Sebastian E. Bitar, *US Military Bases, Quasi-Bases, and Domestic Politics in Latin America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Map, figures, tables, notes, bibliography, index, 220 pp.; hardcover $110, ebook $79.99.

Sebastian Bitar's well-researched book fits in the category of U.S. security relations with Latin America. Unlike many books on the topic, however, it generally avoids conspiracy theories and big-power determinism in dealing with the topic of U.S. base access in the region. Drawing on secondary material, newspapers, Department of State cables on WikiLeaks, and interviews, Bitar develops models to explain the U.S. success, or not, in achieving military access to bases in Latin America.

Bitar begins with the extensive network of bases to which the United States enjoyed access at the end of World War II. He then reviews the gradual decrease in access during the intervening 70 years. He sets the study in the framework of the decline of U.S. hegemony in the region, the rise of China, and the limited rise of potential regional hegemons, mainly Brazil. His models in explaining the success, or not, of U.S. access to bases include domestic politics in individual countries, and that is a great value of the study.

Bitar illustrates and develops his models on the basis of case studies. For successful basing agreements he looks to Comalapa in El Salvador and Manta in Ecuador. However, due to the political dynamics in Ecuador and the coming to power of President Rafael Correa in 2006, the renegotiation of the Manta base resulted in what Bitar terms a failed basing agreement. Having lost access to Manta, and with the relative success of the Colombian armed forces and police supported by the United States under Plan Colombia, the United States sought access to several bases in Colombia, negotiating a defense cooperation agreement (DCA) with the government of President Álvaro Uribe. But the Colombian Supreme Court ruled against the DCA on August 10, 2010. Bitar states that due to new president Juan Manuel Santos's assessment of the domestic political environment, "The new Santos administration decided not to submit the agreement to Congress and allowed the DCA to perish" (140).

The foregoing two paragraphs briefly summarize the contents of the first five chapters of Bitar's book. The models make sense, and the case studies are well researched and balanced. The author might have observed that the main function of the bases in El Salvador and Ecuador, and to a certain extent in Colombia, was drug interdiction. The text is at times awkward, and certainly redundant, but that seems to be a characteristic of Palgrave Macmillan; at least that is my experience in publishing with them.

The last chapter addresses what Bitar terms "quasi-bases." On the "map of U.S. security cooperation in Latin America" on page 21 there are apparently six between Guatemala and Peru. Bitar places a great deal of emphasis on "quasi-bases" in his book, and states that "quasi-bases presented a second-best alternative that allowed the U.S. military to pursue its security goals in the region by bypassing the obstacles of domestic politicization" (145). Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras is clearly a base to which the U.S. military has access. If Bitar wants to call it a quasi-base, fine.

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The other examples, which he distinguishes as "Gas-and-go," "Temporary Ground Access," and "Long-term or Indefinite Ground Access," are very difficult for me to conceptualize. First, all the "quasi-bases" are air bases. All countries control aviation into and out of a country's airports, but for the illegal drug flights. (Indeed, even after the Argentine government approved the mission that involved it, the government confiscated a U.S. Air Force C-17 in February 2011.) Second, any country, in Latin America or not, that has a security assistance program or military sales program with the U.S. government or U.S. firms probably has a group of military personnel or civilian contractors who handle the logistics of military assistance. Do these constitute quasi-bases? For that matter, most countries with which the United States has a significant military assistance or military sales relationship also have a military presence in the United States dedicated to processing assistance and sales. Does this mean that those countries have "quasi-bases" in the United States? An obvious example of this is the German air force's facility at Dulles Airport, outside of Washington, DC. Also, the United States trains NATO air crews at U.S. Air Force bases. Does this mean that NATO has "quasi-bases" in the United States? I note that there is very little reliance on Department of State cables from WikiLeaks in this chapter on "quasi-bases." If these "quasi-bases" were somehow secret, I would have expected far more reliance on these supposedly confidential cables.

In short, Bitar's book is a very useful addition to the literature on the United States and its security relationship with Latin America. Most of the book is well researched and adds to our knowledge of U.S. base access in the region. This reviewer, however, had trouble grasping the importance Bitar assigns to "quasi-bases" in regard to this security relationship.

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