



## INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

### Civilians Get a Foot in the Door: Reforming Brazil's Defense Ministry

In 2007, more than two decades after the end of military rule, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva began to build Brazil's Ministry of Defense into an institution that would give civilians a significant role in defense policy. He appointed retired Chief Justice Nelson Jobim to head the ministry and forge cooperation in setting defense priorities. Together with his military adviser, General Sérgio Etchegoyen, Jobim led implementation of the key recommendations that flowed from this effort. Civilians and officers collaborated around the development and regular updating of a new National Strategy of Defense. Jointly-developed policy documents began to guide internal operations. Service in the defense ministry and cooperation with civilian defense officials became essential parts of an officer's career path. Creation of a Joint Staff improved cooperation among the service branches. By the end of Lula's presidency in 2011, key tasks remained and civilians were still proportionally a small part of the defense ministry staff, but military officers routinely collaborated with civil servants, elected political leaders, and outside experts.

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*Brazilian Defense Minister Nelson Jobim at the Ministry of Defense.*

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## Four other ISS case studies on expanding civilian oversight

A two-part study of [Indonesia](#) details how a group of reform-minded military leaders and a civil society organization played vital roles in redefining the relationship between the armed forces and civilian government after three decades of military rule.

[Chile](#) restructured its defense ministry and hired civilians to manage tasks long controlled by military officers, twenty years after the fall of Augusto Pinochet's military regime.

Five years after the end of [Croatia's](#) war for independence, a new government battled opposition from conservative members of the armed forces to introduce civilian oversight, downsize a bloated postwar military, and prepare their country for membership in NATO and the EU.

One-party rule in [Taiwan](#) ended with the election of Chen Shui-Bian as president in 2000. Despite military resistance and political challenges, Chen oversaw a sharp increase in the number of nonmilitary personnel in the defense ministry and the creation of new opportunities for civilian influence over defense policy.

### ISS Featured Interview

In his 2015 interview with ISS, [Lieutenant General \(Ret.\) Agus Widjojo](#) of the Indonesian National Armed Forces discusses the process of military reform, the difficulties encountered removing the military from the political process, and the progress still to be made. He also describes the long and complicated process of developing a model for a functional civilian-military divide and how to designate responsibility within that split.

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