

## Chapter 6

# Defense Support of Civil Authorities in Responding to Natural Disasters\*

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**Abstract:** This chapter analyzes how the Colombian Military Forces, in performing unified action and working harmoniously with State institutions under its doctrine, are legal and legitimate. It highlights the mechanisms of collaboration and civil control, which are often unknown to members of society, making them a paradigm. Through a qualitative analysis of the laws, doctrine, and actions of security forces, based on the cooperation of the Military Forces as an element of reliable development alongside institutions and civil power, this not only dismantles the paradigm but also brings to the attention of civil society the military profession supported by the developments of its doctrine in conjunction with unified state action.

**Keywords:** Unified action; Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA); response to natural disasters; civil control; civil power; political-military relations

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## **SECURITY FORCES, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND PEACEBUILDING WITHIN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND IHL FRAMEWORK**

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## Introduction

The interest politicians from civil societies typically have in the military extends only to threats to their internal and external security and is confined to the provisions in the constitutions of most nations: the defense of constitutional integrity, the independence and sovereignty of the country, and the responsibility for the use of the State's legitimate force.

Myths surround the interaction of State institutions with their military forces. Opposition political groups, journalists, thinkers, and artists, among others, perceive this interaction as dangerous for democracy. This interaction is usually classified as unconstitutional, without any basis, and outside the competence or mission of such forces due to ignorance of their roles. In short, it is a biased view that focuses on a possible militarization of civil society for political interests, which disregards the benefits that may be derived from this work.

For an efficient operation, military institutions require functional capabilities in war and peace that benefit nations in all spheres, not only security and defense. However, the unified action<sup>1</sup> partners' knowledge of these capabilities is essential since they are linked to the concept of protection<sup>2</sup> and help develop the State.

It should be noted that using military powers to support unified action is not an attack on democracy but rather a viable capability option for the development

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<sup>1</sup> According to the doctrine, unified action (UA) includes synchronizing, coordinating, or integrating the activities of governmental and non-governmental agencies with military operations to achieve the unity of effort contemplated in MFC 1.0.

<sup>2</sup> Protection: This is a warfighting function that describes how to coordinate protection to preserve the nation's combat power, personnel, unified action partners, critical infrastructure, and strategic assets covered by MFE 3-37.

of nations that take advantage of the multifunctional configuration of their armed forces without distancing them from their constitutional mission.

To examine the competencies, we will analyze characteristics and procedures of military action with specific actions, which are not general knowledge but serve to expand the perception of the relationship between defense support of civil authorities (DSCA).

## Fundamentals that Make the Military Different in Society

Discipline, order, and permanent subjugation to civil authority under a hierarchy are everyday activities for the military but not for the rest of society. In the military, there is a different organizational structure, in which the possibilities of each man vary thanks to their talents and special abilities that are put at the service of their unit; there is no individualism, but rather a collective action with a clear objective, which includes even the military families and their way of taking on life.<sup>3</sup>

Duties and responsibilities mark the mission and daily life of the military forces according to their specialty. The promise to serve the country is honored daily, not from the liberal vision that each citizen has, but by fulfilling their assignments in the branch delegated to them, with regulated responsibilities from dawn until they go to rest.

Being a soldier<sup>4</sup> requires regular physical training, strict adherence to discipline rules, and teamwork to fulfill one's duties according to one's position, which is crucial for the security and survival of fellow team members, as well as training in a wide range of military techniques and tactics.

Training in receiving and following orders must be permanent and provided accurately because these are generally accompanied by elements that can cause harm to others if neglected. Additionally, preparation for using force requires

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<sup>3</sup> Military families must deal with specific stresses that make parenting difficult. The figure of the military father must battle with short-, medium-, or long-term absences and the stress associated with enlisting for active duty. Infants must assimilate and face the situation of having a parent who is far away and in danger. Likewise, these homes also face frequent moves and changes in school, adapting to new challenges of cultures and customs. The partner must also face new challenges and various responsibilities while the military parent is away (Children Welfare, Information Gateway, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> When we refer to the word soldier, we are referring to all personnel from the most basic ranks and functions in a military institution, such as those of a soldier in a combat team, to the most complex committed functions led by an army's commanding general.

meticulous planning, which should leave nothing to chance. In the use of force in a war operation, any carelessness can lead to the physical disappearance of a unit.

These concepts of physical training, adherence to orders, and rigorous personal and team discipline are not defining elements of modern armies. They are principles found in the philosophy of the Spartan soldier described in Herodotus' *Histories* from the 4th century BC and in Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (1999), dating back to the 5th century BC, which remain familiar to and prevail in the army today.

The values<sup>5</sup> and conduct of a soldier are governed by principles<sup>6</sup> that cannot be negotiable. Their foundations are described as the cornerstone of military institutions as repositories of the nation's weapons and legitimate use of violence at the risk of their own lives, safeguarding respect for the constitution and the laws of the republic. André Gavet, in his book *L'Art de Commander*, states about the soldier's duty:

It is nothing but the form of the citizen's duty toward the country guided by the moral basis of collective duty. It is organic and not tyrannical. It is exercised through the selfless collaboration of individuals and not by violence. Command and obedience are attributes of equal dignity. (Gavet, 2018)

Within the modern conception of freedoms, described in Law 1862/2017, there needs to be more understanding of what discipline, obedience, subordination, self-denial, and persistence mean. These are essential qualities that every soldier has, exercised not under the coercion of abuse, mistreatment, or arbitrariness but under the command's leadership governed by the attitude of service, respect, and solidarity.

In civil society and institutions, the understanding of military sciences is quite poor or almost non-existent, which is logical in such a closed field that is only relevant to the military. According to *MFE, 1.0, El Ejército* (2017), civil society overlooks the processes that require specialization, which is achieved through educational, instructional, and training processes, necessary for adequately acquiring and enhancing the individual and collective organizational competencies of leaders.

According to military doctrine, knowledge of the military profession is based on four fields: technical-military, ethical-moral, political-cultural, and leadership training, which are multipliers of expertise. Such knowledge is strengthened

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<sup>5</sup> Respect, honesty, loyalty, courage, prudence, perseverance, solidarity, fidelity, and transparency are contemplated in *MFE 1.0, El Ejército* (2017).

<sup>6</sup> Fundamental norms or ideas that guide thought and behavior, derive from beliefs and culture, and regulate the lives of men on land, sea, and air, being the support that makes the ethics and morals of the Military Forces unbreakable. Referenced from the manual of ethical generalities for the military vocation (CGFM, 2016).

by doctrine, making education and training fundamental in the development of technical skills so that officers, non-commissioned officers, and staff have correct judgment in decision-making (MFE 1.0).

The education, training, and retraining processes are certified at all levels, according to rank and specialty, from regular soldiers to brigadier generals for promotion to the rank of major general. This makes military education a constant source of preparation and updating, which requires a professional army competent for the defense of a nation.

All military education programs, in addition to being aligned with the parameters required by the Ministry of National Education (MEN, by its Spanish acronym) under Decree 1075/2015, which regulates the Education sector at the national level, follow the guidelines established in the Education Policies of Security Forces (PEFuP, by its Spanish acronym).<sup>7</sup>

All aspects of the defense of nations cannot be linked to chance or the political logic of the moment. Thus, military sciences are limited to logical premises, academically founded and relevant to the historical context, and adjusted to detailed rationing, as described in *On the German art of war*, as follows:

Nothing could be more dangerous than to follow sudden inspirations, however intelligent or brilliant they may appear, without pursuing them to the logical conclusions, or to indulge in wishful thinking, however sincere our purposes. We need officers capable of following systematically the path of logical argument to its conclusion, with disciplined intellect, strong enough in character and nerve to execute what the intellect dictates. (Condell & Zabecki, 2001)

This foundation of the soldier's training in a solid doctrine focused on the knowledge of their military profession and the optimization of human and material resources at the nation's service. It keeps the armed forces away from political deliberation, making their decisions solely and exclusively under the political directive and civilian control of the president and the minister of defense.

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<sup>7</sup> Taken from PEFuP 2021-2026, Resolution 0455 of March 11, 2021, the educational system has institutions recognized by the MEN, six of them accredited as high quality. Likewise, it has 170 higher education programs approved by the MEN, of which 39 already have high quality registration and 131 have qualified registration. They also provide more than 4,500 training programs that specialize uniformed personnel in military and police art.

## Precepts of the Politics-Soldiers Relationship

The relationships between politicians and the military have very marked visions regarding the management of forces exclusive to politics. This is related to the words of Winston Churchill (1985): "Politics is almost as exciting as war, and quite dangerous. In war you can only be killed once, but in politics many times." The conviction that war is exclusively for politicians is also expressed by the former Prime Minister of France, George Clemenceau, who stated that "war is too serious a matter to entrust to military men," perhaps due to Achille Tournier's reasoning: "The military has too much strength, and the politicians have too much skill."

*Carrying out* violence and war as a decision of political powers is generally analyzed taking the well-known axiom of Carl Von Clausewitz (2016), "war is the continuation of politics by other means" or as explained by John Keegan (2014), in his book *A History of Warfare*, "as the continuation of political intercourse with the intermixing of other means," the other means being the use of violence by the military until the political will of the opponent is subdued.

The rulers and political establishments of States use force because they see military power as an option to conquer the objectives, they consider vital. Failing to achieve this through politics or diplomacy, they impose them by force. Violence and submission become their ultimate goal, and for that, they use the soldier and the armed capacity.

It is not the soldier who initiates conflicts but rather the one who fulfills the political intention of the ruler to whom they are subordinate, since the State led by the ruler has prepared, equipped, and made them ready to comply with the constitutional provisions of nations, which in modern times are none other than the defense of sovereignty, independence, and the integrity of the constitutional order.

Politicians and civilians have a conception of the soldier, shaped in modern times by film and television content in which the countless dramas of their lives are narrated. They are the ones who suffer in the development of war, caused by political acts of States or organizations that fight causes, from the historical view of each conflict.

However, it is not always expected for the military to have political intentions or to be pressured by military institutions due to different reasons that are generally marked by the low or no room for maneuver in public institutions, managed by

technocrats with specialized skills whose expertise the military lacks. Furthermore, “politics is beyond the scope of military competence, and the participation of military officers in politics undermines their professionalism, curtailing their professional competence, dividing the profession against itself” (Huntington, 2000).

History may mark the emergence of military leaders who have taken up political banners and abused force, breaking democracies or changing de facto constitutional orders. This entry of military personnel with command into political arenas is a transgression of honor and the army codes that have governed them in the subordination of authority.

Nonetheless, in all areas of civil and military life, there are anomalies: officers who manage to have particular success in politics and who generally retire to lead a political life. Still, it is no longer common for them to do so in uniform or even think about taking power de facto, as was usual in the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America.

The ideas of the military dictatorships from the 1950s to the early 1990s in Europe, Latin America, and Africa were due to geopolitical factors derived from the bipolar world that existed then, with opposed ideological loads. These dictatorships caused severe *violations* of human rights in the containment and combat reactionary communist ideologies with nationalist content, which, with their revolutionary actions or influenced by the elites of each country in the face of the possible installation of communist governments in the region, gave rise to military dictatorships.

The behavior of these military regimes in power showed that they were unreliable, nor did they bring stability or progress to nations. Thus, they lost support from the USA and its allies. “Events such as the fall of the Franco regime and the democratization of Spain, the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, the collapse of dictatorships in Latin America, and the universal acceptance of democracy as a universal value” (Huntington, 1991).

All this added to the advances and development of international instruments that promote democracies, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the global declarations and conventions of the ILO, and the creation of the Inter-American, European, and African human rights systems, makes it very difficult for a nation to be taken over de facto by a military authority.

