



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

THEMATIC LINE “C”

MODERNIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE DEFENSE SECTOR INSTITUTIONS



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

SUB – THEME I

**INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING OF THE MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE:
CIVILIAN MANAGEMENT AND INTER-MINISTERIAL COOPERATION AT
REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL.**

RAPPORTEUR: EEUU
CO- RAPPORTEUR: PANAMA
MODERATOR: BOLIVIA



“BEST PRACTICES” IN STRENGTHENING MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

By Dr. Richard D. Downie

1. Introduction

As the Director of the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS), an institution that was established as a result of the initial meetings of the Defense Ministers of the Americas (DMA), I welcome this opportunity to share insights on strengthening Ministries of Defense (MODs) and inter-ministerial cooperation at the regional and sub-regional level.

Even during the first Defense Ministerial in Williamsburg, VA, in 1995, strengthening ministries of defense was an issue. By that time, most countries of this hemisphere had transitioned to representative democracy, but few civilians had acquired experience in directing and managing defense and security forces. In fact, most civilians in ministries of defense—when they could be found—wore a “visitor’s badge.” Authoritarian governments had generally seen no need for civilian officials who would influence the defense and security sector; and civilian professionals who had no opportunity to manage the security sector logically avoided defense studies.

Conversely, the circumstances of authoritarian rule did not expose military leaders to the normally stressful practices of a vibrant democratic society; for example, processing demands, resolving disputes, decision-making, allocating resources, and developing and implementing policies. Thus, both civilian and military leaders had much to learn about how to achieve national objectives in a democratic system.

Although the security and defense environment in this region has changed considerably, strengthening MODs remains a concern common to nearly all democracies. Today, the wide variety of responsibilities and tasks that fall upon the defense ministry includes but is not limited to the following: delineating appropriate roles and missions for civilian and military personnel amongst the ministry and the armed forces; developing defense strategy to support national level security policy; allocating ever-scarce defense resources (including the development and coordination of the defense portion of the national budget and allocation of resources among the ministry and each of the armed services) to implement defense policy and strategy; strategic communications and public relations; managing legitimate, effective intelligence systems; interagency coordination; defense acquisition; social decisions regarding the armed forces; control and oversight; the employment and rules of engagement of forces; and last but most assuredly not least, the establishment of performance indicators and measures of effectiveness to monitor progress toward the accomplishment of defense objectives.

Adding to this wide array of responsibilities, MODs today confront new challenges that fall within highly ambiguous circumstances and often simultaneously face an increased



number of missions with fewer resources. In this new environment, how does one strengthen an MOD?

To answer that question, we must first address another, which is, “Strengthen an MOD to do what?” I assert that strengthening an MOD means improving a ministry’s effectiveness and efficiency by increasing its capability to fulfill the nation’s security and defense responsibilities.

To that end, I submit that the first task in modernizing and strengthening an MOD demands an appropriate understanding of the shared, complementary roles and responsibilities among civilians and military personnel involved in the ministry and the defense and security sector. Next, I offer a set of best practices that we at CHDS have observed that have helped increase MOD efficiency and effectiveness not only in this region, but also in countries around the globe. Finally, I address the issue of regional cooperation among defense ministries.

2. Shared Civilian and Military Roles and Responsibilities for the Management of the Defense and Security in Democratic Societies

The importance of shared civilian and military roles in managing the security sector has long been understood as integral to the security that a state is expected to provide as a public good for its citizens. Carl Von Clausewitz’s famous quote that “War is a continuation of politics by other means”¹ highlights the concept that military force is simply a means designed to achieve a political end resulting from a political process.² Referring to the significance of controlling that military force, sociologist Max Weber reminds us, that a government must have a monopoly on the legitimate use of force.³

When the agent of that legitimate force acts to achieve security and defense missions consistent with the orders of the democratically elected leadership accountable to the people of the state, the security system is said to function appropriately. In a democracy, the elected leaders are an expression of the electorate’s will; national policies developed by those leaders, are an expression of the electorate’s will. The military’s implementation of national security policy represents the legitimate expression of the electorate’s will. Alternatively, when a military becomes involved in the political process and takes initiatives independent of the civilian authority, such actions are neither integral nor legitimate in terms of the effective functioning of a democratic society.

