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Executive summary

The environment must be understood today as an essential tool for the sustainability and survival of the nation and the world. In turn, this allows us to achieve the ends of the state, which is, precisely, *'the general well-being of society'*. Thus, the environment -through its climatic changes and transmutations of phenomena, among others- can stabilise, maintain or, in extreme cases, destabilise any nation. Sometimes it is a threat, and other times it is an opportunity for the development and sustainability of the population and the planet. For this reason, both government entities and private companies must include this vital factor in their strategic planning: the environment is vulnerable and, at the same time, a marker of a new way of understanding and guaranteeing the survival of humanity. In this context, and in light of the recent words of President Iván Duque Márquez during the closing of the High Military Studies Course 'CAEM', and the Comprehensive National Defence Course 'CIDENAL', on 29th November 2021, in which he prioritised climate change as one of the main issues on the national security and defence agenda, the *Operación Mayor Artemisa* military operation takes a prevalent role on the daily agenda of actions for the protection of natural resources (Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2021).

Artemisa and its management of environmental crimes in the Colombian Amazon

Fabricio Cabrera Ortiz¹

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Introduction:

Strategic planning is extremely important for the protection of national interests and the political stability of a state, as it permits the relationship between objectives and national identity in order to elaborate strategic documents based on the challenges related to the organisation of the state. On the other hand, strategic planning is a tool that allows the articulation of strategy with actions, which means setting an end point in order to direct the actions to be followed. In other words, if a state does not have a set of articulated strategies, decision-making would be strongly impacted and, facing the international system, would reflect the proverb *'if you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there'*.

Strategy, in the world of security and defence, becomes the most transcendental and non-negotiable milestone for decision-making. However, there are terms that become difficult to define because of the way in which they are understood today or have changed due to their own behaviour over time, as is the case with "strategy". Many of the definitions that have been made of strategy relate to the use of force to achieve certain objectives in war. However, strategy is not exclusive to the military sphere because it operates in other, much broader fields, in times of both peace and war. At the same time, strategy is understood as "the art of establishing criteria and procedures (ways), through which the use of capacities (means) allows us to achieve the chosen objectives (ends)" (Ballesteros Marin, 2016).

According to Bartlett, a decision-maker in the United States, decision-making should be a transversal process at the strategic level under a comprehensive approach to government that allows quick and wise reactions in different situations and requires methodologies that facilitate the work of the authorities responsible for taking decisions in real time. In accordance with the strategy, it is necessary and logical to relate this to planning, since they are two concepts

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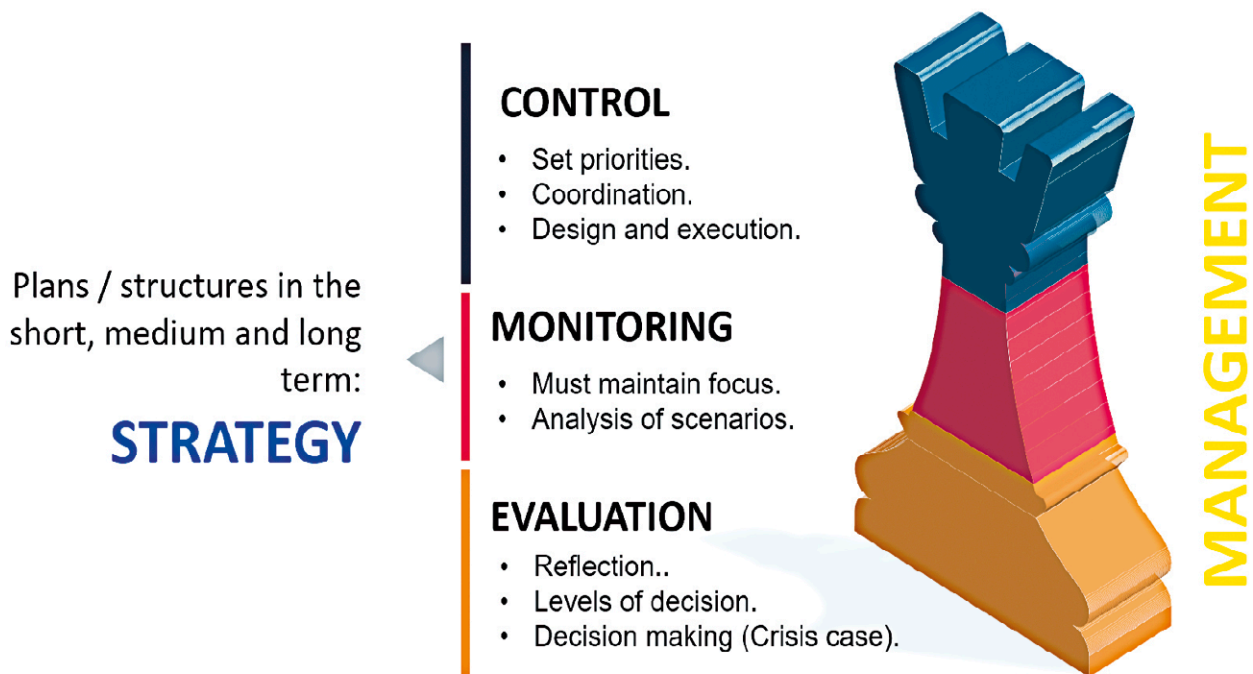
that allow the good execution and administration of a government. Through this synergy, a state “finds the way in which its institutions reflect on the evolution of the contexts in which they develop their intentions, weighing their objectives, means, and ways of acting to adapt to changes” (Arteaga, 2007).

Strategic planning is the guide that allows the construction of plans or strategies in the short, medium, or long term.

A strategy contains three fundamental pillars for its implementation and management. First, CONTROL, which is where priorities, coordination, design, and execution are set. Second, MONITORING, where the focus of what is to be achieved and the analysis of the current and possible scenarios must be maintained. And third, EVALUATION, which is the space to reflect on what has been built from the levels of decision and the crisis case.

Figure 1: Strategic planning process.

