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DETERRENCE BARGAINING IN THE
ECUADOR-PERU ENDURING RIVALRY:
DESIGNING STRATEGIES AROUND MILITARY WEAKNESS

DAVID R. MARES

DETERRENCE IN A context of conventional weapons of limited destructiveness is an especially dynamic process. Deterrence strategies range from threats to sanction to positive inducements to undertake specific behavior. The resources used can be political, diplomatic, economic and military, although analysts usually focus on the latter.¹ None of these resources remains static for long. Technological shifts may turn today's military capabilities into dangerously obsolete hardware and tactics in the face of newer weapons systems and revised military doctrines. The willingness of societies and governments to suffer costs, and the value they place on inducements offered, may also change over time. Even the economic value of specific resources may change, sometimes very quickly, as in the case of oil in 1973 and again in 1982.²

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1. Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theory," *World Politics* 42, no. 4 (April 1990): 469-75.

2. Oil prices tripled in 1973, leading many analysts to wonder whether strategic advantage had shifted from being an industrialized economy to being the supplier of energy to an industrialized economy. Within a decade, however, oil prices collapsed and those who bet heavily on the shift (for example, Mexico and Nigeria) suffered dramatically.

The dynamism inherent in deterrent situations raises questions concerning the analytical and practical utility of the concept of deterrence.³ The question is not whether the parsimonious and deductive theory of deterrence is sufficient to explain why a state chooses to initiate a challenge, but whether rational deterrence theory (RDT) is a necessary part of the explanation, and, if so, how to integrate it with other factors.⁴ This article argues that actors do think in terms of costs and benefits, but that their calculations are fundamentally affected not only by domestic politics, but also by the nonmilitary opportunities they have to continue questioning the status quo. Unlike critics of deterrence, I find the rationality assumption useful for analysis, but find rational deterrence theory too focused on the military aspects of deterrence calculations to provide a compelling argument for why deterrence success varies. Inclusion of nonmilitary aspects improves our understanding of the rationality of deterrence calculations.

This article examines an enduring rivalry for evaluating the impact of interest, capability, reputation, and signaling on deterrence success and failures. Enduring rivalries consist of disputes which are repetitive, severe, durable, and continuous (at least five militarized disputes within a twenty-five-year period with no more than ten years between incidents, unless the issue in dispute remained the same). The duration of the conflict dyad facilitates analysis of deterrence by holding some factors constant (for example, national identity, region, geography) yet providing variation on the occurrence of a militarized dispute.⁵

Analysis of the Ecuador-Peru enduring rivalry demonstrates the value of distinguishing between general and immediate deterrence.⁶ My findings also

3. For a comprehensive review of the general debate between rational deterrence theorists and their critics, see Elli Lieberman, "What Makes Deterrence Work?" *Security Studies* 4, no. 4 (summer 1995): 833-92.

4. Christopher H. Achen and Duncan Snidal, probably the most strident defenders of the theoretical power of RDT, argue that its deductive power surpasses all present alternatives and therefore is useful even if it is not more than a "ceteris paribus explanation, accounting for an aspect of many cases, but not fully for any, and perhaps not at all for some." "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," *World Politics* 41, no. 2 (January 1989): 157-59, quote is from a rhetorical question on p. 158; Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "General Deterrence Between Enduring Rivals," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 1 (March 1993): 61-72, incorporate its insights in a more complex probit analysis.

5. Lieberman, "What Makes Deterrence Work?" His definition is taken from Zeev Maoz and Ben D. Mor, "The Strategic Structure of Enduring International Rivalries" (paper presented at the Workshop on Processes of Enduring Rivalries, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, May 1993, 3-4).

6. General deterrence characterizes a situation in which an actor dissuades an unhappy actor from contesting the status quo, while immediate deterrence refers to a situation in which the challenger contemplates undertaking a specific action to initiate the challenge. Extended deterrence refers to a third party's ability to dissuade actor A from challenging the

agree with Lieberman's that evaluations of intrinsic interests and military capability were generally quite reasonable despite domestic pressures political leaders faced. These factors, along with signaling, determined the success and failure of immediate military deterrence while reputation was less important. In contrast to Lieberman, I found that neither military capability nor prior deterrence episodes can explain the failure of general deterrence, whether one focuses on military, economic or diplomatic resources.

The Peruvian-Ecuadorian enduring rivalry also gives us insight into whether certain types of domestic institutions make deterrence more credible. For analysts who believe in deterrence, credibility of the threat and promise are a key determinant of success and failure. Many international relations theorists and policymakers are currently arguing that democratic states make commitments which are more credible than those made by nondemocratic regimes.⁷ Examining the enduring rivalry over both democratic and nondemocratic periods provides no support for this claim. This rivalry also contests the democratic-peace argument, demonstrating that democratic states are willing to use military force against other democracies if neither is willing to yield.

This article is organized into five sections and a conclusion. In the first section I outline the deterrence debate and how I approach it conceptually. A second section lays out my argument and justifies the case selection. The third section presents a brief history of the Ecuador-Peru enduring rivalry. An investigation of the failure of general deterrence after the 1941 war constitutes the fourth section. The fifth section analyzes the failures of Peru's immediate deterrence in the latest round of militarized disputes between the two countries. The implications for the rational deterrence theory debate are addressed in the conclusion.

ORGANIZING CONCEPTS

“IN ITS MOST GENERAL form, deterrence is simply the persuasion of one's opponent that the costs and/or risks of a given course of action he

status with actor B. The Ecuador-Peru enduring rivalry deals only with general and immediate deterrence.

7. James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (September 1994): 577-92; for a distinction among democratic states see Peter F. Cowhey, "Domestic Institutions and the Credibility of International Commitments: Japan and the United States," *International Organization* 47, no. 2 (spring 1993): 299-326.

might take outweigh its benefits.”⁸ This formulation implies that a status quo exists, along with a defender and a challenger of it. The deterrer has available to him the possibility of influencing both costs and benefits of an action. Costs are influenced through threats and benefits via rewards tied to acceptance of the status quo. Rational deterrence theory conceptualizes the relationship as a simple one: if the costs of the action outweigh its benefits, the potential challenger will not act; if he does, the benefits must have outweighed the costs.

This conceptualization of rational deterrence leads some RDT analysts to claim that the theory is about outcomes, not decision-making processes, and thus whether policymakers actually calculate costs and benefits is irrelevant to the theory.⁹ Other deterrence analysts believe that understanding why and how deterrence works or fails, and not just predicting whether force is used, constitutes the best test of the utility of rational deterrence theory.¹⁰ Critics of deterrence theory vary. Some believe that the theory’s focus on interests, capability, reputation, and credible signaling ignores important factors which affect the calculations of costs and benefits.¹¹ Others believe that domestic political and individual cognitive factors distort the calculations enough so that one cannot systematically claim that the deterrer has significant influence over the costs and benefits of a contemplated action, and hence cannot “deter.”¹²

I agree that RDT is best defended by demonstrating that the costs and benefits of a challenge to the status quo were calculated in a manner consistent with the available and relevant information concerning the deterrer. If domestic politics matters, it is because it either leads to a distorted calculation of the available evidence (in which case RDT is misleading) or because it provides other information which supplements rather than distorts the deterrer’s position (in which case RDT as usually utilized is incomplete).

8. Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 11.

9. Achen and Snidal, “Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies,” 160.

10. Lieberman’s response to critics of RDT is organized around the question of whether leaders, when faced with domestic political pressure, nevertheless calculate the costs and benefits of military action in a rational fashion. His case analysis provides support for the claim that Nasser and Sadat calculated rationally, given their interests and the available information.

11. Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, “Deterrence and Foreign Policy,” *World Politics* 42, no. 3 (April 1990): 173–76; Robert Jervis, “Rational Deterrence: Theory and Evidence,” *World Politics* 42, no. 3 (April 1990): 183–93.

12. Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, “Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter,” *World Politics* 42, no. 3 (April 1990): 208–23.

A second conceptual issue which arises in the deterrence literature concerns the contemplated action to be deterred. Huth and Russett distinguish among "classes" of deterrence, dependent upon whether the challenger and defender utilize military or nonmilitary threats. Tests of distinct classes of deterrence are necessary because a policy action utilized in one class may not work in another.¹³ I disagree with this approach for two reasons. First, when states, particularly smaller states, threaten, they use both military and nonmilitary strategies. A mixture of policies is especially likely when utilizing positive inducements to deter: it would be strange for one adversary to give the other military rewards for not challenging the status quo. Huth and Russett seem to agree, given that they limit their analysis to deterrence via threats, although they noted earlier in the same paper that the theory of deterrence logically includes positive inducements as a means of affecting the deterrence calculation of the challenger. In addition, given the mixed nature of threats and rewards in a deterrence situation,¹⁴ separating military and nonmilitary threats and rewards into distinct deterrence classes makes it difficult to know which deterrence class was responsible for the failure or success which occurred. The question of whether particular policies deter or not should be left for empirical evaluation. When evaluating deterrence success or failure "challenge to the status quo" constitutes the dependent variable, not a particular strategy utilized to implement the challenge.