¹ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War (Vom Kriege)*. trans. O. J. Matthijs Jolles, author’s note, p. xxix (1943). Originally published in 1833.

² Corbett, Julian Stafford. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. London: Brassey’s Defense. 1998, p. 27.

³ Weber made this observation famous as a political concept in his [1918](#) speech *Politik als Beruf (Politics as a Vocation)*.



In essence, strengthening an MOD fortifies the defense sector of the democratic government it supports and to which it belongs. Authoritarian regimes attempt to strengthen institutions by fiat, without attention to democratic values. As a result, their institutions suffer from periodic crises of legitimacy that only weaken their status as expressions of the national will. Our experience in this region has shown that in democratic regimes, good governance and management of the defense and security sector are integral preconditions for peace, stability, development and prosperity—the converse has generally been an impediment to democracy and the rule of law.⁴

Previous meetings of the Defense Ministers of the Americas (DMA) have emphasized the principle that the highest level of decision making in the defense and security sector should result from a political process in which senior military leaders advise the elected, legally constituted civilian authority. At the Sixth DMA in Quito in 2004, delegates expressed their commitment to “the principle of subordination of the Armed and/or Public Security forces to the Constitution and to the legally established civil authorities of their states. ...” Similarly the delegates to the 2002 Santiago de Chile DMA affirmed “the importance of the principal of constitutional subordination of the armed forces and security forces to the legally constituted civilian authorities of our states. ...”

3. Strengthening Ministries of Defense: Best Practices

Within this perspective, I want to highlight some **best practices** drawn from nearly a decade of CHDS’ extensive experience in working with MODs throughout the hemisphere and on research and studies of ministries in other parts of the world.

The Minister of Defense in the National Chain of Command

A crucial--indeed fundamental--element in strengthening a MOD involves the legal authority of the minister within the national chain of command. At CHDS we have observed that in those ministries of defense where the minister has a clearly defined role within the chain of command under the president or national executive, the ministry can more effectively exercise the functions necessary to fully implement and oversee the direction and administration of the armed forces.

With the appropriate authority, the minister of defense can provide immediate control of the policy regarding the military, and her/his primary task is to manage the defense sector in a way that protects the armed forces from partisan politics. By focusing on management within the ministry, the MOD provides a direct venue to the president without having to compete for attention with other ministries or agencies. In this regard, the MOD acts as an advocate for the legitimate institutional requirements of the armed forces, while implementing the president’s policies on national security. Efficient

⁴ Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, “Strategy Paper 2005-2008,” p. 1.



management of the ministry can also reduce conflict with civilian oversight organizations, such as the courts, the national legislature and monitoring agencies withing the executive branch.

Additionally, the minister of defense can and should facilitate and enhance joint action among the military services, to achieve key missions. The minister can ensure that the military service(s) most appropriately suited for certain tasks accomplish (es) those missions. He or she can also emphasize and enhance the communication, coordination and integration of the joint efforts of several military services to complete those tasks in the most effective and efficient manner. Moreover, the minister can help to overcome parochial service interests as a neutral arbitrator. Such inter-service tensions typically arise when the branches of the armed forces seek the acquisition of key service-specific programs as they compete for scarce resources in the defense budget formulation process. In France and Germany, ministerial-level arbitration has resulted in more cost efficient approaches such as the consolidation of medical services and hospitals. Similarly, through the ministry's intervention, Ecuador and other countries have eliminated duplication by allowing one service to provide, for instance, airborne training to all of the services.

On the other hand, where the minister of defense is not legally delineated within the national chain of command, the ministry is relegated to a more coordinating and consensus building role with the military services and joint command. Even with a joint command to coordinate between the services, such a situation places the president or national executive in the position of the civilian arbiter, a role more commonly accomplished by the minister of defense.

