

all endured multiple coups and bloody civil wars over the same period<sup>126</sup>. Costa Rica has been free of military coups and has maintained orderly transfers of power between Presidents. Its security has been maintained by lightly armed police forces that have neither the capability nor the culture required to overthrow the government<sup>127</sup>.

Costa Rica also highlights another aspect of non-military defence, which is that if a state has a military then it may be tempted or pressured to use it. As we saw in the Liechtenstein example earlier in this paper, the absence of a military avoided the question of how it was to be employed in conflict and on whose side. In Costa Rica, even through the height of the civil war in neighbouring Nicaragua, the Public Force was sufficient to guard the borders and avoid the conflict spilling over. On the other side of Nicaragua was Honduras where a military dominated regime gained favour from the United States for providing bases and military back up to the Nicaraguan Rebel Group known as the Contras. This strengthened the power of the military in Honduras and made democracy and progress more elusive for Honduras over the 1980s and 1990s<sup>128</sup>.

Honduras and Costa Rica were very similar states in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century but diverged in 1948 when Costa Rica took the non-military road and Honduras doubled down on strengthening military institutions in partnership with the United States. Costa Rica and the more recently de-militarised Panama now far outpace their militarised Central American neighbours in terms of democratic governance, Human Development, economic prosperity, transparency and safety and security<sup>129</sup>. They are safer, richer, healthier, better educated and more free than the rest of the region<sup>130</sup>. This again raises the question of the utility of a military in a small state, if directly comparable societies are better off when the military is abolished rather than when it is in existence to notionally protect the sovereignty, prosperity and dignity of the state and its people.

In addition to Costa Rica the Latin American and Caribbean nations of Haiti<sup>131</sup>, Panama<sup>132</sup>, Dominica<sup>133</sup> and Grenada<sup>134</sup> have also all made conscious decisions to eliminate their military

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<sup>126</sup> Booth, Wade and Walker, 89-90.

<sup>127</sup> Costa Rica Police Capability <http://www.coha.org/costa-rica-an-army-less-nation-in-a-problem-prone-region/>

<sup>128</sup> Bowman, 209.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Costa Rica comparative development data <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/rankings.pdf>

<sup>131</sup> CIA, 378.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 659.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 348-351.