



Colombia

National Legislation

Systems and Concepts

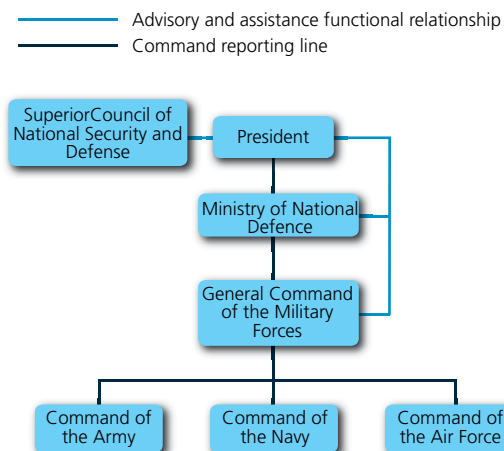
- Decree by which the National Security Council merges with the Superior Council of National Defence and the Commission created by the Decree 813 of 1983 (N° 2.134 - 1992/12/31)
- Act establishing Civil Service Career Rules (N° 443 - 1998/06/11)
- Act by which Benefits are granted to Relatives of People Demised during Mandatory Military Service (N° 447 - 1998/07/21)
- Act on National Agency Organization and Operation Rules (N° 489 - 1998/12/29)
- Act by which the President of the Republic is vested with Extraordinary Authority to issue Rules related to Military Forces and the National Police (N° 578 - 2000/03/15)
- Decree by which the Ministry of National Defence Structure is modified and other Provisions are enacted (N° 1.512 - 2000/08/11)
- Decree modifying the Bylaw which regulates the National Ministry of Defence Civil Personnel Management System (N° 1.792 - 2000/09/14)
- Act by which the Juridical Nature of Nueva Granada Military University is modified (N° 805 - 2003/04/29)
- Act by which Provisions are established to reinstate Members of Illegal Armed Groups (N° 975 - 2005/07/25)
- General Act on Forestry (N° 1.021 - 2006/04/20)
- Act which establishes the Special Administrative System for Civilian Public Employees at the Service of the National Ministry of Defence, for the Military Forces, the National Police and its Decentralised Entities (N° 1.033 - 2006/07/19)
- Act governing the Acquisition of Goods and Services for National Security and Defence (N° 1.089 - 2006/09/01)
- Decree governing Special Career System (N° 091 - 2007/01/17)
- Decree setting out and modifying the Denomination and Classification of Jobs at Defence Agencies (N° 092 - 2007/01/17)
- Decree setting out Basic Wage Scales for Civilian Staff (N° 093 - 2007/01/17)
- Act 1,097 on Confidential Expenses Regulation Decree (N° 1.837 - 2007/05/25)
- Decree by which the Structure of the Ministry of National Defence is partially modified (N° 3.123 - 2007/08/17. Last amendment: Decree N° 4.481 - 2008/11/27)
- Act by which Rules are enacted to strengthen the Legal Frame which allows Intelligence and Counter intelligence Agencies to fulfil their Constitutional and Legal Mission (N° 1.288 - 2009/03/05)

Military Organization

- Act on Recruiting and Mobilization Service (N° 48 - 1993/03/03)
- Military Criminal Code Act (N° 522 - 1999/08/12)
- Decree which modifies the Decree which regulates the Rules for the Promotion of Officers and Warrant Officers of the Military Forces (N° 1.790 - 2000/09/14. Last amendment: Act N° 1.405 - 2010/07/28)
- Act regulating Issues concerning Disability, Compensations, Disability Pensions and Administrative Reports for Injuries (N° 1.796 - 2000/09/14)
- Act on the Unique Disciplinary Code (N° 734 - 2002/02/05)
- Act which partially modifies the Statute of Promotions of Officers and Warrant Officers of the Military Forces (N° 775 - 2002/12/09)
- Act which Rules over the Armed Forces Disciplinary Regime (N° 836 - 2003/07/16)
- Decree establishing a Disability and Survival Pension System for Armed Forces Professional Soldiers (N° 2.192 - 2004/07/08)
- Act on Rules, Objectives and Criteria to set out the Pension System and Retirement Allowance for Members of the Public Force (N° 923 - 2004/12/30)
- Act of Military Situation of People older than 28 (N° 924 - 2004/12/30)
- Act on Requirements for Positions at Military Penal Jurisdiction (N° 940 - 2005/01/05)
- Act which modifies Decrees related with the Wage System and Benefits (N° 987 - 2005/09/09)
- Act which establishes a Special Procedure in the Criminal Military Code (N° 1.058 - 2006/07/26)
- Decree compiling the Rules of Decree Law 1.790 of 2000 on Career Rules (N° 1.428 - 2007/04/27)

Source: Compilation based on the legislation above mentioned. For constitutional provisions see Chapter 1.

The Legal Framework and the Defence System



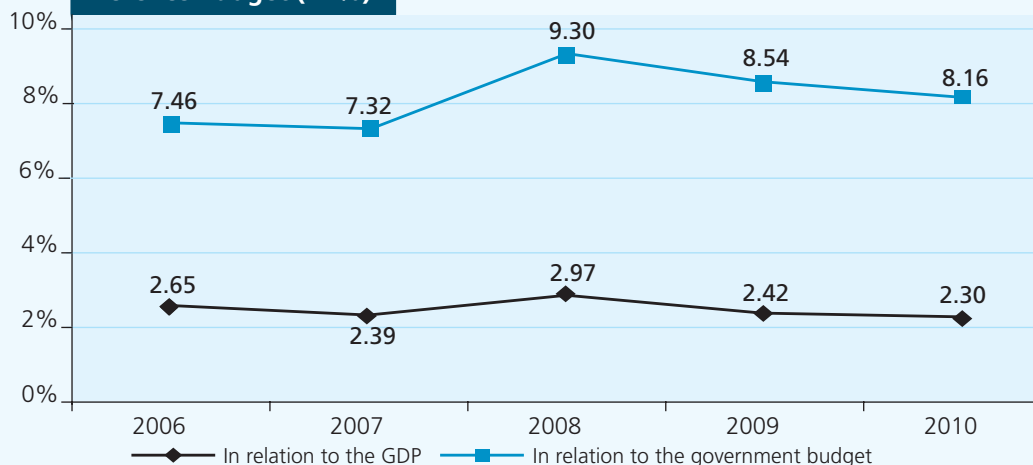
The President is advised by the Superior Council of National Security and Defence, composed of the Ministers of Government and Defence, the General Commander of the Armed Forces, the General Director of the National Police, the Directors of the Administrative Department of the President's Office and of Security, and the Presidential Advisor for National Defence and Security. The command of the military forces is held by the President, who holds it either directly or through the Minister of Defence, and the General Commander, who, in turn, has command over the forces. The Congress holds the powers granted by the Constitution and permanently monitors defence related issues through the specific Committees in both Houses.