A third conceptual issue concerns military deterrence itself. Most deterrence analysts focus on large-scale violence, either war (defined as 1,000 battlefield deaths) or a bloody militarized dispute (at least 200 deaths).¹⁵ Deterrence is successful if such a level of violence is not reached or contemplated by the initiator, even if the status quo is altered by subsequent negotiations or pressure from a third party. I have two objections to limiting deterrence analyses to these cases. First, the concept of military deterrence is not inherently limited to large-scale violence. The point of deterrence bargaining is to convince a potential challenger that it is not in his own interest to challenge. A low level of military threat may be costly enough to convince an actor to refrain from the contemplated action. It is the nature of his vulnerabilities (which may lie in the military or nonmilitary

13. Huth and Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theories," 473.

14. After the Second World War the United States held out economic carrots (for example, participation in the European reconstruction plan) at the same time as it was solidifying the military alliances which would contain the Soviet Union. U.S. support for NATO during the days of détente represents another instance of a mixed deterrence strategy.

15. Achen and Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory," 156; Huth and Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theory," 489-90.

arena) and the expected benefits which matter.¹⁶ The *logic* of calculation, which is the key element in RDT even for analysts who believe the *process* of calculation irrelevant, is the same in all military deterrence situations.

The link between nonmilitary and military threats leads to my second objection to excluding low-level military challenges from analyses of deterrence. Low-level military force may affect nonmilitary factors (third party mediation, capital flight, etc.), which can facilitate challenging the status quo. The status quo country needs to deter those actions. As analysts interested in when and how countries challenge the status quo, if the potential linkage is important enough for a country to consider it, we should think about it also. Rather than limit ourselves to large-scale conflict when discussing the military aspects of deterrence, we should recognize a range of possible military challenges from those involving high-risk options to limited probes and controlled-pressure strategies to bring about change.¹⁷

The purpose of deterrence is to dissuade the challenger from undertaking an action to change the status quo, not to avoid a change in the status quo by a particular method. In a study of a rivalry in which border disagreements occur in difficult to demarcate terrain, as in the Ecuador-Peru Amazonian region, it makes sense to define deterrence as successful when the potential challenger is unhappy with the status quo but accepts it diplomatically, and refrains from infringing upon the border with officially sanctioned and targeted activities in the region. Both sides will have patrols in the general area to insure that the other does not establish effective control. The close proximity of armed patrols in difficult terrain will inevitably produce sporadic exchanges of gunfire. These minor clashes do not represent a failure of deterrence, but the establishment of new outposts in disputed territory or the authorized attack on an existing outpost does.

THE ARGUMENT AND AND CASE SELECTION

RATIONAL DETERRENCE THEORY predicts success if interest, capability, reputation and signaling credibly communicate the likelihood of a costly adventure if the contemplated action is undertaken. Communication should not be distorted by elements beyond the control of the defender (such as domestic politics in the potential initiator or international factors

16. Huth and Russett, themselves guilty of focusing on the military side, point out that exclusion of the nonmilitary aspects of deterrence should be seen as representing an "underdeveloped component" of deterrence theory. "Testing Deterrence Theory," 471.

17. George and Smoke, "Deterrence and Foreign Policy"

outside of the dyad). If an RDT model is sufficient, these other factors will not affect the cost-benefit calculations. If rational deterrence is part of a more complete model of conflict initiation, these domestic and international factors will contribute to the costs and benefits of a contemplated action to change the status quo, and be incorporated into the deterrence calculations of the actors. If the entire notion of rational deterrence calculations is erroneous, consistent miscalculations produced by domestic and international factors beyond the control of the would-be deterrer will result.

I am particularly interested in assessing the impact of democratic institutions on the success or failure of deterrence. Theoretical and practical reasons drive this interest. Critics of rational deterrence theory argue that domestic political calculations will override the policy responses suggested by rational calculations; since democratic institutions allow for more societal input into government policy, they should increase the impact of domestic calculations in deterrence.¹⁸ Many politicians and diplomats are currently making policy under the assumption that democracy produces international peace without regard to context.

Examining deterrence success and failure in an enduring rivalry which also passes through democratic phases (singularly as well as at the same time) over extended periods (the current democratic episodes in Ecuador and Peru extend over fifteen years), may be an ideal setting to see if and how democratic institutions affect deterrence calculations of both the defender and challenger. There are reasons to believe that democratic institutions enhance deterrence. If a leader of a democratic country misreads the deterrence signals coming from a democratic rival but the citizenry are opposed to fighting other democracies, the leader should refrain from initiating action.¹⁹ Democratic deterrers who publicly communicate a deterrence intention should be more credible than nondemocratic deterrers.²⁰

There are conditions under which democratic institutions could decrease deterrence stability. Democratic adversaries should be less deterrable as challengers once they have taken a public stand to challenge the status quo.²¹ Democracy may encourage conflict, even among democracies, more

18. Even analysts who argue that democracies do not fight each other recognize that they can be adversaries and engage in militarized interstate disputes (herein, MIDs). John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (fall 1994): 87-125; Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett, "Normative and Structural Causes of Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (September 1993): 624-38.

19. See the discussion concerning "illiberal" leaders in a democracy in Owen, "How Liberalism Produces the Democratic Peace," 98-101.

20. James Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences."

21. This possibility follows logically from Fearon's analysis.

subtly. Democracy requires civilian control over the military.²² Professionalization of the armed forces (implying among other things, force modernization and the rejection of internal security missions), facilitates, though does not guarantee, civilian control.²³ Professionalization, however, may increase tension in enduring rivalries since the military and its civilian allies will legitimate the military by demonstrating its importance for defending against external threats. These demonstrations for domestic reasons undermine the stability of deterrence, by raising the requirements for credible deterrence (since professional militaries are more efficient, they cannot be defeated so easily, therefore the defender's military capabilities also have to rise) and by making cost calculations more dependent on domestic issues than on the deterrer's actions. (Note that this is not a diversionary war argument, but rather the unintended consequence of professionalization in the context of an enduring rivalry.)

In summary, to explain deterrence success and failure it is necessary to ascertain how and what leaders calculate when confronting a deterrence situation. Do challengers and defenders focus only on interest, capability, reputation and signaling in determining the costs and benefits of contesting or defending the status quo? Or do domestic factors fundamentally affect those calculations? If so, do democratic institutions have particular effects on deterrence stability?

Utilizing a Latin American enduring rivalry to evaluate rational deterrence theory is particularly appropriate. Latin America experienced numerous enduring rivalries and adopted many deterrence strategies. Territorial antagonisms date from independence in the early nineteenth century. Twentieth-century disputes became militarized over 200 times in Latin America, so although the region may be more peaceful than some others, we have significant variation in the use of force to test arguments concerning the success or failure of deterrence.²⁴ There are instances of clear deter-

22. Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

23. Strong civilian institutions are also required. Samuel P. Huntington, "Patterns of Violence in World Politics," in *Changing Patterns of Military Politics*, ed. Samuel P. Huntington (New York: Free Press, 1962), 19–22; Alfred Stepan, *The Military in Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 59–62; and Stepan, "The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion," in *Authoritarian Brazil*, ed. Alfred Stepan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 47–53.

24. MID data set. The original is discussed in Charles S. Gochman and Zeev Maoz, "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816–1976," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 28, no. 4 (December 1984): 605–12. A revised version extending to 1993 is available, though difficult to get. These disputes range from threatening to use force, through displaying force, to actual use of force, including war. The argument for Latin America's relative peace clearly does not apply to militarized interstate disputes, as Gochman and Maoz illustrate on pp. 606–13. Whether the argument applies to wars depends on what period one utilizes, whether one accepts the Cor-

rence success (for example, Chile against Argentina in the 1978 Beagle dispute) and failure (Britain and the United States v. Argentina during the 1982 Malvinas/Falklands crisis).

In addition, if domestic politics distorts rational deterrence calculations anywhere, it should occur here. The dramatic degree of social stratification and economic underdevelopment make all governments in the region, even democratic ones, subject to important domestic protests. Latin American militaries also initially professionalized during periods of intense regional tension (South America at the beginning of the twentieth century, Central America in the 1960s and 1970s) and incorporated geopolitical and balance of power doctrines into their training. Their great influence in government (many times directly controlling them) ensured that defense policy was oriented around at least a rudimentary concept of deterrence (they often failed to appreciate the importance of the credibility issue.)²⁵

Ecuador-Peru constitutes an interesting enduring rivalry for analyzing deterrence. Since Peru lost a war for the second time with Chile in 1884, it has engaged with Ecuador in thirty-four MIDs, including thirteen in the last eighteen years, over sovereignty in the Amazon. The two nations experienced long periods of military dictatorship and spells of democratic government. They have currently been democratic for almost two decades (Ecuador since 1979, Peru since 1980, with a brief exception in 1992). Their economies are crisis-ridden. General power disparities clearly favor Peru and both sides repeatedly demonstrated that the balance of interests is equal. Peru consistently demonstrated its resolve to control the territory, including escalating to war in 1941 and 1995.

Despite Peruvian capability and will Ecuador continues to contest Peruvian claims in the Amazon. Ecuador forewent diplomatic solutions offering more territory than it subsequently lost in military battle. Two decades after signing the 1941 peace treaty Ecuador rejected it despite international opprobrium. Fourteen MIDs occurred while both countries were democratic, as did Ecuador's nullification of the peace treaty. Twenty-one MIDs occurred after Ecuador lost the 1941 war, in stark contrast to the termination of the Colombian-Peruvian enduring rivalry once Peru lost its war in 1934. There have also been short-term deterrence successes, in both the general and immediate context.

relates of War figure of 1,000 battle-related deaths as the cutoff, and whose figures on the death toll one accepts. In any case, the relative question is irrelevant to the analysis in this paper.

25. Frederick M. Nunn, *Yesterday's Soldiers: European Military Professionalism in South America, 1890-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Alain Rouquie, *The Military and the State in Latin America*, trans. Paul E. Sigmund (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

This wealth of experience makes in-depth study of Ecuadorian reactions to Peruvian deterrence efforts useful for evaluating the deterrence debate.

