

NEWS FROM THE FRONT



Conference of American Armies

May 2019



Countering Threat Networks

San Antonio, Texas

4-8 February 2019

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Conference of American Armies Specialized Conference on Countering Threat Networks

Overview

The Conference of American Armies (CAA) is a military organization made up and led by armies from the American continents with the authorization of their respective countries. Currently, there are 22 member armies, including: Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad & Tobago, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Additionally, there are four observer armies, including: Belize, Guyana, Suriname, and Spain.

The CAA conducts a two-year cycle of specialized conferences and exercises hosted by different member armies. During this XXXIII Cycle of the CAA, 2018-2019, the U.S. Army conducted the specialized conference on Military Support to Countering Threat Networks (CTN) at San Antonio, TX from 4-8 February 2019. The main objective focused on exchanging information on CTN and strengthening relationships among the CAA member armies. All of the twenty-six member and observer armies, with the exception of Venezuela and Nicaragua, were invited to participate. There were 16 participants, including: Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Spain, United States, Uruguay, and the Inter-American Defense Board.

Major General (MG) Mark R. Stammer, U.S. Army South Commander chaired the event with support from the CAA Permanent Executive Secretariat (PESCAA), hosted by the



MG Mark R. Stammer, U.S. Army South Commander at plenary session

Dominican Army, and led by Brigadier General (BG) Luis Francisco De León, the CAA Secretary General.

Purpose

The purpose of this event was to fulfill the overall goals approved by the CAA Army Commanders during the CAA Commanders Conference hosted by General (GEN) Mark A. Milley, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, in Washington D.C., in November 2017, which included:

- Conduct a realistic threat assessment to determine how the CAA member armies can provide military support to civil authorities to confront transregional, transnational threat networks (drug trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime, arms trafficking, and human trafficking).
- Share tactics, techniques, and procedures in operations, training, and exercises to strengthen leadership, readiness, and interoperability among military and civilian security forces in the region.

Plenary Sessions

Subject matter experts were invited to deliver presentations on CTN background information that contribute to the CTN fight. The selected plenary session speakers were chosen based on their background, experience, and forward vision on subjects rendered and included:

- GEN Carlos Osvaldo Ospina, former Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces and currently a professor at the U.S. National Defense University (NDU), delivered a keynote address on the “Whole of Government Approach to CTN.”
- Dr. Craig Deare, also from NDU, offered his perspective on “Networks in the Operational Environment” and “The Threat Network Construct.”
- Mr. Cesar Gonzalez, from U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) Network Engagement Team presented information on “Planning to Counter Threat Networks.”
- Major Santa Humberto Cruz Sosa, from the Army of El Salvador, briefed on the current situation in his country which illuminated the topic “Activities to Counter Threat Networks.”
- Mr. Nathan Menkevich, from SOUTHCOM J38 Joint Cyber Center, introduced the concept of cyber-defense to the CAA community in a presentation on “Cyber Security Fundamentals” to shape the next CAA cycle towards potentially looking at cyber security in greater depth.

Four of the presentations were deliberately designed to provide background information and illuminate the delegates' discussion of the four chapters in the draft CAA Guide to Countering Threat Networks as indicated below. This draft was the primary deliverable of the conference.

- Chapter 1: Networks in the Operational Environment.
- Chapter 2: Threat Network Construct.
- Chapter 3: Planning to Counter Threat Networks.
- Chapter 4: Activities to Counter Threat Networks.

The subject matter experts made themselves available to assist members of the working groups by clarifying issues and providing their personal experiences as well as more detailed information on topics as required.

The presentation on "Cyber Security Fundamentals" was introduced to the CAA community to determine whether it may be a subject for future CAA initiatives. Moreover, whether it be an entire two-year cycle dedicated to this theme, or just one specialized conference to develop the concept and gauge the needs of the CAA armies. This proved to be a well-received topic generating discussion indicating it is worthy of further consideration during the next CAA cycle to be hosted by Argentina in 2020-2021. The presenter from SOUTHCOM J38 Joint Cyber Security Center also offered to do a cyber vulnerability assessment of the CAA's Geographical Information System (GIS-CAA) developed and refined by the member armies from commercial off-the-shelf software over the past several cycles.