Source: Compilation based on *Decreto por el cual se modifica la estructura del Ministerio de Defensa Nacional y se dictan otras disposiciones* (N° 1.512 - 2000/08/11. Last amendment: Decree N° 4.481 - 2008/11/27), and *Decreto por el cual se fusionan el Consejo Nacional de Seguridad, el Consejo Superior de la Defensa Nacional y la Comisión creada por el Decreto 813 de 1983* (N° 2.134 - 1992/12/31).

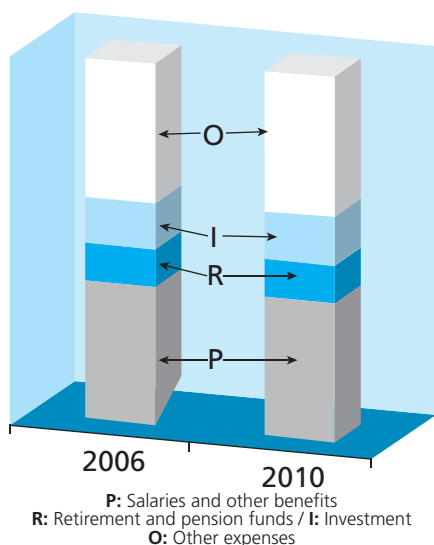
The Budget

Year	Defence Budget (in US\$)	Government budget (in US\$)	GDP (in US\$)
2006	2,872,392,573	38,529,560,858	108,461,000,000
2007	4,105,180,855	56,045,533,692	171,738,000,000
2008	6,004,957,107	64,578,637,852	202,437,000,000
2009	5,534,277,720	64,812,772,301	228,614,000,000
2010	6,178,261,917	75,672,628,409	268,107,000,000

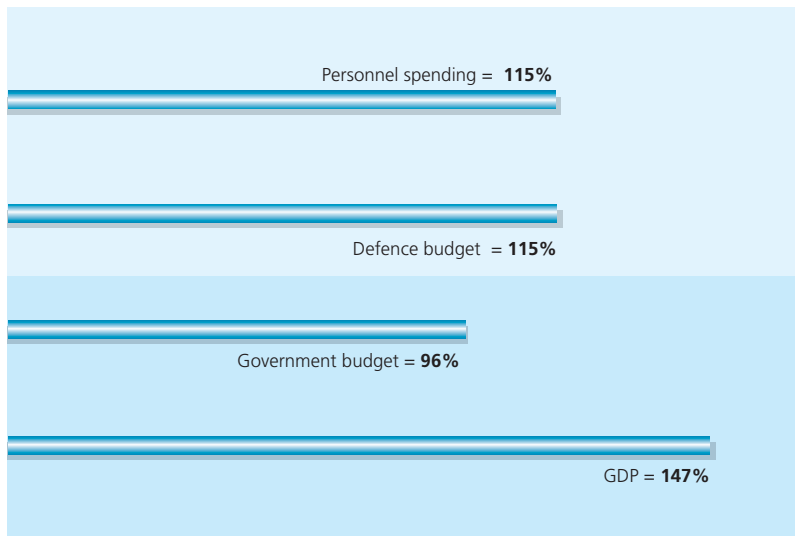
Defence Budget (in %)



Defence Budget Breakdown



Comparative Increase (% variation 2006-2010)

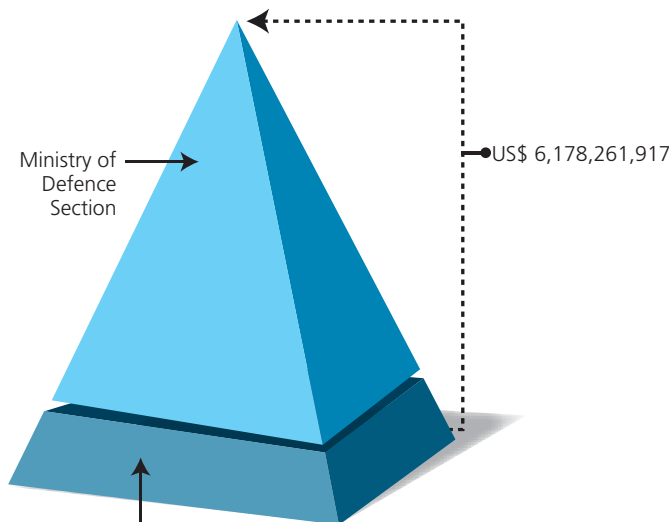


Defence Budget 2010 (in Local Currency)

Ministry of Defence section	Personnel	Other Operational Expenses*	Investment	TOTAL
Ministry of Defence				
General Administration	76,740,931,832	1,066,589,863,011	56,730,280,660	1,200,061,075,503
General Command	14,346,617,094	23,703,020,016	30,341,794,749	68,391,431,859
Army	3,473,730,983,871	1,242,935,443,705	548,899,683,047	5,265,566,110,623
Navy	607,072,223,619	270,946,309,655	618,933,400,000	1,496,951,933,274
Air Force	307,067,661,949	559,731,140,978	366,298,330,777	1,233,097,133,704
Health	62,062,378,000	576,078,580,000	11,448,000,000	649,588,958,000
General Maritime Directorate	16,882,477,176	23,533,844,802	9,718,000,000	50,134,321,978
Retirement Fund of the Military Forces	4,637,850,000	1,403,473,810,000	1,500,000,000	1,409,611,660,000
Institute Casas Fiscales of the Army	1,962,500,000	16,906,310,000	13,350,000,000	32,218,810,000
Colombian Civil Defence	5,016,136,000	13,318,422,699	1,992,000,000	20,326,558,699
Officers Military Club	5,715,000,000	23,542,000,000	8,260,000,000	37,517,000,000
Military Hospital	46,793,557,000	123,168,137,000	22,621,000,000	192,582,694,000
Logistics Agency of the Military Forces	9,144,910,000	433,666,150,000	8,434,000,000	451,245,060,000
TOTAL	4,631,173,226,541	5,777,593,031,866	1,698,526,489,233	12,107,292,747,640

* Includes general expenses, current transfers, capital transfers, sales and production expenses.