STRATEGIC PLANNING



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Based on the above, strategic planning increases trust, reduces uncertainties, and anticipates scenarios, and in the same way

it facilitates direction at the highest level of the conduct of national power in politics. This is how it allows the different fields of

power to be articulated around the objectives proposed by politics. In other words, political decision-makers and military commanders require strategic planning. Similarly, it allows us to argue that one of the main reasons to think strategically is what is considered in economics as the 'avoidance of wasting resources'. Without doubt, strategy could turn out to be an inappropriate political tool if there is no prior strategic culture and thinking.

In the world of strategy, strategic thinking groups together a set of elements: mission, vision, goals, objectives, policies, programs of action, and resources, which are established within a coherent sequence and are defined with respect to an organisation. This, in turn, must have four characteristics: identify itself as a plan; generate guidelines for action; be a position; and, be a perspective, which obviously cannot be visualised in relations between states and goes hand in hand with the existence of multiple national interests in the states of Latin America.

Finally, clarifying what Lantis and Howlett say about strategic culture as a process for a state to know itself and advance in its thinking, this occurs through physical factors (geography, climate, or natural resources), political factors (history, system, elite beliefs, and military organisation), and social/cultural factors (myths and symbols): all of the above factors generate synergy between national interests and objectives

that determine the vision of a state and are managed through strategic planning. In other words, synchronising ways, means and ends within the grand strategy for decision-making means that the state prevails by its survival within the same global playing board.

It must be said that, regarding the strategic environment, Colombia must today have answers in the security field characterised by the uncertainty it faces, a situation in which there are no longer only state actors but also non-state ones, which permeate other types of threats that must be contained and/or counteracted by the state with all elements of both power and national mobilisation. In this sense, decision-makers require significant effort and willingness to move in the right direction towards building a strategic culture that allows the sustaining of a solid security and defence structure needed by each state in the international system.

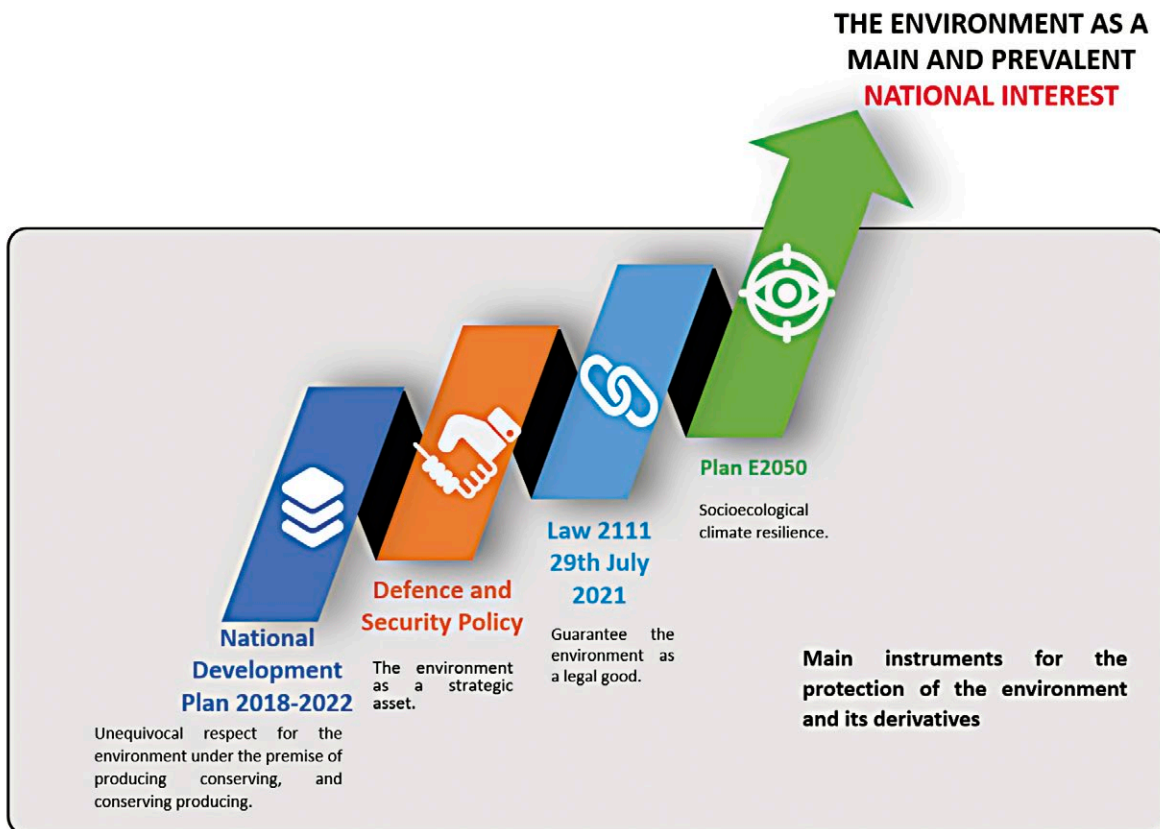
The above has led to the strategic thinking of the Colombian nation planting its tools, such as national security and defence policies, not only in military terms but also in terms of protection from the political, social, economic, and environmental spheres. In other words, there is a synergy between the different fields of power.

Thus, the Colombian government determined that climate change cannot be

accepted only as a risk or danger, but also as an opportunity to understand the importance of comprehensiveness in the forms and levels of the environmental system. For this reason, the Colombian government uses key tools of

political execution to fight in favour of climate change, such as the National Development Plan, the National Security and Defence Policy, Law 2111 of 29th July 2021, and the E2050 Environmental Plan.