Working Groups

After the morning plenary sessions, delegates were divided into three working groups (WG): WG1- Threat Assessment, WG 2 - Interoperability, and WG 3 - Whole of Government. Members examined and deliberated from these three perspectives on assigned tasks during the afternoons of 5 and 6 April. The delegates reviewed, collaborated, and refined three draft practical documents as outputs of this conference, including:

- CAA Guide to CTN (based on U.S. Joint Publication 3-25, Countering CTN, 21 Dec 2016).
- CAA Interoperability Matrix (based on U.S. Army interoperability community of interest matrix).
- Redesigned graphic illustrating network aspects of CAA threats and risks (building on a Chilean graphic from the CAA Ad Hoc meeting on emerging threats in Nov 2018).

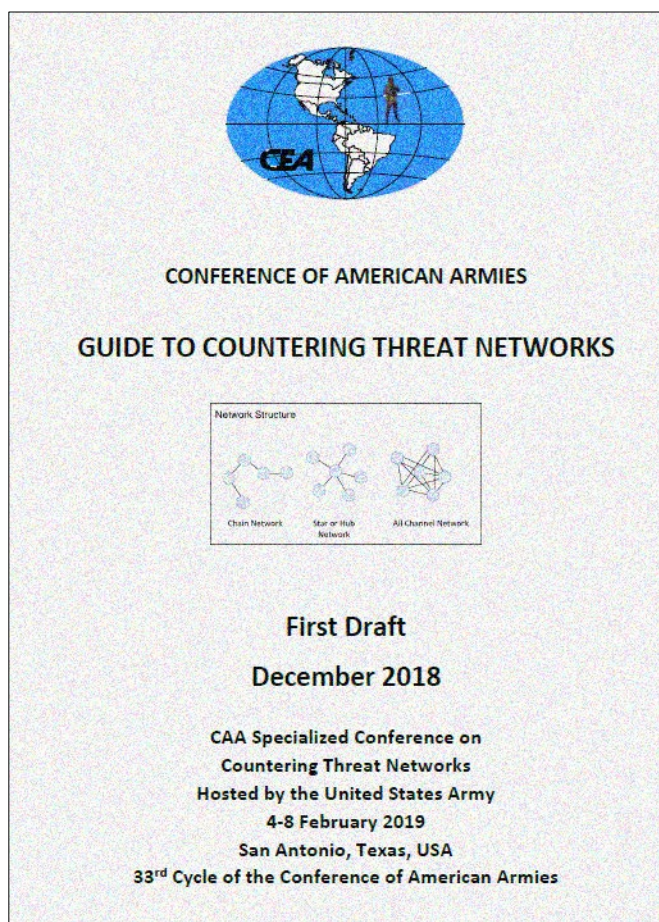
Conference Agenda

	WG 1 Threat Assessment	WG 2 Interoperability	WG 3 Whole of Government
5 Feb 0800-1200	Keynote Address: "Whole of Government Approach to CTN" GEN Ospina SME 1: "Networks in the Operational Environment" Dr. Craig Deare, NDU SME 2: "The Threat Network Construct" Dr. Craig Deare, NDU		
5 Feb 1330-1530 2 hours	Evaluate Chilean Product and Draft Graphic: ID Nodes & Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define concept of interoperability in terms of CTN. - ID the obstacles / shortages that prevent the creation of interoperability. - What is the desired end state? - Evaluate Draft Interoperability Matrix. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define concept of Unified Action in terms of CTN. - ID the obstacles / shortages that prevent the creation of Unified Action. - What is the desired end state? - Evaluate Draft Interoperability Matrix – can it be used in Unified Action realm?
5 Feb 1545-1730 1 hour 45 min	CHAPTER II "The Threat Network Construct" 4 pages	CHAPTER III "Networks in the OE" 5 pages	Annex A "Social Network Analysis" 5 pages
6 Feb 0800 - 1200	SME 3: "Planning to Counter Threat Networks", SOUTHCOM NET - TBD SME 4: "Activities to Counter Threat Networks", Salvadoran Army SME SME 5: "Cyber Security Fundamentals" – SC J38 Joint Cyber Center		
6 Feb 1315-1515 2 hours	CHAPTER IV "Planning To Counter Threat Networks" 9 pages	CHAPTER I "Introduction" and Annex B "Glossary" 5 pages	CHAPTER V "Activities to Counter Threat Networks" 6 pages
6 Feb 1530-1730 2 hours	Continue Work in Working Groups Develop Conclusions & Recommendations		
7 Feb 0815-0945	Present Conclusions and Recommendations (0815-0845)	Present Conclusions and Recommendations (0845-0915)	Present Conclusions and Recommendations (0915-0945)
0945-1000	Coffee Break		
1000-1200	Refine Conclusions and Recommendations		
1200-1300	Lunch / Prep Draft Accords for Signature		
1300-1345 1415-2300	Closing Ceremony: Minutes Signing / Presentation of Diplomas / Gift Exchange Cultural Event/International Reception/Dinner		

CAA Guide to Countering Threat Networks

The initial draft of the CAA Guide to (CTN) is based on U.S. Joint Publication 3-25, CTN. Delegates review of this joint publication was simplified by eliminating U.S.-specific content relating to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility (AOR) and some of the more highly technical details. This made it more easily understood by partner nation planners when extracting concepts for developing the draft CAA Guide. Conference attendees continued to build on a common vision of threats in the region. This has been discussed in the CAA forum over the past four CAA cycles.