In *The Third Wave*, Huntington (1991, p. 8) concludes that since 1990, “military coups, censorship, rigged elections, coercion and harassment of the opposition, jailing of political opponents, and prohibition of political meetings are incompatible with democracy,” which have consequences in international political spheres, in the

UN, commercial powers such as the USA and the European Union, and multilateral economic organizations that would make a military dictatorship like those of the 1960s and 1970s unviable. Likewise, the fall of the totalitarian governments of the communist system, education, information shared by the media, and dissemination of democratic values created a broader and more applicable vision of democracy in the world that differs substantially from place to place due to cultural and religious conceptions or States under a single-party regime.

The experiences of dictatorships in Latin America sponsored by the USA and documented as *Operation Condor* have been extensively studied by the disciplines of social sciences, law, sociology, and anthropology. They have also been exposed and prosecuted for the abuses of the military in power through truth commissions and other bodies of international justice due to human rights violations, which have revealed some shocking truths.

The events that occurred with the dictatorships of the Southern Cone did not become a constant of conduct and military behavior in Latin America. The fact that some countries were not led to arbitrary acts by the military was due to training and education in democratic values; they ignored the concepts of what was called *the national security doctrine* as a method to combat communism through control and revolutionary focus of the world (García, 2021).

National security doctrine coexisted as an unofficial U.S. doctrine that tried unsuccessfully to keep Latin American countries aligned in order to anticipate insurrections or leftist governments and stop the Soviet influence seen in the financing of guerrillas in Africa, Indochina, and Latin America, as the political science professor Francisco Leal Buitrago stated in multiple writings on sociology.

The USA's financing and support of military dictatorships was a failure of its foreign policy of containment because it involved violence, use of force, and military repression. Meanwhile, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, 1917–1991) had been gaining ground with political ideology by unifying all forms of struggle in social niches and promoting Marxist-Leninist ideas and their conception of society through communist parties.

All the promotion of communist ideas that came out of the USSR or the Iron Curtain countries, full of liberating political messages based on equality and equity with perfect systems of life, hid from the Western society of the 1960s and 1970s the poverty and horrors against life, freedom, and other fundamental rights occurring in the USSR, China and, generally, all communist countries perpetrated by political leaders such as Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, and Breszhnev, under the Soviet system.

This knowledge of the emancipatory scope of the economic doctrines of the Marxists, Leninists, or Maoists, which had so much impetus on the part of academics and students in political science or sociology, was not taken as *repression* from a military point of view.

What caused concern in the military community of the free world was the manner of establishing single-party governments, where the name of democracy was invoked in speeches, yet the methods and use of violence for social control constrained them in all their forms (Queralt, 2020).

The analysis and knowledge of Marxist doctrines throughout history have excited society due to their liberating nature, yet they have also worried and alarmed those responsible for maintaining the security and integrity of democracy. These individuals have been concerned with studying Marxist ideas in depth and contextualizing the horrors that were often dismissed or considered false in academic and political settings.

In Latin America, the study of the national security doctrine created a condemnatory stigma against military institutions due to the line of action and preservation of public order, specifically in Colombia, as cited by Leal Buitrago (1992):

Terms associated with military actions under national security doctrine often serve political purposes. This political usage is varied, encompassing public and private denunciations of overtly criminal actions or excesses that are questionable in terms of compatibility with laws or military regulations and the disqualification of nearly any military task. The social sectors that make these assessments are also varied: individuals, trade associations and labor unions, academic sectors, political parties and movements, human rights organizations and groups, guerrillas, and even anonymous groups of drug traffickers. (Buitrago, 1992, p. 26)

These terms against military institutions mean that civil power relations reach very tense contexts in an environment of mistrust fueled by political leaders or academics who do not evaluate the specific circumstances of each country or identify which military bodies did not accept the national security doctrine proposed and financed by the USA. Colombia and Venezuela did so, and despite having suffered revolutionary violence in their territories, they complied with civil order in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, supported by their democratic system and the civilian nature of their military institutions.

Cursorily analyzing military institutions using the same parameters as politicians, academics, or journalists and lacking a detailed observation of the contexts and knowledge of each country's specific military culture and military tradition is a complicated issue that has not been sufficiently integrated into the academic disciplines of sociology and political science.

Above all, academia has no clear intention of knowing the parameters of the training and academic preparation of the officers of the armed forces or of understanding that, in military institutions, training follows democratic principles and not the personal interests of a group of officers, especially in Colombia.

## The Military Government in Colombia

It can be affirmed that in Colombia, the military experience in the government of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953–1957) had a stabilizing effect on partisan violence. The presidential cabinet was entirely civilian, supported by the National Confederation of Workers. The Government gave women the right to vote through a plebiscite and made constitutional changes that favored fundamental reforms, with very few events of significant repression, which cannot be attributed to the general's orders (Bushnell, 2007).

The above shows that Colombia is not very welcoming to dictatorships, no matter how much blood has been spilled in its political history. When General Rojas Pinilla tried to extend his mandate democratically, he failed and, at the suggestion of the military command, discreetly withdrew, handing over power to civilians without using violence or military pressure. Just as he came to power through politicians, he returned it to them (Bushnell, 2007).

This transition from military dictatorship to democracy politically established the presidential alternation between conservatives and liberals and distributed the three public powers in halves between two parties at all territorial levels. This agreement pacified the country and ended sectarian fights (Palacio, 2002), giving way to the political control of the State bodies and the return of the Armed Forces to their constitutional duty.

This Colombian experience in military governments was clear and was not repeated. Furthermore, the political power ignored situations of public order since it delegated control to the military authority over court decisions that derived therefrom through martial law decrees (Gallon, 1983). The military neither wanted nor were they responsible for these functions, which would later ignite multiple

discussions in legal spheres regarding abuses of military justice while trying civilians for crimes related to public order and non-military offenses.

As Gallón (1983) explains, this type of delegation to security forces was so tricky and complex because they assumed functions that properly belonged to mayors and governors, and imposed responsibilities on the military that were not even aligned with their constitutional and functional missions. Consequently, the Minister of Defense himself requested to be relieved of the role of administering justice in situations of public order.

These requests were not accepted or heard by the Government or the Ministry of Justice with the approval of the Supreme Court of Justice, which clearly violated the principle of separation of powers (Comisión Colombiana de Juristas, 2011), being compliance with a political order not a choice for the Military Forces, who continued performing a task delegated by the Government.

## Philosophy and Antimilitarism

New philosophies, coming from the rise of the ideas of critical theory based on the revolutionary transformation of society in the 1960s and 1970s, the Marxist theories of the Frankfurt School, and Michel Foucault's ideas of micro-powers that circulated in the social order, promoted revolutions at all levels in the student and academic community, what Mauricio Archila Neira (2008) describes as: "the preaching condensed in the image of the class struggle as a political confrontation of popular actors led by the organized vanguards to radically change society".<sup>8</sup>

Particular emphasis is placed on Foucault's concepts and the use of violence, especially regarding useful illegalism,<sup>9</sup> the ways in which he conceives the relationship with power and the use of the legitimate authority of the State, and the exploitation by dominant classes, political parties, and other elements. A mechanism justifying violence cannot be accepted simply because it is conceived from a kind of historical relationship of opposing material forces, as it is established in a dominant class memory that delimits a condition of unilaterality from some

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<sup>8</sup> Mauricio Archila Neira (2008) himself quotes Alfonso López Michelsen who stated: "Today we have a class struggle more than a party struggle, that is why the sides are divided into those who want to end the system and those who want to preserve it." (Archila, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Illegalism refers to some fields of legally prohibited activities, but in which existing repressive powers are often suspended. One could speak of zones of tolerance on the part of power regarding certain practices that, despite being legally prohibited, are not usually interfered with by the State apparatus (Foucault, 1992).

excluded sectors, built in turn by rhetorical forms of such unilaterality (Foucault, 1991).

These views from the field of thought suggest that institutions like the State, military forces, or police can be seen as enemies of society (Vega Diaz, 2019), distorting the roles of authorities and fostering prejudice and distrust toward the legitimate functions of the social rule of law.

Moreover, the conflicts experienced during those times of revolutionary awakening, such as the protests against the Vietnam War in the USA, Europe, and Mexico, the excesses of the decolonization wars, the phenomenon of May 1968 in France, and the use of repression in various parts of the world, created an imaginary of violence that implicitly separated society from military forces.

Between 1960 and 1970, the conception of equality provided by the theories of the socialist utopia of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, as the ideological basis of a unique power of emancipation but of impossible applicability, promoted the ideas of the new society that asked for equality through the organization of public power, defining it as "the organized power of one class for the oppression of others" (Marx, 2014).

Based on the above, the armed forces are viewed as an obstacle and a contributor to the ongoing issues of hunger and inequality in the world, placing the military aspect in the forefront while the political aspect remains in the background, attributing the world's ills to the capitalist economic system.

The solution to these ills raised by thought and academia in those times focused on the demilitarization of the world and the return of democracies in African countries and Latin America. A broad concept of military control<sup>10</sup> generated by the Cold War was developed, which was not acceptable to the academic communities and students who engraved antimilitarism in their hearts. This is called the convention of contention and "is culturally inscribed and socially communicated. The learned conventions of contention are part of a society's public culture" (Tarrow, 2011, p. 29).

The environments of freedom of expression and large social movements against militarism in the 1960s and 1970s were not aligned with the armed forces of the nations, which were adapting to the lessons learned from mid-20th century war conflicts without recognizing the emerging threats to the democratic traditions of these nations, perhaps because they were severe and could be avoided in the future.

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<sup>10</sup> Military control has the following ingredients: political positions with managerial importance occupied by military officers, martial law, extrajudicial authority exercised by security forces, absence of central political control over the armed forces, or occupation by foreign military forces (Tilly, 1990).

These conflicts raised new concepts of national defense and changes in military structures that allowed them to face new challenges and threats, which were necessary and relevant, and new ideas with democratic overtones emerged and were supported by the government of the people. Still, in essence, they were against democracy and the plurality of ideas, restricting freedoms, not only free enterprise but through single-party doctrines and totalitarian governments, which suppress political dissent and, therefore, citizens' freedom.

The national strategic concepts, the doctrines concerning national security, and the notions of State and security,<sup>11</sup> with which the military was trained before and after the Second World War under a rigid, logical, scientific, disciplined model of service to the nation (Huntington, 2000), were not sufficiently disseminated to society through information or feedback campaigns for academia and politicians of all parties. Emphasis was not placed on the importance of changes, modifications in defense policies, and protection of the State toward capacity building that threatens the constitution and democracy and not to attack it.

This lack of feedback between the civil and military communities in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s led to a distancing between national defense and security policies that, given their importance, are of general and public interest. Now, in the 21st century, academic scenarios are pervasive, focused on civil-military relations and the concept that security does not belong solely and exclusively to the military but to all the nation's political, economic, and academic entities; this is what is called unified action.<sup>12</sup>

## Threats to Society and Approach to the Military Forces in Colombia

The ideologies arising from the currents of the 1960s and 1970s, which shaped a notion of antimilitarism, transformed the collective imagination of Colombian society due to two factors: the violence from drug trafficking cartels and the territorial dominance of guerrillas. Consequently, paramilitary agents initiated actions against the Army, Police, and civilian population, resulting in an epidemic of

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<sup>11</sup> These concepts are part of the National Security and Defense Manual 3-43, confidential.

<sup>12</sup> Unified action is defined as the synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of government entities' activities with military operations to achieve unity of effort (MFE 3-0, Operations).

kidnappings throughout the country, and a peace process with the FARC guerrilla between 1998 and 2002 ultimately failed, among other issues.

The late 1980s and 1990s were the toughest for the country in terms of attacks by drug trafficking and its allied structures, such as the FARC and ELN guerrillas, in addition to paramilitaries and other criminal groups. They put the governability of the State in check and almost kidnapped the civilian population, as stated in the documents of the "Internal Armed Conflict: The Perfect Scenario" of the ¡Basta Ya! report (CNMH, 2013).

