraying their governments as illegitimate and brutal. This persistent tradition continued into the twentieth century as the military turned against internal enemies, subversives, terrorists, or revolutionaries.[28]

Argentina in the 1960s and 1970s typifies this pattern of a proliferation of terrorist groups in response to state repression after failed attempts at political reform and opening. In 1955, populist president Juan Perón was ousted in a military coup and forced into exile. General Pedro Aramburu led an attempt by the military to purge the country of Peronism before allowing elections with restrictions in 1958 – elections that were annulled in 1962 because the Peronist party received more votes than other parties. New elections were held in 1963, in which President Arturo Illia of the centrist Radical Party won. In June 1966, General Juan Onganía seized power and banned political parties. However, instead of promoting calm, this repression resulted in the emergence of numerous terrorist groups and uprisings, beginning with the 1969 Cordobazo. This spontaneous eruption of riots was followed by the emergence of more dissent and a government crackdown. The crackdown was met with the violence of new Peronist groups such as the Montoneros, the Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas/Peronist Armed Forces, and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias/Revolutionary Armed Forces. Other leftist (but non-Peronist) groups included the Ejercito Revolucionario del

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Pueblo/People's Revolutionary Army, and the Ejercito Revolucionario de los Trabajadores. By 1970, rightist vigilante groups, such as Mano (Hand) – composed of off-duty police – had emerged in response. These groups were not truly independent of the government but represented an effort by the state to distance itself from the worst of the violence. General Onganía was replaced by General Roberto Levingston in July 1970, who was ousted and replaced by General Alejandro Lanusse in March 1971. Under Lanusse, the military became directly involved in the counter-insurgency campaign. Disappearances were rampant by 1971. Incidents of monthly violence increased from fewer than ten a month in 1965 to more than 100 by December 1972. In an effort to remove incentives to violence, the military allowed elections in March 1973. Perón, who had been in exile in Spain, returned to the country in time for new elections in September. After a brief decline in violence, the cycle continued. Perón died in office in July 1974 and was succeeded by his wife Isabel. By the beginning of 1976, the average rate of violence was 300 incidents per month.[29] It continued to increase and a cycle of increasing violence quickly emerged. The far right responded with their own violent groups, including the AAA (Alianza Anticomunista Argentina/Argentine Anticommunist Alliance). As violence from multiple sources proliferated, Isabel Perón lost support. She was removed in a March 1976 coup that installed a *mano dura* authoritarian regime. State terror was extreme, and the military launched what is commonly described as the "dirty war" (1976–83) against anyone it suspected of being a subversive. It is estimated that up to 30,000 Argentines were killed or tortured by the government. At the same time, the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay worked together to track and eliminate each other's internal opponents. Cooperation included intelligence and joint operations that crossed boarders. Prominent assassinations of dissidents in exile included former Chilean foreign minister Orlando Letelier in Washington, DC, by Chilean intelligence, and Uruguayan former congressmen Hector Gutiérrez Ruiz and Zelmar Michelini in Buenos Aires by Argentine forces.

Other countries experienced state terror, including Guatemala (1960–96), Chile under Augusto Pinochet (1973–90) and even Uruguay (1973–85), which became infamous for the extensive use of torture, with estimates of up to twenty percent of the population interrogated and tortured by state forces. Many of these authoritarian regimes shared a "national security" ideology, which, according to George Lopez, "served to support, if not predict, the use of terror as a preferred ruling style in a number of Latin American political systems."[30] The legacy of the "national security" doctrine was entrenched in the region and contributed to state terror. Chilling accounts of government human rights violations can be found in the *Nunca Más* (*Never Again*) report (1984) submitted by Argentina's National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas). The report documented the disappearances of 8,960 people, with the total feared to be at least double that, in addition to tens of thousands imprisoned. In the aftermath of other authoritarian regimes, similar truth commissions were formed, including Uruguay's *Uruguay: Nunca Más* (1989), Chile's *Nunca Más en Chile* (1991), and Guatemala's *Guatemala: Nunca Más* (1998).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of exemplars of different types of Latin American terrorism and violence. Instead of extracting out of the historical context particular tactics, this piece has tried to illustrate how violent movements emerged out of long-standing inequalities and political exclusion and in response to state repression. Violent challengers to

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the state tended to result in intensification of cycles of violence and repression, sometimes even resulting in state terror.