Figure 2: Government tools for environmental protection



Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Regarding the National Development Plan 2018-2022, the Colombian state implemented transversal pacts, including the Pact for Sustainability: Producing Conserving and Conserving Producing, which seeks to “consolidate processes that facilitate a balance between the conservation of natural capital, its responsible use, and national production, in such a way that the natural wealth of the

country is appropriated as a strategic asset of the nation” (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2018-2022: Pacto por Colombia, 2019). This is reflected in sustainable, low carbon practices adapted to climate change, efficient use of natural resources, prevention and reduction of the risk of disasters, and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Figure 3: Sustainable Development Goals aligned with the protection and development of the environment in Colombia



Source: Images taken from the General Assembly Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Following this, it is necessary that “Colombia will be a country committed to environmental management and climate change mitigation, with a modern environmental institutional framework, where biodiversity is conserved and generates new income opportunities. In addition, it will be a territory resilient to the risks and impacts of disasters” (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2018-2022: Pacto por Colombia, 2019). Without a doubt, Colombia has the necessary bases for the improvement of not only the environmental management but also the environmental control of the country. Finally, the National Development Plan also created the Pact for Mining-Energy Resources, which correspond to sustainable economic growth.

On the other hand, there is National Security and Defence Policy (PDS for its initials in Spanish) which was elaborated based on multiple strategic aspects, including “designating the environment as a main and prevailing national interest” (Política de Defensa y Seguridad, 2019).

This highlights the great interest of Colombia in terms of strategic assets and their eventual process of scarcity or mismanagement by internal or external actors. Thus, the government manages to increase security conditions by protecting the environment, as this stabilises the regions of the country. The PDS contains axes of strategic transformation, in which it is evident that water, biodiversity and the environment are strategic assets that immediately become a priority for national security. Likewise, regarding this policy, the environment will be a key and fundamental task for the Military Forces, the National Police, and the Colombian Civil Defence in the protection of natural resources. The policy, as a strategic guide in the development of government tasks, allows the existence of approaches in strategic areas, which is to say, Colombia prioritises the environment with the aim of detecting possible risks derived from criminal activities that degrade not only security but also the development of the nation.

Thus, “climate change alters the strategic panorama and conditions security calculations” (Gomez Maseri, 2021), a situation that leads Colombia to forcefully shield itself against crimes against natural resources. In

this sense, the Colombian government modified Law 599 of 2000 as a single chapter “Of crimes against natural resources and the environment” in order to prioritise these according to their impact.

Figure 4: Typification of environmental crimes in Colombia



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on Law 2111 of 29th July 2021.

Another reason to demonstrate the great interest of Colombia in the face of climate change is evidenced in its active and sure participation in the United Nations conference on climate change, COP26, held in Glasgow in November 2021. In this scenario, the Colombian president presented the E2050 climate strategy which is established as a roadmap to achieve carbon neutrality in 2050.

Nevertheless, the E2050 is structured around nine pillars, as follows: “expansion of knowledge; comprehensive biodiversity management; sustainable production and consumption; just workforce transition; differentiated rural, marine and coastal development; resilient cities and regions; a diversified energy matrix; sustainable mobility and infrastructure; and, increased

capacity to adapt to climate change” (EFE, 2021). As a result, Colombia has included the participation of specialists and the synergy of government institutions, so that this strategy will be a state policy as it will cover seven periods of government.

for degrading ecosystems, for example, the loss of possibilities to establish legal entities and to open public services. The law also increases penalties, broadens the list of crimes against the environment, and considers deforestation a crime.

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Colombia has been a country that, due to its condition as a bi-oceanic country and a multiplier of natural resources, has given vital importance to the management of climate change through the strengthening of strategies and laws that penalise deforestation and other actions that threaten our ecosystems, in order to conserve and protect nature.

For this reason, the Ministries of Environment and Sustainable Development, Justice, and the Interior, and the Office of the Attorney General of the Nation, created a bill on environmental crimes. In this way, it is possible to take measures to counteract the promoting and financing of deforestation, wildlife trafficking, and the invasion of areas of

special ecological importance, among others. The law gives the Attorney General’s Office tools to prosecute those responsible

Although the approval of this law is already a great achievement to protect our ecosystems, the country also needs to strengthen measures to eradicate one of the main causes of deforestation: the illegal exploitation of minerals. This crime has low penalties and does not include aggravating behaviours, such as exploitation in National Natural Parks or protected areas, and the use of mercury or explosives in the extractive activities. For this reason, different ministries came together in 2020 and presented a bill to the First Commission of the Senate to achieve stronger penal, administrative, and sanctioning measures against the criminal chain of exploitation, production, benefit, and commercialisation of minerals.

In short, “Colombia has its challenges in terms of deforestation, the components of the Climate Action Law, the achievements in the protection of natural parks, and the advances towards becoming a carbon neutral country by 2050” (Urregon, 2021). Colombia’s participation and interest in this issue has allowed it to acquire greater responsibility: because it is a mega-biodiverse country it exists in a vulnerable bubble due to its attractive natural resources.

As previously stated, the environment is an issue that involves the participation of the Military Forces to contain the risks, dangers or threats against natural resources, as strategic assets of the nation. This is why Colombia is working in a comprehensive manner between the entire state, including its Armed Forces, to strengthen capacity for preventing and reacting to the eventualities or actions presented by climate change in the different sectors and territories of the country.

The national environmental strategy and the general military strategy

Considering the geographical variables involved in geopolitics, it must be recognised that Colombia occupies a privileged position at both the regional and global levels, as it is the world's second most biodiverse country with 10% of global flora and fauna, as well as 2.4 million hectares of paramos and 5 geographical watersheds, access to two oceans, and the Amazon region, with 483,119 Km² which represent 42.3 % of the continental territory of Colombia and 6.9% of the total Amazon (Cabrera Ortiz & Macias Tolsa, 2020). In this geostrategic context³, in late 2015, Colombia made a commitment to the international community on the

mitigation of climate change, taking rigorous measures of adaptation, mitigation, and differentiation, ranging from the delimitation and protection of the paramos to the fact that 100% of the different national territorial entities have anticipatory plans against climate change. On the other hand, Colombia contributes 0.46% of global emissions, a relatively low figure but one which, without taking the necessary measures, is calculated to increase by around 50% by 2030. For this reason, the country committed to reducing 20% of its emissions based on a projected 2030 scenario and, even, to reduce by 30% with the help of international cooperation.