The union of the political establishment with military action successfully limited the guerrillas and pushed them back to the strategic rear. This process began during President Pastrana's administration (1998–2002), coinciding with peace talks in the clearance zone, known as "Change to Build Peace." During this time, an internal restructuring took place within the Military Forces to adapt to the domestic scenario by collaborating with the population, trade associations, labor unions, private companies, and academia (Cardona, 2015).

These organizational efforts, including the development plan "Change to Build Peace," the defense and democratic security policies of the Álvaro Uribe government (2002–2010) aimed at establishing the rule of law throughout Colombian territory, and the structural changes and support received by the Military Forces, restored the confidence and security of the country with the civilian population's moral strength and faith in the Military Forces, as evidenced by favorability surveys over the last twenty years showing a percentage consistently above 58 % (El Espectador, 2020).

The reliability of the Military Forces demonstrates their capacity for teamwork and subordination to civil authority. Their actions have been solely dedicated to the constitutional mission, not on behalf of a political party, but for the well-being of the community as a whole, always under civil direction and control, as provided by the Constitution and the law.

## Civil Authority and Control over the Military

Society's concerns are focused on the economy, laws, and progress. Generally, security and defense issues take a back seat unless citizens' conditions are affected by public order or a disaster, whether due to external threats or internal security problems.

In the political actions of states, security is rarely viewed as the ideal condition for citizens to exercise their rights freely. This is so prevalent that security

considerations and appropriate planning are absent from land use plans, and priorities are not assigned to the capabilities required to ensure them, as they are regarded merely as expenses rather than investments that guarantee the tranquility of other societal activities. As cited by Professor Carlos Alberto Patiño Villa in his study included in the book *Medellín: territorio, conflicto y Estado*:

Today's large cities across different continents pose fundamental challenges for urban governance, administration, and service provision, as well as the acknowledgment of rights. The primary issue lies in the inability to define the scope of urban government within the areas it should oversee... When the demands of cities exceed the capacities of existing government models, the consequence is the subjugation of municipal governments by violence, informality, illegality, the encroachment of illegal armed groups, and the criminal control of society. (Patiño, 2015)

This example of the urban also extends to the territorial, including the institutional framework, which is fundamental for it to operate through the unified action of the State and the harmonious collaboration of its institutions, as mandated by the National Constitution. Generally, political discussions involve military spending,<sup>13</sup> which, in Colombia, encompasses the support of the National Police. It is often considered exaggerated, as it takes precedence over other budget items, fluctuating between 3.3 % and 3.38 % over the last twenty years (Datosmacro.com, 2024).

The political discussion does not focus on military capacity or the maintenance of security, but rather on the amount of spending and whether it is absorbing resources that could be more effectively used in other areas, such as education, development, and industry as drivers of employment and safety conditions. These discussions not only address Colombia's political reality but also resonate with a global context. Countries often prioritize political objectives over security concerns, frequently overlooking the repercussions of security gaps, which can impact the functioning of states in terms of territorial control and illicit economies, among other factors.

However, alongside the budget issues and political tensions, there are discussions concerning the limitations on the power of military establishments,

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<sup>13</sup> According to the Colombian Constitution, military spending in Colombia includes the operation of the Ministry of National Defense, CCGFM, Army, Navy, Air Force, General Division of Military Health, Superintendence of Surveillance, National Police Commissioner, General Maritime Division, National Police, and Police Health Division.

especially given that in Colombia's reality, the Military Forces are crucial for the nation's social and economic development. They serve as a barrier to illicit economies, ensure the functioning of institutions, and provide protection and services in the country's most remote and neglected areas.

Politicians and the media often overlook the law-regulated decision-making processes of the president, minister of defense, governors, mayors, and military or police commanders. They assert that decisions regarding army or police operations fall solely to military commanders, thereby ignoring specific aspects of maintaining public order in municipalities and provinces.

## What Is Public Order

The Constitutional Court, in Ruling 435-13, has defined public order as: "the set of conditions of security, tranquility, and health that enables general prosperity and the enjoyment of human rights, along with regulatory parameters that ensure security and citizen coexistence." This constitutional projection assigns public order the role of imposing limits on citizens' guarantees and civil liberties to facilitate the peaceful management of coexistence and oversee public policies aimed at interagency collaboration to maintain public order.

Public order management involves judicial and investigative authorities that can swiftly take legal action when necessary to address criminal offenses or crimes threatening citizens' lives, peace, and property.

The political stability of constitutional democracy is the obligation of the organizations that guarantee national security. Still, the three political elements of public order (national defense, national security, and citizen security) must work independently but, at the same time, in a harmonious and coordinated manner regarding their roles and the independence of their functions, which have the sole purpose of guaranteeing peaceful coexistence without any interference under the rules imposed by the Constitution and the laws.

## Responsibility for Public Order

According to the National Constitution of Colombia, managing public order is the responsibility of the president of the republic, under Article 189, the governors as per Article 303, and the mayors according to Article 315, rather than being

exclusively the duty of the Armed Forces, as is often believed. This is evidenced by the fact that the Constitution does not list or mention it among the responsibilities outlined in Chapter 7, "About Security Forces" (functions, items 216 to 224).

But the Military Forces are the arms of force and coercion that the president, governors, and mayors have to guarantee public order. For this reason, it is relevant to make a list of the regulations that order it, beginning with Law 4/1991, "Whereby regulations on internal public order, local civic police, and other provisions are enacted." It delimits the regulatory scheme of internal public order that goes from the provincial to the municipal and the mayor is designated as the chief of police.

Law 4/1991 establishes the regulatory scheme for jurisdictional control of municipal acts on public order and the disciplinary scheme in matters of public order. It also supports the measures taken by mayors or governors, even resorting to the president of the republic when required.

However, regulating public order would be useless without the necessary tools to consolidate, support, and enforce what is established in the functions of security forces about those in charge of maintaining order. To this end, the law establishes the communication channel and platform not only to maintain it but also to create the conditions of communication and distribution of responsibilities for the administrative acts of government and the fulfillment thereof by the Armed Forces.

For this purpose, Decree 2615/1991 was issued as a vital tool for maintaining public order. The National Police is directly responsible for this work, while the Military Forces provide DSCA, utilizing their capabilities to serve and preserve public order across all institutions.

But in the understanding that neither the mayors and governors nor security forces have all the elements to overcome a breach of the peace, Article 113(2) of the National Constitution stipulates that "the different organs of the State have separate functions, but they collaborate harmoniously to achieve their purposes." Thus, the coordination of these purposes includes not only the Executive but also investigative entities, such as the Attorney General's Office, and control entities, such as the Inspector General's Office and the Ombudsman's Office, making them relevant for the maintenance of public order.

These entities participate in security councils as decision-making elements. It should be noted that public order committees are made up of authorities of various kinds and have a preventive and policy-making function, in addition to financing security and citizen coexistence funds and other institutions that are part of or that provide security.

Both security councils and public order committees are bodies of prevention, action, control, and accountability for the results of security forces' tasks. They

issue the general security intentions of the national government, adjusted to the characteristics of each municipality or province. Tasks and objectives for the National Police and the Military Forces emerge from the security councils, as part of the political responsibility of those truly in charge of public order in territorial entities such as governors and mayors.

The convening of security councils can be routine or prompted by external threats, risk reports, threats to the civilian population, crime spikes, or other elements analyzed in the sessions by the relevant authorities. In these councils, the person responsible for public order not only exercises civil control but also assesses and verifies the capabilities of the National Police, which is accountable for its assigned missional areas and shares the responsibility of preserving public order with the Military Forces in their respective jurisdictions, escalating issues to the central level in the case of serious threats.

As a result, certain laws are followed to maintain the public order of the nation, while simultaneously guiding the security policy set forth by the president of the republic. This organized effort is held accountable on an annual basis, and its realities are hard to overlook due to the oversight conducted by civil institutions, including the press, citizen and industrial oversight bodies, and, in general, civil society, all of which are impacted by insecurity and crime.

In the administration, management, and handling of public order, mayors and governors not only present local requirements but also receive early warnings from the national government, particularly from the Ministry of the Interior, aimed at preventing or averting risk situations that could disrupt the peace.

Law 418 of December 26, 1997, prioritizes specific functions because early warnings are provided not only by state agencies but also by various social organizations, individuals, and different intelligence sources, including the military, police, or judiciary, as well as information gathered from open sources like the media.

Additionally, these early warnings or risk reports from the central government level contribute as inputs to identifying signs in the social system or even to preventing situations that may constitute potential natural disasters. These early warnings are managed by the security councils or public order committees, which take the relevant measures to anticipate an escalation of activities that may cause a significant breach of the peace.

They serve as the spaces for managing public order at the national, provincial, and local levels, utilizing the tools provided by law, where tasks are defined, and the operational plans of the Military Forces and Police are developed. Compliance

begins in the operational areas according to each unit's capabilities, whether individually, jointly, in coordination, or even interagency. The primary objective is to restore or maintain public order.

Just as the central, regional, and local government entities have the tools to shape public order in their areas of responsibility and to coordinate with security forces to guarantee conditions of security and coexistence, the military institutions and, in particular, the National Army, have doctrinal procedures in place through DSCA, and, in an extraordinary, temporary and focused manner, through military assistance,<sup>14</sup> ordered exclusively by the president of the republic.

## Fundamentals of Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA)

The meaning of conflict, like the concept of war, has changed in the 21st century. Mary Kaldor, as cited in Gobetti (2009), argued that interstate war, due to new concepts shaped by the consequences of World War II in the 20th century and the notion of democratic peace (the idea that democracies do not fight each other, leaving aside the historical record of democracy and its association with war, Gobetti, 2009), had lost its definition because violence was more likely to be perpetrated at the individual level and therefore, criminal activity will challenge the state monopoly on the use of force.

History and the events that have happened in different countries and various places in the world confirm this due to the situation of interstate conflicts due to the concept of new threats coming from criminal apparatuses with the capacity to use force, making the forces police forces in charge of fighting these criminal organizations are insufficient and raise the need for a concept of approach to the use of the capabilities of the armed forces in the internal sphere.

## New Concept of Security

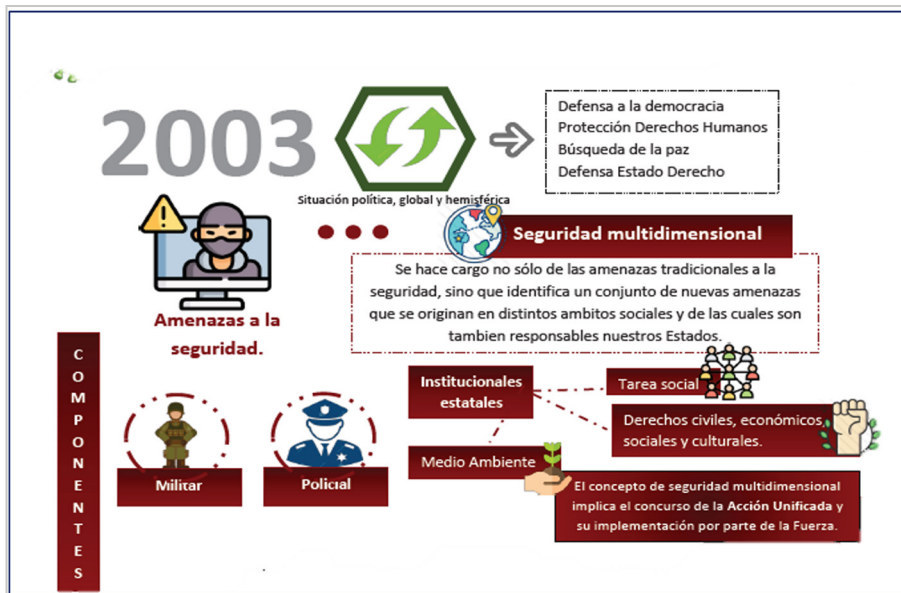
In 2003, after the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Conference on Security held in Mexico, the global situation and the concepts of defense of human rights, global peace, transnational threats, national security, drug trafficking,

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<sup>14</sup> Ordered by Article 170 of Law 1801/2016.

and rule of law were analyzed as fundamental pieces for the emergence of a comprehensive vision. Concepts such as traditional, social, environmental, and economic threats resulted in the creation of a new concept of multidimensional security: "It takes charge not only of traditional threats to security [...] it identifies a set of new threats that originate from different social spheres and which are also the responsibility of our States" (OEA, 2003).