Notes

1 Martha Crenshaw, "Relating Terrorism to Historical Contexts," in *Terrorism in Context*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 4.
2 David C. Rapoport, "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism," *Current History*, no. 650 (2001).
3 Che Guevara, "Message to the Tricontinentals," in Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985).
4 Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, Jr., introduction to *Guerrilla Warfare*, by Che Guevara (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 12.
5 Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 27–8.
6 Beatrice Heuser, "The Cultural Revolution in Counter-Insurgency," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, no. 1 (2007): 155.
7 Howard Handelman, *Mexican Politics: The Dynamics of Change* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 26.
8 Jennifer S. Holmes, *Terrorism and Democratic Stability Revisited* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 90.
9 Andreas E. Feldmann and Maiju Perälä, "Reassessing the Causes of Nongovernmental Terrorism in Latin America," *Latin American Politics & Society* 46, no. 2 (2004): 102.
10 Gustavo Gorriti Ellenbogen, *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Jennifer S. Holmes, Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, and Kevin Curtin, *Guns, Drugs and Development* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).
11 See David Scott Palmer, ed., *The Shining Path of Peru* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).
12 William Ratliff, "Revolutionary Warfare," in *Violence and the Latin American Revolutionaries*, ed. Michael Radu (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), 27.
13 Francisco Leal Buitrago and Andrés Dávila Ladrón de Guevara, *Clientelismo: El sistema politico y su expression regional* (Bogotá, Colombia: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1990).
14 See Aldo Civico "'We are Illegal, but not Illegitimate': Modes of Policing in Medellin, Colombia," *PoLAR* 35, no. 1 (2012): 89. Civico states: "One afternoon in a villa of an upper-class neighborhood in Medellin, Job, one of the main leaders of the Cacique Nutibara, explained to me that the paramilitary 'do not side with the government but are not against the state' [field notes, July 2006]. This was a further illuminating statement. It hinted at the way in which the paramilitaries in Colombia are a criminal organization of the mafia kind. In fact, they are not just a parallel organization, but also one that is working hand-in-hand with the state. Like the Sicilian Mafia, the paramilitaries in Colombia have been at the same time against the state and within the state; both a parallel system and a strategic ally; and a vital part of the *intreccio* to reterritorialize, which is the ultimate goal of policing."
15 Human Rights Watch, "The 'Sixth Division': Military–paramilitary Ties and U.S. Policy in Colombia," October 4, 2001.
16 See Jennifer S. Holmes and Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, "Violence and the State: Lessons from Colombia," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 25, no. 2 (2014): 372–403.
17 Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 76–8.
18 Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 27.
19 Ratliff, "Revolutionary Warfare," 28.
20 Carlos Marighella, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* (Montreal: Abraham Guillen Press, 1969). Quoted material is on 4, 39, 41. See Chapter 20 by Hanno Balz in this volume for a discussion of the influence of Marighella, the Tupamaros, and the urban guerrilla movement on Western European armed groups in the 1970s and 1980s.
21 Ibid., 4, 36.
22 Arturo Porzencanski, *Uruguay's Tupamaros* (New York: Praeger, 1973), 41.
23 Ibid., 40.

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24 Arturo Alape, *La Paz, la violencia: Testigos de excepción* (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 1985), 324.
25 Simon Romero, "After Years in Solitary, an Austere Life as Uruguay's President," *New York Times*, January 3, 2014.
26 Mitchell Seligson, "Agrarian Inequality and the Theory of Peasant Rebellion," *Latin American Research Review* 31, no. 2 (1996): 154.
27 J. Samuel Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 132–2.
28 For more on state terror and its relationship with various forms of sub-state violence, see Chapters 7, 11, and 24 by Martin A. Miller, Paul M. Hagenloh, and Roger Griffin, respectively, in this volume.
29 Jennifer S. Holmes, "Political Violence and Regime Change in Argentina: 1965–1976," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13, no. 1 (2001): 134–54.
30 George Lopez, "The National Security Ideology as an Impetus to State Terror," in *Government Violence and Repression: An Agenda for Research*, ed. Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 75.

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