

POPULATION GROWTH IN LATIN AMERICA AND U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

Edited by
John Saunders

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POPULATION GROWTH IN
LATIN AMERICA AND
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Edited by

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Foreword

The Center for International Security and Strategic Studies (CISS) at Mississippi State University proudly presents this volume's findings on the critical and timely issues of *Population Growth in Latin America and U.S. National Security*.

The starting point of this project was the gloomy demographic projection that between 1981 and 2001, if present growth rates continue, the population of the Western Hemisphere will grow by 42%. This increase, translated into numbers, will be close to 263 million persons, of which 38 million will be added to North America (the United States and Canada) and the balance, 225 million, will be added to the Caribbean and Middle and South America. In other words, the population of North America will increase only 15%, but the population of the Caribbean and Middle and South America will grow by 61%. Thus, by the year 2001, North Americans will be outnumbered by 2 to 1 in this hemisphere.

This population surge in the Western Hemisphere would have serious political, economic, social, and strategic implications for the United States. Neither the Caribbean nor Middle and South American industries or local agriculture would be able to absorb the surplus manpower. Meanwhile, agricultural production would not meet demands, assuming the present model of economic superstructure remains constant. Increasing social tensions and economic inequalities in the hemisphere would offer the Soviet Union an opportunity to drive a political wedge between Latin America and the United States, and the Kremlin and its allies would be expected to establish as many pro-Moscow regimes as possible. Another serious consequence of the population surge in Latin America would be increased emigration (legal and illegal) to the United States and, to a lesser extent, to Canada.

America would face a situation in which immigrants by the millions would need not only social but also cultural emancipation. The evolving situation could be much more difficult for the nation than the emancipation process of blacks in the 1950s and 1960s, since social and cultural balances would be changed radically.

In the light of the developing demographic shift in hemispheric population and its far-reaching impact on the security and economic interests of the United States, the CISS gathered the best demographers and specialists in security affairs available in the United States. The specific issues they addressed included, on the demographic side, the prospect for fertility reduction, labor-force absorption, and food supply, as well as the impact of population growth on the economies of Latin America. The reflecting issues on the security side concentrated on the implications of this demographic transition for political stability, domestic and international conflicts in the region, and the impact of these trends for U.S. security.

The year-long work and consultation of the research group culminated in a nationwide research symposium held at Mississippi State University on February 21–22, 1985. There, the novel combination of demographers and specialists on international security affairs allowed both groups to reap the benefits of intellectual cross-fertilization.

The results of this innovative approach are presented in this volume. Dr. John Van Dyke Saunders, Senior Fellow of the CISS and professor of sociology, led the research work as project director with great competence. He carefully edited and blended the 12 manuscripts. His scholarly expertise, leadership, and organizational ability ensured the success of this undertaking. The contributing scholars helped immensely by completing their manuscripts on time and without compromising the highest scholarly standards. The project staff of the CISS also assisted in achieving professional excellence. The Tinker Foundation and the National Strategy Information Center provided generous financial support to the CISS, which made this important study possible. Last but not least, special recognition should be made of Allen & Unwin for publishing this volume and distributing it across the Atlantic and the Pacific from their facilities in London, Boston, and Sydney.

It is hoped that the findings of our research will benefit governments and laymen alike, as well as corporations interested in foreign trade, investment, and other economic activities in the Caribbean and in Middle and South America and nongovernmental organizations active in the region, and that they will find useful data and ideas in this book. We also hope our work will help to lay the foundation for intrahemispheric debate and planning for the tasks and problems that lie ahead of us.

JANOS RADVANYI
Director, CISS

Preface

With one exception, Latin America is the world region with the most rapidly growing population. A comparison of annual rates of natural increase (the excess of births over deaths) is instructive. Europe's population is expanding at a rate of .3% a year. That of North America (the United States and Canada) by .7% annually. The population of the USSR enlarges by 1% every 12 months and that of Asia by 1.8%. The comparable rate for Latin America is 2.3%, which is exceeded only by Africa, whose population is added to by 2.9% each year. The Latin American rate of 2.3% implies a doubling of the population in 30 years, whereas the rate in the United States of .7% implies a doubling in 100 years.

During the next 20 years, between 1985 and 2005, if present rates continue, the population of the Western Hemisphere will increase by 42% (Table 1). This increase, translated into numbers of persons, will be on the order of 284 million, substantially more than the present population of the United States. The number of inhabitants of the United States will grow, during this period, by only 15%; that of the Caribbean and Middle and South America will increase by 60%.

The most rapid increase is anticipated in Middle America, whose population will expand from 105 to 179 million in the next two decades, a 70% increase. Mexico, the most populous country in the region, will grow to encompass 133 million inhabitants by the year 2005. The population of South America, now barely larger than that of the northern portion of the hemisphere, will exceed the latter by 121 million in 2005. Brazil, the second-largest nation in the hemisphere in population and in territory, will be home for more than 200 million persons. It is probable that by 2005 North

TABLE 1
Estimated Population of the Americas, 1985, and Projection to the Year 2005

<i>Geographical Area</i>	1985		2005		<i>Percent Change 1985–2005</i>
	<i>N (millions)</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N (millions)</i>	<i>%</i>	
The Americas	670	100	952	100	42
<i>North America</i>	264	39	304	32	15
United States	240	36	275	29	15
Canada	25	4	30	3	20
<i>Caribbean, Middle and South America</i>	406	61	648	68	60
Caribbean	31	5	44	5	42
Middle America	105	16	179	19	70
(Mexico)	(80)	(12)	(133)	(14)	(66)
South America	271	40	425	45	57
(Brazil)	(138)	(21)	(218)	(23)	(58)

Source: Compiled and computed from data in Population Reference Bureau (1985).