In cases where the minister is not placed in the chain of command with supervisory authority over the military, he or she cannot play a systemic, fully engaged and integral role in the supervision and oversight of key policy and operational decision-making aspects involving the armed forces. The reform effort in Chile provides an excellent example of an initiative to undertake structural changes that guarantee the minister of defense can perform an active, appropriate and integral role in the management of the defense sector. For example, these reforms designate that the minister of defense presides over and has the sole authority to convoke meetings of the board of the armed forces commanders-in-chief, and name the minister as a permanent member of the National Security Council.

Defining Appropriate Roles for Civilian and Military Personnel.

Another essential element in strengthening an MOD is the clear delineation and articulation of civilian and military competencies within the large organizational structure of the ministry and the armed forces. Both the civilian component, which includes political appointees and career civil servant equivalents, as well as members of the armed



forces must understand and embrace their respective roles as required elements of an effective and efficient defense sector.

Nearly all democratic countries define differently the unique mix of missions and tasks they envision for their defense and security forces, how they task organize, align and allocate defense and security management tasks in ways-- influenced by each country's unique history, culture and traditions.⁵ Yet within this context, civilian staff may be better suited to some functions that a MOD performs while others are more appropriately suited to military personnel. Professor Douglas Bland's concept of "shared responsibility" is helpful in making this distinction.⁶ Under this concept, civilian leaders maintain appropriate direction of the military by acknowledging the military's role in national defense through the establishment of principles, rules, norms and decision-making procedures in areas such as military doctrine, discipline, operational planning, and internal organization, promotion below the rank of general or flag officer, and the tactical direction of units in operations. Civilian authorities develop policies regarding the accomplishment of national goals, the allocation of resources and the use of force.⁷ Another consideration is that a professional civilian bureaucracy can help to ensure continuity and institutional memory as the military rotates through defense ministry positions.

Increasing Trust and Confidence among Civilian and Military Personnel

Increasing trust and confidence among civilian and military personnel within the defense establishment may sound like a platitude, but the accomplishment of this objective is a highly effective step in strengthening a MOD. Broadly speaking, historical events in virtually every country in the region have contributed to lingering suspicions between military and civilian groups; these suspicions must be overcome to achieve the trust and confidence necessary to safeguard the national security in a truly integral manner. Building trust and confidence among civilian and military personnel is in some ways closely related to the act of putting into practice the previous points regarding the concept of shared responsibility and the delineation of appropriate roles and responsibilities for civilian and military personnel.

Although each country delineates responsibilities in the ministry and the armed services differently, when accomplished judiciously, the application of the concept of shared responsibility reinforces trust and confidence among the civilian and military members so that each individual within the MOD understands his civilian or military counterpart's

⁵ As stated in the Consensus Document from the Conference of the Ministers of Defense of the Americas, Quito, 2004, para. 5, each state has the sovereign right to identify its own national security and defense priorities; to define strategies, plans and actions to address threats to its security, in keeping with its legal frameworks

⁶ Douglas Bland, "A Unified Theory of Civil-Military Relations, *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Fall 1999, p. 9.

⁷ Bland, op. cit., p. 20.



roles and responsibilities. Then beyond understanding and orientation, MOD members must put this organization and structural plan into action to improve communication and coordination and achieve effective implementation of MOD tasks. From an internal organization perspective, building a competent, highly skilled MOD team that executes its responsibilities to the highest standards creates tremendous trust and confidence among civilian and military team members.

From a broader perspective, another key to creating trust and confidence within the MOD involves the public's understanding and perception of the legitimacy and the level competence and achievement of the MOD team. The MOD gains significant confidence internally and amongst other elements of the government when the civil society, the congress and the elected national leadership all acknowledge that the defense and security sector effectively and efficiently fulfills its appropriately assigned roles.

