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The Center for Civil-Military Relations Executive Summary

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The Center for Civil-Military Relations
Executive Summary
Colombia Project Programs and Coordination
Bogota, Colombia (9 – 11 October, 2002)

14 October 2002

Summary During the period of 9 –11 October, CCMR took the lead in defining the content of and participating in two seminars, in Bogota, on the theme of Military Strategy and Campaign Planning. The seminars were sponsored by the U.S. embassy and the Colombian Ministry of Defense. The presentations by the U.S participants were shared between CCMR and SOUTHCOM. The CCMR team consisted of Tom Bruneau, Director, and Dick Goetze, Program Manager for the CCMR program in Colombia. The AmEmbassy requested that Dick Goetze serve as Moderator for both days of the seminar. The seminars were supported for the most part by TCA funds. The official presenters and the participants were from the highest levels of the relevant U.S. and Colombian government agencies. The timing of the seminars was especially important as the Colombian government is presently completing its national security strategy and working on its national military strategy. The seminars were acclaimed by all of those involved as a huge success, and follow-on seminars and conferences are now being planned.

Observations

Background

As described in earlier executive summaries, the CCMR was asked in March of this year by the U.S. Embassy in Bogota to act as executive agent for a multi-dimensional and robust program in Colombia to work with Colombian civilians and military officers in developing strategic planning processes and promote popular interest and involvement in national security. On 31 July the same CCMR team participated in a one - day seminar for President – elect Alvaro Uribe and his entire cabinet. The Colombian military did not participate in that seminar. The current program is a logical development from that first high – level event.

Seminars

The program director for the CCMR Project in Colombia, Dick Goetze, visited Bogota on 17-19 September to work with the U.S. embassy and the Colombian government on the seminar plans. On 1 October he visited SOUTHCOM to work out with General Hill and his staff the contents and the forms of cooperation between SOUTHCOM and CCMR in these seminars. Despite the extensive efforts at coordination on the part of CCMR, SOUTHCOM, and the U.S. embassy, we did not know at the beginning of the first seminar on Thursday, 10 October, just what would happen. The uncertainty was due to some questions regarding which public security force sectors and which civilians would in fact participate in the seminar. The uncertainty was also due to some indications that the military participants might not have had access to the Uribe government's recently completed national security strategy. The potential for confusion appeared high.

By the end of the first day seminar it was clear that everything was working out incredibly well. At the first seminar 35 officers and 12 civilians participated, including the Chief of the Joint Staff and the three service commanders with their most senior staff leadership. The seminar was opened by Minister of Defense Marta Lucia Ramirez who presented an important speech on the national security policy of the Uribe government. She was followed by Peter Rodman, Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) who spoke about U.S support to the Colombian government. He was followed by General James T. Hill, the commander at SOUTHCOM who also spoke about U.S. support and the importance of a national military strategy. DASD (Western Hemisphere Affairs), Mr. Pardo-Maurer, attended, but did not make a presentation.

In the first seminar Tom Bruneau spoke about civilian roles in national security and Dick Goetze discussed strategy formulation and resources. B.G. Herrera, the Director of the Colombian War College, presented a national strategic plan developed by the flag and general officers students at the College and previously presented to President Uribe. When it became clear that all but two or three of the Colombian military had no knowledge of the Colombian National Security Strategy which President Uribe had provided to President Bush on 25 Sep, Dr. Andres Villamizar, an advisor to the Minister of Defense and one of the authors of the national security strategy, (who was attending the seminar) was asked by the CCMR team to brief it to the participants. Dr. Villamizar called the Minister of Defense and received authorization to provide the briefing. This presentation was a major advance in Colombian civil-military relations.

The second seminar, on Friday 11 October, included some of the same general officers, but was mainly for division and brigade commanders, and officers at the 0-6 level who are involved in planning. There were a total of 45 During the second seminar B.G. Stenner, the J-5 at SOUTHCOM spoke about military planning. Colonel Kellner the VJ-5 made two presentations in which he covered military planning and campaign planning. At the request of the CCMR team, Dr. Villamizar once again briefed the national security strategy. The Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces, General Mora spoke for almost an hour before lunch on Friday, and delivered several important messages. He also closed the seminar in the later afternoon. In sum, the highest levels of civilian officials and military commanders participated actively in the seminars. The timeliness of the seminars was obvious, and the engagement of the participants very high.

The issue of participation was worked out in the following manner. At the request of the Colombian military senior leadership, the police did not participate. They will be invited to a future seminar on the same topic. Two or three civilians from the MOD did participate, and most actively in that Dr. Villamizar in particular was able to explain to the participants the contents and status of the national security strategy. It was made clear by General Mora that this document had been provided to him and the service commanders for their comments and corrections. As all was clarified, and there was tremendous interest by the participants in the topics due to the current situation of war in Colombia, the seminars really were hugely successful. And, they brought

together the commanders in the first seminar and the planning officials in the second seminar. It was most encouraging for CCMR to see both the impact of our prior work with the civilians and officers as well as the extremely positive relationships between the top level military and civilians. In all cases it became obvious that officers and civilians are increasingly understanding and appreciating the responsibilities and cultures of the other organizations and professions.

Project Coordination

Coordination for the present and future programs was done mainly with the SAO, Lt Col Parrilla. We discussed with him the upcoming program in November for IDARM. We also discussed with Dr. Andres Villamizar the likelihood of a DL Masters program for MOD civilians in particular. We also discussed with Mr. Paul Mahlstedt of the NAS about the vetting of members of the think tank and future funding for the CCMR project in Colombia.

As usual, Lt Col Parrilla and his staff did an incredible job in the preparation and coordination of the seminars that helped ensure the success of these very high profile events. All in all, it was really a remarkable event.

SAO Comments

This was the event with the most impact in civil military relations in my more than three years in country. It had the largest Colombian General Officer participation in a US sponsored event I have ever seen. Drs Goetze and Bruneau turned what had potential for uncomfortable confrontation into an extremely successful event where both civilians and military had a fruitful exchange of information, ideas, and viewpoints. The MOD's presentation provided a strong base to work from. The presentation by Gen Mora, the commander of the Colombian military forces, was particularly inspiring. Dr Andres Villamizar did an incredible job in presenting the Colombian National Security Strategy and answering questions from the audience. The presentation by the SOUTHCOM J-5 staff was so well liked that the Director of the Colombian War College asked it to be presented to the General select course.

Next Phases

By the morning of the second day, CCMR, SOUTHCOM, Paul Mahlstedt, and the Lt Col Parrilla were discussing follow-on seminars. In his closing comments General Mora spoke very positively of the seminar and encouraged us to organize more seminars as they are so valuable and timely. A general consensus emerged that we will attempt to put on a seminar even this calendar year on the same topics but this time invite the police and more civilians, in addition to the new flag and general officers. CCMR and SOUTHCOM will coordinate with the Lt Col Parrilla regarding timing.

Thomas C. Bruneau
Director, CCMR