Americans will be outnumbered by more than 2 to 1 in this hemisphere. These dramatically different rates of population growth herald severe population pressures, even though growth rates may experience some decline.

The future growth of the population of Latin America cannot help but have political, economic, social, strategic, and other implications for the United States. The pace of economic development, for which rapid population growth is an impediment, is unlikely to create enough jobs to absorb a doubling of the size of the labor force in 20 years and effect a reduction of the unacceptably high rates of unemployment that prevail in many countries and are already causing widespread discontent. Young persons, many of whom will be migrants from rural areas, will flock to large cities to join others of their kind, augmenting the pool of the unemployed. They will face the options of engaging in illegal activities, among which must be counted terrorism and attempting to migrate illegally to a country that offers better economic opportunities. The growth of social and economic inequality and of social tensions to which rapid population growth will contribute in the absence of compensatory economic development will offer the Soviet Union new opportunities to drive a wedge between Latin America and the United States. Directly or through surrogates, the Soviets, through assistance to local radical insurgencies, will attempt to establish as many pro-Moscow regimes as possible. Recent history offers examples. If the choice is to migrate in search of employment, the United States will be the objective of the greatest number, most of whom will seek to enter illegally. The pressure now faced by the United States from illegal entrants along its southern border will be

greatly magnified, leading to the adoption of draconian measures to stop the flow. These measures, which will be contrary to U.S. national ideals, will tend to create within the United States an underclass of less than equal residents and citizens, thus sowing new seeds of social discontent.

Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico are becoming increasingly important in international affairs. Argentina and Brazil have the resource base to build nuclear weapons. Mexico lacks only the capital to acquire it. Brazil may well become a major power in the next century, and crucial to the national interest of the United States. The existence of friendly governments in these countries, particularly in Brazil, will be of the utmost importance. Strategic natural resources, such as oil in Venezuela and Mexico and chromium and iron in Brazil, provide opportunities for expanded cooperation with the United States. Political instability caused, albeit indirectly, by rapid population growth could interrupt the flow of strategic materials from south to north and favor the establishment of Marxist regimes.

In the pages that follow, essays are presented that touch on these and other possible or probable consequences of rapid population growth in Latin America for the national interest and national security of the United States.

J.S.



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Professor Wiarda has been the editor of the journal *Polity* and served previously as Director of the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Massachusetts. He has served as a consultant and adviser to a variety of private foundations, business firms, and agencies of the U.S. government. He was a lead consultant to the National Bipartisan (Kissinger) Commission on Central America. He is a member of several honoraries and has held grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, Fulbright Program, Mershon Center, Social Science Research Council, American Philosophical Society, National Endowment for the Humanities, and National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Wiarda has published extensively on Latin America, southern Europe, the Third World, and U.S. foreign policy. His most recent books include *New Directions in Comparative Politics; In Search of Policy: The United States and Latin America; Rift and Change in Latin America; Human Rights and U.S. Human Rights Policy; The Dominican Republic; A Caribbean Crucible; The State, Organized Labor, and the Changing Industrial Relations System of Southern Europe; Corporatism and National Development in Latin America; The Brazilian Catholic Labor Movement; Latin American Politics and Development; The Continuing Struggle for Democracy in Latin America; and Corporatism and Development: The Portuguese Experience.* Professor

Wiarda has lectured extensively at leading universities in the United States, Latin America, and Europe; his writings have stimulated some fundamental reexaminations of the way we interpret Latin American politics and development.



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INTRODUCTION



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Population Growth, Population Pressure, and Political Stability in Latin America

JOHN W. DeWITT

The three aspects of Latin American population growth that I will discuss in the context of U.S. national security are

- Population growth in Mexico: its impact on immigration to the United States and its effect on Mexico's political stability
- Population pressures causing border tensions between neighboring states
- The effect of rural–urban migration on the political stability of Latin American nations

The goal of U.S. national security policy in Latin American is to (a) prevent intervention in the hemisphere by hostile powers; and (b) develop and maintain within the hemisphere a community of free, democratic, and independent nations. Population growth directly threatens the second goal and indirectly threatens the first.

POPULATION GROWTH IN MEXICO

I began my U.S. Foreign Service career as a visa officer at the Consulate General in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. The *bracero* program, one of a long series of programs, formal and informal, to bring Mexican laborers to the United States, was being phased out. Under this program, which lasted from 1942 to 1964, more than 4 million temporary agricultural workers came to the United States. The program lasted so long, and so many people participated in it, that it became institutionalized as a strategy of income maintenance in thousands of Mexican towns and villages.