

## **THIRD CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF DEFENSE OF THE AMERICAS:**

### **DECLARATION OF CARTAGENA**

**CITY OF CARTAGENA DE INDIAS, REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA  
NOVEMBER 29, 1998**

The Ministers of Defense and Heads of Delegation of the participating States in the Third Conference of the Ministers of Defense of the Americas in the City of Cartagena de Indias, Republic of Colombia, on November 29 through December 3, 1998.

CONSIDERING that the Second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago de Chile, defined the initiatives aimed at fostering regional dialogue to revitalize and strengthen the Inter-American system.

BEARING IN MIND the will of the participating States to foster the conferences of the Ministers of Defense as a mechanism of hemispheric engagement concerning matters of security and defense.

REAFFIRMING the important role of the Conference of Ministers of Defense in furthering the principles and objectives established at Williamsburg and San Carlos de Bariloche including the urgency to deepen Inter-American cooperation for maintaining peace and enhancing hemispheric security.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the need to generate a greater awareness and understanding of the vulnerability and special security concerns of the small Caribbean Island States.

REAFFIRMING, furthermore, that the combination of democratic process and respect for human rights strengthens hemispheric security and harmony between states.

THEY DECLARE:

1. The relevance of the commitments undertaken by the Heads of State and Government during the Summit of the Americas to promote regional dialogue and foster an environment of security and trust among the nations of the hemisphere which committed themselves to democratic systems of government as the fundamental element for hemispheric security as adopted in Santiago de Chile in 1991, and reconfirmed in Williamsburg in 1995 and in San Carlos de Bariloche in 1996.
2. The need to strengthen institutions within the Americas responsible for security issues, including mechanisms for natural disaster preparedness and assistance.
3. The importance of promoting meetings and exchanges between military and defense authorities of the hemisphere, whether bilateral, sub-regional, or regional.

4. Each nation has the right to maintain military forces to fulfill its responsibilities as enshrined in their constitutions and in accordance with the Charters of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States.
5. That the adoption of confidence and security building measures has strengthened mutual understanding and has contributed to regional security, economic and social development, and hemispheric integration.
6. The importance and effectiveness of the Conference of the Central American Armed Forces (CFAC) as a regional security and defense body whose underlying principles are in keeping with the spirit of hemispheric integration that has permitted the development of cooperation, confidence building measures, and transparency.
7. Their support for voluntary and active participation in peacekeeping operations of the nations of the hemisphere and promotion of the efforts of the OAS to free the region of the danger posed by anti-personnel mines.
8. That the participating countries are committed to the solution of conflicts between the States through the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.
9. Support for OAS efforts to adopt the Convention on Transparency in the Procurement of Weapons as a step to increase hemispheric security and reduce the risk of conflict.
10. Support a practical approach regarding the potential destabilizing effects of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, acknowledging the OAS Inter-American Convention Against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Material.
11. To support the efforts of countries and institutions dedicated in the struggle against the problem of illicit drugs and related criminal activities.
12. Their condemnation of all forms of terrorism, including non-traditional forms, and support the implementation of the recommendations of the Specialized Inter-American Conference on Terrorism held in Lima, and the consensus reached in Mar de Plata, aimed at fostering hemispheric cooperation against all forms of terrorism as a serious crime threatening hemispheric democracy.
13. The commitment to international law, a basic element in achieving consensual and representative agreements aiming at coexistence with solidarity and mutual respect among states, and with due respect for the principle embodied in the Charter of the Organization of the American States (OAS) that international order consists essentially of respect for the personality, sovereignty, and independence of States.
14. The full satisfaction of participating States on the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

15. The need to encourage education and training in human rights and international humanitarian law for the members of the military and defense forces.

16. They will intensify their efforts at the OAS Hemispheric Security Committee to revitalize and strengthen the institutional framework of the Inter-American system related to security.

17. Their special satisfaction for the peace agreement obtained by the republics of Peru and Ecuador.

18. Their sympathy and solidarity for the governments and peoples of the Caribbean and Central American states who recently suffered the devastating effects of natural disasters.

19. Their full support for the internal peace initiative undertaken by the government of Colombia.

20. That the host country for the next Defense Ministerial of the Americas will perform the functions of Protempore Secretariat of the conference.

21. Their appreciation for the decision by the Government of Brazil to host Defense Ministerial of the Americas IV during the second half of the Year 2000.

22. Their most sincere thanks to the Government and people of Colombia for their warm welcome and the efficient organization of the Third Defense Ministerial of the Americas.

Cartagena De Indias, December 2, 1998