Effective Organizational Structure with Clear Chain of Command and Accountability

Obviously, this appropriate division of civilian and military labor also applies to the development of an efficient and effective organizational structure within the MOD. This structure should reflect the MOD's ability to ensure accountability for the quality and the completion of these tasks entailing the security and defense of the nation. An appropriate organizational structure cannot be left to chance. The MOD can and should evaluate its staff's capability, both organizationally and functionally to accomplish the specific tasks it is charged to complete. As President Uribe has shown in Colombia in recent years, the nexus between chain of command and accountability is significant for both political and operational effectiveness.

Professional Development

Another important tool for strengthening a MOD involves the education and professional development of all the personnel under its responsibility. To a large extent, an institution can only be as strong as the individuals that make up the organization. Having a ministry staff of competent, well trained professional civilians and military personnel is critical to the effective functioning of the MOD. But we all recognize that in many countries, the MOD is a relatively new entity, not only within the national bureaucracy but also for civil society.

Based on their years of service and experience, military personnel generally have a broad technical knowledge regarding the leadership and employment of forces to implement assigned tasks. Upon assuming key positions, many civilians charged with the responsibility for the direction, supervision and control of the armed forces often do not have that kind of technical knowledge and rely in this area on the advice and counsel of their uniformed colleagues. As stated earlier, this military advisory role is a positive



element of the civil-military relationship. To ensure the political neutrality of the armed forces, the civilian leadership is normally responsible and better suited for engagement in the political process involving the definition of objectives for its military to accomplish, plans for apportioning scarce resources, explaining defense requirements to congress, and acting as points of accountability to the citizenry as offices delegated with the authority to act for the Chief of Government. As Clausewitz reminds us, “the leading outlines of a War are always determined by the Cabinet . . . by a political and not a military organ.”

Civilian management of such an important responsibility requires appropriate education and experience. Although defense and security studies in Latin America historically have not been a particularly popular academic discipline, it is encouraging to see an increase in and proliferation of academic programs in this discipline in the universities of the region. Institutions such as CHDS, which help to educate civilians and military personnel implement defense and security responsibilities, are also tools in this regard.

An established professional development program is an important way to maintain a corps of experienced and talented civilian staff. Training that places civilian ministry staff members in a military environment is valuable as it provides a better understanding of armed forces organizations and exposing these civilian leaders and staffers to the perspectives, insights and experiences of military leaders and professionals. A number of countries in the region permit civilian officials to attend courses at military and national defense war colleges. Peru, for example, uses its Strategic Leadership for Defense and Crisis Management (CEDEYAC) course to acquaint civilian course members with different bases and military installations. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) runs a program called the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP), in which DOD civilians from around the country spend one week a month with a different Service or Combatant Commands, over a period of nine months. Such training helps ministries recruit, develop and retain civilians who have not served in their countries' militaries, but who bring skills and backgrounds vital to their ministries and governments.

Legislative Liaison

We cannot overlook the requirement to keep our legislative bodies fully informed about the course of events and programs within our defense and security sectors. In time of threat, defense and security needs and requirements are easily identified and justified. In times of peace that task is less clear. Justifying the significant expenditures required to maintain the military and security force readiness necessary to successfully meet future challenges or requirements can involve considerable effort. A comprehensive, permanent public liaison with the legislature is essential to maintain congressional support for funding levels adequate to ensure the resources to carry out the defense and security establishment's assigned tasks. Liaison efforts need to be mature, constant and informative—this last, a bi-directional requirement.



Interagency Coordination

As one of many government institutions, the MOD plays a key role in coordinating defense and security sector requirements with other agencies both inside and outside the government. Today, countries in this region face many challenges that cannot be accomplished in isolation, or by the military alone. As important as the military's role may be, it must be coordinated with the efforts of many other organizations that perform important functions in the political environment. When achieved appropriately, each institution's legitimacy and functional effectiveness becomes stronger.

A MOD ensures unity of strategic direction and effort through permanent information sharing, consultation, harmonization of planning, and joint execution. As the security environment changes with new threats, actors, or problems, political demands in democracies change. Institutions work best when they process information intelligently to permit better understanding of the environment and adjust and reallocate scarce resources. The effort to explore collaboration and cooperation with other governmental and nongovernmental actors opens new opportunities that can enhance security amongst agencies and organizations that may have divergent missions, objectives and values.

