

Regional Experience in Military Cooperation¹

Military Cooperation at a Regional and Bilateral Level: The Chilean Perspective

INTRODUCTION

I would like to thank the *National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Defense University* for inviting me to participate in such an important international congress. Undoubtedly military cooperation in topics such as security and defense has always been a huge challenge for the region. In fact this has become a matter of growing interest in Chile, and especially in its Armed Forces.

In my presentation on this discussion panel about "Regional Experiences in Military Cooperation" I will introduce the topic from a historic point of view related to some variables that influence the different forms of cooperation at a regional and bilateral level. Later, I will focus on the state of cooperation in the present.

FIRST STEPS IN COOPERATION

Throughout history, different variables have influenced the cooperation between the Armies of the nations of the sub-region. During the Independence period in America, at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the colonies started their emancipation from the Spanish Crown, we can find the first examples of cooperation among the armies, which all together in a cooperative and integrated way organized themselves to fight a common enemy and get Independence for their own nations, forming the states we know nowadays.

The mandatory variable for this cooperative effort is founded on the ideas of Liberty and Self Government. To fulfill the above, they had to defeat the enemy militarily in a definitive and total way in all the South American sub-region, as the only option to obtain security and guarantee the survival and stability of the emerging republics.

Initiatives such as the Liberation Army of the Andes organized by Argentines and Chileans in the city of Mendoza in 1815, led by generals José de San Martín and Bernardo O'Higgins determined Chilean Independence. This event is part of what we may consider as the first steps in political and military cooperation in South America, such an organization would be called "Combined Forces" these days.

These same methods went on to become the foundation for a new cooperative effort among armies, this time with the objective of achieving Peruvian Independence. This operation was known as "The Liberating Expedition".

¹ Presentation by the President of the Academic Consultative Council of Military Studies and Investigations of the Chilean Army, Retired Division General Juan Carlos Salgado Brocal, in the Forum on Regional Experience in Military Cooperation organized by the Defense University of the United States on the 30th November 2006.

We could mention many other examples of American cooperation throughout history, but I should like to end this part by mentioning the successful campaigns led by generals Simon Bolivar and José Antonio de Sucre which paved the independence of Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador through winning the battles of Carabobo, Boyacá and Pichincha.

From the above, we can conclude that while the ideas of independence were shared by South American countries, this type of cooperation was a success. Once the Independence was achieved, projects to promote unity among countries weakened to such an extent that rivalries appeared, which I do not intend to examine here, and ended in conflicts whose consequences have lasted a long time.

Despite the above, at the beginning of the nineteenth century we can find another kind of cooperation, which in peace times, was developed by the Armed Forces and sponsored by the corresponding governments.

In this role of cooperation between armies, Chile, as other countries, has had a successful and rich history. Among the most relevant cooperation projects carried out by Chile, during this period, we can mention the exchanges with the armies of Colombia, Ecuador and El Salvador. The variable that motivates this process is the professionalization of the armies in these countries. Thus, it is the search for professionalization through cooperation of these armies which has advanced progress in this aspect.

THE REGIONAL MILITARY COOPERATION DURING THE COLD WAR

After World War II, when the United States of America emerged as a world power, the main political and strategic problems in the region began to revolve around the perspective of the United States.

In the 50s, the fundamental reasoning of the American Defense Policy was the hemispheric defense against the communist potential aggression, and particularly the protection of the strategic areas and inter-oceanic communication lines².

Later in the 60s, with Kruchev's proclamation of the national liberation war doctrines, the reasoning changed to that of helping states to counter internal subversion and insurrection.

As a result of the above, in the early 60s, the United States signed several bi- and multilateral agreements with different countries, on the one hand, to prevent a possible Soviet advance, and on the other, to obtain the necessary raw materials and bases to secure its own defense.

Regarding the hemispheric situation, we can mention the experience of "interamericanismo," a process which integrates American nations, and in terms of security matters, is identified with the political and strategic view of the United States. Thus, we can point out that the variable that influenced military cooperation between the states of the region, was due to the Cold War, and the military relations centered on the United States.

² Corbet, Charles: La Defensa de Estados Unidos y América Latina, Military Review, VI June 1975, p.14

The Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance Treaty (TIAR) signed by nineteen countries in 1947 was the most important reference for cooperation which formed a hemispheric security system as never seen before. The objective of this agreement was to prevent and suppress threats and aggression against any of the countries of the American continent, based on democratic ideals and the permanent will to cooperate. Thus it was possible to face any type of possible threat under the protection of the United States.

As a consequence of the above, Chilean press wrote in their main columns as follows: "The basic concepts of Solidarity and Inter American cooperation that were expressed in the Chapultepec Agreement have been reassured and invigorated. Inter-American procedures to solve controversies in a peaceful way have been improved, specifying duties of mutual help and common defense"³.

The concept of hemispheric security and cooperation conceived through the TIAR showed its weakness, and could not establish itself as an Inter-American security system of real operability. Thus it soon became reduced to a merely formal agreement.

THE PRESENT REGIONAL SCENARIO AND THE INTEGRATION AND COOPERATION PROCESS

The end of the Cold War and the events linked to this international process, along with globalization forces, have made an impact on the sub-region creating new realities.

It is well known that the hemisphere has different contexts, and that each country has been affected by different problems and threats. Due to this, there are different security agendas in America, ranking from the super world power to the Caribbean states, and also those in our region.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been a clear and sustained decrease of the influence of the strategic and geopolitical variables on inter-state relations in the region. The complexity of the globalization scenario and the insertion of countries facing the phenomena that characterizes globalization, such as democratization and the influence of inter-dependence phenomena and economic integration have had an impact on security and defense, bringing such concepts closer to the foreign affairs policies of the countries.