Composition of Defence Budget 2010



National Police Retirement Fund, Revolving Fund of the Police and Superintendence of Private Protection and Security (shown on Ministry of Defence Section) US\$ 1,064,252,120

Military acquisitions since 2007 reached around US\$ 3,924,000,000. These purchases were made with special funds approved by the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (CONPES). This amount accounts for 18% of the budget allocated to defence for 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Source: Compilation based on *Ley por la cual se decreta el presupuesto de rentas y recursos de capital y Ley de apropiaciones para la vigencia fiscal del 1° de enero al 31 de diciembre de 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010*. The National Budget passed by Congress by means of the above mentioned Act is considered herein. The concept of investment is that expressed in "Investment". Acquisitions: *Memorias al Congreso de la República 2008-2009 y 2009-2010*, Ministry of National Defence. GDP: Projection of the World Economic Outlook Database, IMF, for each year under review. This source has been taken for comparative purposes. Each country elaborates the budget based on its own GDP estimation. The dollar value considered corresponds to the exchange rate determined by the World Economic Outlook Database, IMF, for each year under consideration. As of July, the 2010 exchange rate average is 1,937.90 Pesos, based on data provided by the Central Bank of Colombia. For further calculations, figures are provided in local currency. Expressions in Bold Type (Table) make reference to the various defence budget items, which can be found in a sector-based or institutional classification of the Budget Act.



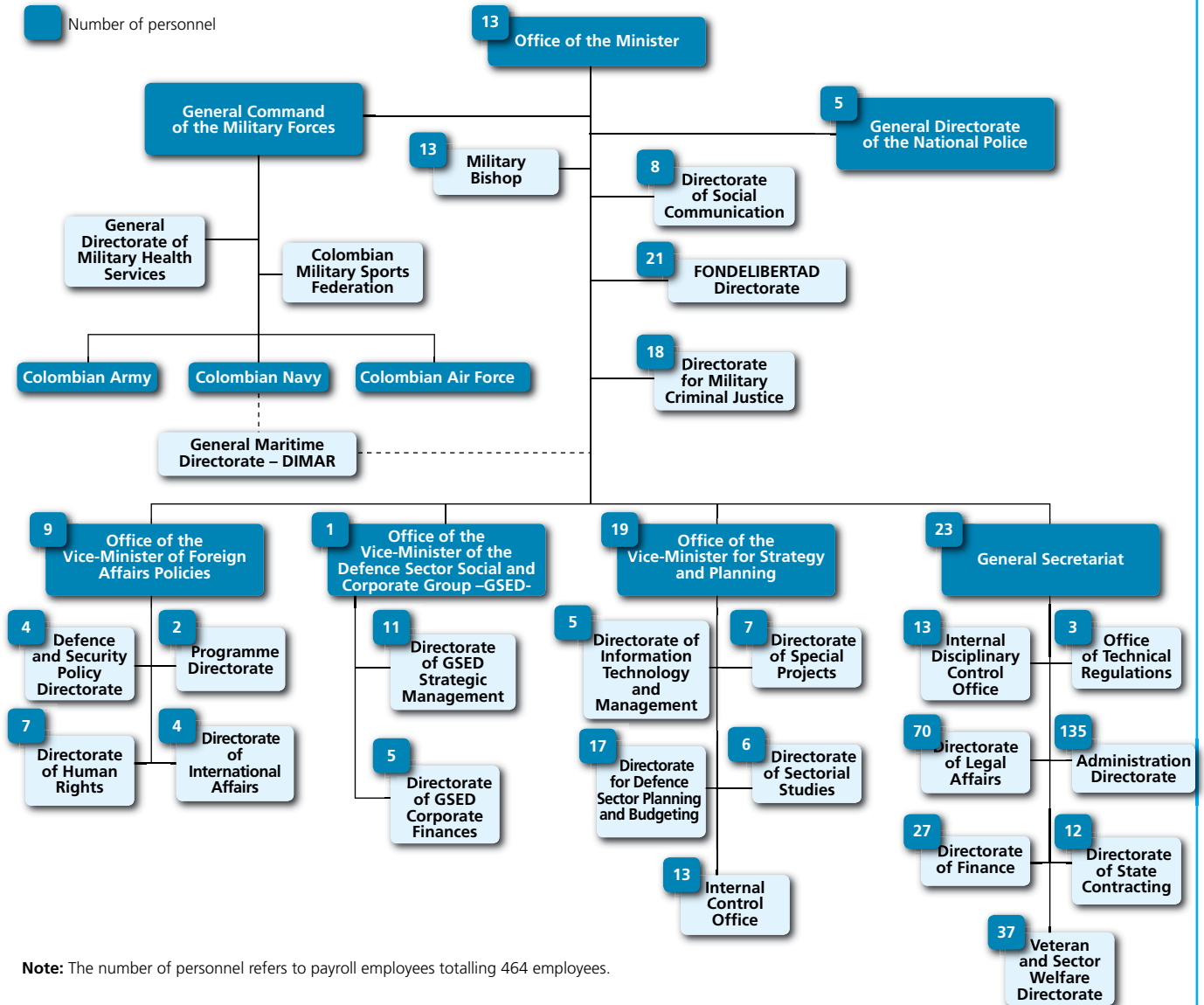
The Ministry of National Defence

Responsibility:

The Ministry of Defence conducts the Military Forces and the National Police as mandated by the President, formulating and adopting the sector policies, general plans, programmes and projects for the defence of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Nation as well as to maintain the constitutional order and guarantee a democratic co-existence. The National Ministry of Defence counts on the direct assistance of the General Commander of the Military Forces, the Commanders of the Armed Forces, the General Director of the National Police and the Vice Minister.