Exercises and Simulations

One effective way to evaluate the MOD staff's interagency coordination as well as the organizational and functional capability mentioned earlier is through the use of exercises and simulations. Military organizations call this approach "training as you fight, and fighting as you train." Computer-based simulation exercises highlight strong points and weak areas within the organization and are useful training tools to help MOD staffs prepare for future potential crises. Undertaking the effort to ensure training and education is always better during a period of calm, when lives are not at stake. MOD officials—such as those who coordinated the implementation of traumatic operations requiring rapid organization, coordination and deployment of a government response during Hurricanes Mitch, Stan, Wilma, and Katrina or last year's tsunami in the Indian Ocean, or even the deployment of forces to support operations in Haiti—can attest to the importance of such preparation.

One important way of improving interagency coordination is to design exercises and simulations that encompass scenarios that require a broad response by several agencies of government. Such exercises can reveal strengths and weaknesses in both individual performances as well as in collective action and suggest immediate remedies. The involvement of the principal leadership of these organizations is critical to the success of these exercises, however busy these key individuals may be at the time.



Budgetary Authority

Given the reality that a budget is the financial expression of policy, the MOD must have the final authority to decide how the collective expenditures of all elements within the defense sector are allocated. The minister requires a technically competent staff, with requisite financial and budgetary experience, coupled with a solid understanding of the uniqueness of military requirements. This type of budgetary expertise within the defense sector takes time to develop. Our experience at CHDS has shown that educating budget specialists to understand defense issues is preferable to attempting to train defense experts in economics, finance, accounting, and budgeting to help develop and formulate defense budgets.

4. Regional and Sub-regional Coordination

In a world of transnational threats such as organized crime, trafficking in drugs, arms, and people, terrorism, and even natural disasters—none of which respect national borders—the MOD must be able to respond to both internal and external challenges. We all recognize that multinational approaches are essential to countering transnational challenges; no country can solve such problems in isolation. A strong MOD must be able to coordinate, collaborate and cooperate with its counterparts in neighboring countries, both near and far. This task is only partially complicated by the reality that some countries have militaries, others do not. Nevertheless, Costa Rica and Panama, which have no military forces for example, face essentially the same kinds of defense and security challenges as the other nations with armed forces. Moreover, as part of the legitimate political process, the political leadership in some countries have delineated that the military forces will have certain functions, while the leadership of other countries has determined that the police or gendarmie-type force will be responsible for those same kinds of missions. For example, in Chile the Carabineros rather than the military have counter-drug and counterterrorism responsibilities. In Bolivia and the Dominican Republic, the military have carried out those missions. The United States splits the mission, allowing the military to participate only outside our national borders except in carefully enumerated exceptional circumstances. In that regional context then, how can an MOD ensure effective coordination not only bilaterally, but also multilaterally?

Sub-regional efforts offer some potentially viable answers as well as useful models. The Defense Ministers of Central America have provided an excellent example in taking steps on a sub-regional basis to address such coordination challenges. At the meeting of the Central American Defense Ministers, hosted in October, 2005 by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld in Key Biscayne, Florida, the ministers began comparing best practices to resolve issues within countries, and examined various arrangements through which to best address international cooperation across borders and across dissimilar kinds of police or military organizations. This initiative began with the examination of legal



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

arrangements such as the Central American Framework Agreement and the *Consejo de Las Fuerzas Armadas de Centro America* (CFAC). Accordingly, these kinds of meetings have been useful to identify problems to coordination and collaboration, as well as to propose solutions for those issues.

This DMA here in Managua provides an outstanding opportunity to address regional solutions and review best practices. In particular, this meeting and other DMA-related activities offer propitious times to view how sub-regional solutions already underway may be linked with ongoing efforts in other sub-regions. Further, it may be useful to examine the possibility of applying successful, practical approaches to the entire region in response to common transnational problems. Clearly, we must be careful with the solutions that we propose and choose as they may potentially affect generations to come in many or all of our countries. Nevertheless, many of the defense and security challenges we confront are so critical to the prosperity, stability and well-being of our region and of our citizens that we must face these threats directly. This DMA meeting provides a unique window of opportunity through which to make real advancements in our discussion of valuable ways to coordinate and work cooperatively to enhance our national, sub-regional and collective regional security.