AN ENDURING RIVALRY: ECUADOR-PERU 1829–1995

SPAIN'S RELATIONSHIP with her American colonies was complex.²⁶ Requirements for administering religious "guidance," military defense and general public policy produced overlapping jurisdictions. Upon independence states selected the particular colonial administrative divisions which included the most territory. Initially extensive territory was at stake, generating the great wars of the nineteenth century. These wars ended but disputes concerning the precise demarcation of boundaries continued. The Ecuador-Peru enduring rivalry developed within this context.

The Amazon river offers access to the potentially rich Amazon basin, and a potential trade route to the Atlantic for South American countries on the Pacific coast. In the century and a half since independence, Ecuador and Peru have repeatedly skirmished and perennially renegotiated "final settlements" to the disputed territory. Tensions dramatically escalated in 1941, when Peruvian troops, tanks and planes swept across the disputed regions, penetrating deep into Ecuador itself.²⁷ Ecuador confronted a United States and Latin America preoccupied with the war in Europe and the Pacific. Peru threatened to occupy the territory until Ecuador recognized Peruvian claims in the Amazon. Bowing to pressure for inter-American solidarity, Ecuador accepted the Rio Protocol in January 1942. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States became guarantors of the treaty. The Protocol denied Ecuador sovereign access to the Amazon River (the 1910 Spanish arbitration proposed giving it sovereign access via the Marañon River, but Ecuador rejected the settlement; the Protocol only provided Ecuador with the right to transit rivers).

26. This brief historical summary is based upon Julio Tobar Donoso and Alfredo Luna Tobar, *Derecho Territorial Ecuatoriana*, 4th ed. (Quito: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1994); Gustavo Pons Muzzo, *Estudio Histórico sobre el Protocolo de Rio de Janeiro* (Lima: n.p., 1994); Carlos E. Scheggia Flores, *Origen del Pueblo Ecuatoriano y Sus Infundadas Pretensiones Amazónicas* (Lima: Talleres de Línea, 1992); Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Hacia la Solución del Problema Territorial con el Perú: Libro Blanco* (Quito: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1992); Bryce Wood, *The United States and Latin American Wars, 1932–42* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966).

27. Although Peruvian president Manuel Prado was opposed to a war with Ecuador, the commander of the northern army insisted upon attacking the Ecuadorian forces. Geoffrey Bertram, "Peru 1930–60," in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethel, 9 vols., vol. 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 423.

The territorial dispute between Ecuador and Peru appeared settled. The government which signed the Protocol, the military leaders which overthrew it in 1944 and the new democratic government of President José María Velasco Ibarra all accepted the Protocol.²⁸ Border demarcation proceeded without serious controversies, with Brazilian arbitration resolving a number of issues in 1944, until 95 percent of the area had been resolved.

In 1947 a seventy-eight kilometer section to be divided by the *divortium aquarum* between the Zamora and Santiago rivers, proved problematic. The Cenepa river was discovered to flow through the expected *divortium aquarum*, making demarcation by the letter of the Protocol impossible. Ecuador seized the opportunity to reopen the Amazon issue, arguing²⁹ initially that the treaty was inapplicable, and by 1960 that it was null and void. Ecuador failed, however, to garner international support for its position.

Despite the unsettled issue, by the 1960s Ecuador joined Peru as allies in general foreign policy. The Andean Pact, created in 1969, seemed an ideal forum in which to substitute concerns for territorial divisions with economic integration. Relations between the two countries improved markedly, and trade expanded.³⁰ From 1970 to 1975 Ecuador and Peru signed a number of economic cooperation agreements. Economic cooperation accelerated after 1985. President Alberto Fujimori became the first Peruvian president to travel to Ecuador, and he offered various economic development proposals, as well as the possibility of a free port for Ecuador on the Peruvian Amazon.³¹

Ecuador, however, entertained the idea of economic cooperation without letting the topic affect its territorial claims.³² It was not just the political elite who could separate economic and territorial sovereignty issues. A public opinion poll conducted before the 1995 war demonstrated that Ecuadori-

28. Tobar Donoso and Luna Tobar, *Derecho Territorial Ecuatoriana*, 212-26; 234-35. With hindsight the authors claim that Ecuador expected the guarantors to find some way to compensate Ecuador, but since the Protocol did not foresee anything at issue other than border demarcation this appears to be post hoc justification for the position taken by Ecuador after the Zamora-Santiago problem arose.

29. *Análisis Semanal* (Quito) 25, no. 6, 10 February 1995, 11-12 notes that Ecuadorian leaders have never specified where access to the Amazon would occur, but that access via the Marañón River in the Zamora-Santiago region would provide the country with only the appearance of an Amazonian country since the Marañón is not navigable to the Amazon in that sector. See also Fernando Bustamante, "Ecuador: Putting an End to Ghosts of the Past?" *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 34, no. 4 (winter 1992/93): 205-13.

30. William P. Avery, "Origins and Consequences of the Border Dispute between Ecuador and Peru" *Journal of Inter-American Economic Affairs*, 38, no. 1 (summer 1984): 74.

31. Scheggia Flores, *Origen del Pueblo Ecuatoriano*, 71-73.

32. Luis Carrera de la Torre, *El Proyecto Binacional Puyango Tumbes* (Quito: AFESE, 1990): 73-111.

ans could appreciate the need for greater economic relations with Peru, but still distrusted them (49 percent of respondents believed Ecuador to be an "enemy" country and only 39 percent perceived it as friendly; see Table 1).

Table 1

ECUADORIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS RELATIONS WITH PERU, NOVEMBER 1992

1. Some people say that Peruvians and Ecuadorians are very similar people? Others say that there is a great difference between a Peruvian and an Ecuadorian. With whom are you more in agreement?	34% very similar; 60% great difference
2. Do you believe that it would be convenient to open commerce between Ecuador and Peru, completely, as was done with Colombia?	55% yes; 39% no
3. Do you believe that a solution to the border problem could contribute to the economic development of both countries?	79% yes; 15% no
4. Do you see Peru as a friendly country or an enemy?	39% friendly; 49% enemy

Source: Jaime Durán Barga, "Actitud de los Ecuatorianos Frente al Perú: Estudio de Opinión Pública" in *Ecuador y Perú: vecinos distantes* (Quito: Corporación de Estudios para el Desarrollo, 1993), 171-202.

Peru also refused to let economic cooperation affect its position on Amazonian sovereignty. Although the Andean Pact began to lose momentum in 1976 (partly because the lesser developed Ecuador and Bolivia did not receive the hoped for benefits), Peru rejected Ecuador's contention that progress on the border could provide the impetus for renewed progress among Pact members.³³ Brazil's initiative for Amazonian cooperation and development seemed to offer Ecuador an opportunity to increase its *de facto* presence in the Amazon. But Peru short circuited this effort in the final Treaty signed in 1978.³⁴

International diplomacy and economic cooperation did little to resolve Ecuador's Amazon problem. This failure led to a renewal of the latest

33. Avery, "Origins and Consequences," 69.

34. Stephen M. Gorman, "Geopolitics and Peruvian Foreign Policy" *Inter-American Economic Affairs* 36, no. 2: 71; 83-84.

phase of militarized clashes in 1977, just as democracy was returning to both countries (see Table 2). Two of these clashes were major. In 1981 up to 200 people died in the confrontation and Peru threatened to invade Ecuador in a repetition of 1941. Ecuador had to appeal to the guarantors of a treaty it did not recognize by the euphemism of "the four friendly countries" to halt the fighting and reportedly paid reparations to Peru. In 1995 reliable unofficial estimates put the dead at over 1,000 during 34 days of fighting. This time Ecuador was prepared and withstood the localized Peruvian assaults to their forward position. To avoid escalation, however, Ecuador's president Sixto Durán Ballén seemingly abandoned the nullification thesis³⁵ and publicly asked for the guarantors' mediation.

The guarantors brokered a cease-fire, separated the two military forces, and called for negotiations. Talks have been hindered by Ecuadorian domestic politics. Durán Ballén is in the last few months of his term and facing serious domestic opposition because of alleged corruption in his cabinet and a severe economic crisis. (A new president took office on 10 August 1996). Interviews with Peruvian and Ecuadorian analysts suggest that the Fujimori government perceives that there is no one with whom to negotiate. More importantly, no major social forces in Ecuadorian society have advocated accepting less than sovereign access to the Amazon. As a result, the dispute remains highly visible. In December 1995 Peru mobilized 6,000 troops on the border in response to Ecuador's purchase of four Kfir fighter bombers from Israel (with U.S. consent). Although military confidence-building measures occurred in the disputed sector during January and February 1996, the Peruvian negotiator arrived in Quito with copies of his book supporting Peru's interpretation of the 1947 negotiations.³⁶

This brief historical summary of the Ecuador-Peru enduring rivalry allows us to focus on two questions. What are the relevant deterrence moments after the 1941 war? What explains why and when deterrence works and fails?

35. The president's wording was ambiguous and he has never clarified it. The majority of people polled in Ecuador's two major cities believed that he did not accept the Protocol. Among respondents with graduate school level of education, the figure is even higher. Poll of 6 January 1996 in Quito and Quayaquil by *Informe Confidencial*.

36. *Hoy* (Quito), 29 December 1995; 12 13 14, 23, and 26 February 1996; the planes have U.S.-built engines and therefore their sale to third parties requires U.S. approval.