(Decreto por el cual se modifica la estructura del Ministerio de Defensa Nacional y se dictan otras disposiciones, N° 1.512 – 2000/08/11, Sec. 2, 3, 4 and 5)

Organization Chart and Personnel



Note: The number of personnel refers to payroll employees totalling 464 employees.

Date of Foundation: 1965
Current Minister (September 2010): Rodrigo Rivera Salazar
Can military members be Ministers of Defence?: Yes (if they have retired)
Number of military members who were Ministers of Defence: 12
Number of civilians who were Ministers of Defence: 13
Have there been any women in charge of the Ministry of Defence?: Yes (Marta Lucía Ramírez de Rincón, 2002-2003)
Average permanence in the Minister of Defence position: 1 year and 10 months

[The Minister currently in charge is not considered. The creation date is related to the moment in which the term "Defence" becomes part of the Institution's name]

Source: Compilation based on information provided by the Ministry of National Defence.

Political Definitions

Policy Guidelines

The consolidation of the Nation's territorial control and rule of law is understood as the condition in which security provided by the Public Force can enable the State to fully exercise its authority and allow all its institutions and agencies to operate freely and seamlessly, while enabling the people to fully enjoy their full rights.

Programs and Actions associated with the National Development Plan:

1. Territorial control and defence of national sovereignty:
 - Consolidation of the Defence and Democratic Security Policy (PDSD) within the national territory.
 - Maintenance of strategic capabilities.
 - Strengthening of State intelligence.
2. Combat illegal narcotics and organized crime:
 - Consolidation of tasks of crop eradication, interdiction, extradition, money-laundering control and demand reduction.
 - Combat racketeering and kidnapping.
3. Peaceful co-existence and security:
 - Strengthening of levels in charge of policy-making and implementation.
 - Consolidation of the community policing model.
 - Information systems and contrast media.
 - Domestic violence and juvenile crime.
 - Regulatory reforms.

Strategic Goals

Consolidate the country's territorial control and strengthen rule of law in the entire national territory. Protect the people, maintaining a strategic initiative against all sorts of threats to citizen security. Dramatically increase the costs for drug trafficking activity in Colombia. Maintain a legitimate, updated and effective Public Force that citizens can trust and rely upon. Sustain the decreasing trend of all crime indicators in the country's urban centres.

Integral Defence and Security Policy Objectives

1. Consolidation of security and combat against illegal armed groups: Intensify the combat against these groups, to ensure security conditions that may allow consolidating the rule of law in the entire territory and, thus, lead to prosperity.
2. Counter-narcotics and fight against illegal activities: Combat drug-trafficking and other sources of financing and supply for these gangs, as well as different expressions of cross-border organized crime.
3. Strategic capabilities: Strengthen strategic capacities to ensure national defence and sovereignty.
4. Citizen security and peaceful co-existence: Ensure protection of life and peace for the people, by combating all manifestations of crime and delinquency, while promoting inter-agency coordination and ensuring enhanced levels of peaceful co-existence and prosperity.
5. Modernization of the defence and security sector: Deepen the implementation of security and defence management best practices and innovation, within the proper regulatory framework.

Source: *Guía de Planeamiento Estratégico 2007-2010, Logros de la Política Integral de Defensa y Seguridad para la Prosperidad* (September 2010), Ministry of National Defence. The 2011-2014 National Development Plan will be disclosed by the end of 2010.

Colombia published its *Política de Defensa y Seguridad Democrática* (Defence and Democratic Security Policy) in 2003 and *Política de Consolidación de la Seguridad Democrática* (Democratic Security Consolidation Policy) in 2007.

Reports Submitted to the United Nations and the OAS

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
										✘		✘
											◊	◊
							☛		☛			☛

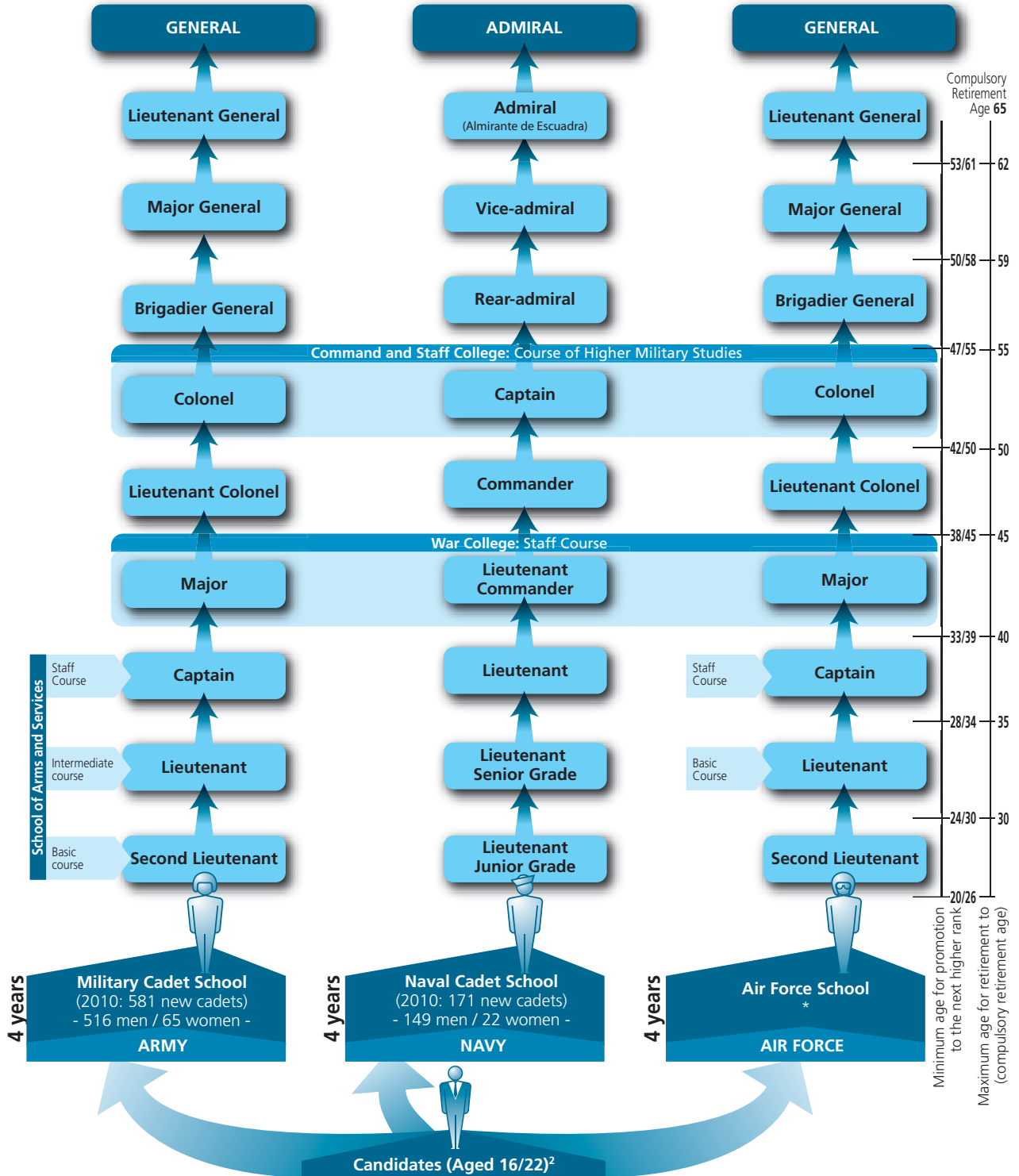
Register of Conventional Arms: ✘ Register of Military Expenditures: ◊ Implementation of Confidence and Security Building Measures: ☛