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

SUB- THEME II

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION IN EACH STATE FOR THE MODERNIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE DEFENSE INSTITUTIONS.

RAPPORTEUR:	EEUU
CO- RAPPORTEUR:	BOLIVIA
MODERATOR:	COLOMBIA



**REMARKS OF MICHAEL W. COULTER
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE**

Honorable ministers, other distinguished guests, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I am pleased to join my Department of Defense colleague, Alisa Stack O'Connor, to talk about interagency coordination and defense transformation.

My name is Michael Coulter. I am a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Political-Military Bureau of the United States Department of State. The Pol-Mil Bureau is the State Department's primary link with the Department of Defense and the vehicle for interagency coordination between the Defense and State Departments.

Our interagency coordination takes place against the background of a rapidly changing security environment. I would like to talk to you quickly through how the State Department views this change, and then address how the United States government interagency process is coordinated to address the new security environment.

First, how we view this change.

- The days of discrete political and military domains are over. Today, politics, policy, diplomacy, and military activities interact at every level and all the time.
- The conventional view of politics-free warfare with three distinct and linear levels - strategic, operational and tactical - no longer applies. This outmoded view, in which levels are linked but separate, with different players at each level, presumes that if we get the policy right, all else will follow. This fails to take into account the inherently political nature of the military's activities on the ground today, let alone the effects of instantaneous media visibility, the ubiquity of information and communications, and the rapidly declining impact of traditional public diplomacy on public opinion.

Second, how we address this changing environment.

In the world we face, military actions must be designed and undertaken with the best political and diplomatic advice we are capable of providing - both before and during the fact. Thus, Secretary Rice believes that "The diplomacy of the 21st century requires better "jointness" ...between our soldiers and civilians." And the State Department is committed to doing just that. For example:

- Secretary Rice has transformed the program providing Political Advisors to Military Forces, called POLADS, expanding it from the General Officer level to include the operational level, thereby improving State's coordination with our men and women in uniform. These POLADs are now present at Combatant Commands, on Task Forces,



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

at Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan, and with some units in the field.

- In the Western Hemisphere, State Department officials recently participated in military exercises carried out by our Second Fleet, adding useful political and diplomatic perspective. Via video conferences, a State Department officer in Washington can serve as “virtual POLAD” to a Commander on the field on an “as needed” basis and then deploy forward with that unit for exercises or contingencies.

The informal working level interagency consults in the field are mirrored in Washington, which Ms. O’Connor will discuss.

In the State Department, we connect these interagency efforts with international efforts and initiatives:

A good example is the new proposal of a “1,000 Ship Navy.” This initiative seeks to unite our navies, our coast guards, and our commercial companies through technology and cooperation to increase maritime domain awareness. I look forward to talking with you more about this in coming months.

Yet another example is the Proliferation Security Initiative, known as ‘PSI.’ PSI Partners make a political commitment to establish “best practices” to stop WMD proliferation-related shipments. PSI does not create formal “obligations, but it does offer help to participants to stop, search, and seize these shipments.

We are also proud to support, as part of the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), the efforts of the Conferencia de Fuerzas Armadas Centroamericanas (CFAC) – to establish a multinational peacekeeping battalion comprised of troops from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala.

Permit me to highlight a few other ways that interagency and international efforts have stabilized the international environment:

- During the TSUNAMI in Southeast Asia, international naval vessels created the first international sea-base to support government and non-government operations ashore.
- During the Hurricane Katrina disaster relief efforts in the south eastern United States, more than 121 countries and 13 international organizations stepped forward and offered the assistance to the United States. The cornerstone of facilitating, coordinating and implementing that operation came from U.S. and foreign naval assets.
- Today, the U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Mercy with crew members, NGO volunteers, and foreign military medical professionals is out there providing hope, comfort, aid, assistance, and community outreach to millions of people.