Figure 1. Multidimensional Security



Source: Departamento de Acción Integral y Desarrollo (2021).

This approach led to an international endorsement to ensure that the Military Forces broaden their perspective on security issues globally while concentrating on their missions. Meanwhile, an institutional process was initiated to unify efforts in addressing new social, economic, cultural, and environmental threats, with potential support drawn from its capabilities if necessary.

This was just the beginning of the new challenges that countries face in contributing to development and confronting threats directly in coordination with civil authorities. Colombia, for its part, continued to analyze and embrace this concept for its involvement in activities that, until a few years ago, would have been considered purely institutional responsibility.

## Development of the DSCA in the National Legal Framework

The Military Forces were not unfamiliar with the advances made during the OAS Special Conference on Security. Since its dissemination and implementation, the organization has directed its efforts toward aligning institutionally with national policy to facilitate participation in activities beyond its institutional responsibilities. However, Article 2 of the Constitution can be identified as the foundation for the involvement of the Military Forces in supporting civil authorities.

The essential purposes of the State are to serve the community, promote general prosperity, and guarantee the effectiveness of the principles [...] defend national independence, maintain territorial integrity, and ensure peaceful coexistence and the validity of a just order [...] The authorities of the republic are established to protect every person residing in Colombia in terms of their life, honor, property, beliefs, and other rights and freedoms, while ensuring compliance with the social duties of the State and individuals. (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991, art. 2)

On the other hand, and in compliance with the parameters established by the president of the republic per Title VII About the Executive Branch, Chapter 1, Article 189(3) of the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC, by its Spanish acronym), "Lead security forces and dispose of them as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the Republic" and Article 189(4), "Preserve public order throughout the territory and restore it where breached," the military commander must facilitate the performance of activities that guarantee the nation's peace. To this end, the president convenes meetings of the security council, regional committee, and disaster prevention committee in coordination with civil authorities, all within a framework of respecting fundamental rights, prioritizing life, and ensuring immediate assistance for those affected.

Likewise, under Presidential Directive 01 of March 20, 2009, titled "Coordination of the National Government to Implement the National Territorial Consolidation Plan," the following lines stand out:

to maintain investor confidence and advance effective social policy, the national government has focused on designing a mechanism to strengthen the alignment of military, police, and anti-narcotics efforts with social, justice, economic, and institutional development efforts of the State in strategic areas of the national territory, called Strategic Leap.

## Changes in Army Doctrine, Damasco Project, and Concepts of DSCA

Based on the new concept of multidimensional security, the National Army undertook the Damasco Project, whose fundamental objective is to develop and disseminate military doctrine, transformed from including necessary tools for cooperation and interoperability with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It resulted in the structuring of the fundamental Army manuals (MFE) and fundamental Army reference manuals (MFRE), which contain the principles; the Army campaign manuals (MCE), which explain tactics and procedures; and, finally, the Army technical manuals (MTE), which refer to the techniques to fulfill missions, functions, or tasks in the theater of operations and training centers.

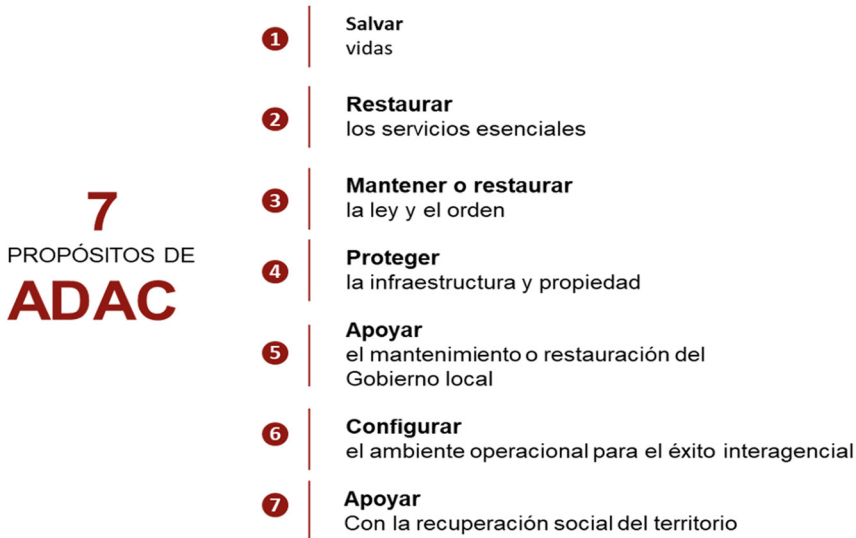
Thus, the concept that emerged was that of unified land operations (ULO), which the MFRE 3-0, Operations, defines as “offensive, defensive, stability, or defense support of civil authorities tasks performed simultaneously to seize, retain and exploit the initiative to gain and maintain a position to prevent conflict, shape the operational environment and win the war as part of unified action,” carried out through decisive action (DA). This concept contemplates DSCA, which will be examined below.

The doctrinal foundation of DSCA is laid in MFE 3-28 and MFRE 3-28 (Ejército Nacional, 2017). It is defined as the “support provided by the Military Forces of Colombia and all the institutions that make up the defense sector in response to requests for assistance from national civil authorities in domestic emergencies of any kind” (MFE 3-28). This is achieved thanks to cooperation between the military and civil spheres to confront situations that competent authorities cannot resolve, usually when they have exceeded their capabilities and require other entities to strengthen security from a multidimensional approach.

DSCA has seven fundamental purposes (Figure 2): 1) to save lives; to protect human life; 2) to restore essential services necessary to sustain life, including water and domestic services; 3) to maintain law and order, supporting civil authorities in maintaining order to disperse crowds amid riots, patrol in unauthorized areas, control riots and serve as security forces; 4) to protect infrastructure and property (public and private); to protect state domains; 5) to support the maintenance or restoration of the Government; institutional presence to strengthen governance and recover the economy; 6) to shape the operational environment for interagency success; to support all partners from unified action, medical capabilities,

intelligence, logistics and communications to provide solutions to crises, and 7) to support the social recovery of the territory; integration of capabilities, focused on the same objective, taking into account the priority of the national Government.

Figure 2. Purposes of DSCA

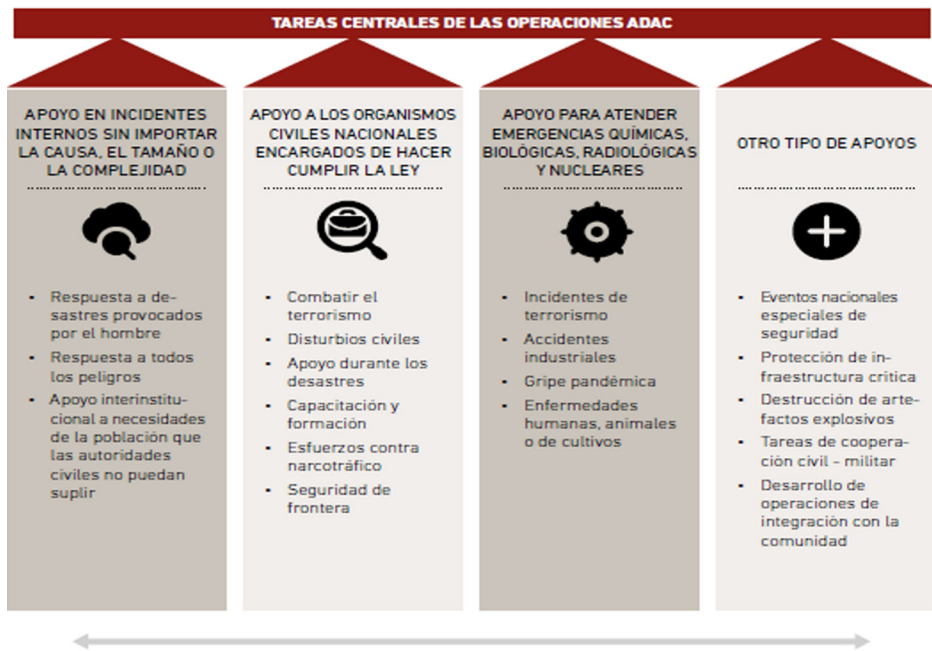


Source: MFE 3-28 (2016).

## DSCA Tasks within the Doctrine of the Military Forces

Military units will support civil authorities as requested to: 1) provide support to national civil institutions in charge of law enforcement; man-made disasters, institutional support for the needs of the population; 2) provide support to act and assist in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents; fight terrorism, civil unrest, support during natural disasters, efforts against drug trafficking, and border security; 3) provide support for internal incidents, *no matter* the cause, size or complexity; terrorism, industrial accidents, pandemic influenza, human and animal or crop diseases, and 4) provide other designated support; security, protection of critical infrastructure, destruction of explosive devices, civil-military cooperation tasks, community integration activities.

Figure 3. DSCA Tasks



Source: MFE 3-28 (2016).

To fulfill these tasks, it is essential to maintain active and continuous communication with the institutions or civil authorities that facilitate the activities being carried out directly. They are responsible for leading all actions in the affected municipalities and regions; in turn, the Military Forces will provide support utilizing the capabilities available in the nearest unit.

We must not forget that, as this is a military operation supporting civil authorities, it is essential to document each action taken (photos, videos, sketches) and the assistance provided during the emergency for the historical record of Force support. This documentation allows us to emphasize its non-lethal contribution to new threats, distinct from traditional ones, affecting areas impacted by organized armed violence. This approach aims, from a broader perspective, to tackle internal crises in coordination with civil authorities.

It is important to recognize that the efforts made in collaboration with the community, civil authorities, and the Military Forces are horizontal, meaning that no orders are issued to the military units or personnel engaged in the activities. Consequently, the Military Forces will establish a mission order (MO) to provide

timely crisis support according to their capabilities, as determined by the unit commander. Institutions, for their part, will fulfill their responsibilities following their mission and established organizational functions. This approach ensures that everyone is involved in the planning, preparation, performance, and assessment processes to achieve the shared objectives.

## Warfighting Functions<sup>15</sup>

In the development of military operations, it is necessary to consider that the warfighting functions contemplated must be fulfilled, which helps perform DSCA tasks since some of them would not apply. For the deployment of DSCA, the relevant ones are mission command, movement, maneuver, sustainment, and protection, which become the cornerstone to support the activities required by civil authorities, as follows:

### Mission Command (MC)

In coordination with NGOs, military units must continue to deploy their capabilities according to their training and experience, considering their own ability to act, the commander's intent, and the framework of respect and legality.

### Movement and Maneuver

The main objective is to restore mobility and alleviate and improve the quality of life after a disaster.

### Sustainment

To comply with the plan and achieve the necessary support, the units assisting civil authorities must have physicians, supplies, and equipment. Most affected areas experience shortages of water, electricity, and sanitation, requiring the installation of a base to support troop operations.

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<sup>15</sup> In accordance with the doctrine, warfighting functions are the set of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information, and processes) united by a common purpose that commanders use to fulfill missions and training objectives and are linked to joint functions of the Military Forces (MFC-1, 2018).

## Protection

It is essential that commanders manage their capabilities in this field and how they are legally exercised at the national level to integrate them into this protection scheme.

Before starting DSCA, the unit commander must understand the operational environment and identify the ethnic groups, religions, beliefs, civil authorities (including governors, mayors, police, firefighters, and civil defense), and arrange for both horizontal and vertical coordination through security councils or documented meetings to ensure direct and frequent communication between the unit and regional institutions.

