Future Tasks and Challenges for the National Army, a Holistic Look at Security and Defense

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Future Tasks and Challenges for the National Army, a Holistic Look at Security and Defense

Carlos Alfredo Castro Pinzón & Luz Martha Melo Rodrigues

Abstract

The article focuses on analyzing the new challenges for the Colombian National Army (CNA), which requires a full understanding of its functional organization, based on the Chiefs of Staff, Plans and Policies, Force Generator and Operations. These are based on the structural basis of the human being, technology, research and capabilities from the functions of conducting warfare, which refer to the tasks and systems united to develop the purpose of the commanders in terms of fulfilling the missions and objectives set by the Force.

Likewise, it is divided into two approaches: the first is a basic bibliometric analysis, while the second is an exposition on the critical issues involved in the definition of those circumstances and situations for the consolidation of long-term challenges and challenges. Finally, conclusions are presented on the exposed topics that can lead to research and analysis of greater complexity.

Keywords: Challenges, Military Doctrine, Capabilities, Transformation, Technology.

Introduction

In the current context, governments face numerous security and defense challenges, both nationally and internationally. To understand these dynamics and reach reasonable conclusions, it is necessary to conduct studies based on experiences, lessons learned, models and bibliometric analyses. These involve a preliminary exploration of the phenomena currently being addressed worldwide. For this purpose, databases such as Web of Science and Scopus are used, which provide metadata, abstracts, countries, affiliations, references and impact factors. The results obtained show the need to filter the documents by topics of specialization, since only a limited number are directly related to the future security and

defense challenges of the countries. It is interesting to note that none of these documents come from Latin America. The importance of addressing aspects related to the context to accurately understand the phenomena studied and frame them as new threats to the Armed Forces (FF. MM.) and the National Police (PONAL) is highlighted. In addition, the transformation and strategic modernization, the projection of capabilities and the use of new technologies for defense management are analyzed. Emphasis is placed on the need for leadership, information and cooperation to address current and future challenges in national security and defense.

Current Challenges in Security and Defense: Bibliometric Analysis and Strategic Transformation

In order to attempt an approach to the challenges currently faced by governments, in terms of security and defense, in the national and international context, studies based on experiences, lessons learned, models and bibliometric analysis are required to understand the current dynamics and reach reasonable conclusions expected by the Armed Forces and PONAL.

Regarding bibliometric analysis, it is necessary to conduct a preliminary investigation of those phenomena currently addressed in the world. For this purpose, the databases Web of Science and Scopus were searched, from which metadata, abstracts, countries, affiliations, references and impact factors were extracted. Within the search equation, the following criteria were considered as criteria: “challenges of the military forces”, “challenges facing the military” and “new challenges for military forces”.

The results obtained by Web of Science were 2045 documents for different approaches that contemplate international relations, political science, history, sociology, area studies, law, public environments, among others. Therefore, it was necessary to filter by topics of specialization in order to arrive at a more practical and effective result, appropriate to the development of the thematic developed in this work. Thus, it was found
that, in relation to the future challenges for the security and defense of the countries, only 205 articles were linked and none of them came from Latin America.

Taking into account the Scopus academic database, the findings do not differ exponentially, since 4027 results associated with different research approaches were found, however, only 148 of them correspond to the object of study. Indeed, the search identified texts linked to countries such as the United States (USA), United Kingdom, Switzerland, Israel, Australia, Brazil, India, Italy and Nigeria. In addition, the affiliation of each of the documents comes from laboratories, universities, technological institutes, military forces, academies and military research sources.

A preliminary analysis of the information collected shows the insufficiency of Latin American countries in terms of in-depth studies on the possible challenges they will face in the short term, at least theoretically. Therefore, it is necessary to address aspects related to the context, which should accurately demonstrate the phenomenon studied and frame it as new threats to the Armed Forces.