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

These programs are but a few examples of what Secretary of State Rice refers to as “Transformational Diplomacy”—reshaping our structures, our people, and the way we do business to address the environment we now face. Transformational Diplomacy will require taking on new tasks, breaking old habits, working with people who are also trying to make those transformations themselves, and being partners with those around the world who share our values and want to improve their lives.

In today’s rapidly shrinking world, the international community shares an interest of the most strategic and real kind: addressing the all-threatening scourges of instability in the shape of terrorism, piracy, trafficking, and ungoverned spaces.

This Defense Ministerial of the Americas provides us with a valuable opportunity for us to share experiences on how we break down the interagency and international stove pipes that impede our ability to organize quickly and seamlessly. I hope that at this conference we can continue to exchange impressions on how to adapt and transform, to coordinate and cooperate more efficiently, so as to defeat emerging transnational threats more effectively.

**Comments by Ms. Alisa Stack-O’Connor,
Interim Director for Policy Planning, Office of the Secretary of Defense,
at the Seventh Conference of the Defense Ministerial of the Americas**

Honorable ministers and other distinguished guests, thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

In today’s security environment, we face an increasingly diverse but interconnected set of threats and challenges. These threats call for a global and multidimensional approach, and demand a coordinated search for solutions to common problems. Forums, like the Defense Ministerial of the Americas (DMA), provide us critical opportunities to work together and talk face-to-face.

The Department of Defense was born from the Second World War and came of age in the Cold War. We planned for major force-on-force conflict between the regular, uniformed militaries of nation-states. However, the world has changed. Armed conflict is increasingly a phenomenon *within* states rather than between them, and we all face serious challenges from sub-state, transnational movements, like al-Qa’ida, drug traffickers, and criminal gangs.

As large as the Department of Defense is, it cannot meet the security challenges facing the United States alone. Cooperation with other countries and other US government departments and agencies is an essential part of providing national security.

Interagency cooperation, of course, is not a new concept. We have been cooperating with other federal entities and countries since the Department’s birth. The US government has



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

formal mechanisms for coordinating activities. Most of these are run by the National Security Council staff to cover specific issues that require a multi-agency focus, such as support to Afghanistan. At the top, the Secretaries of Federal Departments form the “Principals Committee.” The Principals Committee meets as required to make decisions on policy matter of Presidential importance. The Principals Committee may refer issues to the President for final decision or to the “Deputies Committee” for discussion or further action. Like the Principals Committee, the Deputies Committee, made up of the Deputy Secretaries, meets as needed to resolve inter-agency disputes or make key policy decisions.

The Deputies or Principals also often refer issues to the Policy Coordinating Committees for further work and to make recommendations. These Policy Coordinating Committees form the basic, day-to-day infrastructure of interagency cooperation through the NSC staff. The Policy Coordinating Committees are created around specific issues, such as assistance to Afghanistan, to coordinate the actions, policies, and occasionally the resources of the Federal departments and agencies. Agencies and departments will assign personnel ranging from the assistant secretary level to staff to work on Policy Coordinating Committees as part of their assigned portfolio. For example, in the Department of Defense regular duty for staff engaged with Homeland Security may include attending a Policy Coordinating Committee on port security. The committees meet on regular schedules and provide recommendations to the Deputies and Principals Committees for final decision. If a disagreement between agencies cannot be resolved through the Policy Coordinating Committee, it may be referred to the Deputies Committee for resolution.

These committees do not guarantee agreement. They promote cooperation and resolution of disagreements by better understanding of each other’s positions and abilities to produce a better product for our citizens. Interagency cooperation is about leveraging comparative advantage. Each Federal Department and agency is designed to promote a different element of security. Our specialization is essential to our success separately and together. Mechanisms of cooperation, such as exchanging staff and joint exercises, are geared toward finding useful solutions to disagreements and reducing their frequency and intensity, especially in times of crisis.