All of the above has opened new opportunities for the Armed Forces to play more active roles in cooperation and integration matters. Thus, we can see an evolution characterized by a steady rise in bilateral cooperation. Additionally, the Armed Forces are also playing an important role in multilateral cooperation.

As a consequence, one of the most distinctive peculiarities of the evolution of defense policy in these countries has been the abandoning of the exclusivity of dissuasion as a strategic conceptualization, to now assign importance as well to international cooperation, fundamentally in the neighbor plan in order to create a climate of distension and confidence which allows access to relations **which are less conditioned by the historical agenda and more centered in building a stable future.**

³ El Mercurio newspaper, Santiago, Chile. 3rd September 1947.

These countries have not restricted the protection of territory only to defense policies. This has also been enriched through the opening of their economies, the process of the reform of international political institutions where these countries participate, the dynamic of globalization and by the growing importance of international crisis originating within countries or through non-national threats.

The multinational collaboration dates back to the beginning of the 1960s. Instances of military consultation and training in the multilateral environment, such as the Conference of American Armies and the combined exercises of Unitas, Rimpac, Team-Work, Red Flag, Passex and Cabañas among others, are all examples of cooperation integration and transparency.

At present, a display of belief in the multilateral compromise for cooperation is shown in the involvement of a large part of the sub-region in the international effort to contribute to the solution of the grave crisis presented in Haiti in 2004. In the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which has taken place in this country, civilian and military forces from the majority of South American states have participated.

In this way, contingents from 10 American countries form part of the Peacekeeping Force integrated by military units which work together or with combined forces, such as, for example, is the case of the Chilean-Ecuadorian Construction Engineers Company. This effort towards multinational cooperation returns to the essence of that made during the Independence stage of the Latin American nations and rescues the regional appreciation of that era.

Likewise the cases of Chile with its neighbors, Argentina, Peru and Bolivia, which I best know, help us to better illustrate and understand bilateral cooperation. With each of these different countries there exist different states of progress and achievement, and better military relation, transparency in defense policy, military policies, acquisitions and the development of their Armed Forces have all been sought. In the same way, agreements and treaties of global and bilateral reach have been signed and it has also been agreed to put into practice a series of Means of Mutual Confidence (MM.C.M.) with the purpose of diminishing uncertainty and erroneous perceptions.

All of these instruments form, generically, the political and political-strategic frame of bilateral army relations at a neighbor level, which has made possible the detailed military agreements to implement the Means of Mutual Confidence.

At the level of the Armed Forces as a whole, the Consultative Meetings of the General Staff with Argentina, and the Rounds of Conversations of the High Commands with Peru form instances in which the Chiefs of the institutional General Staffs together with the CDS discuss and agree means of mutual confidence with their equals in Argentina and Peru through annual working meetings which take place alternately in each country. In the same way, the Bilateral General Staff Conferences with Argentina and Peru are meetings of each of the institutions with their equals to make detailed agreements on exercises, interchanges or combined projects. These meetings generally take place biannually in an alternate form in each country.

These instances of agreement have allowed a large quantity of Means of Mutual Confidence to be reached between our countries, from the first generation through visits by authorities and interchanges, up to the third generation through combined exercises and bi-national developments.

After a gradual but sustained development in relations of confidence and cooperation, at present a high level of integration has been achieved in the themes of peace operations and humanitarian aid. This is attested by the participation of a unit of the Chilean Army which is integrated into the Argentinean contingent of the Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the development of joint exercises between the forces of both countries named "Araucaria" whose fifth version is just ending.

The processes of cooperation and integration of the Chilean Army with its opposite number in Argentina are considered as a model which could well be applied to other countries in the region.

With Bolivia, despite the fact that diplomatic relations do not exist, multilateral military events have been taken advantage of, such as the Conference of American Armies or the Meetings of the Army Commanders of the expanded MERCOSUR, in order to generate instances which have permitted maintaining cordial relations of dialogue at the highest level.

Furthermore humanitarian de-mining has continued in the frontier zones alongside the total destruction of all anti-personal mines in store, thus faithfully complying with the Ottawa Treaty. These acts form a demonstration of the neighborly cooperation and integration with Bolivia.

This is a concrete example of how it is possible to advance and persevere in the construction of links between the Armed Forces institutions of neighbors even though in the political scenario, relations have a different rhythm.

CONCLUSIONS

The history of military cooperation in the region has been conditioned by distinct variables, and in practical terms there have been none which have lasted through time. In terms of shared objectives, from the formation of independent states in the nineteenth century, no other global project has emerged which has stimulated the processes of collaboration or regional integration. Something more can be said in respect to the perception of common threats to the security and stability of the region. Although during the Cold War there was a certain consensus in respect to a common enemy, the forms in which this occurred – and the measures which each state took to combat it – acted as centrifugal forces, generating consequences which still affect the region.

Likewise, bilateral relations were marked for much time by geopolitical and strategic considerations, aggravated by historical claims which obviously generated an environment which was little suited to military cooperation.

However, the changes which the international system has gone through and its effects in the region over the two last decades have modified this climate, allowing for democratic states

to work together through differing instruments including those of a military nature.

Consensus in a regional political project and the perception of common threats to regional security and stability have returned to being the fundamental necessities for the development of a collective security system for the states. In so much as both conditions are not fulfilled, states can advance in bilateral and sub-regional relations. It is precisely in this that military cooperation can play an important role in preventing conflicts, avoiding mistaken and surprising situations, diminishing uncertainties and, also, generating the best conditions for confidence and stability among neighboring countries.