Source: Compilation based on reports submitted to the UN Register of Conventional Arms and the UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures and reports submitted to the OAS on the Implementation of Confidence and Security Buildings Measures.



Military Career

Commissioned Officers' Career Path ¹



¹ Command corps includes officers who have been educated at military academies from the beginning of their professional careers. The graph makes a theoretical reconstruction of officers' promotion through the completion of mandatory courses. Further requirements for promotion have not been considered.

² The age of 16-22 has been considered for comparative purposes. Entry age varies depending on the Service: in the Army 16-22, in the Navy 16-21 and in the Air Force 16-22. The minimum age for promotion shall depend on age of graduation from the military institution.

* As of September 2010, the admission process had not finished.

Source: Compilation based on *Decreto que regula las normas de carrera del personal de oficiales y suboficiales* N° 1.790 – 2000/09/14. Last amendment: Act N° 1.405 – 2010/07/28). New cadets: Military Schools.

The Armed Forces

General Mission

The Military Forces shall have the main mission of defending the sovereignty, independence, integrity of the national territory and of constitutional order. (Political Constitution, Sec. 217)

Specific Missions

Army

The National Army conducts military operations to defend and maintain national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, to protect the civilian population, private and state-owned assets, so as to contribute to generating a peaceful and secure environment and development to assure the Nation's constitutional order.

Navy

Contribute to the defence of the Nation through the effective use of a flexible naval power in maritime, fluvial and land spaces under its responsibility to comply with the constitutional order and participate in the development of maritime power and the protection of Colombian interests.

Air Force

The Colombian Air Force dominates and maintains control over Colombian air space and carries out air operations for the defence of the country's sovereignty, independence, national integrity and constitutional order.

Total Strength: 268,242



Officers:

M 8,479	448 W
Non-commissioned Officers:	
M 30,647	897 W
Troops:	
M 186,073	0 W
M 99.40 %	0.60 % W
Total 226,544	



Officers:

M 1,854	305 W
Non-commissioned Officers:	
M 7,660	228 W
Troops:	
M 21,308	0 W
M 98.30%	1.70 % W
Total 31,355	



Officers:

M 1,802	395 W
Non-commissioned Officers:	
M 3,153	185 W
Troops:	
M 4,808	0 W
M 2.94%	17.06% W
Total 10,343	

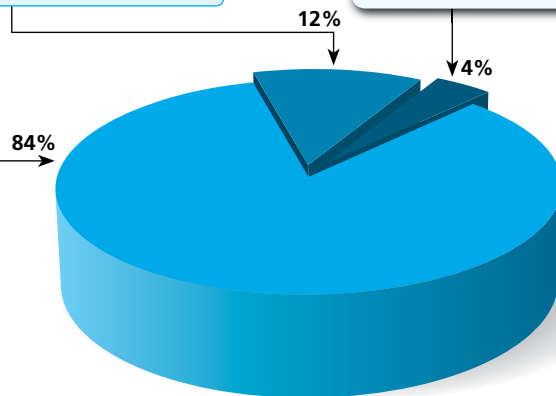
New Military Units

Type of Unit – National Army	2002 2010
Divisions	4
Decisive Action Force	1
Task Force	6
Territorial brigades	15
Mobile brigades	18
Divisional Reaction Force	7
Groups of Urban Antiterrorist Special Forces	11
Groups of Lanceros (rangers)	1
Counter-guerrilla battalions	66
High mountain battalions	6
Infantry battalions	5
Artillery battalions	2
Engineer battalions	5
Power and road special battalions	3
Supply battalions	1
Maintenance battalions	1
Support and service battalions	11
Communications battalions	2
Forest battalions	3
Instruction, training and re-training battalions	12
Mobility battalions and aviation manoeuvres	8
Special operations battalions	7
Disaster response and prevention battalions	1
Demining battalions	1
Explosive and demolition battalions	1
Intelligence battalions	1
Cavalry group	1
Schools	14
Intelligence units	2
Intelligence regional units	8
Combat support and service companies	16
Explosive and demolition companies	4
Mobile engineer companies	4
Plan Meteoro Companies	12
Operational commands	5
Special commands	1
Special operation command	1
Specific commands	2
Logistics commands	3
Joint command	1
Divisional Marte Group	6
Instruction and training centres	24
High precision sniper units	43
Military districts	1
Medical dispensaries	1
Departments (I's)	7
Directorate	22
Offices	3