Table 2

MILITARIZED INTERSTATE CONFLICTS: PERU-ECUADOR 1910-95ⁱ

Year	Year	Year	Year
1910	1932	1950	1977-78
1911	1934-36	1951	1981
1912-13	1937	1953	1983 ⁱⁱⁱ
1914-16	1938	1954	1984
1917-18	1939-42	1955	1985 ^{iv}
	1942	1956 ⁱⁱ	1985 ^{iv}
	1943	1960 ⁱⁱ	1988 ^{iv}
			1989 ^{iv}
			1991
			1993
			1994 ^{iv}
			1995 ^v
			1995 ^{vi}

- i According to the MID data base all the Ecuador-Peru disputes in this period included displays or actual use of force by one of the participants, and not merely verbal threats
- ii Not listed in MID database, but listed in Joseph E. Loftus, *Latin American Defense Expenditures, 1938-1965* (Santa Monica: RAND, January 1968) Memorandum RM-5310-PR/ISA), 27-29.
- iii Scheggia Flores, *Origen del Pueblo Ecuatoriano*, 61, reports a Peruvian patrol was ambushed with one dead.
- iv Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Hacia la Solucion*, reports shots exchanged in January and April 1985, April 1988, and a Peruvian mobilization on the border in 1989.
- v Official reports indicate fewer than 200 casualties, but confidential interviews with U.S., Ecuadorian, and Peruvian military analysts put the number at more than 1,000 to 1,500 on the Peruvian side alone. See text for discussion.
- vi *Hoy*, 29 December 1995.

THE RIO PROTOCOL SETTLEMENT: EXPLAINING GENERAL DETERRENCE
SUCCESS (1943–50) AND FAILURE (1950–PRESENT)

ECUADOR WAS COMPELLED to accept the treaty in 1942. Occupied by Peru and with no international support, Ecuador had no alternative way to secure territory which was unquestionably Ecuadorian.³⁷ Demarcation of 95 percent of the border from 1943 to 1947, however, is not a result of compulsion since Peru withdrew from Ecuador and issued no threats to retake the territory.

Ecuador challenged the Protocol settlement in the diplomatic arena, not on the battlefield. Rejection of the Protocol in 1960 reaffirmed and deepened that strategy. If Peru attempted to deter Ecuador from questioning the status quo after the 1947 stalemate, why did deterrence fail? If RDT is useful, changes in the balance of interest, Peru's reputation, capability and credibility in signaling should account for the failure of Peru to deter. If we find Peru's deterrence credible, however, we need to examine domestic institutions and politics to explain its failure.

Balance of interests. History demonstrated that the Amazon constituted an intrinsic interest for both Ecuador and Peru. Ecuador's evaluation of Peru's interests cannot have undergone any significant change in the period between the 1941 war and 1950, nor in the years prior to the 1960 denunciation of the Protocol. During the 1942 Protocol negotiations, the subsequent demarcation undertaken from 1943 to 1947, and the stalemate years of 1947–50, Peru repeatedly resisted efforts to alter the battlefield results: Ecuador had no sovereign outlet to the Amazon. Peru's rebuilding of the armed forces after Ecuador's 1950 diplomatic move and the subsequent militarized disputes on the border up to 1956, should also have demonstrated to Ecuadorian leaders in 1960 that Amazonian control remained a high priority. Finally, Peru's refusal to attend the 1959 OAS meeting in Quito reaffirmed Peru's interests.

Analyses by Ecuadorian diplomats of the period and present day analysts provide no indication that Ecuadorian officials believed that Peruvian interest in depriving them of "their" Amazonian rights declined up to 1960. Their strategy to pursue international pressure, rather than bilateral nego-

37. See the comments by the Ecuadorian negotiator in Tobar Donoso and Luna Tobar, *Derecho Territorial Ecuatoriana*, 212–22; and by General Jose W. Gallardo R., commander in chief of the army, "Comentario Militar," in Hernan Alonso Altamirano Escobar, *El POR QUE del ávido expansionismo del PERU* (Peru's avid expansionism explained) (Quito: Instituto Geográfico Militar, 1991), 34–35. (Gallardo was defense minister during the 1995 war.)

tations, constitutes clear recognition of the intrinsic nature of Peru's interests in the Amazon.

Reputation. Ecuadorian perceptions of an aggressive Peru, willing to use military force to retain its ill-gotten gains, did not waiver. Peru had a reputation for weakness when confronting a well-prepared adversary: it lost two wars to Chile in the nineteenth century, had recently (1929) agreed to recognize Chilean sovereignty over most of that territory; and failed militarily to wrest the Leticia from Colombia in 1932. Those failures reinforced Peru's reputation in the bilateral relationship. If Peru was weak compared to the others, Ecuador was weak compared to Peru. Thus Ecuadorians, and others, saw the 1941 war as an attempt by Peruvian army's to recover prestige and legitimacy.³⁸ Reputation was context specific and enhanced the Ecuadorian perception that confronting Peru alone would be very costly.

Capabilities. The balance of capabilities was complex. As long as the dispute remained bilateral and the potential for escalation great, the *military balance* favored Peru. Ecuador's democratic government increased its military capabilities in the late 1940s while the authoritarian government of Peru decreased its own through the early 1950s. By 1955 Peru had fewer men under arms than Ecuador and its defense expenditures exceeded those of its smaller neighbor by only 15 million U.S. dollars. If we apply the standard 3:1 advantage for defenders, at some point in the early 1950s Ecuador might have been able to defend against Peru in the short term. When President Galo Plaza announced the Protocol's inapplicability in 1950, the short-term balance had shifted, but not in any way which could be considered fundamental. Ecuador did not design a blitzkrieg strategy to seize the disputed sector. Peru's willingness to escalate an armed confrontation to a general war gave it great advantages in manpower and economic resources if the war was not short. Ecuador refused to gamble: the 1950 decision sought a diplomatic, not military, settlement.

Ecuador's diplomatic strategy required low-level border skirmishes. Peru responded by altering the military balance: while Ecuador's buildup slowed in the early 1950s, the new democratic government of Peru began a major military buildup in 1956. Within a decade Peru's armed forces and its military expenditures outnumbered Ecuador's four to one, despite Ecuador

38. The extreme view can be found in Capitan Altamirano Escobar's book, *El POR QUE del avido expansionismo del PERU*, which begins with a discussion of Incan expansionism and Lt. General Frank Vargas Pazzos (ret.), *Tiwintza: Toda La Verdad* (Quito: Color Grafica, 1995). (Vargas Pazzos was a deputy in the Congress, had been a leading presidential candidate for 1996, and is currently minister of the interior.) Tobar Donoso (*Derecho Territorial Ecuatoriana*, 203-8), however, also saw a carefully planned strategy, as did Wood, *The United States and Latin American Wars*, 326-30.

allocating a higher percentage of its GNP to defense.³⁹ Notwithstanding the buildup and the skirmishes, Velasco Ibarra reaffirmed Ecuador's challenge to the status quo in 1960.

Ecuadorian decisionmakers understood the fundamental disparity in military power. Dramatic defeat in 1941 propelled the military to support democratization to free itself from domestic politics and professionalize. Fitch's detailed analysis of military perceptions and justifications for supporting or threatening Ecuadorian democratic governments in the period 1948 to 1966 does not uncover disagreements between civilians and military officers over the Amazonian issue.⁴⁰ Ecuador's abandonment of the military skirmish component of their strategy after Peru began its military buildup in 1956 suggests that civilian and military policymakers were unwilling to risk a repeat of their 1939-41 disaster.

Ecuadorians, however, did not believe that the balance of *diplomatic capabilities* favored Peru. Ecuador demonstrated good faith in accepting the delimitation of 95 percent of the border along the terms of the Protocol. Everyone could recognize that the strong trampled the weak in 1941. With the war over, the international community could remedy the injustice suffered by Ecuador by insisting that Peru negotiate a relatively small (compared to what had been "lost"), sovereign access to the Amazon. Although Peru repeatedly argued for the sanctity of international treaties, the declaration of inapplicability in 1950 did not question the treaty itself. Ecuador argued that the failure of the Protocol to incorporate the real geographic situation made negotiations necessary.

Ecuadorians recognized that "justice" would not attract sufficient international attention. During the Protocol negotiations foreign diplomats told Ecuador that they had to accept virtually all of Peru's demands or the mediating countries would move on to more pressing matters and "Peru would be in Guayaquil" in five days.⁴¹ Ecuador needed, therefore, to keep the issue alive and to make it in the interest of the international community to pressure Peru. The military skirmishes which were renewed in 1950 and continued until Peru's dramatic military buildup in 1956, thus were directed at the international community, not Peru. The 1960 decision was intended

39. J. Samuel Fitch, *The Military Coup d'Etat as a Political Process* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 21, 40, 122-24, 158; Loftus, *Latin American Defense Expenditures, 1938-1965*, 28, 49, 86-99.

40. Fitch, *The Military Coup d'Etat*; Isaacs, *Military Rule and Transition*, 2-3, also does not reference the question of the border in her summary of why the military grew disenchanted with democracy in the 1960s.

41. Tobar Donoso and Luna Tobar, *Derecho Territorial Ecuatoriana*, 220-21. Guayaquil is Ecuador's major port.

to communicate to the international community, not Peru, the seriousness with which Ecuador considered the issue.

