



The Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies

Twenty years ago, during Argentina's turbulent transition to democracy, a retired U.S. army colonel was loyally assisting the civilian government of then President Raul Alfonsin. The retired army colonel was working as an advisor in the Defense Ministry and was asked by a journalist how many civilians were employed in policy making positions there. "Sir," came the dry response, "we have citizens who are perfectly capable of running the Ministry of Defense. They are called military men."

In the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, many of whom were experiencing transitions to democratic rule, what civilian inputs there were during the 1980s and early 1990s focused mostly on civil and military relations. The goal was to ensure that elected officials maintain control of the armed forces in the context of mutual respect and collaboration. Meanwhile, the "nuts and bolts" issues of administration of military and security forces, and overall questions of strategy, were still left largely in the hands of the armed forces.

Even in 1995 by the time of the first Defense Ministerial (DMA) in Williamsburg, Virginia, most countries in the region had transitioned to representative democracy, but few civilians had acquired experience in directing and managing defense and security forces. Authoritarian governments had seen no need for civilian officials who would influence the defense and security sector. Not only had the circumstances of authoritarian rule not exposed military leaders to the normally stressful practices of a vibrant democratic society, such as processing demands, resolving disputes, decision-making, allocating resources, and developing and implementing policies. But also, those civilian professionals who had no opportunity to manage the security sector logically avoided defense studies. Clearly, both civilian and military leaders had much to learn about how to achieve national objectives in a democratic system.

At the first DMA, some of the civilian defense ministers from the region raised the need for an institution to help educate civilians on the management of defense and security with then Secretary of Defense William Perry. In 1996 during the DMA in Bariloche, Argentina, the establishment of the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS) was announced. Its purpose is to raise the understanding of civilians and military personnel about their shared roles in the management and implementation of defense and security to meet national security requirements.

Less than ten years later, more than 13,000 individuals have participated in CHDS seminars, conferences and workshops and more than 2,500 alumni from throughout the region have graduated from its longer (three-week) courses. Three quarters of whom are civilians and one fourth military. A growing number of CHDS alumni have gone on to be cabinet ministers, heads of national legislatures, presidential/ministerial advisors, and general and flag officers in governments around the region. Many are key players in formulating security strategies and defense policies. The "Declaration of Santiago," issued at the Fourth DMA in 2002, specifically recognized the role of CHDS and its relevance for the Hemisphere. Increasingly, U.S. embassies are relying on CHDS regional and subject matter expertise to provide needed "connective tissue" with regional policy makers whose governments are not always in line with Washington's policies.

Since September 11, 2001, CHDS which calls itself a policy tool for enhancing civilian and military relations has focused on providing educational outreach support to increase regional

understanding about the need for effective programs to combat violent fundamentalist ideologies, promoting increased inter-agency and regional cooperation, and building support for defense and security policies among key civilian decision-makers. Working closely with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the National Defense University and the senior leadership at SOUTHCOM, NORTHCOM, and CHDS has been able to foster trust relationships and frank dialogue with people representing a broad range of political beliefs and affiliations from around the region.

One highly successful outreach effort has been CHDS's National Security Planning Workshops (NSPWs). The workshops bring together senior national-level decision makers to address strategic policy and strategy formulation and implementation. The NSPWs foster interagency coordination of civil and military cooperation, and provides unique opportunities for U.S. and host country national dialogue. The first NSPW was held in August 2004 in Panama for the incoming administration of President Martin Torrijos. Six months later, a CHDS graduate who heads Peru's congressional security and defense commission was instrumental in arranging for a planning workshop in his country. As a result of a specific request by Paraguayan Vice President Luis Castiglioni to his U.S. counterpart, Vice President Richard Cheney, in September 2005 CHDS held an NSPW on integral security in Asuncion. In May of 2006, the Center was invited by the new Honduran government to conduct an NSPW for senior officials led by Vice President Elvin Santos and Minister of Defense Aristides Mejia Carranza. Finally, from July 28 through July 30, 2006, CHDS conducted a well-received NSPW for senior Costa Rican officials at the invitation of the new government headed by President (and Nobel laureate) Oscar Arias.

Dennis F. Caffrey, CHDS dean of students and administration, stated the following:

The NSPWs have provided priceless venues for the trusted exchange of information, ideas and new perspectives on issues that affect all of us. Because we try to hold them early in the term of a new government in the region, they feel they are supported with hands-on help, and the United States gets a hearing for its concerns from people who matter.

More recently, attention has been focused on the Center's Interagency Coordination and Counterterrorism (ICCT) course, which addresses intra-interagency and international coordination with a focus on the long war against terrorist violence. Participants, mostly middle managers from military, law enforcement, civilian agencies, international and non-governmental organizations, receive up-to-the-minute information on global trends on the war on terror, and how national governments around the world are organizing to meet the threat.

In June 2006, the ICCT brought Joaquin Villalobos, former commander of the Salvadoran Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrilla group, together with Ambassador (retired) David Passage, the U.S. deputy chief of mission to San Salvador (1984-1986), and Ambassador (retired) William Walker, who served as the U.S. envoy to El Salvador as peace negotiations in that country finally bore fruit. The former senior vice president of NDU and one of the founders of CHDS also attended to help discuss the applicability of lessons learned from the Central American insurgencies to today's challenges. The 71 students from seventeen countries in the region, plus Spain and Morocco, taking part in the three-week course were treated to insights and analysis never before given by three of that conflict's most important protagonists.

Center Director Richard D. Downie stated the following:

I think some of the greatest values CHDS brings to its students are intellectual clarity and the opportunity to share perspectives across national boundaries, regions and cultures. Because of the types of people we are able to call upon for example, senior officials from DoD, Homeland Security, Department of State, the best and the brightest from NDU and members of our own academic staff, as well as a broad array of other

experts we are privileged to call friends, the Center literally vibrates with relevance for both Washington's need for engagement and the region's thirst for expertise.

Kenneth LaPlante, CHDS deputy director stated the following:

In the past, U.S. military education in the region was stove piped into one area, where certainly there were dividends in terms of influence, but it suffered from sometimes being an echo chamber rather than a place where an honest expression of differences can and does lead to new ideas and new perspectives, as well as consensus. CHDS' role has been to do just that to open up communication with people who maybe even a decade ago, probably would not have given security studies, or even engagement with the U.S. government, a second thought.

Former students, including educators, academic researchers, journalists, non-government organizations, a think tank staff, along with military and police officers, report that several other CHDS offerings have also proved to be of significant benefit both for their education and to their careers. For example, its Advanced Policy Making Seminar (APS), a sustainment activity designed to nurture CHDS alumni by enhancing their existing knowledge of security and defense issues and processes, offers them the opportunity for professional development and continued interaction and networking with their counterparts from other countries.

The Center's Senior Executive Dialogue (SED), provides a unique opportunity for the hemisphere's senior leaders to discuss policy issues and interact in person with U.S. counterparts in Washington, D.C., and the combatant commands. The SED is organized by sub-region and provides another opportunity to promote increased regional cooperation on security and defense concerns. The participants, ministerial-level decision makers, have reported that their discussions held during the SED have had direct impact on how critical issues are addressed back in their own countries.

Two new academic initiatives are about to be launched at the Center. The Faculty Outreach Program will bring one or two members of the faculty to those countries with active CHDS alumni associations to conduct a number of events. Beyond bringing the alumni up to date on the latest initiatives in the Center, the CHDS envoys will present the latest thinking at the Center on the major topics of the day, ranging from the Global War on Terrorism and Countering Ideological Support for Terrorism, to Stability Operations, Defense Transformation, and National Security Strategy formulation.

The second initiative is a long-anticipated Advanced Course, geared to those "who remain decisively, actively, and enthusiastically engaged in the defense and security sector," reports Dr. Craig Deare, CHDS dean of academics. He also states the following:

Although career defense ministry officials represent the ideal candidate, we will welcome those who exercise their influence in the fields of academics, media, legislatures, or other executive branch areas, such as presidential staff, planning, treasury, and so forth.

The first two of the fourteen-week distance learning and three-week in-residence courses, to be presented in March 2007. The course will focus on Terrorism and Stability Operations. And, for the first time ever, NDU will be granting three credit hours for successful completion of the course.

Strategic communication with the region is also conducted in a number of other ways at the Center. CHDS has completed two Department of Defense sponsored research projects:

- The first on Peacekeeping in Latin America and the Caribbean
- The second on Gaining Regional Support to confront the ideological support of terrorism

In addition, in February of this year, the Center, in cooperation with NDU's Center for Technology and National Security Policy (CTNSP), hosted a workshop on Bolivia's future under the leadership of its new President, Evo Morales. The 2 1/2-day event brought together nearly a dozen Bolivian participants to better understand the challenges and opportunities presented by Bolivia's new administration. A debate series, called "Face-to-Face Encounters," also regularly engages experts in a point-counterpoint approach to provide insight on topics of increasing concern in the hemisphere. The encounter between former FMLN Commander Villalobos and ex-U.S. Ambassador Walker was the latest in these friendly, but no holds barred, exchanges.

Individual research by CHDS faculty, students and alumni is also a cornerstone of Center efforts to contribute to a cooperative international security environment and mutual understanding of U.S. and regional defense and security issues. The Security and Defense Studies Review offers an array of timely articles by regional specialists, and CHDS faculty are frequently asked to speak at U.S. and international conferences, as well as to write books and scholarly articles.

Dr. Herb Huser, editor of the Security and Defense Studies Review stated the following:

We have been blessed with the kind of articles from our contributors that lend themselves naturally to book-length collaborations. That interest, by NDU Press and others, is what helps affirm that we are breaking new ground.

Recently CHDS Professor John T. Fishel recently published, together with Dr. Max Manwaring of the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College, a critically-acclaimed book, *Uncomfortable Wars Revisited*. In July, Dr. Jaime Garcia Covarrubias, professor of national security affairs, presented a paper on "Nationalisms, fundamentalisms and security" in Madrid at the III Atlantic Forum on Liberty and Democracy in Europe and America, organized by the Fundaci n Internacional para la Libertad headed by Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa. (The event was inaugurated by former Salvadoran President Fernando Flores and closed by former Spanish President Jose Maria Aznar.)

CHDS ambitious mission does not end with providing education and advancing research on security and defense issues. The Center also insists on the promotion of activities that are possible only through the establishment of a permanent and dynamic network throughout the hemisphere. Five active CHDS Alumni Associations in the region in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay are part of that robust network of security-minded professionals, and help ensure a strong interaction not only between CHDS and its alumni, but also among the alumni themselves.

Dr. Luis Bitencourt, CHDS professor and alumni coordinator stated the following:

Security and defense are themes that are constantly changing, and require consistent attention and a multiplicity of perspectives that promote broader and better understanding. The alumni associations are the more effective way to mobilize alumni and convey this mission.

Dr. Downie, Director Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies stated the following:

Globalization has not only shortened the distances between people; it has also changed the nature of the security and defense challenges we all face. Security and defense paradigms are changing, a new premium is being placed on alternative views and a democratization and expansion of the community in which solutions are found.

Fortunately for us and for future generations, today's defense and security graduates around the region form part of a growing regional/international community. We at CHDS are delighted to be expanding our activities to offer greater opportunities to learn together and from each other.