Working in a coordinated and inter-institutional manner is essential for DSCA tasks. According to the doctrine, these missions occur when civil authorities request assistance from the National Army and are executed under a unified command post (UCP) comprising the civil authority, the military commander, and partners engaged in unified action to support the operation, while also considering the level of coordination required for each situation. (MFE3-28, 2016)

The support provided and resources allocated for fulfilling the tasks initially come from the general budget of military units. However, as the complexity of the emergencies or support provided increases, these will be taken over by civil authorities or escalated to higher units until they reach the central level.

## Capabilities of the Military Forces to Be Used in DSCA

Only some of the Military Forces' capabilities are usable in DSCA. However, soldiers are trained to exploit initiative in combat. Furthermore, they understand that military capabilities can be applied to DSCA tasks since this helps them make the most of their disciplined initiative and effort (MFE 3-28) within the framework of the needs in which they are required, such as 1) performing tasks effectively and efficiently, 2) performing tasks safely, and 3) performing tasks within the current laws.

Considering the above, the Military Forces, through their various specialties, offer DSCA tasks, integrating their own capabilities with those of educated, trained, and qualified personnel to achieve common objectives that address the immediate needs of the affected population through non-lethal actions. To clarify the roles

of each participant, the MDN issued a policy for the defense sector regarding disaster risk management, serving as effective support for the National Disaster Risk Management System (MDN, 2019). This policy aims to achieve risk reduction and train personnel during environmental emergencies, with support from public and private institutions and the National Police.

This enabled the National Army, through Provision 0033 of September 3, to establish “the Risk Management Division for Disaster Prevention and Consolidation” in 2009, which was renamed the Disaster Risk Management Division in 2015.<sup>16</sup> From there, the foundation of units specialized in environmental issues continued. To this end, the Battalion of Disaster Care and Prevention Engineers No. 80 “BG Álvaro López Vargas” was created. In 2012, platoon-level tactical units were formed to respond to and prevent disasters within the engineering branch, ensuring preparedness for potential humanitarian assistance at all levels and providing an immediate response.<sup>17</sup>

The military engineers maintain a demining brigade and battalions, a disaster response and prevention battalion, a construction brigade, and a humanitarian demining brigade, all of which are strategically positioned to ensure immediate response capacity in support of the country's development. (Ceballos, 2015)

For this reason, military engineers can engage in preventing and responding to risks associated with incidents of both natural<sup>18</sup> and anthropic<sup>19</sup> origin. They are also equipped to assist in internal incidents, irrespective of their cause, size, or complexity. Their support extends to the construction, restoration, and maintenance of shelters, supply centers, bridges, dispensaries or hospitals, schools, retaining walls, artworks, roads, hydraulic, sanitation, and electrical networks, water supply, electrical systems, demolition of structures, debris removal, flood response, fire

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<sup>16</sup> Its purpose was to formulate plans, guidelines, projects, programs, and technical documents that guided the development of risk management, including its knowledge processes, risk reduction, and disaster management within the Force. Additionally, it aimed to coordinate interventions with the National Disaster Risk Management Unit (UNGRD, by its Spanish acronym) to assist communities affected by emergencies or disasters at the national level (NGDR, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Through Ministerial Resolution 3725 dated September 2, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and mass movements, fires, atmospheric events (floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, El Niño phenomenon, La Niña phenomenon, droughts, frosts, fires, among others), and climate change (mitigation and adaptation) (NGDR, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> There are two types: intentional and unintentional, such as CBRN, epidemics, pandemics, mega-mining, and fires, among others (NGDR, 2015).

response, use of canines to search for and locate people, and rescue of individuals and vehicles in emergencies.

The Army Aviation and the Colombian Air Force can quickly and efficiently deploy one or more aircraft to any location in the country within three hours, reaching remote disaster sites; evacuate and relocate individuals at risk from unsafe or high-risk areas to safe zones; provide aeromedical evacuation, extraction, or rescue of disaster victims using combat search and rescue techniques; transport food and medical supplies; facilitate emergency communications, aircraft recovery, transportation of bodies,<sup>20</sup> and firefighting; and have qualified personnel<sup>21</sup> equipped with the necessary skills and experience to fulfill these missions. (Niño, 2020)

Between 1999 and 2014, the development and acquisition of Army Aviation capabilities were decisive, as the fleet increased from 35 helicopters to over 200. Among these, 54 % belonged to the National Army, featuring unique specifications that enabled them to successfully perform a range of missions. Notable examples include the Russian-made Mi-17 helicopters, American UH-60L Black Hawks, a Blackhawk for 180 passengers, five MI helicopters for evacuating 120 people, and three Antonov aircraft with a capacity of 12 tons per flight. This experience has facilitated 24-hour operations supporting ground troops, air assaults, medical evacuations, troop transport, parachute deployments, reconnaissance, and intelligence operations using unmanned aerial vehicles.

## Military Police Units<sup>22</sup>

The Military Police units are primarily designed, according to doctrine and training, to assist civil authority “when the police commander requests it, if the National Police lacks the capacity to manage serious disturbances or address a public calamity.” Currently, within the context of DSCA tasks, Military Police units perform

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<sup>20</sup> Army aircraft will transport corpses only in cases of adequate preparation with protection methods and preferably by the external load method.

<sup>21</sup> Experience in search and rescue, aquatic firefighter aviators, air dispatch aviators, ground support and supply team aviators.

<sup>22</sup> It is the specialized unit of the National Army with education, training, and appropriate lethal and non-lethal equipment that provides support to local authorities in establishing law and order. It is focused on breaking up a crowd through the rules of the use of force in a simple and flexible way to control and end a situation of breach of the peace.

crowd control missions; they do not engage in confrontations with the civilian population, nor are they involved in riot control, which is prohibited by Presidential Decree 003/2021.

Thus, treatment must be impartial and kind in crisis management “so that when intervening in acts of civil disobedience, it must be through a series of procedures and physical barriers” (Niño, 2020). This could involve providing security for tasks assigned to the National Police to free up forces of law and order for specific functions that the Military Forces can carry out.

The military personnel taking over tasks assigned to the National Police, such as securing facilities and fixed posts of critical infrastructure, helps free up valuable personnel since the Police is the only institution responsible for monitoring and controlling these types of collective violence activities following social protests.

On the other hand, it ensures support for civil authorities to secure operations in transportation, communications, and public service systems, such as clearing blockages on the roads. Due to its quick response, it is possible to establish alternate routes with secured escorts and ensure safety at civil facilities.<sup>23</sup> Comprehensive action

is the collection of military actions that encompasses military information support operations, civil affairs, civil-military cooperation, and public affairs, enabling the Army's capabilities to be integrated with those of unified action partners in support of the commander's intention. (MFE 3-53, 2016)

In recent years, this concept has evolved from the doctrine structuring. MFE 3-53, Comprehensive Action, establishes its capabilities, activities, structure, and tasks but has as a frame of reference the lessons learned from the activities that have been carried out. Until 2019, through these doctrinal documents, their standardization, strengthening, and recognition were not possible, becoming those in charge of the non-lethal part of the Force.

Since 2016, the National Army has established specialized units equipped with skilled personnel, education, training, and tools that enhance support for military operations and DSCA. Currently, it includes a Comprehensive Action and Development Command (CAAID, by its Spanish acronym), two comprehensive action brigades (BRAID 1-2, by their Spanish acronyms), eight comprehensive action battalions (BAAID 1-8, by their Spanish acronyms) assigned to each

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<sup>23</sup> Including government buildings, prisons, sources of water, electricity, fuel, and industrial complexes.

division, and one comprehensive action operations battalion (BOAID, by its Spanish acronym). This structure enables a more thorough analysis of the areas where operations, activities, and coordination with civil, local, and regional authorities take place.

Figure 4. Army's Comprehensive Action Organization

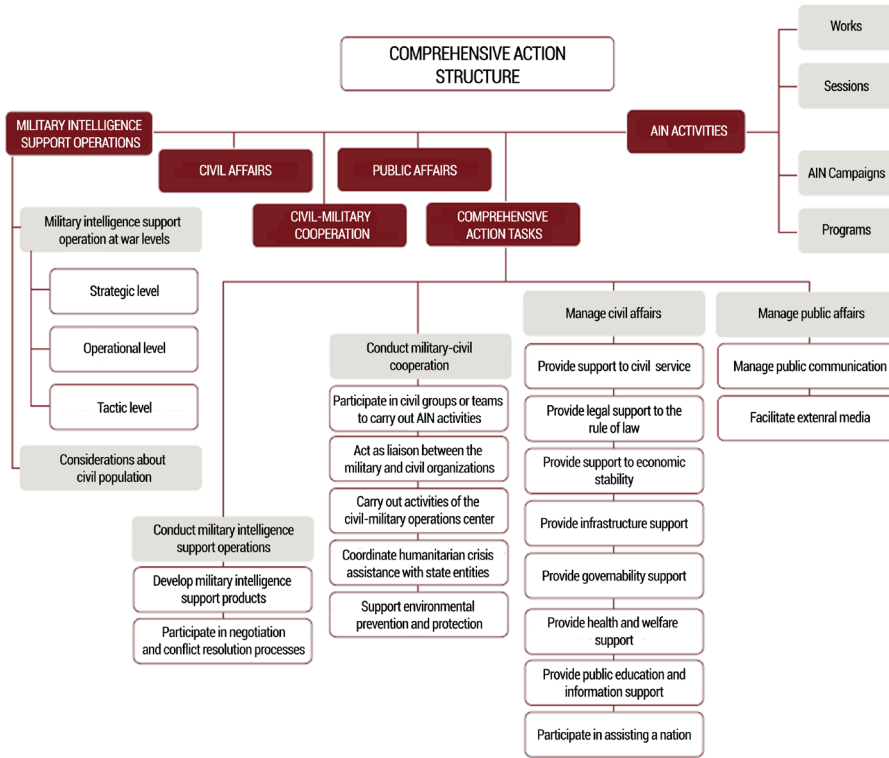


Source: Ejército Nacional (2021).

The comprehensive action manual describes four disciplines that will facilitate fulfilling institutional objectives: civil affairs, public affairs, civil-military cooperation, and military information support operations. They aim to build relationships of trust, provide information, and establish communication channels with civil authorities, unified action partners, the media, and the community.

The Military Forces, particularly the National Army, through its units, stand ready to respond to the call of civil authorities, including health personnel (doctors, combat nurses, specialists, and brigade members) and the dispensaries established within the military units to support any situation that may arise.

Figure 5. Comprehensive Action Structure



Source: Ejército Nacional (2021).

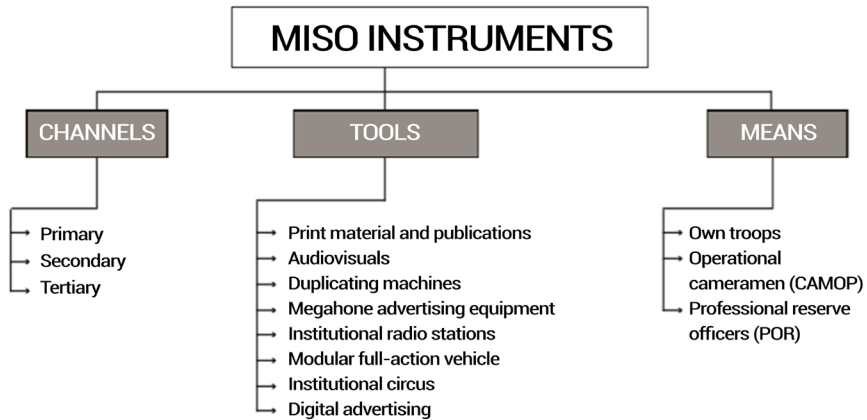
In the process of updating, formalizing, and recognizing capabilities, units, and personnel, we identified instruments, channels,<sup>24</sup> tools,<sup>25</sup> and means<sup>26</sup> that facilitate the conduct of operations established for developing activities according to the region's needs.

<sup>24</sup> The military information support operations channel is the instrument to identify the appropriate way to deliver or disseminate the outputs of military information support operations.

