



V CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE LAS AMERICAS

SANTIAGO DE CHILE 18 AL 22 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2002

THEMATIC LINE 1: REGIONAL SECURITY AT THE ONSET OF THE 21ST CENTURY

SUB-THEME 1C: CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN THE PREVENTION AND CONTAINMENT OF CONFLICTS

SPEAKER: ECUADOR

BORDER COOPERATION IN THE PREVENTION AND CONTAINMENT OF CONFLICTS

This conference marks itself as a moment in the process of fully reaching the strategic visions of the states before a changing world and helps the consolidation of relations and institutional exchanges between the ministers of defense and the armed forces of our countries in front of new challenges y regional conflicts that weigh upon our continental, regional, and local security.

The last world order, a period known as the “Cold War,” ruled in the world since the end of World War II and was marked by a clear political, economic, and ideological confrontation characterized by the confrontation between the two great blocks that disputed, outside of their territory, the domination of the world. The strategical environment was evident being identified with absolute clarity by their area of influence, political and geographical space, and by the interventionist actors. These risk factors were clearly determined and clearly predictable. Nuclear dissuasion and equilibrium of the powers was the predominant political strategy of world security.

In this manner was configured the world power dynamic and the superpowers worried themselves with constructing alliances, especially in those geographical areas they considered to be of strategical interest. Moreover, they were determined to try to equalize and top the armed potential of their adversaries.

In this context, Latin America was not a strategical priority of the superpowers, constituting a peripheral and secondary region where its role and importance took root in the space of contention, prohibition, and neutralization of the face of the ideology of “real socialism.” Thanks to this, the American states formed a part of the continental security structure supported in the “collective security,” in which every state, being a component of the system, felt protected by the “Tratado Interamericano de Asistencia Reciproca” (TIAR), a defensive superstructure. Nevertheless, before the conclusion of the Cold War this system demonstrated problems in its interpretation and above all, its application.



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SANTIAGO DE CHILE 18 AL 22 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2002

The Cold War ended with the bipolar order of this confrontation and established a new strategic scenario characterized by new paradigms, placing the world in a transition process in which new rules are still continuing to be structured and restructured. In this way, the systems and conceptions of security and defense of the necessary countries should be adapted to the new imperative strategies.

We are in an epic of profound changes in this world, changes which strike upon the lives of human beings, organizations, and states. This new situation is framed by accelerated globalization determined by a complete interdependence that includes economic, social, political, environmental, military, and other, processes. This has modified the scene, the regional equilibriums, geopolitical conceptions, ways of life, values, and notions of security and defense.

This new scenario, began to suffer profound transformations and the opening of markets multiplied the wealth and possibilities for development of countries. The best events that mark this period have been: the consolidation of the Democratic system of government; the promotion and respect of the values and principles related to human rights; the consciousness of the importance of sustainable development; the preoccupation with the eradication of the poor and discriminated; the search and maintainment of peace, and the integration of regional and free markets as the dominant economic model.

Even though the great expectations of this transformation, that the world has experimented, the disenchantments of this “new order,” characterized by the economic multi-polarity, started and became evident. The actual model requires as basic conditions free trade, competitiveness, and technological development. Even though world wealth has shown a notable increase, the beneficiaries have been relatively small groups. Consequently, poor countries find themselves bad positions to confront the challenges of globalization.

The region has shown that is interested in renovating the security system that would allow countries to benefit from better reach and coverage, in order to construct a regional peace that would diminish the possibility that in the immediate future that would produce conventional conflicts between states that would diminish the possibility in the immediate future of conventional conflicts between the states, and would fuel (develop) a base for mutual trust and confidence.



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SANTIAGO DE CHILE 18 AL 22 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2002

The members of the Comunidad Andina have reaffirmed their compromise with a maintainment of peace, the renouncement of the use of force, the peaceful solution to controversies, the respect to international rights and the putting into practice of the community policy of security and trustfulness, in the context of a Democratic conception and not against external security, and based on the following principles: respect to the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of each of its member states, no intervention in internal affairs, protection of human rights, preservation of the rights of states and democracy as the system of government, respect to international obligations and adhesion to the system of collective security of the United Nations and the American States Organization.