Signaling. Peru's refusal to reopening negotiations on the territorial question and its willingness to militarily contest Ecuadorian advances in the disputed region, were clearly communicated. Peru countered Ecuador's diplomatic offensive by insisting on the sanctity of international treaties. Peru claimed that the Protocol was flawed in one small region and no reasonable modification of it to delimit the Cordillera del Condor region could justify granting Ecuador sovereign access to the Amazon. Peru, however, would not compromise even in the disputed region and insisted on a maximalist position for demarcation: the Cordillera del Condor.

A critic of Peru's deterrence policy might argue that the signaling was ambiguous because talk is cheap. Peru decreased its military capability and there were no MIDs from the end of the war until after Ecuador declared the Protocol inapplicable. Peru also experienced a military coup in 1948 and authoritarian leaders can change their minds easily since domestic audience costs are low. Domestic audience costs on this issue were very high in Peru, however, regardless of the type of government. In addition, cheap talk should also affect Ecuador. Declaring the Protocol inapplicable interested few outside Peru and Ecuador. The fact that a democratically elected leader proclaimed it might signal the government's sincerity, but neither Peruvians nor the international community expressed any interest in helping consolidate Ecuadorian democracy or Galo Plaza's standing by renegotiating the peace treaty. Thus Ecuador would have to create a problem to attract attention and that meant raising the level of tension on the border. Peru's intrinsic interests, reputation and medium-term military capability left no doubt in Ecuadorian civilian and military leaders that they had to proceed carefully. In short, the fact that talk is cheap worked to Ecuador's disadvantage because Peru held both the military and diplomatic cards.

The absence of MIDs during 1943–50 occurred because each side occupied territory as demarcation proceeded. Once the Protocol became irrelevant to the deployment of frontier posts, Peru consistently used force against Ecuadorian incursions, imagined or otherwise (see Table 2). Even when those skirmishes abated after 1956, Peru continued its military buildup. Yet despite the clarity of Peruvian diplomatic and military signals, Ecuador intensified its challenge in 1960 by declaring the treaty null.

Impact of democratic institutions and domestic politics. Galo Plaza was elected in 1948 because the military sought to extricate itself from the debilitating effects of governing or supporting a dictator. Ecuador remained democratic throughout the period during which its strategy to challenge was conceived

and implemented, 1948–60. Plaza was a moderate, with good relations with the United States, Velasco Ibarra won the presidency in 1952 behind a conservative and populist alliance, as did Camilo Ponce in 1956 and Velasco Ibarra again in 1960. The Ecuadorian economy experienced a banana boom in the early 1950s and bust by the late 1950s. In 1959 domestic political stability began to decline and government repression resulted in 1,000 deaths at one antigovernment demonstration.

Academic analysts have not found significant disagreements between the democratic government and military officers over Amazon strategy from 1948 to the 1963 coup. In contrast to most of Latin America, civilians controlled the defense ministry. President Plaza provoked no institutional opposition when he closed the Military Academy from 1953 to 1956 after some officers grumbled that his budgets would keep Ecuador weak vis-à-vis Peru. Even the military government of 1964–66 did not change the relative place of defense in the overall budget. The decision of democratic governments to contest the Protocol responds to their own interests, not to military pressure. The active publics of Ecuador opposed the loss of the Amazon and every government sought to redress the “injustice,” even when not faced with severe domestic political opposition. Plaza had little internal opposition when he declared the Protocol “inapplicable.” Ponce’s outgoing government did face a sudden explosion of domestic opposition in 1959, but the border remained calm. Velasco Ibarra had just been elected president with more votes than the combined total of all his opponents, when he declared the treaty “null.” Massive public demonstrations erupted in support of this new step in Ecuador’s fight to regain sovereign Amazonian access.

Democracy does not appear to be important in either the decision to contest the status quo after 1947 or in the decision on how to use military force in the challenge. Ecuador’s aspirations for a sovereign outlet to the Amazon are national, rather than partisan. The historical record clearly demonstrates that Ecuador’s leaders understood that a bilateral military confrontation could not be resolved in its favor; that is, Peru deterred the military option. An error in mapping the topography, however, seemed to provide Ecuador with a better opportunity than before the war to build an international coalition to peacefully pressure Peru into recognizing the Amazonian character of its neighbor. From an Ecuadorian perspective, it was clear for all who cared to look that Ecuador was a victim of aggression, that its cause was just, and that it was seeking a relatively small access into the Amazon. If international diplomacy worked, Peru would find that the cost of rejecting Ecuador’s “just” demands would outweigh any benefits.

Rational deterrence theory, consequently, provides a useful way to analyze Ecuador's decision to challenge the status quo after 1947, provided that we not limit ourselves to the military aspects of a challenge. Domestic politics did not distort Ecuadorian calculations of Peru's deterrence capabilities. The manner in which its political and military leaders chose to undertake that challenge demonstrates a clear awareness of the strengths and limitations of Peru's deterrence capabilities.

Ecuador's strategy of 1950 (modified significantly in 1960), however, did not prove successful. The search for a new strategy led ultimately to the 1995 war and a dramatic failure of Peruvian immediate deterrence.

EXPLAINING IMMEDIATE DETERRENCE FAILURE (1981 AND 1995)

THE CURRENT SEQUENCE of MIDs began in the late 1970s, after almost a twenty-year hiatus and just as redemocratization was occurring in both countries. In the last 18 years there have been eleven minor MIDs (1977–78, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1994 and 1995), and two cases of immediate deterrence failure (1981 and 1995).

FAILURE OF DETERRENCE, RETURN TO COMPELLENCE IN 1981

In the miniwar of 1981 Peru discovered new Ecuadorian outposts in disputed territory, which Ecuador refused to abandon. Peru unleashed overwhelming force against one of them, Paquisha, and threatened to replay the 1941 invasion of southern Ecuador. The Ecuadorians were beaten back quickly, and purportedly paid reparations to Peru;⁴² battlefield deaths numbered up to 200. Ecuador also sustained a diplomatic defeat, as the OAS would not mediate the dispute since the Protocol gave this task to the four guarantors. Since nullifying the treaty in 1960, however, Ecuador had not recognized the "guarantors." Instead it appealed to "the friendly countries" for diplomatic support to restrain Peru. They came to Ecuador's aid on the cease-fire, but refused to do more until Ecuador changed its position on the Protocol. Although Peru failed at deterrence, it succeeded in compelling Ecuador to retreat from forward positions.

In light of the Peruvian response we come to the issue of why Peru failed to deter Ecuador from actually moving military forces into the dis-

42. Pons Muzzo, *Estudio Histórico*, 310–54; *Análisis Semanal*, 46 reports the payment, but Ecuadorian political leaders denied it. *Hoy*, 2 March 1995, "No se Pagó Indemnización a Perú."

puted zone. Did Peru fail to adopt a deterrence policy? During the military government Peru attempted to implement a firm but flexible deterrence strategy vis-à-vis Ecuador. This approach combined increased benefits for accepting the status quo (via economic bilateral development projects and trade expansion) and a military commitment to defend Peruvian claims in the disputed territory. Why then did the policy fail? Was Peruvian military deterrence no longer credible? Or did domestic factors in Ecuador nevertheless push the country into contesting the frontier militarily? To answer these questions I examine both the standard determinants of deterrence credibility and the impact of domestic politics and democratic institutions on the calculations which led to the 1981 miniwar.

Balance of Interests. The Peruvian military government's general foreign policy emphasized Third World cooperation in a North-South paradigm and the mutual benefits of bilateral economic cooperation. Ecuador, still pursuing sovereign access to the Amazon, began to perceive that other things might matter more to Peru than blocking Ecuador in the Amazon. The explicit link between further progress on Andean Pact integration and a resolution to the border issue illustrates this perspective.

In addition, by 1977 Peru had become embroiled in a severe conflict with Chile as a result of ideological (a leftist military government in Peru, a rightist military government in Chile), and territorial disputes (concerning Peruvian and Bolivian territory lost to Chile in the War of the Pacific). Ecuador's military government may have believed that Peru would be more likely to settle in the north in order to concentrate on the south.⁴³

Reputation. Peru's reputation for credible deterrence suffered in this period because of the ambiguity of Peruvian behavior. Relations with Peru improved in the first decade of Peruvian military rule. Military skirmishes ceased after 1960, and although ambassadors were mutually recalled in 1966,⁴⁴ after the Peruvian military coup of 1968 relations became friendly. Peru's reputation as a country willing to utilize military force in defense of

43. Gorman, "Geopolitics and Peruvian Foreign Policy," 80; Daniel M. Masterson, *Militarism and Politics in Latin America: Peru from Sanchez Cerro to Sendero Luminoso* (Westhaven: Greenwood, 1991), 265. During the 1995 conflict Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori maintained that Peru could escalate the conflict despite initial losses because the military government of the 1970s had stockpiled weapons in preparation for a war with Chile. *CHIP News*, "Peru was Preparing for War with Chile, Reveals President Fujimori," 3 March 1995. My research to date has not uncovered the thinking of the Ecuadorian military on this issue. It would be quite surprising, however, to encounter strong evidence that such a factor was not considered important.

44. Diego García Sayan, "Relaciones con Colombia y Ecuador" in Eduardo Ferrero Costa, ed., *Relaciones Internacionales del Perú* (Lima: Centro Peruano de Estudios Internacionales, 1986), 30.

its interests may also have changed as the war scare with Chile defused. Peru's reluctance to push too far with Chile in 1976–77 might have inspired the Ecuadorian probes of 1977–78.