<sup>25</sup> Tools are the technological instruments used to support the production and/or dissemination of the MISO series to the target audiences.

<sup>26</sup> Means are human resources used to support the dissemination of the MISO series among the target audiences to be impacted.

Figure 6. Instruments for Military Information Support Operations



Source: Ejército Nacional (2019).

This is how comprehensive action is prepared to face crises under Law 1523/2012 in disasters resulting from one or several natural and man-made events that cause intense, severe, and widespread alterations in the normal conditions of society, which give rise to risk situations for the population. In the Colombian case, there are geological phenomena, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, avalanches, and landslides; hydrometeorological phenomena, such as floods, droughts, frosts, tidal waves or tsunamis, tropical cyclones, hurricanes, and fires; technological phenomena, such as industrial and health risks; and phenomena stemming from massive concentration of people.

## Relevant DSCA Tasks of National Significance

To complement this writing, the Military Forces, particularly the National Army, will serve as an example of coordinated and interagency joint work with various civil authorities. We will present three emblematic cases of significant institutional efforts: 1) Ángel Plan 2017, in response to an avalanche in Puerto Asís (Putumayo); 2) San Roque Plan 2020, addressing the COVID-19 pandemic; and 3) Providencia 2020, following a natural disaster. It is important to note that these operations are not the only ones conducted, as most units of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, decentralized at their level, maintain ongoing contact with civil authorities and undertake DSCA tasks that contribute to the governability of municipalities.

## Ángel Plan

In recent years, Colombia has faced multiple environmental challenges that have impacted thousands of residents in various regions. One such challenge occurred in Mocoa, Putumayo, on March 31, 2017, as the rainy season began; while some were sleeping, others were having dinner, and some were preparing for the next day:

The Mocoa, Mulato, and Sangoyaco rivers, along with some streams like La Taruca, rose higher than expected. In just a matter of seconds, they overflowed their banks and surged down the streets with such fury that they dragged along rocks, creating a domino effect that pushed others. Simultaneously, they destroyed everything in their path: homes, cars, trees, and, most tragically, hundreds of lives. (Ceballos, 2015)

Within the framework of the doctrine of the National Army and in response to the call of civil authorities during the environmental crisis, the Ángel Plan emerged (Sepúlveda, 2018), focused on addressing the disappearance of 17 neighborhoods, the lack of essential services, 330 deaths, 400 people injured, and the ruins left by the avalanche.

In coordination with civil authorities, from the very first moment of the natural disaster, organic troops from the National Army's 27th Jungle Brigade of the 6th Division promptly supported civil authorities as the initial step of aid, due to their inability to control the situation and the inadequacy of rescue institutions in the area. The Army deployed 100 personnel, including non-commissioned officers and soldiers, to initiate the rescue of 116 individuals and provide first aid assistance.

In the hours following this natural disaster, Army troops took immediate control of the situation (El País, 2017), with a thousand men providing urgent support and assistance. Since state reaction times are slower, the respective institutions relied on the initial information provided by the troops on the ground and began their activities through the Disaster Response Unit.

The unity of command and decision-making procedures enabled a prompt deployment of capabilities and coordination spaces for the state, preventing the duplication of efforts and allowing civil authorities to provide and supplement the necessary aid.

The National Army remained for a month, during which it deployed all of the Force's capabilities to benefit the inhabitants of Mocoa, Putumayo. It coordinated military efforts with civil authorities and the local community. Through civil-military cooperation, it received 2,093 tons of essential items, reconstructed pipelines, provided differential assistance, and responded to the situation in a timely manner.

Military engineers successfully constructed a bridge to connect Putumayo with the rest of Colombia in just two weeks. They also created two temporary shelters for the victims; Army Aviation transported pipes and donations, while the Military Police assisted local authorities and ensured citizen security to prevent looting in unaffected homes and businesses (Sepúlveda, 2018).

This was one of the first actions carried out by the National Army within the framework of DSCA; in this case, it was a purely military task. After achieving reconstruction, civil authorities regained control of the area, and the work continues to this day.

## San Roque Plan

In March 2020, the president of Colombia issued Decree 457/2020, which provided instructions regarding the health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the maintenance of public order. To this end, and in accordance with the provisions of the decree, the Military developed a strategy to assist civil authorities during the emergency.

The commanders of the Forces (Navy, Army, and Air Force) analyzed how to align their support with national capabilities, considering the impact of the pandemic on the lives of millions worldwide. They optimized their efforts in coordination with civil authorities, guided by orders issued from Bogotá, to identify needs, necessary logistics, and personnel required to achieve the stated objectives.

For this reason, the San Roque 2020 operation was established as a contribution from the Military Forces to the national government's strategy to confront the COVID-19 pandemic and unify capacities for humanitarian aid during this crisis (CGFM, 2021). It was widely known that, at the beginning of the pandemic in Colombia, new courses of action were developed to disseminate accurate, timely, and factual information to thousands of people isolated by the virus.

Each of the Forces fulfilled the tasks assigned by the national government to promote the well-being of the country's inhabitants. The land, sea, and air capabilities focused on providing essential support to the communities affected by the pandemic. Although the president of the republic made a direct call in this instance, the authorities also sought the collaboration of soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officers to manage this challenging situation.

This illustrates how, by creating the unified command post (UCP), 88 municipalities situated in the Amazon and Pacific regions of Nariño were prioritized. Coordinations were initiated by the National Risk and Disaster Management Unit (UNGRD), governorates, and mayors' offices to compile a list of families, assess

economic situations, gather information on members, and collect other details that would enable the effective delivery of aid to those most affected.

Civil-military relations within a framework of cooperation facilitated the alignment of efforts and capabilities with institutions solely aimed at ensuring the well-being of the population and upholding a successful and functional rule of law amidst the crisis.

Figure 7. Operation San Roque



Source: COGFM (n.d.)

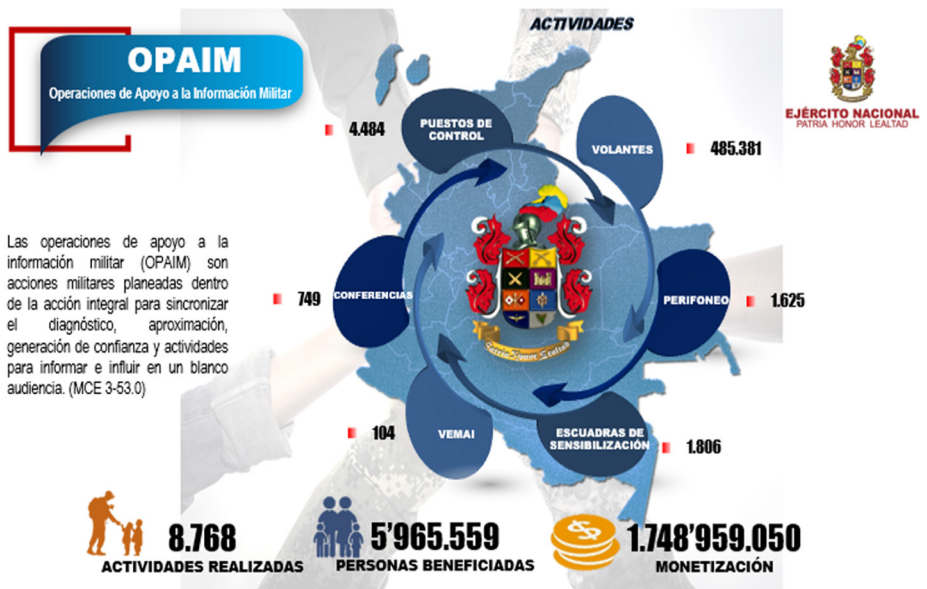
Four lines of effort were established to implement the San Roque plan, aiming to preserve the health and integrity of the Military Forces while also assisting those most affected:

- 1) preserve the integrity of the Force, which aimed to keep its members healthy by ensuring full compliance with the measures implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19; 2) maintain operational capacity, focusing on fulfilling the mission entrusted in the development of operations and utilizing the capabilities of the Military Forces when necessary; 3) conduct border control operations; although the priority was to prevent the spread of COVID-19, sovereignty over Colombian territory could not be overlooked. Therefore, it was essential to continue monitoring organized armed groups and exerting border control, ensuring security and implementing measures for entering and exiting the country; and 4) provide DSCA to raise awareness among populations

and communities to prevent contagion while leveraging all capabilities in humanitarian assistance in regions that required it. (CGFM, 2021)

The activities conducted by the National Army included the delivery of 1,0908,911 food items, various action tasks, military information support operations (MISO), 4,484 activities such as checkpoints, 485,381 flyers, 1,625 COVID-19 prevention messages disseminated through public address systems, 104 messages spread via comprehensive action mobile vehicles, and 749 talks and conferences with communities, as well as local, regional, and national authorities.

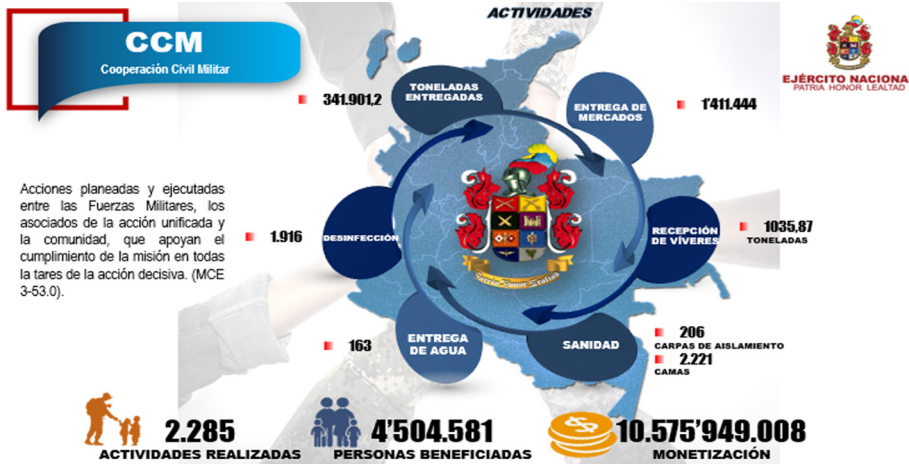
Figure 8. MISO Results



Source: COGFM (n.d.)

Civil-military cooperation facilitated the transportation and delivery of 341,901.2 tons of donations and 1,411,444 tons of food items and conducted 1,916 disinfection activities at homes, vehicles, and health entities. Additionally, 163 liters of water were distributed, along with the installation of 206 isolation tents in areas where hospitals exceeded their capacity (San Andrés was one of the first beneficiaries). Support was provided to health entities with 221 beds for personnel exhibiting symptoms of or already infected with COVID-19, alongside campaigns for receiving 1,035.87 tons of aid in coordination with civil authorities.

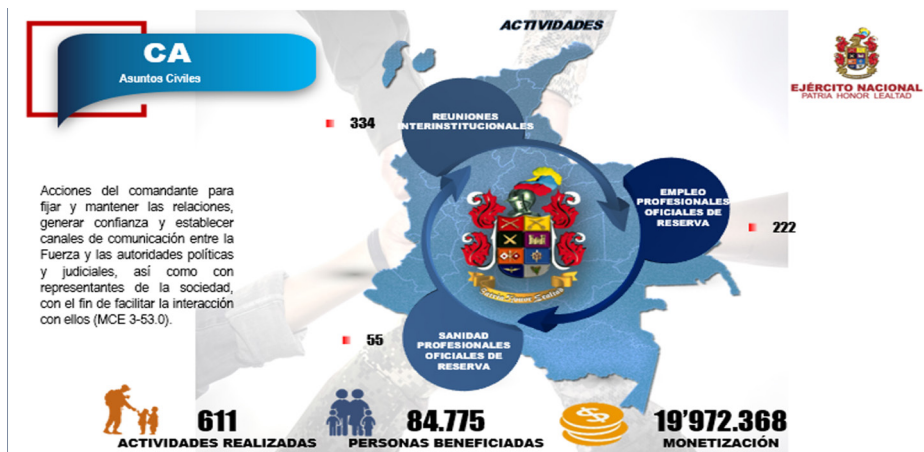
Figure 9. CMC Activities



Source: COGFM (n.d.)

