



**CONSENSUS OF THE CONFERENCES OF MINISTERS  
OF DEFENSE OF THE AMERICAS**

**Managua, October 2006**



## VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE LAS AMERICAS

### INTRODUCTION

The intention of the document “Consensus of the Conferences of Ministers of Defense of the Americas” is to order a list of principles and agreements that have been adopted and reiterated at the six meetings prior to the VII CDMA. These have been broadly discussed, from Williamsburg to Quito, and are fully supported and accepted by the Ministers of Defense of the hemisphere, as stated in the final declarations of the aforesaid conferences.

In the context of the Seventh Conference of Ministers of Defense of the Americas, the central objective of this instrument is to facilitate the treatment and debate of the themes on the Thematic Agenda, to provide a baseline reference for the opening statements of the Ministers of Defense and to streamline the contents and approval of the Final Declaration.

In short, the consensus previously reached will allow the delegates to optimize time by avoiding the discussion of those aspects that have already been agreed upon at the previous conferences and in respect of which there is already a common shared hemispheric vision.

The following is a list of the consensus topics reached in the six prior conferences. The order in which the consensus are listed is not meant to convey any hierarchy of importance or connotation.

### CONSENSUSES OF THE CONFERENCES OF MINISTERS OF DEFENSE OF THE AMERICAS FROM WILLIAMSBURG, 1995 TO QUITO, 2004

1. The preservation of democracy and democratic institutions is vital for the stability, peace, security and the development of the hemispheric member states, according to the principles, values and mechanisms of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.<sup>1</sup>
2. The firm adherence to the principles and the rule of international law enshrined in the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), including self-determination, territorial integrity, non-intervention, pacific and negotiated solution of controversies and the right to self-defense as essential principles of the hemispheric security.<sup>2</sup>
3. The principle of subordination of the military and public security forces to the democratically elected civil authorities.<sup>3</sup>
4. The public, democratic and transparent nature of security and defense policies and the norms of confidence and security promotion, contribute to keep peace and consolidate democracy among the States in the Region, particularly through the publication of White Papers and through the preparation and presentation of



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military expenditure reports in keeping with instruments developed by the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS) to that end.<sup>4</sup>

5. The security and defense of each state are the responsibility of the state and society as a whole, and not merely a responsibility of the military forces and public security forces and therefore, it is imperative to educate civilians in defense issues and to involve civilians and the armed forces in discussions concerning military matters.<sup>5</sup>
6. The existence of common concerns regarding cooperative hemispheric security and the importance of sub-regional realities, experiences, agreements and priorities in strategic contexts.<sup>6</sup>
7. Each State has the sovereign right to determine its own defense requirements and instruments to identify its own national security and defense priorities, according to its national legislation and with full respect for international law, principles of the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS).<sup>7</sup>
8. The need to implement educational and training programs that will allow the members of the military and public security forces to guarantee complete respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and thus contribute to strengthening democracy and the rule of law.<sup>8</sup>
9. To encourage all the nations of the hemisphere to actively and voluntarily interoperate and participate in peacekeeping operations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.<sup>9</sup>
10. To strengthen cooperation and support mechanisms for natural disaster prevention and mitigation.<sup>10</sup>
11. The region's commitment to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.<sup>11</sup>
12. Condemnation of all forms of terrorism, drug trafficking and related crimes, and transnational crime.<sup>12</sup>
13. To commend the progress made in the region on humanitarian demining, including the progress made toward implementation of the Ottawa Convention on the part of the states parties, and reaffirm our support to national programs and bilateral, subregional and regional agreements for integral action against antipersonnel landmines.<sup>13</sup>
14. The recognition of a multidimensional concept of security and the diverse traditional and non traditional threats facing hemispheric security.<sup>14</sup>



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15. The necessity of strengthening hemispheric cooperation mechanisms to face threats, respecting sub-regional and national realities and priorities.<sup>15</sup>
16. The principle of budget transparency and accountability is a core aspect of cooperation in matters of security and defense, therefore, the implementation of methodologies to measure defense expenditures is important as proof of mutual trust.<sup>16</sup>
17. The promotion of social, ethnic and gender equity among the armed forces.<sup>17</sup>
18. Cooperation in the implementation of policies set by the States for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, strategic assets and water basins.<sup>18</sup>
19. Cooperation in science, technology, training and defense industry in the Americas so as to contribute to regional security and defense and socioeconomic development of the hemisphere.<sup>19</sup>
20. Economic, social and cultural development are intimately linked to peace and security.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Williamsburg, 1995 (1); San Carlos de Bariloche, 1996 (1); Cartagena, 1998 (1); Manaus, 2000 (1); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (1); Quito, 2004 (1).

<sup>2</sup> San Carlos de Bariloche, 1996 (2); Cartagena, 1998 (8) (12); Manaus, 2000 (7); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (8) (16); Quito, 2004 (5) (14).

<sup>3</sup> Williamsburg, 1995 (3); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (3); Quito, 2004 (1).

<sup>4</sup> San Carlos de Bariloche, 1996 (3); Cartagena, 1998 (5); Manaus, 2000 (11) (12); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (22); Quito (4) (17).

<sup>5</sup> Manaus, 2000 (9); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (21); Quito, 2004 (3).

<sup>6</sup> Santiago de Chile, 2002 (18); Quito, 2004 (10) (13).

<sup>7</sup> Cartagena, 1998 (4); Manaus, 2000 (8); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (14); Quito, 2004 (5)

<sup>8</sup> Cartagena, 1998 (14); Manaus, 2000 (18); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (23); Quito, 2004 (28).

<sup>9</sup> Williamsburg, 1995 (6); San Carlos de Bariloche, 1996 (4); Cartagena, 1998 (7); Manaus, 2000 (14); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (19); Quito, 2004 (15).

<sup>10</sup> Cartagena, 1998 (2); Manaus, 2000 (17); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (24); Quito, 2004 (15).

<sup>11</sup> Manaus, 2000 (8); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (15); Quito, 2004 (9).

<sup>12</sup> Cartagena, 1998 (7) (11); Manaus, 2000 (15) (16); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (6) (25); Quito, 2004 (9) (26).



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- <sup>13</sup> Santiago de Chile, 2002 (9); Quito, 2004 (2).
- <sup>14</sup> Santiago de Chile, 2002 (9); Quito, 2004 (2).
- <sup>15</sup> San Carlos de Bariloche, 1996 (3); Manaus, 2000 (13); Quito, 2004 (15).
- <sup>16</sup> Manaus, 2000 (19); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (22); Quito, 2004 (20).
- <sup>17</sup> Santiago de Chile, 2002 (25); Quito, 2004 (8).
- <sup>18</sup> Manaus, 2000 (17); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (24); Quito, 2004 (37).
- <sup>19</sup> Manaus, 2000 (17); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (24); Quito, 2004 (38).
- <sup>20</sup> Williamsburg, 1995 (5); Manaus, 2000 (11); Santiago de Chile, 2002 (4); Quito, 2004 (2).