The term *autogolpe*, or self-coup, now appears to be a permanent part of the lexicon of Latin American affairs and US–Latin American relations, following the decision by democratically elected President Alberto Fujimori to close down the institutions of representative government in Peru on 5 April 1992. As if the drug issue, a growing and vicious insurgency, and a depressed economy were not enough, on that day Peru was faced with yet another crisis, this one with major repercussions for countries of the region that had grown confident that democratic government was around for good.

The issues raised by the crisis of Peruvian democracy and the international community's response to it are many and varied and they cannot be separated from developments of Peru's past and the history of US–Latin American relations. Believing the time was right for examining the country's political and economic system within the context created by the *autogolpe*, the Latin American Program convened a major conference, “Peru: Democracy in Crisis and the International Community,” at the Woodrow Wilson Center on 1 and 2 June 1993. The chapters of this volume are the revised papers commissioned for the meeting, coupled with edited transcripts of the remarks made by the commentators.

In addressing the issues, we particularly wanted to allow Peruvians themselves to express their views on the challenges facing their country and on the appropriate response of the international community. We sought to provide some of Peru's leading scholars and analysts with an opportunity to exchange their views on three key issues: the prospects for democracy, civil-military relations, and the state of the economy. Therefore, while some of the commentary is provided by North Americans, the six main chapters of this book are the original work of Peruvian experts. For the introduction we
turned to Carol Graham, a visiting fellow at the World Bank, who provides an excellent analysis of the events and issues covered in this volume. We are particularly pleased that such an excellent group of Peruvians, as well as Peruvianists from Washington, DC, and other parts of the hemisphere, were able to join the program in what proved to be a most informative event.

These chapters have been substantially revised since the conference with use of the comments and discussion provided at the meeting. We hope the volume will contribute to the ongoing scholarly and policy debate on the democratic crisis within Peru and throughout the international community.

Of course, the production of this, the final product, required the excellent work of the program’s staff. Gary Bland, senior program associate and coeditor of the volume, organized the conference, served as a moderator, and prepared the manuscript. The program’s two associates, Bernice Romero and Allison Garland, were tremendously helpful in ensuring a successful conference. Lucy Hetrick, program assistant, also was most helpful in organizing the meeting.

Joseph S. Tulchin