Peru's handling of the first Ecuadorian probe into the region in 1977–78 diminished Peru's aggressive reputation. In the first clash since 1960 Ecuadorian helicopters flew into disputed territory and military outposts were constructed. For a few months patrols skirmished. Rather than escalate the events, however, Peruvian president General Morales Bermudez called for the militaries to work out a *modus vivendi* in the region: they would both abandon the specific zone in dispute.⁴⁵

Capability. The balance of capability favored Peru in 1981. In a replay of the 1940s, the Ecuadorian military endorsed a return to democracy after 1976 to focus on professionalizing and modernizing their force structure to defend against Peru.⁴⁶ By 1981, however, Ecuador was just beginning its second phase of professionalization, while Peru was already better trained and armed. Peruvian expansion in manpower from 1955 to 1965 came at the expense of material and training,⁴⁷ and after 1973 the military government engaged in a massive arms buildup and training program.⁴⁸

The balance of forces in the immediate zone of conflict also favored Peru. Ecuadorian outposts were constructed on the eastern side of the mountain range, with poor lines of communication to Ecuador in the west. Their positions were exposed, making them vulnerable to Peruvian fighter-bombers and attack helicopters.

Signaling. Peru's signaling was complex because it wanted to provide Ecuador with rewards for peacefully resolving the issue, but also needed to communicate an ability and will to utilize the stick if necessary. Peru signaled a willingness to make deals for economic integration, but it also explicitly rejected any linkages between economic cooperation and a renegotiation on the border. Peru also provided signals that its Third World focus was changing. Military leaders began focusing on their institutional needs once they decided to return to civilian rule. Foreign policy responded by shifting from a progressive diplomatic agenda emphasizing regional integration to a more nationalistic focus on traditional aspects of security.⁴⁹

45. Pons Muzzo, *Estudio Histórico*, 296–99.

46. Isaacs, *Military Rule and Transition*, 109–11.

47. Loftus, *Latin American Military Expenditures*, 59. Defense expenditures per member of the armed forces declined dramatically in Peru and increased in Ecuador; by 1965 Ecuador exceeded Peru in this category.

48. Adrian J. English, *Armed Forces of Latin America* (London: Jane's, 1984, 1985), 366–401.

49. Gorman, "Geopolitics and Peruvian Foreign Policy," 80–81; 125–26 and Masterson, *Militarism*, 265.

From a Peruvian perspective, its preparation for war with Chile had as a minimal goal to dissuade Chile and Bolivia from negotiating an outlet to the Pacific via ex-Peruvian territory.⁵⁰ When those negotiations aborted, Peruvian defense of national interests had been achieved. Far from being a sign of unwillingness to use force, the episode could be seen as demonstrating Peru's resolve on territorial issues.

Peru was also active on the diplomatic front. Peru vetoed sections of the Brazilian-inspired Amazon Program that would have given Ecuador an Amazonian character.⁵¹ Peru explicitly noted that the 1978 agreements to deal with specific issues concerning patrols in the region were undertaken within the context of the Rio Protocol.⁵² It also rejected U.S. efforts to modify Peruvian intransigence on a resolution negotiated outside of the context of the Rio Protocol.⁵³

There were, however, other signals which suggested to the Ecuadorians that Peru would not react to the progressive encroachment by Ecuadorian outposts. The official Ecuadorian version of the events of 1981 claims that the three outposts which provoked the attack in 1981 had been established eight months before, without any protests from Peru,⁵⁴ although an Ecuadorian reporter claimed that the government was still in the process of constructing them in the vicinity of outposts abandoned by Peru as a result of the 1978 informal agreement.⁵⁵ Both explanations suggest Ecuadorian probes to evaluate just how far it could go. They did not expect a full-scale military attack. The outposts were defenseless against the air attack unleashed by Peru. In addition, defenses in southern Ecuador, as well as the navy, were not prepared to confront a Peruvian attack. Uncertainty concerning the Peruvian response helps explain why Ecuador disregarded Peru's ultimatum in January 1981.

The ambiguity of Peru's deterrence strategy by itself cannot explain why Ecuadorian leaders initiated military probes. The United States raised Ecuadorian expectations that the international community might favor a "just" solution to the conflict when it said Peru's position was too intransigent.⁵⁶ Why, however, did Ecuador interpret ambiguity to mean that Peru might not respond, and if it did, that it would do so with a minor use of

50. Gorman, "Geopolitics and Peruvian Foreign Policy," 69-70.

51. *Ibid.*, 83-84.

52. Pons Muzzo, *Estudio Historico*, 296-301.

53. St. John, *The Boundary*, 16.

54. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Mision en Washington*, 61.

55. Claudio Mena V., *Paquisha: Toda La Verdad* (Quito: Letra Nueva, 1981), 64-67, as cited in Pons Muzzo, *Estudio Historico*, 307-9.

56. St. John, *The Boundary*, 16.

force, as in 1977–78. The domestic determinants of deterrence calculations help us here.

Impact of democratic institutions and domestic politics. Ecuador became democratic in 1979. As noted, the military began to prepare to contest Peruvian positions in the disputed Cordillera del Cóndor. Democracy did not change Ecuadorian policy toward the Amazon because civilian politicians basically agreed with the goals of the policy (attain sovereign access to the Amazon) and the electorate was believed (correctly, as events demonstrated) to support the confrontational policy as well. Ecuadorian civilian and military leaders interpreted the ambiguity of Peruvian deterrence in a manner consistent with national desires to secure sovereign access to the Amazon.

In his inaugural address, Jaime Roldós proclaimed that his government would continue to pursue “recognition of the historic and inalienable Amazonian rights” of Ecuador.⁵⁷ The decision to move Ecuadorian troops into the disputed territory was at the very least known to the civilian leadership, and President Roldós even visited Paquisha in August 1980.⁵⁸ There were no public demonstrations against this policy. After the fighting, the International Affairs Commission of the House of Representatives held hearings on the border issue and reaffirmed their support for the Executive’s decision in 1960 to declare the Protocol null.

Because Ecuador’s redemocratization was relatively new some analysts might suggest that the military pushed the civilian government into engaging in militarized disputes. While this speculation is difficult to test, there is little reason to believe it. The military had willingly and with great relief, retreated from controlling the government. Although some hardliners favored pressuring the government with the threat of a return of military rule, the institution strongly resisted those appeals and allowed civilians to discipline such officers.⁵⁹ Once the fighting began it is possible that the civilian government had little control over military operations,⁶⁰ but Roldós made the decision to ask the OAS and the “four friendly countries” to mediate without consulting the military and they did not seek to overturn it.⁶¹

57. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Hacia la Solucion*, 182.

58. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Mision en Washington*, 61.

59. Isaacs, *Military Rule and Transition*, 119–42. My interviews with Army officers and Ecuadorian military analysts in 1995 demonstrated that the Army still harbors great resentment of Air Force General Frank Vargas Pazzos (ret.) because he led a coup attempt in 1986 which the Army put down in a bloody battle. An interesting side note is that in August 1995 Vargas was running second in opinion polls for the Presidential election in 1996.

60. Two confidential Ecuadorian interviews, August 1995.

61. Confidential interview with a former high-ranking diplomat. My 1995 interviews, Gen. Vargas Pazzos (*Tiwintza*) and Minister of Defense General Gallardo (“Comentario Militar”) suggest that some military officers have reinterpreted the events of 1981 to suggest that they

The 1977-78 confrontation between Ecuador and Peru was defused by the military governments in both countries while the 1981 miniwar occurred while both were democratic governments. This correlation only proves that no simple relation between type of government and the evolution of disputes exists. A look at the next severe military clash between Ecuador and Peru helps us think about the relationship more clearly.

FAILURE OF DETERRENCE IN 1995

For thirty-four days in early 1995 Ecuador and Peru sustained their most serious military confrontation since 1941. Both sides deployed sophisticated aircraft and Ecuador used modern intelligence technology. Armed forces mobilized in the jungle region of the actual fighting, and along the west coast, including the navies. Ecuador called up its reserves.⁶² Despite initial successes against Peruvian attacks, Durán Ballén feared Peruvian escalation. The military had confidence in their ability to defend, but Durán Ballén did not and appealed for mediation.

The 1995 war occurred after Peru had demonstrated its resolve in the 1981 miniwar, and after a series of militarized disputes (nine in the fourteen years between these two episodes). Was Peru's deterrence credibility somehow undermined during the intervening period? Or did domestic politics in Ecuador push leaders into misinterpreting or ignoring Peruvian deterrence policies? Once again we turn to interests, reputation, capability and signaling, as well as the domestic political context, to evaluate the failure of Peruvian deterrence.

Balance of Interests. Peruvian behavior in 1981 demonstrated that its commitment to the intrinsic interests in the Amazon remained as strong as ever. Ecuador's military preparations for its incursions into the region were based on the expectation that the moment would come when Peru would react militarily (see below under capabilities). Ecuador constructed outposts in the region in 1987 without incident, but Peru considered that locale to be Ecuadorian. In 1991 skirmishing among patrols almost escalated, but was papered over by another "Gentleman's Agreement" which, short of build-

were holding their own and civilians capitulated. On the other hand, Army chief general Paco Moncayo claimed that, as a result of having focused on governing the country between 1973 and 1979, the armed forces were not ready to defend themselves against a broad Peruvian attack in 1981. Interview, August 16, 1995.