Civil Affairs made 55 professional reserve officers available to support medical activities required in areas with the highest infection rates, including specialists, doctors, and nurses. Additionally, about 222 officers from other disciplines assisted in coordinating the dissemination and delivery of groceries and provisions, among other tasks, while also conducting approximately 334 inter-institutional meetings to monitor the progress of contagion figures.

Figure 10. Civil Affairs Activities



Source: COGFM (n.d.)

The National Navy delivered 4,810,874 liters of water and transported approximately 768 tons of food. Similarly, the Air Force delivered 1,381 tons of food, 2,700,000 liters of water, and 158 tons of medical supplies, transported COVID-19 tests, and conducted 3,654 humanitarian flights. They also provided nearly 226,609 grocery items and essential resources to the most affected families, utilizing over 772 flight hours.

Finally, the San Roque plan demonstrated that it is both possible and viable to unify the capabilities, missions, and efforts of the Military Forces and the institutions to ensure the stability and peace of the communities without neglecting the constitutional missions.

## Providencia

In November 2020, the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology, and Environmental Studies of Colombia (IDEAM, by its Spanish acronym), after evaluating the impact of Hurricane IOTA, recommended that the national government declare a disaster situation to facilitate the crisis response process (La República, 2020).

After the evaluation, approximately 95% of the island of Providencia was compromised, around 2,000 houses were destroyed, and there was no access to drinking water. In addition to the environmental damage, the infrastructure of schools, hospitals, and businesses was also impacted. The UNGRD responded to the public calamity with humanitarian aid, addressing health, energy, communications, water, supplies, food, and hygiene kits, among other essential items for the islanders.

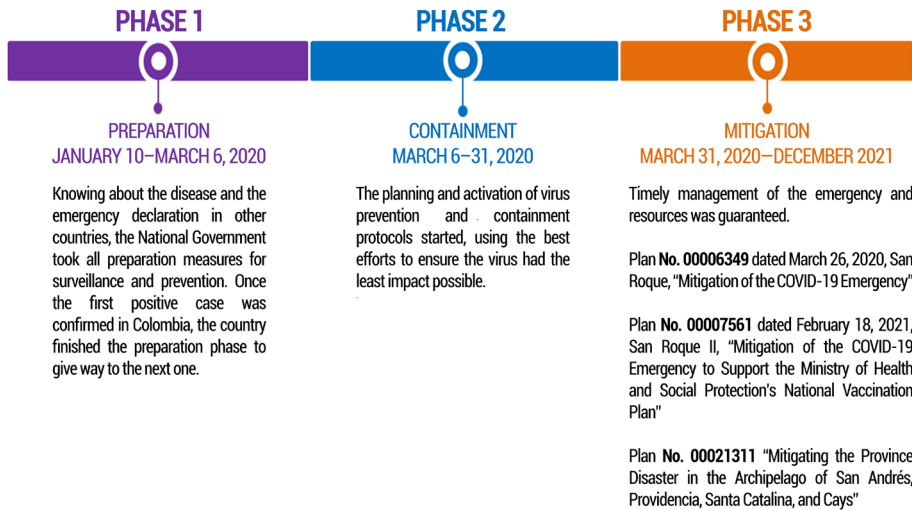
For this reason, President Iván Duque, through Decree 1472/2020, declares a disaster in the Province of Archipiélago de San Andrés, Providencia, and Santa Catalina, including its keys, for a period of twelve months, extendable for an equal duration. Following the passage of Hurricane Iota, "the efforts of local and state entities, the Military Forces, and other institutions contributed, within their roles, to address the emergency that arose." (DAFP, 2020).

Declaring a state of emergency, as contemplated in Article 215 of the CPC, in response to situations that constitute a serious public calamity due to shortages, basic sanitation issues, hospital overloads, or the occupation of maximum capacity in hospital centers, undermines the institutional stability and security of the State.

Faced with this declaration of emergency, the National Army, in compliance with the provisions established during the conduct of ULOs and in order to participate jointly and inter-institutionally, directly supported the UNGRD, which led activities together with civil authorities. Based on the results of this interagency coordination,

a strategy was formulated through a plan to assist civil authorities. Three phases were established to facilitate the performance of activities that ensured institutional support compliance (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Disaster Response Phases. Providencia



Source: Ejército Nacional (2021).

Phase 1. Preparation and Planning: Prepare personnel, material, equipment, and air support; coordinate with civil authorities to perform stability and DSCA tasks; strengthen institutional coordination; and participate in a unified command post to control the situation.

Phase 2. Conduct of the Operation: Provide primary care through the Military Health Division (DISAN, by its Spanish acronym), comprehensive action, Strategic Communications Division (DICOE, by its Spanish acronym), disaster response battalion, search and rescue platoons, skid steers, dump trucks, heavy machinery, with the following missions:

- Establish a unified command post in the territory to facilitate inter-institutional coordination.
- Execute stability and DSCA tasks (provide support to national civilian law enforcement institutions, assist in internal incidents regardless of cause, size, or complexity, and deliver other designated support) as ordered by MFE 3-28.

- Perform tasks related to debris removal, adaptation of essential sanitation services, medical care services, adaptation of roads and infrastructure, restoration of communications, and development support days.
- Maintain communications throughout the humanitarian assistance mission, providing real-time reports to the PMU-COING in Bogotá.

Phase 3: Transition. Complete the plan and stabilize the disaster situation in Archipiélago de San Andrés, Providencia, Santa Catalina, and its keys. The National Army is recognized for its disaster response, national cooperation, and comprehensive action operations. Its units remain committed without any new developments in personnel, materials, or equipment.

**Figure 12.** *Reconstruction of Providencia and Santa Catalina*



**Source:** Ejército Nacional (2021).

Decisive points: 1) reconstruction of infrastructure (roads, sanitation services, drinking water supply, restoration of public services); 2) comprehensive action, vaccination, medical and psychological care days; and 3) redeployment of the allocated units. In providing such complex support to the civil authority, not only due to the mobilization of resources but also due to the maritime distance from San Andrés and Providencia, activities and units were organized following the doctrinal steps for this type of event.

## Organization Processes in ULOs

The concept of ULOs involves conducting military operations in a joint, coordinated, and inter-institutional manner. It is essential to enhance stability<sup>27</sup> and DSCA<sup>28</sup> as a critical task. When a state possesses an army and coordinated institutions with strategic capabilities, it becomes easier to support civil authorities in mitigating and managing development issues, increasing economic flows, and establishing itself as a regional power in line with the objectives of DSCA tasks (MFE 3-28, 2016).

In this natural disaster case, the CGFM first uses the capabilities of the Engineering Command through the special brigade of engineers, military health, strategic communications, comprehensive action, and development to support provincial authorities and contribute to the National System of Disaster Risk Management.

For the Military Forces, this was perhaps the most significant challenge they have faced in these 50 years of internal conflict. The context was highly complex due to the arrival of COVID-19 in Colombia, along with the economic, social, environmental, and infrastructure crises affecting the Raizal community and the inhabitants of San Andrés Island.

The biggest challenge was containing the pandemic among ministries, institutions, and military forces. All state capacities collaborated to ensure the island's stability. The situation was complex, but military engineers, Army Aviation, the Air Force, and the National Navy devised a fieldwork plan that allowed them to meet the proposed objectives within the first hundred days.

Therefore, the Military Forces developed contingency protocols to support the vulnerable population in a joint and inter-institutional effort with the Colombian Civil Defense, the Official Fire Department, the Governor's Office, and the UNGRD. Cleaning and debris removal work began in the affected areas (CGFM, 2020).

The National Army deployed personnel from Comprehensive Action Battalion No. 8 (BAAID8), who, with their comprehensive action capabilities, quickly provided assistance to civil authorities. They organized the affected personnel, initiated cleaning campaigns, and distributed messages through flyers, public address systems, and an institutional radio station.

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<sup>27</sup> Stability tasks reestablish civil security, civil control, and essential services and support security cooperation, government, and economic and infrastructure development (MFE 3-28, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> Provide support to national civilian law enforcement institutions, provide means to address chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents, assist in internal incidents regardless of cause, size, or complexity, and provide other designated support (MFE 3- 28, 2016).

During 2020 and 2021, nearly 1,471 activities supported civil authorities in military information support operations (MISO): 420 messages broadcast through public address systems, 58 talks and conferences, 88 activities conducted at intersections and traffic lights across the island, and 105 checkpoints where information was provided to islanders regarding road conditions and technical issues.

In addition to the COVID-19 prevention campaigns, flyers facilitated communication during the crisis due to the lack of media in the area. Civil Affairs (CA) organized 99 park movie activities, a concert, 18 sporting events, 20 conservation activities for parks and monuments, primarily those affected by the hurricane, three recitals, 109 mural painting events, 50 circus shows, five activities with ethnic groups, and 41 community workshops.

These activities resulted from civil-military cooperation (CMC) aimed at strengthening relationships with the community. They included 11 health days, support for the development of 36 production projects, 76 environmental initiatives, six partnerships with private companies to benefit the most affected communities, a farmers' market, and 83 inter-institutional meetings.

All of the above was coordinated with the institutions and the Raizal. Public Affairs (PA) conducted 68 radio broadcasts, disseminated 45 spots from companies and institutions present on the island, produced eight magazines, created four informative videos, shared 37 environment-related posts, and published 18 tweets on the institutional account. In 2022, approximately 216 activities were conducted under the leadership of the regional authorities, who, after stabilizing the crisis on the island, resumed their functions alongside the Military Forces.

## Discussion and Inferences about DSCA Paradigms

There are various definitions of paradigm in scientific research and experimentation, so we will explore Kuhn's theory (1971)<sup>29</sup> and Capra's (2003) interpretation of the social paradigm:

Social paradigms are usually stable over time, are difficult to change, and can also vary from one community or society to another. This means that what is socially acceptable for one group may not be so for another.

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<sup>29</sup> In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, published in 1971, Thomas S. Kuhn argued that the paradigm determines the types of experiments scientists perform, the types of questions they ask, and the problems they consider important.

During the investigation for this chapter, it became evident that certain political, academic, and social groups resist questioning the relationships between civil authorities and the Military Forces in addressing daily issues related to maintaining public order, as well as the challenges that arise daily due to the armed conflict in a territory as vast as Colombia.

Fear, lack of communication, and perhaps a maturation process in the understanding of military capabilities supporting civil society are prominent, possibly due to the military thought and education of the early and mid-20th century. Due to a short-sighted perspective, the military did not engage with civil society to clearly communicate its capabilities—not just those involving the use of force and strategic deterrence, which are usually displayed in parades, but also the unseen aspects that are essential for achieving DSCA objectives.

The military capabilities that serve and assist society in governing remote regions, where state presence is lacking compared to cities, are largely unknown to national public opinion.

These collaborations of all kinds, ranging from guaranteeing security to supporting the needs of communities and providing possible solutions for small infrastructure adaptation projects, are carried out jointly by community action boards and small Army units present in the regions. They stem from verbal cooperation agreements between a commander, who may be a lieutenant or a sergeant, and are conducted quietly throughout the country.

We must also consider the infrastructure projects contracted with the Army Engineering Command, which provides roads, aqueducts, streets, and environmental sanitation projects while restoring hydraulic sources for municipalities, governors' offices, or at the central level in hard-to-access areas, as well as support for civilian contractors (Ejército Nacional, 2022).

However, academic, political, and journalistic circles show little interest in understanding this type of collaboration between the military and civil authorities, as well as the civilian population. They perceive the actions of the Military Forces more as a threat to democracy and state stability than as a practical advantage backed by evidence.