The results contemplate the strategic transformation and modernization, the projection of capabilities and new technologies for defense management, which allows interpreting the challenges faced by nations in security, as well as the development of important changes and understanding of actors, entities or forces with the capacity and intention to affect the interests of nations.²

It is feasible to understand the transformation of the Force as an advancement of the organizational structure at a higher level, which demands work, professionalism, dedication, resources and improvement in processes and procedures. In 2007, the Ministry of National Defense (Mindefensa) provided resources to sustain the transformation on an adaptive strategic basis for

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² Ibid., 1-12.
15 years, whose culmination would be reached in 2030.³ One of the goals of this initiative was the victory over destabilizing factors, the reconfiguration of the Armed Forces and the PONAL, as well as the consolidation of stability for new contexts. Its development was achieved based on the structuring of planning processes, resource management and implementation of tools aimed at improving efficiency in spending and enhancing the capabilities of the Forces.

Thus, in the face of strategic transformation and modernization, the JCE structured a judicious and professional process that began with the Strategic Review and Innovation Committee (CREI), whose fundamental task was to analyze in a systemic and structured manner each directorate, component, section and articulating and/or cross-cutting areas of the Force. It was necessary to fully understand the tools that would lead to the synchronization of processes and the sustainability of the operational effort without detriment to the fulfillment of the constitutional mission entrusted to it. It also took into account the participation of the members of the JLA as developers of the prospective methodology aligned with the purposes of the Institution.

The creation of the Strategic Committee for Transformation and Innovation of the National Army (CETI) was based on the data collected by the CREI to determine lines of development and execution, and thus reach another stage. CETI conducted a second analysis, interpreting the results and structuring initiatives to be carried out in the short, medium and long term. In addition, by the end of 2012, the Army of the Future Strategic Design Committee (CEDEF) was implemented, through which the Minerva Plan was structured by the Education and Doctrine Office; subsequently, it was registered as a project with the National Planning Department (DNP).

The consequences of the implementation of the CEDEF were not long in coming and two fundamental definitions were achieved: First, the Army’s operational concept called Unified Ground Operations (OTU) was established. Secondly, the capabilities needed to face future threats were defined. All this was achieved through doctrinal development that included the review, updating and prioritization of existing publications, with the aim of improving military performance and aligning with the standards of the global agenda. Joint, coordinated and interagency strategies were proposed.

During the doctrine production process, the EJC analyzed various domains and defined TOU as “offensive, defensive, stability or defense support tasks to civil authority, executed simultaneously to capture, retain and exploit the initiative, and consolidate gains to prevent conflict, shape the operational environment and win the war as part of unified action.”

As for capability, it is doctrinally defined as the “ability to complete a task or execute a course of action under specific conditions and level of performance.” This includes the strategic, special operations, intelligence, territory control, mobility, logistics, communications, non-kinetic capabilities and welfare components, among others, which are contemplated in the Doctrine, Organization, Material, Personnel, Infrastructure, Leadership, Training and Maintenance (DOMPILEM).

It is important to highlight that the development of capabilities requires sine qua non elements, such as commanders’ leadership and information, which serve as means to coordinate and integrate efforts and carry out mission-type command tasks.

On the other hand, as part of the dynamic and advanced approach contemplated in the doctrine, as a condition for the other capabilities of
the DOMPILEN, integral action is adopted as the “set of military actions encompassing support operations and military information, civil affairs, civil–military cooperation and public affairs”,8 in order to achieve the fulfillment of the mission.

In the same sense, the projection of capabilities is directed towards their possible export within multinational support and cooperation exercises on issues related to humanitarian demining, victim concentration areas, search and rescue of collapsed structures and disaster risk management, as well as other tasks that integrate decisive action and phenomena corresponding to the transnational character.9

This can effectively contribute to a precise definition of how to be part of the global agenda, through strategic alliances, inter-institutional military training agreements and multilateral exercises focused on an effective deployment of units in different scenarios, as well as an effective response to chaotic situations, problems related to transnational crime, instability and changing and unknown threats.

However, the main effort to achieve this inclusion in the consolidation of international objectives, their purposes and agenda, starts initially from central governments, especially those that have demonstrated resilience in the face of “high profile threats to liberal–democratic life”.10 These can be phenomena in environments of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VICA), as well as terrorism, human or non-human infectious diseases and conventional and unconventional risks. Significant progress has been made in good governance that allows the inclusion and adoption of disruptive technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data for collective decision making.