Given that 11% of global emissions come from deforestation, Norway, the United Kingdom and Germany contributed \$5 billion USD between 2015 and 2020 to finance projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and the degradation of forests. It should be noted that the donors conditioned the funding to obtain results, and of this figure, \$300 million were allocated within the framework of two agreements. The first supported the implementation of the *Visión Amazonia* (Amazon Vision) program of the Ministry of Environment

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³ Geostrategy understood as the art and discipline of making geopolitical aspirations come true; following Brzezinski, it is the strategic management of geopolitical interests (Sanchez Hurtado, 2012)

and Sustainable Development which sought, among other aims, to reach the goal of zero net deforestation in this region in 2020. The second had a national scope and the objective of reducing deforestation in the whole country (García Arbeláez, Vallejo López, Lou Higgins, & Escobar, 2016).

However, the figures reported by the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM) show that deforestation in the Amazon has been rising since 2013, with more than 200,000 hectares of forest cover lost in 2016-2017, and 1,722 early warnings of deforestation persisted as of 2020, mainly in the departments of Caquetá, Guaviare, and Putumayo. This demonstrates the challenge of reaching the zero-deforestation commitment.

Operación Mayor Artemisa

The Colombian Military Forces have been involved in environmental protection and, therefore, have included the directives of this government policy in their strategic guidelines, ever since the creation of the Ministry of the Environment and the organisation of the National Environmental System (SINA), with Law 99 of 1993. Article 103 of this law, *On the Support of the Armed Forces*, which in practice corresponds to the public force, formulates the responsibility of ensuring

the protection and defence of the environment and non-renewable natural resources, and compliance with the norms established for this purpose, in order to protect the natural heritage of the nation which is part of national sovereignty. Likewise, it assigns missions to the National Navy, entrusting it with the “exercise of the functions of control and surveillance in environmental matters and natural resources in the seas and coastal areas, as well as the surveillance, monitoring and evaluation of pollution or other altering phenomena in the marine environment” (Función Pública, 2021).

Since 1993, as was mentioned, the Military Forces have conceived the importance of environmental issues and, in this process, have been refining their policies and strategies in line with the strategy of the national government, as well as from their own initiatives. This has made it possible to contribute to global demands regarding the shared responsibility to make the planet a place that guarantees the subsistence of humanity. However, meeting these challenges requires an immense effort that involves not only the human talent of the institutions but also extra economic resources that are not part of the military budget, with the objective that military participation has the means to facilitate the achievement of the objective and desired end result.

In this effort, and as a precedent, in 2018 the Ministry of National Defence established its

Environmental Policy for the Defence Sector (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2021) and, as previously mentioned, the current National Security and Defence Policy, published in January 2019, established the need to defend bodies of water, biodiversity and the environment, designating them as strategic assets that correspond to a main and dominant national interest. The strategic stature designated to this interest is completely innovative, as it turns their protection into a matter of national security against threats such as foreign interests that seek to geopoliticise strategic resources, the predatory action of drug trafficking, the illegal extraction of minerals, and deforestation.

In developing this policy, the Ministry of Defence, in order to legalise the judicial framework of the mission areas of the sector, issued Resolution 0201 of 5th February 2021, establishing in Article 1 the definition of the Mission Areas of the Defence Sector and, in Article 2, the definition of three Mission Areas of Contribution of the Defence Sector. *This second category includes the Contribution to the Protection of Natural Resources and the Environment*, defined as: “actions to provide support to environmental authorities, territorial entities, and the community, in the defence and protection of the environment and renewable and non-renewable natural resources, in the functions and actions of control and surveillance provided for by the law” (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2021, p. 2). In this way, the non-traditional role that the Military Forces have been fulfilling since the 1990s was updated and strengthened,

but it was also clearly established that the mission areas are the frame of reference in which to adopt the strategic priorities of the sector and to define joint and coordinated operation elements (with civil authorities or other institutions) to achieve synergy when facing threats.

It has also been important that, in recent years, Western states of greater or lesser importance have incorporated climate change into their national security agendas as a non-direct and autonomous threat and calculated its effects as a potentiator of other risks and threats. As endorsed by the COP26 summit, the political and environmental discourse of climate change has been presented as a threat of vital interest to states since it represents the danger in which humanity finds itself for its subsistence, and therefore requires strategic management outside traditional limits and political procedures.

This is why securitisation processes can be positive, because they favour greater participation by developed states in advancing issues related to climate change (Giles Carnero, 2016). However, when talking about securitisation it is necessary to clarify that the most frequent assumption is to confuse

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this word for an exclusive synonym for the action of militarising, despite this interpretation being debatable from many points of view. Therefore, Resolution 0201 clearly specifies that the protection of natural resources and the environment is a matter exclusive to the environmental authorities, territorial entities, and the community, and thus, the role of the Military Forces is limited to carrying out actions to provide these actors with the necessary support for the protection of the environment and renewable and non-renewable natural resources.

Due to the above considerations, on 9th May 2019, the *Operación Mayor Artemisa* was born ⁴, its primary mission being to mitigate the criminal phenomena that affect the environment and to deny criminal actors access to the land, river and marine protected areas established in the 62 National Natural Parks, as well as to protect the water, biodiversity and natural resources designated as strategic assets of the nation. In order to achieve a better understanding of the development and operation of this military operation, some fundamental aspects will be described and analysed.

The first relates to the territorial approach of the operation. It is noted that in 73% of the National Natural Parks there is the presence and transit of Organised Armed Groups (GAO) and Organised Delinquency

Groups (GDO); in 42.3% there are antipersonnel mines; in around 20.9% there are illicit crops; in 65% selective logging is practiced; in around 68% there is cattle ranching; in 37% there is illegal fishing; and, in 15% there is the illicit extraction of minerals (Parques Nacionales Naturales, 2021). This allows us to see that environmental crimes nurture the illicit economies of the GAOs and GDOs and, therefore, neglecting these serious threats results in the strengthening of criminal organisations, difficulties in guaranteeing security and coexistence in the affected zones, the acceleration of environmental degradation, the creation of conditions that propitiate the indefinite prolongation of violence, and high rates of criminality.