Since the end of the Cold War, the number of agencies involved in national security and foreign affairs has increased. To meet non-traditional security challenges, we need the specialized skills and programs of departments and agencies that in the past focused almost exclusively on domestic issues. For example, the FBI and Department of Justice are key to our efforts to combat terrorism and other international criminal enterprises and are orienting themselves to deal with threats outside of the United States. These agencies are much needed and appreciated assets. As the number of agencies involved in foreign and security affairs increases, so do challenges of communication, understanding each other’s corporate cultures, and coordination. To overcome these challenges, the



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

Department of Defense supports efforts to improve strategy development, planning, and operations with interagency partners.

The Department of Defense's 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review, for instance, recommended the creation of National Security Planning Guidance to direct the development of both military and non-military plans and capabilities. This planning guidance would set priorities and clarify national security roles and responsibilities across the US government to reduce gaps and eliminate redundancies. It would help agencies align their strategy, budget and planning functions with national objectives.

Let me describe a few of the specific initiatives the Department of Defense and other departments are pursuing to be more effective in today's security environment.

- The Department is working with the newly established Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization at the State Department. This office was created, with strong support from the Department of Defense, to increase the capabilities of US civilian agencies and improve coordination with international partners in resolving complex crises.
- In a major effort that is just beginning, the Department of Defense is working with Congress and the State Department to update our traditional foreign assistance programs, practices, and laws.
- We are beginning to develop a National Security Officer corps to create a new, interagency cadre of senior military and civilian professionals who can effectively integrate and coordinate the contributions of individual agencies in support of national security interests. Establishing a National Security Officer corps would be an important step in reaching our security objectives, and a major change for the civil service. We are working other federal agencies and their educational components to develop this concept.
- In a separate, but related effort, we are working with the Department of State to identify ways in which our Ambassadors and Combatant Commanders can better work together in Washington and in the field. We're also looking to expand our exchange of personnel.
- We aim to transform our National Defense University into a National Security University, tailored to support the broader educational needs of national security professionals from across the US Government. We envision a revised curriculum that promotes a more unified US Government approach to national security and increased participation from other federal agencies.

While the focus of my remarks today is on interagency cooperation, working with allied and friendly nations is obviously a key element in addressing 21st century challenges. Our partnership with other nations continues to be a principal source of strength. By working together, we enjoy much greater security than any of us could hope to achieve on our own.



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

Increasing the capacity of our international partners is therefore another key step in attaining our security goals. One of the most important vehicles is our security cooperation program. Through this program, our countries accomplish many goals including:

- Increasing our capabilities to operate with each other;
- Strengthening cooperation between our militaries and our ministries of defense;
- Benefiting from comparative advantages in security and foreign policy; and
- Enabling military transformation through development of common security assessments and joint, combined training and education; combined concept development and experimentation; information sharing; and combined command and control.

In closing, as in many relationships, there is always more work to do and more issues to resolve. Interagency cooperation is a dynamic process that we constantly revisit and revise with other departments, with the White House, and with Congress. This process and the end result are well worth the effort, and personally, one of the highpoints of my job. In building interagency partnerships and other areas, Deputy Assistant Secretary Coulter's office has been instrumental. I want to take this opportunity to thank him and his staff for their cutting-edge work on strengthening the relationship between our departments.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. I would be glad to answer any question you might have now or later today.



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

SUB-THEME III

**MODERNIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES: FUNDAMENTALS, LESSONS
LEARNED, ONGOING EXPERIENCE AND PENDING CHALLENGES.**

RAPORTEUR:	CANADA
CO- RAPORTEUR:	ECUADOR
	MEXICO
MODERATOR:	ECUADOR



VII CONFERENCIA DE MINISTROS DE DEFENSA DE

SUB-THEME IV

ACTIVITIES OF THE ARMED FORCES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES.

RAPPORTEUR:	VENEZUELA
CO- RAPPORTEUR:	ANTIGUA Y BARBUDA
MODERATOR:	TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO