



THEMATIC LINE 2: MUTUAL TRUST ON THE AMERICAN CONTINENT

SUB-THEME 2B: THE ROLE OF DEFENSE BOOK AS A MEASURE OF MUTUAL TRUST

SPEAKER: BOLIVIA

Introduction

I must begin by thanking the Secretariat of National Defense of Mexico, for the document “The Role of the Defense Book as a Means of Mutual Trust” that has contributed to the work of the Rapporteur, who quotes three paragraphs that synthesize the prolegomenon to the issue at hand.

“The role of the Book of National Defense, is that of an instrument that develops as a means to foster confidence and security, as per the 1998 Declaration of San Salvador, that determines the importance of promoting the exchange of information with the publication of these books or official documents.”

“These books include, in general terms, information regarding the legal framework that supports the role of the Armed Forces in the framework of security and national defense, organic structure and participation in civil society, as well as their operating budget.”

“The parallel evolution of the Armed Forces and society, leads to an understanding that National defense is forcefully a matter of State, even though the concrete decisions that may be taken in the area of defense policies are no exempt of controversy, it is important to recognize the degree of social and political consensus that has been reached in the past few years.”

These concepts essentially coincide with the conclusions reached at the international seminar on defense white books, that took place in La Paz in April 2001.¹ The following is a **summary** of the conclusions reached.

First. On the political consensus processes for the elaboration of the defense white books: Defense policies must become one with State policies, as well as any other public policies, with the legitimacy granted by civil society, government and the Armed Forces majority support. The book on defense is not an end by itself, but a means to explicitly submit defense policies conceived as a social and institutional structure that must be frequently updated.

¹ “White Books on Defense: Political consensus and comparative strategic design”, La Paz, Bolivia, April 18-20, 2001. With the participation of experts and scholars from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Spain, United States, Guatemala, England and South Africa.



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Second. On the modernization of defense policies and the Armed Forces: Defense policies must adapt to the trends, processes and events occurring around the world and in our region and at the same time adapt to the reforms taking place in the State, in order to be coherent with the internal processes of the country.

Third: On the context and contents of the defense white books: The White Books must divulge policies with social consensus. Foreign defense and domestic security must complement each other, although it was observed that domestic security implies a complex process that must be treated with utmost severity, bearing in mind the political role of the Armed Forces in the past. The Seminar recommended that the white books include the manner in which the Armed Forces will participate in solving environmental problems, in peacekeeping operations, road construction in border areas, in prevention and rescue operations during natural disasters, and in providing humanitarian assistance.

Fourth: On defense culture: The acculturation process on defense must be sustained on democratic values, transparent information between the State, society and the Armed Forces, on historic values and the openness of the Armed Forces towards society and vice versa. Platform defense culture builds legitimacy for the Armed Forces upon which it is built a strategic appreciation in the value of the national security strategy and of the responsibilities of the civil society and the State. The search for military prestige is not an end by itself, rather it seeks democratic integration of society with the structure of defense and its permanent capacity to respond to national emergencies.

Pending Debates

A complete reading of the original conclusions document² shows that the following issues, which are part of an inter-related group, require further debate.

- Definitions and outlines of **Security and Defense** concepts.
- Defense Ministry and Armed Forces structures suitability to adapting to the **new threats against national security**, such as –among others- drug-trafficking, the threat of which increases in direct proportion to poverty, which in turn increases at the same ratio as the economic crisis affecting several countries in the region.
- Modernization of the Armed Forces: poses the dilemma: **modernization vs. arms build-up.**

Security and Defense: Before and After

Before going on with this account, it should be illustrative to remember the April 2001 environment in which the La Paz Seminar was taking place. A distinguished speaker described it by saying: “I will begin by defining the environment in which we are operating.

² Ibidem



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Along the conferences we did listen so far we recognize a number of concerns which the peoples have for their security today. In the past, concerns were focused on the State itself, on its integrity, frontiers, sovereignty, the nation-state, the enemy nations and global stability. **But due to the peace in which we live, we no longer have such type of worries and international stability keep us quiet tranquil”.**

Barely five months after the description of such peaceful atmosphere, the security international foundations we used to know were cracked by the abrupt changes occurred within the realm of security and national defense, since the treacherous attack perpetrated inside a friendly country, on September 11th.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall it was already difficult to separate security and defense concepts. After September both concepts were intertwined in a symbiosis: though different, each one depends on the other and neither is solely national defense or exclusively national security.

This occurs, for instance, when confronted to terrorism, which is the worst threat to world peace and security. Security and Defense, also intertwine when it comes to preventing or subduing one of the most destructive expressions of terrorism, which is funded by illegal drug-trafficking: narco-terrorism. The latter is a peace and domestic security enemy. Supported by drug trafficking great fortunes, narco-terrorism has already begun its attacks in some countries, such as Bolivia. Drug trafficking undetected snakes into normal daily activities, by disguising its attack as a protest of a population sector, taking advantage of popular discontent aggravated by poverty.

In order to prevent or repel the attack, military defense forces detached from security systems are not enough, they must act together. Their actions must be supported by the courts and, **“special laws that will allow us to access the funding sources to smother them”**, as stated two months ago by the Minister of Defense of Spain, Federico Trillo-Figueroa³, when referring to terrorism in the world after September 11th, 2001. The rapporteur borrows the idea quoted above to apply it to narco-terrorism, in view that the lack of control of the international financial system represents –at least in terms of drug-trafficking- a very serious threat to State security. The rapporteur also quotes from Mr. Trillo-Figueroa the following concept, where he substitutes terrorism by narco-terrorism:

“We need the State to revoke any law that may benefit social organizations that support **narco-terrorism**, by outlaw them; we need the cooperation of international police and intelligence services and the creation of special international police units to detect their international connections.”

³ “Seguridad y lucha contra el terrorismo”, *Política Exterior* magazine, Madrid, September, 2002.



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New Threats and Risks to Peace

The strength of facts has registered drug trafficking and its hidden aftermath, narco-terrorism in the **“new agenda” of risks and threats that shares with the “historic agenda”**. These agendas were mentioned by Michelle Bachelet⁴, Minister of Defense of Chile, when she states that “we are facing a reorganization of the international system. Globalization increased transnational phenomena, has brought with it a correlative increase in the conflicts they bring.” Dr. Bachelet states “I refer to the group of international problems that were taken as the **“new threats”** during the 90’s: environmental degradation, **drug trafficking**, migrations or international delinquency. In this sense the international agenda has broadened.”

The **view on the new threats presented by drug-trafficking, its activities and related effects**, i.e., money laundering, corruption, violence, alliances with terrorism, **control of rural and urban territories**, and the growing **transnationalization** of this phenomena, shows a shared concern by defense institutions, already stated in the white books in Germany, Canada, USA, France and the United Kingdom⁵. For instance, Canada “...sees the important challenges posed by its great expanse and resources for illegal activities. **This is applicable to illegal trade of narcotics and other substances.**” Another example: *Le Livre Blanc sur la Defense*, from France sustains **“Drug trafficking constitutes a threat for public health, for the sovereignty of the Nations and the international community**, since drug trafficking is an extension of conflicts, a feeding ground for **guerrilla and terrorist movements.**”

A study submitted in August of this year by Professor Stain⁶, states that in the Republic of Argentina, as of mid-90’s, government and military leadership started underscoring military participation in the conspiracy in the so called new threats and, specifically in drug-trafficking and terrorism...”, “...in the operational area, as well as in the area of information and intelligence.” Said study suggests that these issues were widely debated during the preparation process of the “Defense Review 2001”, as a complementary document to the White Book. The same study suggests that the debate will continue on “the resolution of the dilemma: modernization vs. arms build-up, in order to allow all countries –in reasonable proportion- to have armed forces capable of operating on the basis of cooperative balance, when political security systems thus require it”⁷.

⁴ “*Libros de la defensa, consolidación democrática y seguridad regional*”, master conference, international seminar, *Libros de la defensa nacional...*” Quito, May 23rd, 2002.

⁵ View of threats in white books of defense, www.isen.gov.ar

⁶ El “Libro Blanco de la Defensa Nacional en la Argentina. Logros y desafíos de la política de defensa y militar Argentina en los comienzos del milenio”, Marcelo Fabián Stain. Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, REDES, 2002, Brasilia, August 7-10, 2002.

⁷ “*La defensa en la sub-región*”, Luis Tibiletti, First Symposium on Security and Defense of the CHDS Club – Argentina, Buenos Aires, April 2001.



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What has been stated thus far, is far from being a summary of all the studies and opinions on the “new agenda” regarding risks and threats against the Defense and Security of each nation and all nations herein represented. However, the rapporteur believes that what has been mentioned, in spite of its limitations is sufficiently eloquent in order to bring forth new debates regarding the need to include in the white books of defense explicit articles on these issues in order to promote mutual trust between the Nations in the American continent.

The Defense books

We know that, in simple terms a White Book is the expression of the focus each Nation has on its defense and the means to insure its sovereignty in the current international cooperation process. To participate in this process and bearing in mind the aforementioned new risks and threats, the white books would also have to define in a broader fashion the concept of national security in order to focus, as well, on the transnational threats to the nations’ security.

In essence, a defense policy expresses a State policy because it comprises a public conduct that represents the Nation’s interests and is in agreement with the concept of national security. From this statement we must agree that in order to include this public policy, explicitly in a White Book, the starting point may be provided by the Executive or the Legislative, or also a foreign policy, for example, from an international organization. After the initial boost, as Doctor Hayes states “it is the people who must take responsibility for the design of the defense policy that governs the Armed Forces and security forces as well, for these are simply an instrument of the State created by the people.”⁸

The term security is unavoidably repeated in these statements because, as Doctor Hayes stated⁹, the Defense White Book is a hot issue in Latin America and the majority of the countries within Latin America are preparing one, and one of its principal components is the definition of security. “Currently, the discussion is if security refers to State security or that of the individual... The trend is to seek the security of the individual in a stable environment”. And she adds: “A White Book defines a broad framework for policies, a vision of what we want to achieve and of the context and importance of these issues for society and not for the government that will implement these policies.”

In view of all the facts mentioned thus far, it is evident that if those responsible for the defense books wish them to be an instrument to create mutual confidence, they must incorporate the policies to be followed by the State to face the new threats against its sovereignty, the security of its citizens and international stability.

⁸ “La educación de la defensa para civiles y militares. Avances y perspectivas en el Hemisferio”, Margaret Daly Hayes, PhD, “International seminar on defense white books”, La Paz, April, 2001.

⁹ “Seminario sobre el libro de la defensa nacional. Perspectivas...”, inaugural speech, Margaret Daly Hayes, PhD, Quito, May 20-22, 2002.



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An analysis of the risks posed by terrorism in its different expressions, such as those stated so far and the illegal available financial sources, leads us to fear non-military threats to the security of our nations. These exploit the national weaknesses, such as economic crisis and poverty. These threats are made easier and stimulated by globalization of trade and communications and must be kept in mind at the time of defining defense and citizen security strategies, so that they provide trust between the nations of the Hemisphere.

There is no model to prepare the defense white books. There are certain areas of comparison between the nations of the Hemisphere, aside from the common threats and risks, however, each nation's idiosyncrasies and the different government goals do not allow a single perspective.

There are however positive aspects. It is heartening to mention a favorable atmosphere to draft white books as tools for trust building between our countries. As per SIPRI's report in the period between 1990-2000, there were only four major armed conflicts¹⁰. Latin America is the world's only region where armed conflicts diminished during that decade, to the point where there currently is only one conflict, in Colombia, whereas Bolivia is trying to neutralize the threat of a domestic conflict with similar origins and features.

Another positive aspect is in the progress achieved in the region during the last two decades. Democracy in the region brought with it a process of easing of tension unknown in the region until such time. The application of measures that would lead to mutual trust and an active Defense Diplomacy made a strong mark, to the point where now-a-days we may boast that the chances of a conflict between nations is highly unlikely. The Central American security treaties, the signing of the Tlatelolco Treaty by all the members of the OAS, the peaceful resolution of conflicts between Argentina and Chile, Brazil and Argentina, Peru and Ecuador, prove that the consolidation of peaceful co-existence is possible in the bilateral as well as in the multilateral framework.

Nevertheless, such an encouraging background, as Dr. Klepak¹¹ said, "does not mean a fantastic panorama; that there are no problems: Colombia, presently (April 2001) has differences with its neighbours; relationship between Cuba and the USA is difficult; doubtless, Bolivia also has problems with a neighbour." These problems stem from the Bolivian territory landlocked situation. This situation did worry and continues worrying the OAS members who consider that Bolivia's landlocked situation resolve shall constitute a restoration of Justice. To reach to that resolution Bolivia continues to persevere in following the diplomatic way.

¹⁰ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Yearbook 2001. Armaments, Disarmaments, and International Security, Oxford University Press, 2001.

¹¹ Dr. Hal P. Klepak "Post cold-war international strategic panorama and hemispheric security and defense: Risks and challenges", International seminar, La Paz, op.cit.



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In spite of the noteworthy progress in the Hemisphere in terms of overcoming potential conflicts and the implementation of trust-building measures, this region is far from achieving growth that is free from the new threats that come from within and outside our territories.

We in Bolivia believe that the publication of the Defense White Books can communicate the peaceful nature of our countries to the region and the world.

Although only a few countries in the hemisphere have published their Defense Books, it is gratifying to see that the number of those who have begun the process of preparing their Defense Books –among those Bolivia- has increased. Currently the region not only understands but also considers imperative to design new Security Policies for the hemisphere. We believe that if there is social instability in the region, this is partly due to the fact that we have not reached a consensus on how to face the new common threats.

Obviously, the White Books will not provide a road map to avoid, neutralize or eliminate latent threats in the region. However, the moral concepts, the attitudes and guiding principles of the Armed Forces of a Country, of its government and of its people may be reflected in a White Book and summarize its spirit, its *ethos*, which can provide us indicators regarding a country's position in the international scenery. But more importantly, it will provide a splendid opportunity to think again regarding the traditional concept of defense.

A White Book must offer assurance to its own people and to that of the neighboring countries. The provision of human security is part of the State's responsibilities, that is to say the guarantee that will allow citizens to carry on their daily activities with the reassurance that they are protected against any danger.

At the same time the White Book must reassure neighboring and regional communities regarding the steadfastness with which the State assumes the democratic values, the respect to human rights, its disposition for the peaceful solution of controversies and its compliance with international law.

On the other hand, the region's integrating drive, irregardless of the path it takes, must become an integral part of a country's calling in order to contribute to the development of our societies.

The above does not intend to preach about what must be included or not in a White Book, but is a perspective regarding the philosophy that could become the driving force of the experiences of many of the representatives gathered in this conference, some of whom are contributing to the drafting of the Defense Books of their own countries.



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With that philosophic vein, maybe we agree that such book should be the honest expression of the geo-political needs of our countries, its medium and long-term objectives, as well as each country's strategy to translate its policies into sustainable actions that will endure in time.

If we really wish to make our White Book a trustworthy document, that is applicable, we must discuss thorny issues for our neighbours and ourselves. Each participating country wishes to achieve its security and defense objectives. What we don't know are the exact conditions that will lead to achieving this purpose. Some countries in our region cannot bridge the gap that exists between their objectives and the material means with which to implement them. Ideally, the countries affected by these concerns should study them jointly in order to identify the elements they consider suitable to reach fair solutions.

For this purpose, probably far-reaching policies would be discussed to overcome our differences with our neighbours, setting a similar path for our foreign policies and proposing honest and applicable strategies for each issue. All of this, while maintaining the *ethos* of respect to international law and the search for peaceful solutions for controversies.

In order to draft policies that are sustainable in time, we will necessarily have to discuss serious reforms within the Armed Forces, asking ourselves what kind of Armed Forces we wish for the future, and more importantly, what means we are willing to use to reach our objectives.

If we intend for the White Book to become the vector of strategic priorities, it must necessarily address these issues as well as reforms in military education, following long-term strategies to train our military resources and specially the civil society.

Training of civilians in defense matters is the most important issue to reduce and neutralize threats arising from within our own countries.

No objective will be reached without a genuine political will, a commitment and leadership that emanates from the structures of power, in the hands of civilians. Those who are in power must propose attainable objectives, not those *desired*, in order for the White Book not to become an anodyne document. Thus, possible objectives will be the core of those policies that the State has the genuine capacity to carry out and will to put into practice and of long-term sustainability.

The challenge is home. An effective way to fight against the general feeling of insecurity in a country is to respond to the challenge from within. The architecture of security in the hemisphere will be the result of the ideas each Country has with regard to this issue.



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We will believe we have traveled a long way if we establish, as a basis for this process, respect for the democratic values reflected in the White Book, as a summary of reasonable policies within our countries and respectful of our neighbours' rights.

We believe that as long as we follow these guiding principles, regardless of our strategic needs, our White Books will be trustworthy and we will share a common language with the other countries of the hemisphere, when the time comes to set one common security policy within the Inter-American system.

Such a common security policy should enable our region both to have a voice of its own and to make its external policy credible. And, the existence of an external policy shall make an economic policy sustainable. But, the one-ness of our economic policy shall not be reached by having it just on paper but with concrete steps first creating a factual solidarity to materialize in trade exchange terms. Let us remember the European Community was not made in one strike but throughout many trials and failures within the realms of economics, finance and culture. The search for completeness and mutual support between our economies shall contribute to diminish the Latin American economic model vulnerability to international crisis.

The chain of facts on the above paragraph start from a common security policy hypothetical paradigm of our countries. Lacking of such policy Latin America is not on the international security new agenda. Having such policy we will have a cohesive factor to help mature other common policies which at their time shall give substance, credibility and vitality to our white books.