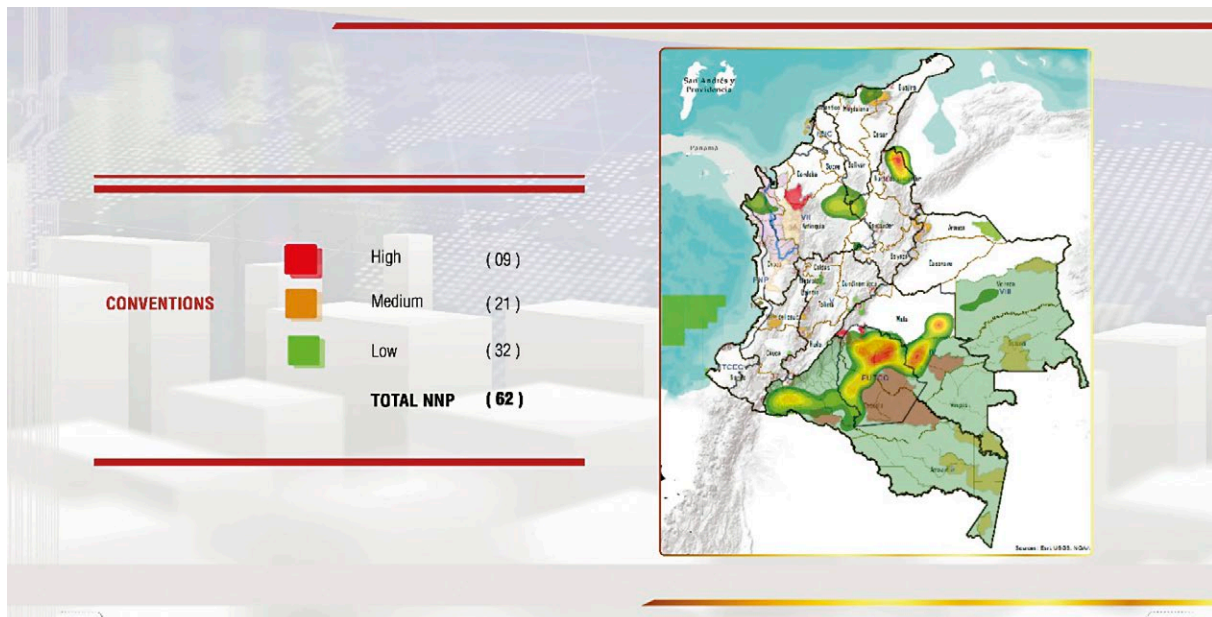
Map 1 shows that the vast majority of the parks are located in the Colombian Amazon, as well as those that have been prioritised at the high and medium level due to instability factors determined by the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the IDEAM, and National Natural Parks, such as deforestation and forest fires, water pollution, illicit crops, illegal mining, illegal activity, armed conflict, extensive cattle ranching, and the invasion of protected areas.



Foto: ©Flickr-Sumapaz
Luis Alejandro Bernal Romero

⁴ "Diana, whose name in Rome is Artemis, was the daughter of Zeus and Leto, and the twin sister of Apollo, being one of the 12 main deities of Olympus. She represents the young woman full of strength and health" (Ferrando, 2021).

Map 1. National Parks of Colombia and their intervention prioritisation



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on data of the (Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares, 2021).

On the other hand, the responsibility of caring for the National Parks belongs to the carabinieri of the National Police, but due to the complexities of the threats faced, as well as the rough nature of the Colombian geography, their capacities are overwhelmed. Therefore, the need has emerged for the defence sector, through the Military Forces, to become increasingly involved in supporting this mission. Similarly, the commitment given by the President of the Republic regarding environmental issues and climate change has been ever-increasing throughout his mandate. For example, on 30th August 2021, in the city of Leticia, after the preparatory activities for the COP26 summit, a Security Council was held in which he stated that “*Artemisa* becomes an integrated and permanent action of all forces to protect the natural resources of our country, that is, this changes from a

campaign with operations to a permanent daily and continuous agenda for the protection of our protected areas” (Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2021).

In the same declaration, he alluded to Law 2111 of 29th July 2021, and placed special emphasis on the increase in the members of the public force that participate in the *Operación Mayor Artemisa*, who amount to 22,300 distributed across 10 battalions, 1 brigade against drug trafficking, 1 brigade against illegal mining, detachments of the Coast Guard and Marine Corps, 100 officials of the National Police with the competence of judicial police competence. He confirmed the gradual increase during 2021 of 280 professional soldiers for the department of Amazonas, staggering their participation in two contingents of 140 men. Additionally, he also announced the participation of the

National Natural Parks in certifying members of the public force who participate in this organisation in environmental issues. No less important is his announcement regarding the formulation of the most wanted list for environmental crimes and their associated rewards, and finally, the dissemination of the innovative scientific research project carried out by the Colombian Air Force and the SINCHI Institute in order to undertake reforestation using the launching of seeds from airplanes (Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2021).

As can be deduced from the above, the participation of the Colombian Military Forces in the mission areas of contribution will be

increasingly intense, especially in missions related to the environment due to the connotations that climate change represents for humanity. However, as was previously mentioned, the strategic military direction has indicated that all actions carried out to fulfil this mission start from the base of developing joint, coordinated, and inter-institutional and multilateral operations. In this respect, a strategy of coordination and articulation has been established, including the participation of the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Attorney General's Office, the National Army, the National Navy, the Colombian Air Force, and the National Police, as shown in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5. Coordination and articulation strategy