Type of Unit – National Navy	2002 2010
Navy infantry battalions	2
Fluvial task units	2
Naval bases	1
Groups of urban antiterrorist special forces	2
Coastguard station	25
Air-sea station	8
Fluvial support mobile station	10
Aircraft unit	9
Helicopter unit	3
Patrol boat	21
Administrative boat	5
Training boat	1
Coastguard commands	1
Troop armoured vehicles	9
Troop quick patrol vessel	5
Fluvial support patrol vessel	4
Ocean patrol vessel	2
Landing fast boat	2
Submarine fast boat	5
General transport craft	3
Bay towboat	1
Training sailing-ship	4
Departments (I's)	2
Directorate	5
Offices	1

Type of Unit – Air Force	2002 2010
Yopal Air Group	1
Yopal Air Base	1

The number of civil personnel in the Forces (2010) is:
 - General Command: 316
 - Army: 5,928
 - Navy: 1,991
 - Air Force: 2,529



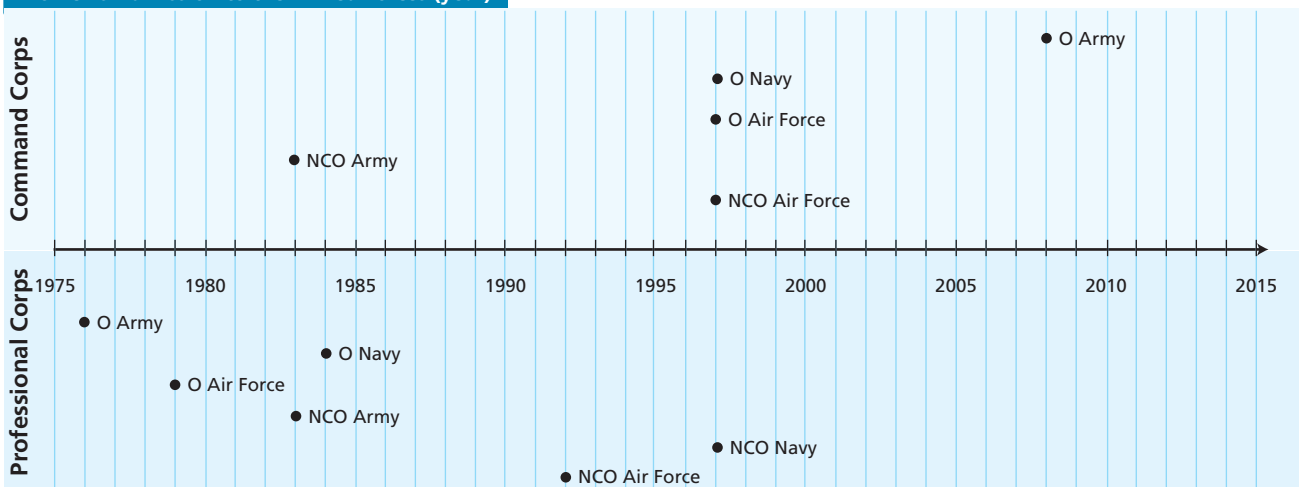
M: Men / W: Women

Source: Web pages of the Armed Forces (missions) and information provided by the Ministry of National Defence (troops). Logros de la Política Integral de Defensa y Seguridad para la Prosperidad, September 2010, Ministry of National Defence.



Women in the Armed Forces

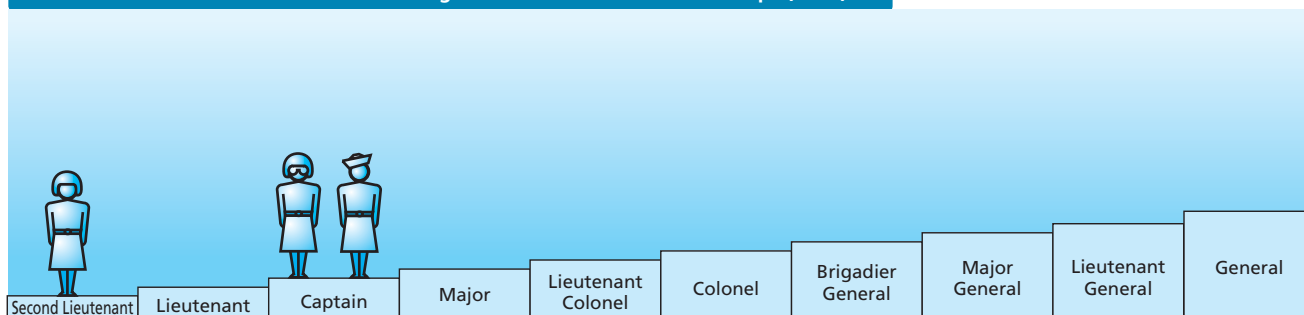
Women's Admission to the Armed Forces (year)



O: Officers - NCO: Non-commissioned Officers

Note: Women cannot be part of the Naval Force command corps as non-commissioned officers. The Command corps includes officers who have been educated at military academies from the beginning of their professional careers. The Professional corps refers to those who develop a career in the civilian sphere and are then incorporated to the armed forces.

Women Officers who have reached the highest rank in the Command Corps (2010)



Note: These ranks correspond to the Army, as an example. The equivalent ranks for Captain are Lieutenant (Navy) and Captain (Air Force).

0.92% (2,458) of the total Armed Forces are women.

Source: Compilation based on information provided by the Navy, Ministry of National Defence and Project 07-184 Global Peace and Security Fund RESDAL.

Military Service

It is mandatory for all male citizens at the conscription age, for a period of one or two years. Women shall only be liable as required by the country, and shall be assigned differentiated tasks.

Modalities:

- Enlisted soldier (18 to 24 months)
- Peasant soldier (12 to 18 months, in the area of residence).
- High-school graduate soldier (12 months)
- Professional (12 months)

- Soldiers, especially high-school graduates, apart from their military training and other obligations as soldiers, shall be trained to perform social welfare activities for the community, especially tasks related to ecological and environmental preservation.
- Peasant soldiers shall fulfill their mandatory military service in the geographical area where they reside. The National Government shall organize said service taking their academic background and trade into account.
- Professional soldiers work under a contract.