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In that perspective, the Armed Forces and the PONAL find themselves in the need and obligation to contemplate the operational environment, which is conceived, at least in the military doctrine of the JOC, as the “composition of conditions, circumstances and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and weigh on the commander’s decisions”\textsuperscript{11}. This integrates both the physical areas (air, land, sea and space) and the information environment domain including cyberspace, which is defined as the global domain that is part of the information environment composed of interdependent networks of infrastructure, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and data including elements such as the Internet, telecommunications, networks, computer systems, embedded processors and controllers.\textsuperscript{12} 

In this context, it is crucial to have a forward-looking approach to the mutation of threats, their structure and analysis. New approaches such as emerging technologies make it possible to deal efficiently with possible attacks perpetrated by outlaw groups. They also consider the effects on national security and defense, incorporating aspects such as cyber espionage or cyber sabotage aimed at destabilizing the political systems of nations. It is important to note that, in the face of new threats, there is the possibility of facing imminent attacks in any of the domains of the operational environment.\textsuperscript{13} This results in an increase in the complexity of operations, the multiplicity of actors involved and the confusion between the traditional elements of conflict.\textsuperscript{14} Faced with this scenario, it is essential to have adequate strategies and capabilities to deal with these situations and protect national security and defense effectively.

In this sense, it is required capabilities aimed at the professionalization of the Force in aspects different from those addressed, which integrate new skills, updates and advanced training in cybercrime detection, recognition of alerts provided from big data and AI, which warns information capture

\textsuperscript{11} Ejército Nacional de Colombia, “Manual fundamental del Ejército MFE 3-0 Operaciones”, (2017), 4-21.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 4-19.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 2-4.
processes, intelligent and timely services in the national defense system and a technological base determined by R&D+i.

Based on the above, it is possible to consider a structure superior to the one established for the Armed Forces, which incorporates a rationality based on the possibility of an electronic government, which encompasses all government functions and activities, shaped by ICT, which, in turn, integrate the four domains of governance and public administration, which are: the economic and social programs of the State, relations with the citizen and the rule of law (e-democracy), internal functioning and the relationship with the international environment.15

Conclusions

The JLA undertook a transformation process that involved all its members at different levels, receiving the unconditional support of the Active Reserve and state entities as a whole. This was guided by approaches aimed at achieving diverse objectives, involving the participation of academia and the collaboration of armies with varied structural, doctrinal and operational developments.

Although the scientific production on the challenges and future challenges for the Armed Forces is not extensive, the information obtained and analyzed, from the context of lessons learned, is of great value. This is due to its contribution in normative, doctrinal, human resources, management and application of tactics, techniques, processes and procedures in the conduct of military operations.

The experience of the JLA becomes a valuable source of information to outline strategic objectives in the anticipation of new challenges and the structuring of solutions to face them. Among these are the configuration of new threats, tactics, techniques or procedures of the enemy, as well as the budgetary feasibility to adapt to new realities and the establishment of the conduct of operations in multinational scenarios.

Finally, it is required to overcome internal risk factors and project public security capabilities, through the “consolidation of defensive capabilities and the role of Colombia as a assistant in building stability and regional security”\textsuperscript{16} To achieve this, it is necessary to overcome internal risk factors and project public security capabilities. This implies strengthening defense skills and Colombia’s position as a reference in promoting stability and security in the region.

**About the authors:**

**Carlos Alfredo Castro Pinzón** is a Colonel in the Colombian Army. Professional in Military Sciences, graduated from the Escuela Militar de Cadetes “General José María Córdova”. He is a specialist in University Teaching from the Cavalry School and in Security and National Defense from the War College. Throughout his military career, he held several important positions. He was vice-rector and dean of the Faculty of Military Sciences and International Relations of the Military Cadet School, as well as deputy director of the same faculty. He also served as Commander of the Medium Combined Arms Task Force No. 01 at the Buenavista Military Fort, La Guajira. He currently serves as Director of the Army Doctrine Center.

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