62. Gabriel Marcella, "War and Peace in the Amazon: Strategic Implications for the United States and Latin America of the Ecuador-Peru War of 1995" (typescript, U.S. Army War College, Department of National Security and Strategy, 1 September 1995), 2-3.

ing confidence, provided more grievances as the Peruvians later refused to abandon the outpost in question.⁶³

Peruvian president Fujimori returned to offering Ecuador the carrot of economic integration and development plans in 1992–93. In addition, he was willing to negotiate regional economic cooperation programs with Chile without demanding that it relinquish territory seized from Peru last century. Coming on the heels of the 1991 near-crisis and the experience of 1981, however, it would not be reasonable to think that these economic cooperation proposals signified a diminution of Peruvian interests in controlling sovereign access to the Amazon. Ecuadorian plans for a military confrontation in the disputed sector (see below) indicate that they expected Peru to contest their advances.

Reputation. Peru's aggressive reputation in Ecuador remained intact. Military and public opinion in Ecuador continued to harbor an image of Peru as an "enemy" country.⁶⁴ 1981 confirmed Ecuadorian expectations that Peru would fight again at some point if Ecuador insisted on sovereign access. Between the 1981 and 1995 wars there were nine MIDs, and although some confrontations ended with local confidence-building measures, the Peruvians always demonstrated their unwillingness to accept anything but the status quo frontier. Confidence-building measures and agreements to withdraw from forward positions did not keep Peruvian and Ecuadorian troops from exchanging gunfire in 1985 (twice) or April 1988, nor did it keep Peru from mobilizing its forces on the border in 1989 (Table 2).

Peru's reputation influenced both the military and civilians in Ecuador. The Ecuadorian military's plan for defending the forward positions they were constructing was based on the expectation that Peru would respond with the same level and type of force as in 1981 (see below). Civilian leaders tried to walk a thin line between keeping the dispute alive and imbued with Peruvian threats, but not crossing the threshold into full-scale war.

Capabilities: Military and Diplomatic. This is the key to understanding the failure of deterrence in 1995. Unlike previous episodes (1941 and 1981), Ecuadorian military analysts now perceived a favorable local balance of military power and believed that they could defend Ecuador against Peruvian escalation. This represents a dramatic turnaround, caused by Peruvian complacency and diversion, as well as Ecuadorian innovation.

63. *El Universo* (Quito) special supplement "Ni Un Paso Atras," 22 March 1995, 2.

64. See Table 1 for public opinion and interviews with military officers in August and September 1995.

My interviews as well as published accounts in Ecuador indicated that Ecuador's military learned the lessons of their defeat in 1981.⁶⁵ In a future clash they expected Peru to adopt similar tactics: fighter bomber and helicopter attacks, parachuting troops into the remote region, and threatening to escalate the dispute into Ecuador. Military strategists prepared to meet this challenge and do it relatively cheaply. They chose terrain which would limit the maneuverability of aircraft (with the mountains at their back and steep mountains on each side Peruvian aircraft had to come from one direction), make it difficult to detect Ecuadorian defenses (triple canopy jungle allowed soldiers to sit hidden in trees with SAMs), and hard to penetrate on foot (cheap Chinese plastic antipersonnel mines awaited them). Weapons purchases seem to have been secret.⁶⁶ Effective lines of communication (a system of footpaths leading back to Ecuadorian base camps and villages) were developed. They also contracted Israeli and Chilean intelligence and communication experts to create a system to intercept Peruvian communications. Finally, they prepared national defenses in case of escalation, including getting the Navy out of port quickly.⁶⁷

The Ecuadorians patiently waited for the right moment. In 1987 they discovered a new Peruvian outpost, Pachacutec, in territory recognized as Ecuadorian during the demarcation which occurred in the 1940s. Rather than denounce it, they waited until 1991 to make it an issue.⁶⁸ During the 1991 controversy they did not back down and conflict was avoided by a gentleman's agreement establishing a security zone and the mutual withdrawal of forces from two outposts. Neither side withdrew, producing a stalemate unchanged by MIDs in 1993 and 1994, until Peru decided to insure an Ecuadorian retreat. These events suggest that Ecuador was ready to militarily contest Peru by 1991, but needed Peru to initiate the fighting.

As important as the tactical, technical, and logistical improvements were, Ecuadorians also monitored the Peruvian institutional context. Ecuador's military command believed that the Peruvian military became demoralized and corrupted after a decade of fighting a civil war against both guerrillas

65. Confidential interviews August 1995; and interviews with Dr. Luis Proaño, political advisor, Ministry of Defense, Quito, 14 August 1995; and Col. Hernández, Personal Secretary to the Minister of Defense (and commander of the Tiwintza defense during the war), 14 August 1995; Gen. Vargas Pazzos, *Tiwintza*, 45-62.

66. ACDA does not record China having delivered or made any agreements to deliver arms to Ecuador from 1979 to 1993. U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers*, vols. 1985 and 1993-94 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 133 and 140, respectively.

67. Ecuadorian, Peruvian, and U.S. military and civilian analysts, confidential interviews with author, August and September 1995.

68. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Hacia La Solucion*, 145.

and the drug trade (during which the institution was heavily criticized for human rights abuses and in which officers succumbed to “narcodollars”). Fujimori’s interference with the military chain of command in order to assure personal loyalty was also believed to have negatively affected Peru’s military. Peru was expected to be surprised by Ecuadorian defensive capabilities, waste significant resources in trying to overwhelm them and be unable to adjust its local strategy before the costs of the war forced Peru to either escalate or negotiate a cease-fire. Faced with significant losses in the Amazon, aware that Ecuador’s Navy had already left port, and observing the mobilized Army in the south, Peru was expected to negotiate.

Ecuadorian calculations assumed that the changed military balance would also produce a shift in the diplomatic balance. The international community had repeatedly demonstrated that the Ecuador-Peru border dispute lacked the importance to attract “effective” attention (defined by pressuring Peru to negotiate). The next clash, inevitable as it was, would force the international community to remain involved until it resolved the dispute. Ecuador would not cede its new outposts until it attained a solution: “Not One Step Back” became the national slogan.

Civilian policymakers in Ecuador lacked the military’s confidence. They were aware of the preparations, but were not willing to gamble that the diplomatic balance had changed as well. Many in the Foreign Ministry now favored returning to inapplicability thesis.⁶⁹ As the fighting developed, Durán Ballén informed the National Security Council that he would ask the guarantor countries to mediate. From the civilian perspective, Ecuador’s advantage lay in demonstrating good faith in the guarantors while Peru attempted militarily to dislodge the outposts.

Credible Signaling. Peru’s signals to Ecuador that it was engaging in a firm but flexible deterrence strategy were undoubtedly credible. Fujimori made a number of public decisions which implied great domestic political risks for him,⁷⁰ and his own personal authoritarian traits demonstrated his commit-

69. *Latin American Regional Reports—Andean Group* 14 November 1991, 6.

70. Any Peruvian politician who advocated a conciliatory policy toward an Ecuador which did not recognize Peruvian sovereignty over the Cordillera del Condor region ran electoral risks. The 1995 war occurred during the presidential campaign. Fujimori’s opponent, former UN secretary-general Javier Pérez de Cuellar and his military advisors, publicly wondered about Fujimori’s ability to defend Peruvian interests. In response, Fujimori claimed that his conciliatory policies had been designed to deceive Ecuador, and increased efforts to win on the battlefield. *Hoy*, 22 March 1995, 3 April 1995; Abraham Lamas, “Ecuador—Peru: Quién Ganó y Quién Perdió en la Guerra Empatada,” InterPress Service, 10 March 1995. Since Fujimori was not planning on ceding a sovereign access to Ecuador and regional economic development fits in with his neoliberal outlook (he sought similar programs with Chile), one should take this claim to be defensive campaign rhetoric. In March he offered Ecuador the carrot of a possible free zone in the Amazon, but as a result of Congressional opposition, he

ment to impose high costs on those who opposed his major projects. Fujimori seized upon the 1991 dispute to push for a definitive settlement, although he was criticized in the Congress for not dealing harshly with Ecuador.⁷¹ In 1991, 92 and 93 he offered Peru a package linking economic development projects, a free port on the Amazon, reciprocal security measures and arms limitations along the border in exchange for a border demarcation linked to the Protocol. His trip to Ecuador to offer details on the proposals was the first by a Peruvian president; he would go three times.

At the same time Fujimori was extending the olive branch (on Peruvian terms), he demonstrated his unwillingness to compromise on fundamental points. In early 1991 Ecuador asked privately that Peru abandon the Pachacutec outpost. Peru's initial threats and subsequent refusal to abide by the agreement to mutually withdraw forces dramatically increased tensions and spiraled into the war in 1995. In 1992 Fujimori presented another indication of his refusal to bargain on major points when he closed Congress, oversaw the election of a Constituent Assembly, adoption of a new constitution increasing executive powers, and returned the country to democracy, all in a year's time.

The credibility of Peru's deterrence strategy was not undermined by allowing Ecuadorian outposts be established or by not escalating the minor MIDs which occurred between 1981 and 1995. Neither did the confidence-building measures among military personnel in the Cordillera del Cóndor zone.⁷² Ecuador's strategy was based on the belief that Peru would respond at some point, thereby making Ecuador appear to be the victim of aggression once again. To understand why Ecuador not only continued to dispute the issue, but also sought viable ways to contest it, we need to turn to domestic politics.

Impact of democratic institutions and domestic politics. After the miniwar of 1981 Ecuador's Foreign Ministry undertook a national opinion survey on the issue. The diplomatic corps perceived Ecuador's strategy as fundamentally flawed because it contested the principle of the sanctity of treaties and sacrificed national development to a vague territorial issue. The opinion poll, however, confirmed the popularity of the strategy of nullification and sov-

retracted it. Latin America Data Base, *NotiSur—Latin American Political Affairs*, 10 March 1995. Fujimori won in a landslide in April, although his victory probably had more to do with his success in bringing down inflation and curbing the Sendero Luminoso guerrillas than with the war.