		Number of Soldiers (2010)		
		Army	Navy	Air Force
Soldiers	Enlisted	67,579	13,045	4,808
	Peasants	23,264	701	-
	High-school graduates	15,674	-	-
	Professionals	79,556	7,562	-
	TOTAL	186,073	21,308	4,808

Source: Information provided by the Ministry of National Defence and *Ley de servicio de reclutamiento y movilización* (N°48 – 1993/03/03).

Defence and National and International Community

Multinational Peace Force and Observers (MFO)

Colombia has been part of the MFO since 1982. This mission is independent from the UN, and was generated by the Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979. It has an Infantry Battalion made up of 31 officers, 58 non-commissioned officers, 265 soldiers and 3 civilians (a total of 357 men).

Source: Web site of the Multinational Peace Force and Observers (MFO).

Support Actions

The General Command of the Military Forces (CGFM) has developed a Joint Integral Action programme in order to assist in population needs and support the community. The Integral Action includes:

Consolidation Plan 2008-2014

The Plan has allowed the execution of infrastructure work totaling US\$ 11,322,283 in more than 1,100 municipalities around the country. Works include the construction and improvement of roads, parks, schools, health facilities, aqueducts and sewers.

Indigenous Affairs

In 2007, the CGFM created the advisory office for Indigenous Affairs. In 2009, similar offices were created in the National Army, the National Navy, the Colombian Air Force, the "Caribe" Joint Command and the Omega Joint Task Force. At present, there are 62 liaison officers of Indigenous Affairs in units where there is relevant presence of indigenous peoples, thus interacting directly with the native and indigenous organizations and communities, carrying out health support programmes as well as integration activities.

Inter-agency campaigns

Every year, different health support activities are carried out in different locations around the country; said activities include medical and dental care, surgeries and various specialities. During 2010, 18 campaigns have been performed.

Aid in case of disaster

As part of the National System of Disaster Response, in February 2009 the Public Force operated in Nariño, where floods caused a disaster affecting around 31,250 people.

Military Forces action:

- The National Navy deployed fluvial support and coastguard boats to evacuate affected people in flooded areas.
- The National Centre of Air Force Personnel Recovery deployed an air-medical evacuation platform to give support to the search and rescue efforts.
- C-130, C-295 and CN-235 aircraft for the transport of specialized personnel and equipment to assist in a disaster scenario, carrying 310 tons of supplies and 129 people.
- Medical teams of the National Navy took part in the health care campaigns.

Activities of the Joint Integral Action Command:

- Resolution Integral Action, support campaigns for "Plan Fronteras." 13,633 beneficiaries.
- Coordinated Integral Action, support in health care areas in coordination with the US military Group. 26,166 beneficiaries.
- General Integral Action. 329 health campaigns. 237,952 beneficiaries.

Soacha Plan

Conference development, provision of health services and recreational activities in the main municipality welcoming displaced persons of the country. 10,189 beneficiaries.

Security Consolidation

Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR)

Colombia is the only country where DDR has taken place in the midst of armed violence with groups with which no peace agreement has been signed. This has been accompanied by rules seeking to contribute to social and economic reintegration of demobilized persons with a regular legal situation.

The Programme of Humanitarian Aid to the Demobilized persons (PAHD) aims at providing integral humanitarian aid to the demobilized persons and their family group, facilitating their social reintegration.

Demobilized persons:

2002-2006: 2,389	(average)
2007	3,192
2008	3,461
2009	2,638
2010	1,924 (January to September)

Democratic Security Consolidation Policy

The PCSD, established in 2007, has the following objectives: consolidate the territorial control and strengthen the Rule of Law in all the national territory; protect the population; increase the cost to develop drug trafficking activities; maintain a modern Public Force and; keep the downward trend of criminal indicators.

Public Security

Seizures (1999 – 2010)

- Arms..... 70,561
- Ships..... 4,930
- Vehicles..... 19,274
- Aircraft 776
- Neutralized aircraft 423

Drug trafficking

- **Coca crops:**
Reduction from 101,800 (1998) to 68,025 (2009)
- **Seized cocaine:**
134 tons average (2002-2006)
179 tons average (2007-2009)
- **Illegal substance laboratories destroyed:**
1,486 average (2002-2006)
3,242 average (2002-2009)

Public Force

- **Increase of Public Force manpower (military and police forces):**
313,406 (2002)
426,014 (2010)

The National Consolidation Plan (PNC) is organized at an operational level in Regional Coordination Centres (CCR). The Ministry of Defence has assigned officers of the Military Forces and National Police in 10 CCRs with the main mission of providing advice, based on security criteria, to make civil decisions related to the development of each one of the areas prioritized by the PNC.

Likewise, the PNC includes a National Territorial Consolidation Plan, which aims at fulfilling the objectives of the PCSD, maintaining the confidence of investors and advancing in the effective social policy, through the reinforcement of the alignment of military, police, and antinarcotics efforts as well as those in the social and legal areas, and the economic and institutional development of the State in strategic areas of the national territory.

In this context there is a Consolidation War Plan (2007-2010), based on which the military forces jointly with other state institutions focused the operational effort in 17 strategic areas with the aim of achieving demobilization, capture or reinsertion of illegal group members by means of the implementation of the "Salto Estratégico" National Campaign.

Source: Presidential Instruction N°1, Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2009; *Estrategía de fortalecimiento de la democracia y el desarrollo social, 2007-2013; Logros de la Política Integral de Defensa y Seguridad para la Prosperidad*, September 2010, *Memorias al Congreso 2009-2010; Política de Consolidación de la Seguridad Democrática, 2007; Plan Consolidación 2008-2014; Cambio Climático, Riesgos Nacionales y Retos para la Fuerza Pública*, Research Note 2, National Ministry of Defence, and websites of the General Command of the Military Forces and the National Ministry of Defence.



Analisis:

From the “Strategic Leap” to “Democratic Prosperity”

Jesús Alberto Ruíz Mora

Director of the Institute of Military Science Research, and Researcher of the Center for Strategic Studies on National Security and Defence (CEESEDEN).