The short-sighted vision of jurists, sociologists, and academics in other disciplines, whose theses have allowed politicians to demean military action in the Colombian conflict, may create and anticipate possible coups d'état and saber-rattling based on statements by military commands regarding issues that are part of the national reality, which are also viewed as political statements by certain interests.

Statements deemed political are baseless because certain actors perceive as an absolute and immovable truth that general military thought and culture operate solely under a non-existent national security doctrine, which targets an internal enemy for its political ideology. They clarify that security forces do not seek political ideology but rather resort to violence, which is a crime that deliberately undermines democracy and the constitutional order of nations.

The thoughts and absolute truths regarding power relations with the military, posited by some politicians, serve as a paradigm because they embody a truth that has endured over time and is socially accepted by a group—specifically, society—that directly benefits from it. However, this is not applicable to academia, certain political parties, and NGOs.

The evidence establishing this paradigm primarily arises from understanding, on the one hand, why soldiers are distinct citizens within society and the necessity for this distinction in order to serve as the defenders of culture and democracy and, on the other, the principles governing the relationship between politics and the military. It is important to recognize that conflicts are political events in which the military is involved.

Moreover, there is the historical aspect regarding Latin America's dictatorships in weak democracies, which viewed the military as a solution to the violence and insurrections of the 1960s and 1970s. However, these actions yielded no positive outcomes; instead, they tarnished the core identity of military institutions through abuses and undemocratic behaviors that severely violated human rights.

However, this paradigm is challenged not only by a careful historical review of events in Colombian history but also by the educational background of the Military Forces and the Police, along with statistics on education and training, which are often overlooked in academic discussions that criticize the Military Forces and fail to recognize the support they provide to civil authorities.

## Military Education as a Guarantee of the Constitutional Rights of Colombians

Military education has been a pillar since the military reform of 1907 during Rafael Reyes' administration, particularly with the establishment of the Military School of Cadets, the Naval School, and the Higher School of War. These institutes focus on the education and professional development of officers, advancing knowledge not only in the use of weapons but also in the study of military sciences, which evolve and adapt daily as a social science.

This education emphasizes not only the use of combat capabilities but also the support elements and services for combat that align with DSCA, rather than being isolated or solely based on military doctrine. This approach is backed by academic preparation validated and endorsed by the MEN, through high-quality certified programs recognized by academic peers from various universities, which have accredited the curricula in the training schools. This follows an educational framework for security forces and a policy for security forces education (PEFuP) as outlined by the MDN in 2021. Additionally, all programs hold qualified registrations from the MEN.

The development of this educational policy for security forces serves as a crucial tool for structuring military doctrine within institutions. It focuses on the professional and technical training of officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers across all forces, thereby reinforcing civilian control of military institutions.

## The Paradigm of Civil Control of the Military

The control exercised by the president of the republic, the minister of defense, and the CGFM is absolute and permanent. The inclusion of a civilian minister of defense represents one of the greatest successes of the national governments, in addition to viewing security forces as an element of development and a reliable alternative, due to two fundamental aspects: first, clear defense policies guiding the forces, and second, their continuous use in addressing multiple threats and security challenges currently faced by Colombia.

The military forces in this country may serve as the best example of institutions dedicated to the State rather than specific administrations. They maintain an unrestricted balance between institutional integrity and authority, with a clear delineation in controlling the legitimate violence of the State. This balance is grounded first in a solid military education, as previously mentioned, and second in the continuous performance of tasks by troops and commanders at all levels oriented toward the service and security of communities. This situation surpasses the constitutional perspective regarding the defense of territory and sovereignty, aligning more closely with safeguarding the internal constitutional order.

In the field of sociology, authors such as Feaver (1996) view harmonious relations between the civil government and the military as a total threat based

on agency theory.<sup>30</sup> The author emphasizes that ensuring military personnel can perform tasks ordered by civilians and maintaining adequate security levels against external enemies does not guarantee they will refrain from carrying out coups d'état; the overarching issue of civil control remains unresolved (Feaver, 1996).

However, Feaver's statement also includes numerous suggestions for military control and monitoring tools to mitigate the risk of betrayal. This author believes that control tools undermine civil and military relations, which contrasts with Huntington (2000), who discusses professionalism in his book, *The Soldier and the State*.

If we analyze what the two authors state in the Colombian case, Huntington's arguments resonate more strongly, as he presents compelling reasons for the favorability of the Military Forces in relation to the civilian population amidst the Colombian conflict. This author views the use of the Military Forces as more of an alternative solution than a problem.

This refers to the term "unified action," defined as the synchronization, coordination, and integration of activities between governmental and non-governmental entities alongside military operations, enabling the achievement of unified effort (MFC, 1.0). This concept originates from military doctrine rather than politics or law.

This concept is evident in everyday national life concerning public security, including the activities of prevention, detection, and neutralization of threats posed by organized crime and national or transnational crimes. These threats endanger the well-being of the civilian population, the prosperity of communities, infrastructure, and the associated services of the State (MFC, 1.0).

Unified action and coordination mechanisms within the constitutional framework of harmonious collaboration between institutions, as found in the regulatory development of Law 4/1991 and the articles previously mentioned regarding public order management, serve as the control element that, in this context, extends from the municipal level to the presidential level, via security councils and public order committees.

It is clear that the use of force in all national military operations against criminal structures is not a secret and is known daily and immediately to the minister of

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<sup>30</sup> Agency theory suggests it can explain the strategic interaction between civilians and the military by proposing an assertive delegative system. Under such a command, the military cannot make decisions without the permission of the civil authority already under delegated command, despite being subordinate to civilians (Feaver, 1996).

defense, who conducts the necessary monitoring. This complements the oversight exercised by public opinion, which remains visible due to the media.

This control exercised by the media is vital and transparent, as it illustrates the actions of security forces, which are often questioned but, in many cases, also praised. This situation is natural and is considered in theoretical discussions as friction by Carl Von Clausewitz, reflected in incidents that influence ground maneuvers.

All tactical actions on the ground are deemed legal and legitimate. However, in cases of doubt, the MDN, the General Command, and the Forces particularly welcome inquiries from the State's investigation institutions to assess and take legal actions, whether through military criminal justice or ordinary justice. This ensures transparency and shows civilian control.

The potential excesses of security forces are often generalized by political and opinion sectors. However, it is sufficient to consider the number of military members prosecuted due to operations and tactical actions on the ground, including the 1,995 soldiers who appeared before the JEP in 2019 (Ugarriza, 2019).

If we compare this figure with the 245,000 men that the Army has had on average in Colombia since 2000, we will find that the number of military personnel involved in illegal actions that must be resolved in judicial courts is 0.8 %. Similarly, if we analyze figures from 2014<sup>31</sup>, only 960 soldiers were under arrest, representing 0.3 %, an insignificant number in a conflict as complex as the Colombian one.

Judicial action and oversight of potential excesses by the Military Forces contribute to the legitimacy of civil control over the military establishment. This control focuses on the State's responses to security challenges from a multidimensional perspective, aimed at consolidating state legitimacy and the democratic system, while consistently respecting human rights and upholding the rule of law (MDN, 2019).

Given that civilian control of the military apparatus in the Colombian state serves as a paradigm, a small portion of society expresses distrust toward military institutions and calls for greater oversight, as well as the dismantling and elimination of certain tasks. In contrast, the majority of society supports and trusts this institution without reservation, based on the clear facts outlined below.

Society supports the Military Forces not solely because they are a military apparatus but due to the proven collaborative efforts they engage in with state

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<sup>31</sup> In a document of more than a hundred pages that the Attorney General's Office submitted to Congress at the request of Representative Alirio Uribe (Polo), all the investigations that the ordinary justice system carried out against members of the public force from 2000 to 2014 are recorded (Semana, 2014).

institutions to combat the tangible threats present in society. This support is not based on political, ideological, or academic theories derived from books that evaluate them according to the military practices observed in other countries, which have not experienced the same dynamics of internal and transnational threats that Colombia has faced.

This paradigm is transformed by joint, coordinated, and interagency efforts, which focus on securing and clearing large areas of the country from threats. It involves executing stability tasks aimed at establishing security and supporting institutions, conducting operations against kidnapping and extortion, and collaborating continuously with security forces in the fight against terrorism. It also includes humanitarian and civic assistance programs, highlighted by three clear and recent examples of significant impact through crisis responses and limited contingency operations in close collaboration with the UNGRD.

Another positive element is the dedication and coordinated efforts of the Military Forces alongside the judicial institutions in the country, ensuring security in their actions. For instance, the support outlined in the Single Judicial Police Manual (FGN, 2020) facilitates operations against various types of crimes in areas where judges and prosecutors face security challenges in fulfilling their constitutional duties. This is why it is common to see in the news that the FGN conducted arrests, raids, and seizures with the assistance of the Military Forces and the support of civil institutions responsible for law enforcement.

## Conclusions

This chapter analyzes the role of military institutions in Colombia, contrasting it first from a differential perspective, based on the fact that the military are distinct citizens due to their mission-driven performance and daily life, the ongoing requirements for their training, education, and discipline, as well as the institutional principles and values—factors that would be very challenging to homogenize with the ordinary citizen.

Concepts of political relations with the military are consistently shaped by political initiatives that are undertaken by the military, not because the military dictates the State's operational line, but because politicians choose to utilize state force legitimately through the military.

Reference is also made to a historical period when the military rose to power over nations in Latin America. This fact should not be overlooked; however, we

cannot establish a regional historical perspective and behavior pattern based on suspicions stemming from political ideologies and approaches without examining the control and management of civil authority over the Military Forces in Colombia.

The brief experience of a military administration in Colombia, as analyzed by historians, demonstrates that the country is not conducive to military rule. Through civilian political maneuvers, a military government, led primarily by civilians, was implemented and dismantled, without the military establishment permitting a continuation of an army general in power, ultimately paving the way for civil government as outlined in the Constitution of 1886.

Likewise, the cultural process of antimilitarism was analyzed not only in the country but also worldwide. It originated from ideologies and propaganda in the 1960s that came from totalitarian communist government systems, which were perceived as more democratic and egalitarian at the time. However, history revealed that they were not, and in fact, restricted all civil liberties and freedom of expression.

In the national context, civil society faced threatening conditions in the 1980s and 1990s due to subversive groups funded by drug trafficking, which generated ungovernability and threatened society as a whole. It was the Military Forces, through their operations in coordination with judicial authorities, who restored governability and peace in many regions of the country.

This was achieved under the DSCA precept, which, although not referenced in the Army doctrine prior to the Damasco project, was applied and yielded results. Based on constitutional duties, as of 2016, the doctrine has clear, specific, and regulated foundations established for the Military Forces in the 2018 Joint Doctrine Manual.

DSCA serves as a paradigm that, for certain groups in society, is seen as valid due to the fear of granting excessive powers to the military. Nonetheless, this paradigm is challenged by the institutional and legal structure of the State, which defines it through civil control of security forces managed by those responsible for public order: the president, governors, and mayors, rather than military commanders.

Military commanders deploy their capabilities to serve civil authorities at all levels, evaluating public order and collaborating harmoniously with all state institutions. The Military Forces ensure security conditions that enable other state institutions to fulfill their constitutional missions.

The results presented in three public-order situations, where the actions of the Military Forces were explained in detail, demonstrate that achieving them

would have been impossible without control by and ongoing coordination with civil authorities—primarily the MDN, MinInterior, MinSalud, and other institutions.

The DSCA paradigms can only be addressed with an understanding of two key factors: the principles of military education and the processes of planning, analysis, and delegation of responsibilities that take place between civilians and the military at the municipal, provincial, and national levels.

These levels of permanent coordination are controlled not only by judicial authorities and regulatory agencies but also by the press, which informs and updates citizens daily on the use of security forces. However, the most crucial aspect that challenges all paradigms and doubts surrounding the DSCA in Colombia is public opinion in the regions, where the Military Forces and soldiers are viewed as trustworthy and respectable amid a historical conflict. Thanks to what the soldier represents, the National Constitution has been observed.

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