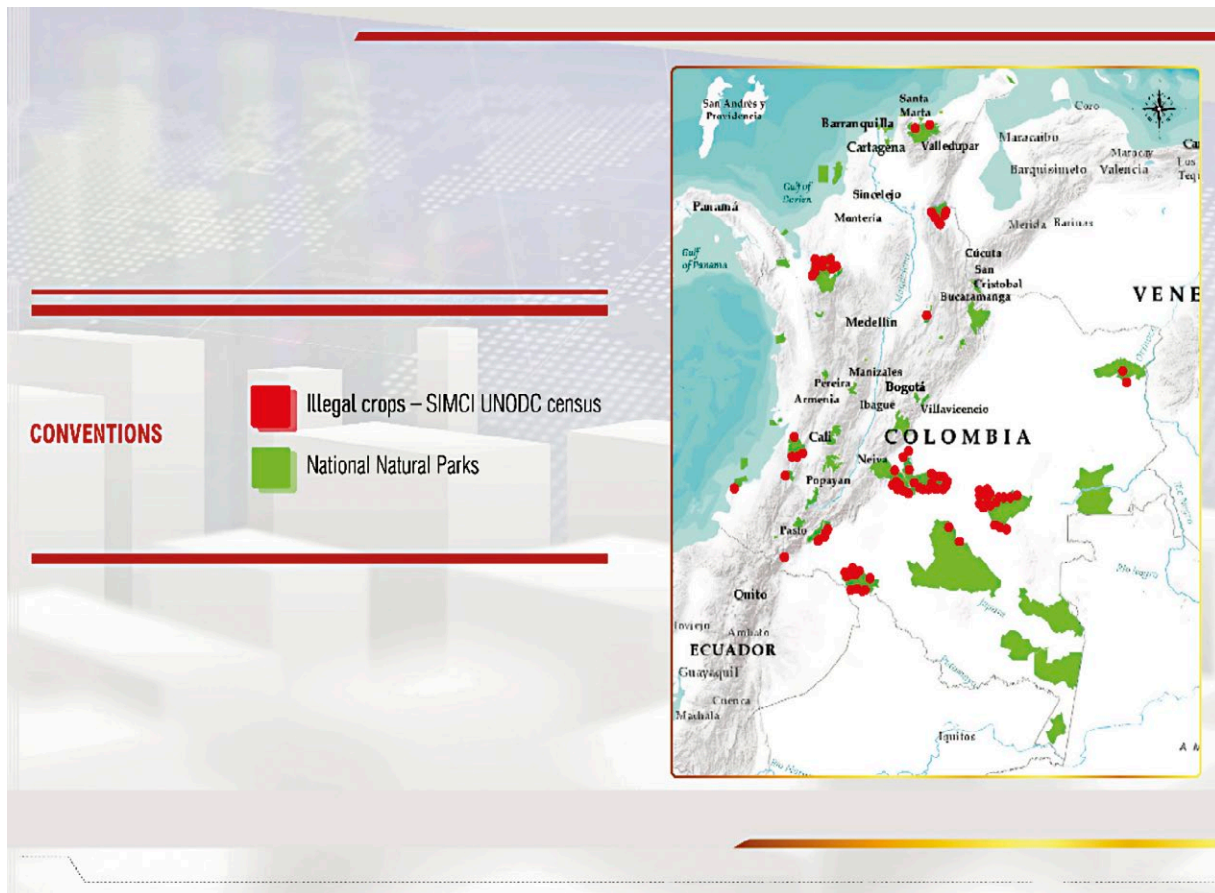


Source: (Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares, 2021).

Within the instability factors formulated by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development mentioned previously, it is important to highlight illicit crops and the exploitation of minerals as these have a special importance in the Colombian Amazon. Regarding the first factor, and considering that the Amazon includes the southern part of the department of Vichada, the south-east of the department of Meta, the

entire territory of the departments of Caquetá, Guainía, Guaviare, Putumayo and Vaupés, as well as the Bota Caucana and the Amazonian watersheds of Nariño composed of the upper parts of the Guamez, Sucio, San Miguel and Aguarico rivers (Riaño Umbarila & Salazar Cardona, 2018), only the departments of Amazonas, Guainía and Vaupés had fewer than 100 hectares of illicit crops in 2020 (UNODC, 2021).

Map 2. Illicit crops in National Natural Parks

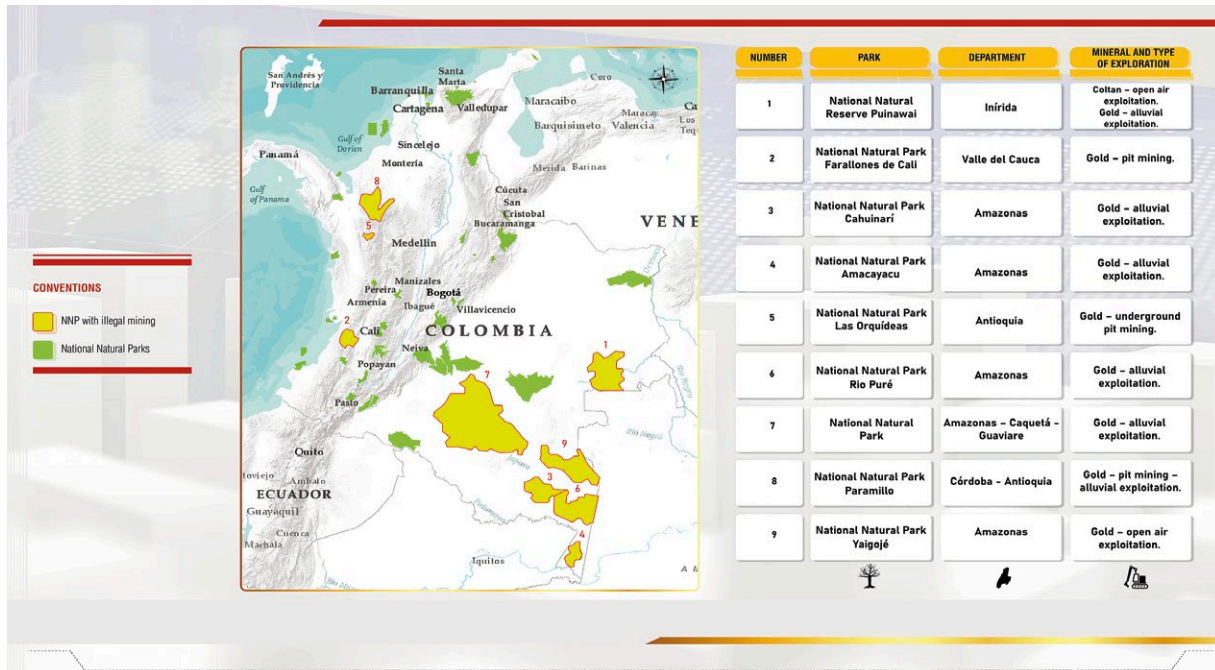


Source: (UNODC, 2021).