The speech delivered by President Lleras to the Colombian military on May 9, 1958, was an undoubted landmark in Colombian security doctrine: it contributed to military force detachment from partisan politics, but, at the same time, placed civilians at a distance from national security issues¹; and it was the main reason for the usual absence of security and defence policies that would have the support of civilian institutions to consolidate military forces’ successes.

The concept of *democratic security* meant a transformation of the security and defence notions in Colombia, as it resulted in the Executive Branch’s final commitment to subjects of a sensible political-strategic value for the nation. This does not mean that such commitment did not exist before, but rather that the lack of articulation between national policy and military conduct explicitly led to transforming military forces in the favourite instrument for domestic public order control, which was resorted to in recurrent but erratic manners, instead of looking for structural changes². President Uribe’s success was underpinned by his decision to take the offensive against drug trafficking and terrorism, securing the support of several Colombian society sectors, which allocated part of their resources to the payment of the war tax, which funded the arrival of civilian and military State

authorities to a number of different and remote locations of the nation’s geography.

This was at the heart of the Democratic Security Policy (PSD; Spanish acronym), a complex strategy that not only was limited to military action to restore territorial control, but also promoted political and economic tools for the social recovery of the affected territories. Combining the work of the armed forces with the support of civilian agencies was one of the strengths of the PSD.

The Strategic Leap

Today’s President Juan Manuel Santos, then in the capacity as Minister of Defence, was the announcer of the “*Strategic Leap*,” an offensive through the activation of joint force tasks intended to break up FARC’s military capabilities and prevent them from establishing in new territories³. The action is planned as a massive and sustained military campaign, forcing to take up men and means from different territorial spaces and concentrating military efforts to reduce the FARC’s offensive capacity. This is an operational re-engineering coupling a dominant intelligence capable of identifying very sensitive targets, with the use of tactical units highly competent for striking spe-

1 Alejo Vargas, “Alberto Lleras y los militares”, *El País*, July 1, 2006.

2 Francisco Buitrago Leal, *Defensa y seguridad nacional en Colombia, 1958-1993*, (Bogotá: Editorial Tercer Mundo, 1994).

3 *El Espectador*, “Gobierno anuncia un ‘Salto Estratégico’ para darle la estocada final a las Farc”, 31 de marzo, 2009, <http://www.elespectador.com/articulo132498-gobierno-anuncia-un-salto-estrategico-darle-estocada-final-farc>

cific objectives.

An inter-agency coordination effort is needed, which not only seeks to capture criminal organization members, but also ensure their conviction. An important element is the strengthening of border security, as well as an increase of military control on the lines limiting the areas where illegal armed groups have taken base, minimizing tactical movements in anticipation of State force action.

The “Strategic Leap” devotes a good deal of institutional efforts to strengthen the commitment of State institutions to the social and economic development of vast areas. International cooperation, intra-agency actions and institutional effectiveness represent fundamental assumptions for this work, because these are the factors capable of transforming military successes into a social and state victory.

The social recovery of the territory seeks to change the population status, evolving from simple inhabitants subject to State control, to citizens entitled to full rights and guaranties, through an institutional process involving gradual coverage by the State for the recovery of areas and populations to a civilian regime and the pursuit of development and progress⁴.

The transformation of the Colombian Armed Forces within the framework of Democratic Security has allowed them to have greater presence and control over the national territory, use resources in a more rational manner and maintain effective coordination between the different forces, which led to results including the elimination of important illegal leaders, disarticulation of narco-trafficking roads and rings, mass demobilization and release of kidnapped people in operations such as “Jaque,” “Camaleón” and “Sodoma.” The tactical capability contributed by Joint Commands and Task Forces should be noted, where the best of each service is committed to common strategic objectives. The Army has reduced the illegal groups’ strategic mobilization corridors, from its rearguard area in the south of the country, to the heart of the nation’s power located in the Capital of the Republic.

The Democratic Prosperity

The development mobilization programs, including *Familias Guardabosques* (Wood Ranger Families), *Familias en Acción* (Families in Action), crop substitution and other social action projects of the Presidency allow the reinsertion of communities isolated from the national economy, as well as the arrival of

development-driving foreign investment. International cooperation has a unique significance (US assistance only represents US\$521.8 million).

One of the challenges for the incoming government is, apart from sustaining the military effort, to rally more resources into the programs that seek social and economic stabilization in the areas now recovered. To this end, a decided commitment of the private sector is required for the task, since it is a vital element towards the successful completion of the “*Strategic Leap*” and its coupling with “*Democratic Prosperity*”, the colors held up as national policy by the new President. “A Good Government” as the one Juan Manuel Santos pretends to lead, implies, for security and development to be effective, legitimizing State policies as a product of a convergence of efforts in all the fields of national power, joined to a national union effort.

Even more final will be the initiatives involving the armed forces in inter-agency tasks to allow countrymen returning to the fields and producing hand in hand with institutions. On the other hand, the legitimacy of men in uniform lies on their maintaining respect for human rights; the deaths of civilians, accused of guerrilla activities, perpetrated by certain Army members in criminal attitudes assumed by their own decision were a shameful page in the military institution’s history, written by its best men for the peace of all Colombians. For this reason, the Army has the imperative need to strengthen their relation with some sectors of the population, whose confidence was weakened by the so called false-positives. The institution, therefore, is charged with the responsibility to not allow the repetition of such abominable conducts, as well as to contribute to fast justice administration, thus completing the work that the Army itself started by opening the respective investigations against the presumed criminals and taking them to the competent courts of justice.

These Public Force drives will be indispensable in the mission to beat armed groups’ actions, since up to date, the only successful colonization processes have been those of coffee producers and drug-traffickers⁵. It is in the hands of the new leader to make of the *Strategic Leap* the road to social victory, through democratic prosperity, a fundamental State objective to attain peace.

⁴ Ejército Nacional, “Actualidad: Salto estratégico busca llevar a las Farc al punto de no retorno”, <http://www.ejercito.mil.co/?idcategoria=218556>.

⁵ Gonzalo Sánchez, “Guerra prolongada y negociaciones inciertas en Colombia” in *Violencias y estrategias colectivas en la región andina. Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú y Venezuela*, ed. Gonzalo Sánchez y Eric Lair, (Bogotá: Editorial Norma, 2008).