The preoccupation and exposed platforms of all themes have been received also by our country. From our perspective the significant changes that show National Security fall upon the conception and application, thanks fundamentally to the birth of new threats, like the following:

At the external level:

- The negative effects of Columbia's internal conflict, which unfortunately has effected the security of the border zone, whose consequences are related to the increase of displaced people and refugees, high indexes of urban-rural violence, like illegal actions related to the conduct of force within the letter of the law.
- The drug trafficking and organized crime, considered as "Threatens in red," whose actions cause a systemized series of events that each time make security and defense more vulnerable, causing a trafficking of precursors, arms, influx of illicit money, violence and other related crimes. These bad things have spoiled the state role, generating parallel structures that wear down the constitutional legitimacy.
- The lack of regional strategical balance, characterized by the eventual asymmetric development of military power, and voluntary political intervention, would be able to generate imbalances that convert themselves into potential threats to the sovereignty of nations. Nevertheless, every state is sovereign to maintain its military instruments according to their priorities and defensive necessities.
- Terrorism in all its manifestations, not acts of specifically military character, but actions that use easy tricks and techniques to cause damage to other objects. Their final objective is not to win a strategical victory but only to terrorize the civil population. The solution is not exclusively warlike because the most powerful factor of these attacks is psychological.



V CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE LAS AMERICAS

SANTIAGO DE CHILE 18 AL 22 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2002

At the internal level:

- The economic crisis that affects the development of the country and normally generates social conflict.
- The impact of poverty and the deterioration of quality of life debilitates the foundations of social development and hurts the principal productive force of the country, the same that sustains the laboral capacity of its habitants.
- The corruption in all its forms is evidence of a fundamental crisis of political representation, eroding the institution of the State and the legitimacy of public management of the country, sacrificing the resources of the nation to the interests of the unproductive sectors that degrade the morale and the confidence of citizens in the institutions and their representatives.
- The uncontrolled migration, resulting in the perception of social and economic insecurity that dominates the country constitutes a factor of disequilibrium against national integrity and the potential productivity and culture of the coming generations. This is a factor that debilitates the national economic being, generates social and cultural conflicts, disunites the familiar group, and at the same time permits the surge of activity in illicit human trafficking.
- The governmental conflicts, characterized by the inefficiency of the exercising of governmental action, the lack of control, the badly directed management in the public sector, the little information and transparent procedures/processes, the generating of conflicts that can lead into crisis, striking negatively the democratic stability.
- The ethnic and cultural conflicts, like the tendencies of the exacerbated autonomists, that generate confrontations with others comprise with the development of the country and the requirements of a united nation.

Before these newly presented conditions in the international stage, the asymmetric threats and regional disequilibriums, make it necessary to develop an effective cooperation with our states framed in the normative advances of international rights, the cooperative security and the interstate cooperation agreements.

In this context Ecuador reiterates its respect to international rights, related to the keeping of treaties, not intervening in other countries internal affairs, respect to the sovereignty of states and the prohibition of the use or threat of force as a resolution to conflicts. In this way, it (Ecuador) orients its efforts to fulfill the established accords of the Conferencias de Ministros de Defensa de las Américas, the same that shelter in priority: the preservation of democracy; the strengthening of military-civil relations; the increase of the Measures for the Promotion of Confidence and Security; and the integration of forces in the fight against drug trafficking.



V CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE LAS AMERICAS

SANTIAGO DE CHILE 18 AL 22 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2002

On the other hand, and according to the evolution of international relations in the last three decades, the possibility of interstate conflicts that go reducing the growths in the process of cooperation stimulated by the establishment of strong economic, commercial, and social ties, by the development of multinational schemes of integration, and by enormous advances in communication and the circulation of good people and ideas between nations.

Before this new world order, a country considers the cooperative regional security as an alternative that actually makes suitable the process of integration and consists of the anticipated performance in conflicts, through the establishment of diplomatic mechanisms and multilateral military levels, tending to limit or neutralize the causes that they generate, privileging the "prevention" of themselves, incorporating in this manner new threats in the public discussion, and signifies a change of attitude in the dynamic that has traditionally characterized military-civil relations, that from our perspective should respond to a vision of arranged/coordinated social security.

In the frame of the Declaration of Santiago and the resolutions of the OEA, Ecuador fully supports the frontier cooperation in the prevention and contention of conflicts.

Additionally, Ecuador imagines security as a central condition of human beings, above the base of government and development, what it induces it is, to abandon military exclusivity, to pass to be multidisciplinary, embracing all camps and areas of national and international coexistence.

These notions of Cooperative Security should enrich and develop the agreement of the hemispheric security forces and position new compromises and institutional structures in the construction of new schemes of security imperative to the sub regional strategies. Accords and strategical sub regional considerations.