Regarding the illicit exploitation of minerals, five of the nine parks observed in **Map 3** correspond to the Amazon region,

with gold being the main mineral exploited through alluvial techniques.

Map 3. Illicit extraction of minerals in National Natural Parks



Source: (UNODC, 2021).

These destabilising factors demand that the national government continues its efforts to eradicate illicit crops and the necessary measures to counteract illicit mining. To achieve of these tasks, because of the complex geographic conditions and hostile agents represented in the GAOs and GDOs that commit crimes in the Amazon, the function of the Military Forces becomes a vital instrument, due to their logistical and operational capacities, to exercise the sovereign action of the state, to recover the monopoly of the use of force, and to secure the territory. In this way, the different state, departmental and municipal entities can govern by offering the capacities of the state to contribute to the development of the region.

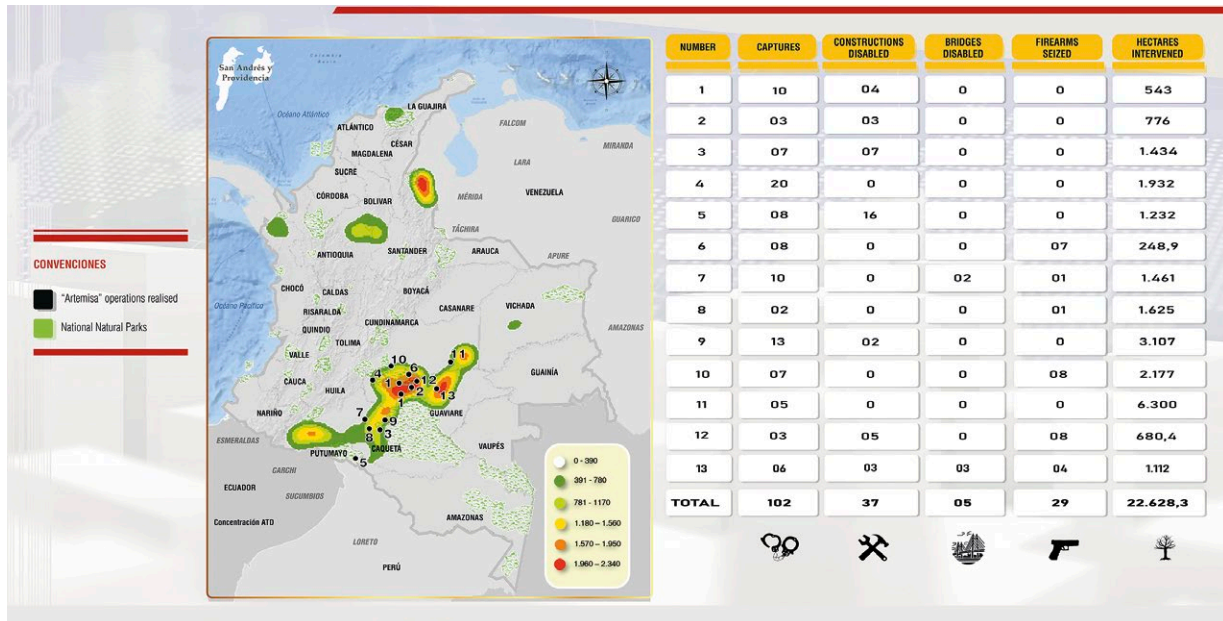
Results of the Operación Mayor Artemisa in the Colombian Amazon

The efforts made by the Military Forces during the development of *Operación Mayor Artemisa* until November 2021 have focused on the execution of thirteen operations, whose results related to environmental crimes can be seen in **Map 4**.



Foto: © Flickr - Amazonas - Nao Lizuka

Map 4. Tactical missions and results in the framework of the Operación Mayor Artemisa



Source: (Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares, 2021).

Figure 6 reflects the evolution of the operational results from its beginnings in 2019 to the present. As evidenced, they have shown a progression due to

the greater commitment and experience developed by the Military Forces in this new type of operation, making them more efficient in their missions.

Figure 6. Operational results of the Operación Mayor Artemisa in the Colombian Amazon



Source: (Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares, 2021).

In sum, the participation of the Military Forces of Colombia in the protection of the environment and natural resources is not one of the primary responsibilities of the military institutions, but their participation is decisive, as can be perceived in the results shown against environmental crimes. Likewise, there are other types of threats in the national territory that demand the presence and active participation of the military. Nevertheless, the GAOs and GDOs and their relationship with environmental crimes, and the overwhelmed capacities

Both the human talent and the capacities developed in the last twenty years are vital resources that contribute to the mission of the National Police in maintaining internal order.

of civil authorities and the National Police, make necessary the participation of the military institutions of the defence sector in public security, understood as the “actions aimed at ensuring the action of the public force throughout the territory to affect and dismantle organised armed groups and organised criminal structures

with national and transnational scope, and their related manifestations that threaten the internal order of the country” (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2021, p. 2).