71. Pons Muzzo, *Estudio Historico*, 364.

72. *Ibid.*, 362

foreign access.⁷³ In 1983 Congress reaffirmed the nullification of the Protocol. As Table 1 demonstrated, Ecuadorians have a sophisticated view of the border issue, believing the border issue obstructs development and that the country should have free trade with Peru, but that Peru is an "enemy" country. It appears that Ecuadorians expect Peru to make the concession which would improve relations. These opinion polls corroborate the anecdotal evidence politicians see in public demonstrations and small shops⁷⁴ that ceding on the sovereign access issue could cost someone an election.

As the war began, Durán Ballén had severe domestic political problems, but the war was popular, and his standings in the poll soared.⁷⁵ The confrontation was not a diversionary tactic, however. Ecuadorian planning for a major confrontation began before Durán Ballén's tenure. The president and his civilian advisors believed that a major war would be disastrous for Ecuador. Rather than demand an immediate solution, he used the domestic euphoria of the initial military successes to confuse the nullification issue and focus on the inapplicability track. Duran Ballen believed that this step would enable the guarantors to play a more fruitful role in the negotiations which were bound to follow the military clash. Neither the military nor nationalist civilians made an issue of the change, because nullification had not brought sovereign access and inapplicability still allowed pursuit of that goal. Instead these social forces focused on defending the gains made in January 1995.

The impact of democracy is not limited to electoral constraints on politicians. The return of democracy contributed to the 1995 war in two ways. The Ecuadorian military could focus on "professionalizing," which meant preparation to defend against its most likely foreign adversary, Peru. Civilians also pushed for "professionalization" as a means of insuring the continuation of democracy. Thus even as the military's share of GNP declined dramatically under democracy, their capacity increased greatly.⁷⁶ The resulting shift in the balance of military capabilities allowed Ecuador to pursue a

73. The poll is discussed in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Hacia la Solucion*, 192-93; diplomatic sentiment is discussed in *Latin American Regional Reports* 14 November 1991, 6.

74. In August 1995 I observed hand-made signs and cartoons placed in shops which celebrated the "victory" of Tiwintza and ridiculed Peruvian soldiers.

75. Interview, Proaño.

76. ACDA estimates of Ecuadorian military expenditures as a percent of GNP indicate that they were never large. A slight increase developed after the military government had been in power for a few years (from 2.1 percent to 2.4 percent, except for 1978 when it reached 2.9 percent), followed by a slight decline with the return of democracy to the level of the early years of military government, an important increase after the 1981 miniwar (reaching 3.3 percent in 1983), and declining dramatically after 1987, reaching 1.1 percent in 1993. *World Military Expenditures*, vols. 1985 and 1993-94, 60 and 61, respectively.

strategy reminiscent of the early 1950s: diplomatic appeals to the international community underpinned by a level of military tension in the zone of conflict. In this context, Peru's resoluteness in defending its gains in the 1941 war, far from deterring Ecuador, ensured that militarization of disputes would plague the enduring rivalry.

THE COMPLEXITY OF RATIONAL DETERRENCE

WHAT DOES THIS analysis of the Ecuador-Peru enduring rivalry suggest about the utility of rational deterrence theory? The dominant impression one receives when considering Ecuadorian behavior after the 1941 war is one of a resolute and innovative rational challenger, even as governments changed and the role of the military in politics shifted. The evidence suggests that Ecuador knew that Peru had the interest and military capability to make deterrence in the military realm credible. Rather than being deterred by Peru's threat to escalate if necessary, Ecuadorians sought a strategy which would allow them to continue to pursue their goal but minimize the chances of escalation. Their strategy for challenging the status quo mixed diplomatic and military components and was based upon the expectation of forceful mediation by a third party, the international community. Overall, they performed very well, easing up on the military pressure when things threatened to get out of hand and correctly perceiving the moment at which Peru was militarily vulnerable.

Given Ecuador's goal, it made only two mistakes. One resulted from the complexity and ambiguity of Peruvian deterrence signals from 1977 to 1981 and the other lay in rejecting the Protocol. The first error was remedied with an innovative and far-reaching change in military doctrine and force posture. It took a while longer for politicians to overcome the second mistake, but Durán Ballén acted quickly when presented with the opportunity.

Rational deterrence theory does not escape unscathed, however. With regard to the strictly military aspects of deterrence, Ecuador's decision to challenge would have seemed incomprehensible except perhaps after 1981. Military confrontations formed part of Ecuador's strategy for challenging the status quo, but they played a secondary role. They were designed to be limited probes and constitute controlled pressure tactics in a scheme which would draw the only resource which could provide Ecuador with sovereign access to the Amazon: international pressure on Peru. Peru's deterrence strategy failed, both in general and immediate terms, largely because Peru could not influence Ecuador's calculations of the likelihood of international

mediation. There were too many potential mediators (the United States, OAS, UN, and the Pope) and too many instances of international intervention for Ecuador to believe that no one would play an active role if the Ecuador-Peru dispute heated up sufficiently. Critics of deterrence who focus on its limitations and underdeveloped state have a point here.⁷⁷

Appreciating the complexity and sophistication of Ecuador's strategy helps us understand why neither interest nor reputation played an important role in the credibility of Peru's deterrence strategy. Except for a brief period from 1968 to 1977 Ecuador accepted Peru's intrinsic interest in the Amazon and its reputation as an aggressor. Again, except for this period, Peru signaled clearly and Ecuador understood.

As to the balance of capabilities, on the military front Ecuador read Peru's capabilities correctly and took appropriate actions. Usually that meant backing off, but Peru's internal situation after 1981 presented Ecuador with an opportunity to develop a short-term scenario for a military stalemate. It was in the balance of diplomatic capabilities that Ecuador consistently miscalculated, but the costs were generally minimal and Peru did not develop a strategy to deter Ecuador in this arena. Critics of deterrence theory make another important point by noting that challengers seek strategies to circumvent the defender's superiority.⁷⁸

There is no evidence that Ecuador's internal political problems affected its deterrence calculations. Sovereign access to the Amazon has been a national, not partisan goal. Civilians and the military both seek the same ends and both have been respectful of Peru's military capabilities. Although the military may not have entirely agreed with the decisions taken by the civilian presidents on how to terminate the military conflicts in 1981 and 1995, they did not oppose them. Presidents Galo Plaza and Velasco Ibarra faced no internal opposition when they declared the Protocol inapplicable and null, respectively. Although Durán Ballén faced significant domestic political problems, the clash's timing was determined by Peru's decision to attack the outposts. Durán Ballén moved quickly to limit and defuse the conflict.

Democracy in Ecuador may have facilitated conflict and, in conjunction with Peruvian military capabilities, limited its escalation. Since the return of democracy to Ecuador in 1979, four presidents oversaw the expansion of military capability and were willing to keep the border militarized until achieving sovereign access to the Amazon. They were nationalists, but public opinion in Ecuador also demanded that their elected leaders pursue this

77. George and Smoke, "Deterrence and Foreign Policy."

78. Janis Stein, "Calculation, Miscalculation and Conventional Deterrence," 58, as cited in Lieberman, "The Rational Deterrence Theory Debate," 13.

goal. The result was a major clash in 1981 and a short war in 1995. It was also the president in both instances, however, who made the decision not to escalate further. The military seemed willing to take more punishment in 1981 and trusted its ability to defend in 1995, but the presidents were unwilling to risk further escalation. Democracy in Peru appears irrelevant to the credibility of its deterrence signals: the only period in which its deterrence was questioned spanned a transition to democracy, 1977-81.

The longitudinal analysis made possible by focusing on an enduring rivalry reveals the dynamic character of Ecuadorian calculations. Lieberman's argument that deterrence must fail occasionally in order to be credible, however, was not confirmed. The war in 1941 was a major deterrence failure, with disastrous consequences for the challenger. Yet Ecuador began challenging as soon as it designed an alternative to the military challenge. Deterrence failed again in 1981, but it only stimulated a new attempt to innovate. Will the failure of deterrence in 1995 bring deterrence stability? The absence of a theory of learning in Lieberman's argument means that we are left with the empirical observation that sometimes failure is followed by success. When deterrence fails we wish that it works the next time, but at this stage we do not have a good argument for why we should expect it.

Rational deterrence theory emerges from this analysis of an enduring rivalry as useful, though underdeveloped in important ways. This is good news for deterrence analysts because they are on the right track and much work remains if these other factors are to be incorporated into the theory. What about the "patient," however—what does a rational deterrence approach suggest for the future of the Ecuador-Peru enduring rivalry?

Ecuador has essentially been playing a game of chicken with Peru, confident in its ability to pull back at the last minute. It almost failed in 1995, as Peru refused to accept the initial battlefield reality and the international community was initially unable to persuade Peru to accept the stalemate. Given Peruvian resolve and the impotence of the international community on this issue (a result of both low interest and capability), my analysis suggests that Ecuador must accept that Amazonian sovereignty cannot be achieved, but that Ecuador can prosper without it. Ecuador needs an important popular education campaign, perhaps not unlike the one carried out by U.S. president Jimmy Carter to sell the Panama Canal treaties. In addition, the international community has to refuse to offer Ecuador hope that it might function as a knight in shining armor if the damsel finds itself in severe stress. Finally, an increase in the credibility of Peruvian deterrence in the contested region can play an important role in helping Ecuador come to a rational decision favoring termination of this enduring rivalry.



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