To reach what's expressed the Ecuadorian state, with the participation of political, social, and economic actors and militaries of the society has designed politics to preserve the judicial order, sovereignty, territorial integrity, free exercise of constitutional rights, peace, civic tranquility and well-being, in order to reach and maintain a good general public.

These processes of international cooperation require, to be sustained, policies which favor environmental, diplomatic, and military conditions that ensure certainty and security in their administration. This means that in addition to the security cooperative that has been given, its important to set an integrated cooperation system that that allows easier amplification and consolidation of the independence dynamic, a fact that affects with more intensity to the bi-national frontiers.

All of these small goals are steps, composed of communication, exchange of information, exchange of professional knowledge, combined military exercises, strict adherence to past agreements, dual civil-military meetings between representatives of defense and international affairs, in the spirit of the agreements, are all part of these processes.



V CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE LAS AMERICAS

SANTIAGO DE CHILE 18 AL 22 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2002

It is important also to look for a deep, effective, and clear implementation of the registry of conventional arms and standard international control of military spending that would involve all nations.

Conceptually, the methods of development of mutual confidence and security establish systems of direct and efficient communication that are aimed at the reduction and nullification of potential tensions; establishing predictable procedure processes, that look to avoid surprises that generate decisions that could generate crisis.

Also comprised is the control of actions, that should establish revised norms rules in the acquisition and production of armaments. These methods include close analysis of importation and use, like those used to monitor the development of technologies with potential military use.

All of the above should link itself to a narrow relation of Mutual Confidence, and Frontier Cooperation and Security. Ecuador has clearly pronounced a multidimensional focus on security, the same as it has been said, that includes social, political, economical, environmental, and help aspects.

On the same line of analysis, we should consider a military aspect: the strengthening of actions in order to prevent incidents and increase the security of the air, sea, and land travel; the development of communication between civil and military authorities that share a border; the strengthening of the National Center of Border Control in order to better control the customs, migration, arms, chemical precursors and other actions and contain and diminish the possibilities of conflict. In this manner countries can share systems of developed frontier vigilance with the final goal of obtaining common benefits.

Additionally, the social factor cannot be underestimated: the productive and commercial development on the borders fringes give indispensable support so that the levels of prevention along the established diplomatic and military boundaries can be efficient, moreover, the populations of the borders have established cooperative ties between each other.

If we all maintain this uncertainty, the poor and reduced institutional presence on the part of states in the border zones the basic structure of the frontier cooperation in the prevention and containment of conflicts is fragil and runs potential risks. Because of this it is of central importance to solicit the fulfillment of offerings of international help in order to develop those regions and urge international cooperation on promises of external help.

The regional security demands frontier cooperation between states that consider, together with the impulse for economic and political development and an increase in commercial trade, the guarantee of effective exercising of actions for security and national defense and control of the territorial spaces fastened to the sovereign state important, especially along critical frontiers.



V CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE LAS AMERICAS

SANTIAGO DE CHILE 18 AL 22 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2002

All of the above expressed in other contexts, where the Frontier Cooperation in the Prevention and Containment of Conflicts has consolidated states in the border areas, the focus of social and economic development becomes central to laying the foundation of political processes and fluid diplomatic and military cooperation. The international help fills an important role in these aspects, especially in places where old interstate conflicts has been resolved and where the international cooperation has offered means to cement the social and economic aspects of peace.

Ecuador proposes that South America should design a system of security above the base interstate mechanisms, relations, and associations, and should have a multilateral cooperative and solitary focus, strengthened by the mechanisms framed in the “Tratado Interamericano de Asistencia Reciproca” (TIAR) the “Grupo de Rio”, “La Comunidad Andina de Naciones” and others. In consideration to the strategic dimension of the “Cuenca Amazonica” and the peculiarities of the conflicts of land, as in the case with our “Subregion y Triple Frontera en el Cono Sur.”

The Ecuadorian proposal has the desire to disconnect itself with the culture of violence inherited from external conflicts and connect itself with the good offices that plant themselves in the circle of the Commission of Continental Security. To crystallize this desire, on the one hand to take big steps to confront the crisis before us, and on the other hand to reorient the continent and the hemispheric security) and Reciprocal Assistance, required as a result of new state demands.

Finally, la Cooperacion Fronteriza en la Prevencion y Contencion de Conflictos, the theme of this conference, is born in forgotten places, but filled with potential that constitute the first traits of a national identity, as a link to a homogenous country, called borders. The job of strengthening borders is a task for each state, and not only military presence in their surroundings will fertilize the present in order to pick up the fruits of future generations.