



**XII** TWELFTH CONFERENCE  
OF DEFENSE MINISTERS  
OF THE AMERICAS

PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, OCTOBER 10-12 2016

## REPORT OF WORKING COMMITTEE

### THEMATIC AXIS I:

#### **Security and Defence of the Americas in a Changing International Environment: The Evolving Role of the Armed Forces**

**Moderator (Paraguay):** Colonel Nicolas Angel Narváez Retamozo

**Rapporteur (Colombia):** Mrs. Diana Maria Torres Garces

**Co-Rapporteur (Argentina):** -

**Co-Rapporteur (Barbados):** Commander Errington Shurland

**Co-Rapporteur (El Salvador):** Coronel Salvador Napoleón Contreras Dheming Cruz

**Co-Rapporteur (Mexico):** Brigadier General Roberto Claudio de Rosal Ibarra

### Participants

This group comprised delegates from Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela; and included participation from the following Observer delegations:

- William J Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (Perry Center);
- Regional Security System (RSS);
- Regional Center for Strategic Security Studies (CREES);
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC);and
- Inter-American Defence Board (IADB).

Presentations were done by the following:

- **William J Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (Perry Center):** The Perry Center representative explained that it was important to acknowledge the changes in the national, regional and global environment that were the driving forces to evolving role of the Armed Forces. He posed two critical questions:
  - i. Are we changing for the right reasons, that is, are we evolving through carefully developed policy, based on credible future threats; and
  - ii. Is it the right kind of change?

- **Regional Center for Strategic Security Studies (CREES):** The representative of CREES explained the importance of the military working with the civil authorities and suggested the following considerations:
  - i. Empowering of local civil authorities
  - ii. Enhancing Studies in Academia with the Inter-American Defence Board and other institutions
  - iii. Addressing the nature of international law as it is limited in dealing with some of these issue
- **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC):** The ICRC representative highlighted the importance of disseminating and integrating military procedure with international humanitarian law and other fundamental standards protecting life and dignity.
- **Brazil:** The delegate from Brazil made a presentation titled ‘Brazil’s decade of Major Event Security’.

**Key Issues Discussed** (summary of main issues discussed, and which countries/observers contributed)

- The importance of evolving role of the Armed Forces in addressing the changing security environment of the hemisphere.
- The distinct constitutional commitments governing the Armed Forces in the respective countries of the hemisphere.
- The importance of respect for sovereignty and national legislation.
- The definition of the concept of threats.
- Notwithstanding diverse national circumstances, there are common threats and country responses may differ. Collaboration could generate synergies for combating threats affecting the hemisphere.

**Conclusions** (main conclusions of discussions in respect of Thematic Axis I)

1. The Committee agreed that in the Spanish text of the Draft Declaration the use of the word ‘rol’ was more appropriate than ‘papel’ with reference to the role of the armed forces.
2. The role of the Armed Forces is subject to change in order to address the ever changing security environment.
3. The role of the Armed Forces to support domestic public security is determined by the national legislation, respect for the Constitution and the sovereignty of each country.
4. The definition of threat is one which requires extensive discussion, particularly in the current international environment.
5. The Committee agreed to address operative paragraph 17 in the Plenary.
6. The provisions of the Declaration should not be binding.

**Recommendations** (paragraphs for inclusion in draft Declaration of Port of Spain)

1. The creation of an Ad Hoc Working Group to examine and exchange experiences on the evolving role of the Armed Forces in defence and security. The results of this Working Group will be presented at the XIII CDMA in 2018.

Suggested Amendments to the Draft Declaration:

**“Their agreement to the establishment of an Ad Hoc Working Group to examine and exchange experience on the evolving role of the Armed Forces in defence and security. The result of which will be reported to the XIII CDMA in 2018.”**

2. The word ‘papel’ should be replaced by the word ‘rol’.

3. Suggested Amendment to Operative Paragraph 13

13. That they recognise the specific problems and challenges of developing states and the possibility of utilising the military in support of civil authorities in an effort to counter the growing incidents of transnational organised crime, including the illicit trade in small arms, drugs, humans and all other forms of trafficking. Similarly, they recognise the need for the need for the military of the aforementioned states to assist in areas of man-made and natural disasters, border control, cyber security and cyber defence, major event security, critical infrastructure protection, environmental protection and resilience and climate change adaptation.

4. The Committee agreed based on a reservation from Nicaragua that paragraph 17 Rev1 (paragraph 16 Rev2) be revised in the Plenary. Nicaragua explained that it was not party to the treaties mentioned and therefore cannot accept the content of this paragraph.

16. Their renewed determination that Member States should prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trafficking in, the illegal use of, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons;

16. La renovación de su determinación de que los Países Miembros deben prevenir, combatir y erradicar el tráfico ilícito, uso ilegal y proliferación de las armas pequeñas y armas ligeras;

## Signature List

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Colonel Nicolas Angel Narváez Retamozo  
Moderator  
PARAGUAY

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Ms. Diana Maria Torres Garcés  
Rapporteur  
COLOMBIA

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Brigadier-General Roberto Claudio de Rosal Ibarra  
Co-Rapporteur  
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