Furthermore, Colombia does not have sufficient means to safeguard the natural resources of its vast geography and therefore cannot neglect to make use of its Military Forces as an instrument of the

state. In fact, they are an option of great validity and legitimacy. Both the human talent and the capacities developed in the last twenty years are vital resources that contribute to the mission of the National Police in maintaining internal order. Moreover, Colombia, as previously indicated, is responsible for only 0.4% of global greenhouse gas emissions. However, due to the particularities of the country including its biodiversity, paramos, and tropical rainforest, it is highly vulnerable to the events produced by climate change and therefore the environment has taken a prevalent position on the national security agenda, because it is necessary to act with determination and urgency in the face of this great challenge. Nevertheless, this does not mean that by securitising environmental issues it is militarising them; both the strategies that have been implemented, such as the Colombian Strategy for Low Carbon Development (ECDDB), commonly known as E2050 (Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2021), and the Pact of Leticia, clearly denote that achieving these objectives is the responsibility of the civil authorities and through programmes that, in most cases, do not relate to military issues (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2021).

It has been calculated that the flight hours to protect the Amazon in the 13 operations carried out to date have had an approximate cost of \$5,632,314,585 Colombian pesos; this is one reason

why the Military Forces have received additional funding that guarantees, on the one hand, the functioning of the Operación Mayor Artemisa to address the causes of climate change and, on the other, that this does not constitute a burden that affects the ordinary budget of the military institutions. In the same way, and because the vast majority of environmental crimes have a cause-and-effect relationship with climate change, the commitment and determination of international cooperation and developed countries are necessary because Colombia alone is unable to cover the incredibly high operational costs and financial resources needed for any other type of project.

Recommendations

1. In the field of the national environmental strategy and its appendices (ends, ways and means), it is essential that a rational balance is established in the means to be employed, so that the 'how' of achieving its objective has the necessary resources, in terms of both human talent and capacities, and so that, through a process of continuous evaluation, their progress is monitored. In this way, the necessary adjustments can be made, as well as the synchronisation of all institutions that participate in the strategy. It is normally the case that strategies are perfectly designed on paper, but they do not have the necessary resources to be implemented. Likewise, it is decisive that the command and control of the execution of the strategy are channelled to achieve the necessary interactions to harmonise the different actors and resources involved, and thus to fulfil their mission. Given this, in Colombia there are excellent strategies, but experience has shown that, due to the lack of unity in direction or command, its progress can stagnate and thus blur the effort of the state in the eyes of the public.
2. Security issues are political decisions, while defence issues are political-strategic due to the involvement of the Military Forces. In this context, the current government led by President Iván Duque Márquez decided on the need to defend bodies of water, biodiversity, and the environment, designating them as strategic assets that correspond to a main and dominant national interest. In this vein, this national interest has been given strategic status to include it in the national security agenda, due to the implications and consequences it has for the nation, and for humanity as a whole, if it is not protected. The national government of Colombia, in coherence with its policy, signed and promoted the Pact of Leticia on 6th September 2019, along with the governments of Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Suriname, with the purpose of

agreeing concrete actions in response to the large-scale forest fires occurring in the Amazon forests. The opportunity to continue this alliance and create a regional security complex, in which the determinant risks and threats of climate change can be considered and the bases of a joint defence of the Amazon established, is important in terms of the geopoliticisation of strategic resources which is a great risk to humanity today due to the petty interests of some developed countries.

3. Although it is true that the Colombian state has tried to introduce new and broader penal classifications of crimes against natural resources and the environment within the Penal Code, it is important that the prosecution of the perpetrators of this type of crime is strengthened further, as it is useless to adjust the punishments and crimes if the perpetrators are not effectively prosecuted. The updating of the article on environmental crimes is an initiative that will help to change the course of the country's environmental management, since deforestation, wildlife trafficking, the financing of invasions in areas of special ecological importance, environmental pollution, and the illegal appropriation of vacant lands, among others, can be combatted. This tool is an important instrument for one of the world's richest countries in terms of biodiversity, so the assigning of prosecutors and

judicial police to the Amazonian territories is a task that must be strengthened in the short term.

4. In view of the fact that the Military Forces will continue combatting this type of criminality, the state must allocate additional budgetary resources to sustain the military operations carried out in the Amazon and prevent the forces from having to make expenditures from their own traditional budget. This is because, unfortunately, Colombia has multiple threats across the length and breadth of the national territory, meaning that the absence of these additional resources would be detrimental to the capacities used to face them. Likewise, it is essential to establish a rational balance in the allocation of troops for *Operación Mayor Artemisa* so that other vital areas of the national territory are not neglected. Finally, there is a strategic political responsibility to establish the military defence of the Colombian Amazon in the face of the possible intentions of other states to appropriate strategic resources, as well as the task of enlisting, preparing, training, and assigning capacities for the troops deployed in this territory, so that they can respond to the most extreme situations and guarantee the national sovereignty of Colombia.
5. International financing is a cooperation mission that the national government

must continue to escalate through Euroclima+, the European Commission, etc. The government must also promote projects based on national priorities, preferably of a regional scope. Efforts should also be aimed at achieving, with the international community, environmental financial mechanisms to substantially increase financing in

favour of the conservation, bioeconomy, circular economy, and sustainable use of the Amazon. Likewise, steps must be taken with multilateral banks and the private sector so that they contribute financially to the implementation of the strategies that stem from the different modalities of the Paris Agreement.

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POLICY PAPER

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Environmental Security in Latin America and the Caribbean: Evolution and Challenges for the 21st Century

Num. 1



Glyphosate and Environmental Security in Latin America and the Caribbean

Num. 2



Artemisa and its management of environmental crimes in the Colombian Amazon

Num. 3



Dysfunctionality of state actors in effective environmental protection of the Peruvian Amazon

Num. 4

Explanation of the network:

The Latin American Environmental Security Network aims to produce knowledge in the academic field and opinion pieces on the threats, risks and challenges facing environmental security in Latin America and the Caribbean through various case studies. To achieve the above, it has created spaces for dialogue with civil society organizations, academia, economic actors and decision makers from the public sector, to dialogue, raise awareness and seek consensus on the need to give relevance and priority to the threats it presents. the region in environmental matters. Thus, through the preparation of papers (policy and working) and books, it is proposed to collect the study work of the network on specific cases to make the main problems visible and propose recommendations to provide inputs to decision makers in both the public and private sectors. to respond and mitigate the threats that endanger environmental security in its different dimensions in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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