Each of the WGs were assigned a portion of the draft CAA guide to review and provide input on. Their analysis and comments significantly improved the quality of the document. All products are designed to have common processes, procedures, and terminology. The intent is to leverage these documents to promote further discussion on interoperability and what it means in the Western Hemisphere.



Cover of First Draft, CAA Guide to Countering Threat Networks

Once completed, the initial draft was translated to Spanish and Portuguese and distributed to the CAA armies six weeks prior to the conference for their review. In addition to sharing the most important concepts of the original doctrinal publication, a critical part of this initiative is developing consensus on the correct translation of these terms and concepts. The Spanish language tends to take on many idiosyncrasies among the countries of Central and South America. Ultimately, sharing doctrinal concepts and terminology in a commonly agreed upon translation will improve interoperability and enhance our ability to work with partner nation security forces and interagency partners. The process of staffing and refining the draft, both during the conference and afterwards in collaborative efforts, has great value. It gives our partners a sense of ownership of the final product and benefits the U.S. Army by considering other perspectives in developing the final product.

Measuring Interoperability

Interoperability is often discussed as an important goal to be achieved with our partner nations' security forces; however, it is often a rather elusive concept that is difficult to define and assess. The U.S. Army's interoperability community of interest developed the below matrix to quantify and measure levels of interoperability. It served as a good starting point for the CAA in attempting to quantify and measure interoperability among member armies.

Interoperability Matrix

	Not Interoperable	De-Conflicted	Compatible	Integrated
	No demonstrated interoperability, formations must operate independently from each other.	Forces can co-exist but not interact together. Requires alignment of capabilities and procedures to establish operational norms, enabling partners to complement each other.	Forces are able to interact with each other in the same geographic area in pursuit of a common goal with similar or complementary processes.	Forces able to integrate upon arrival in theater w/o need to use another nation's equipment. Interoperability is network-enabled. Able to establish networks and operate effectively with or as part of respective formations.
Communication Information Systems / Info Sharing	N/A	Partner provides LNO support for COP. Manual Info Exchange.	COP achieved via Ad Hoc Procedures. Forces exchange agreed information (versus common information).	Common network. Shared COP. Common information exchange products.
ISR	N/A	Intelligence sharing on Ad Hoc Basis.	Partial access to intelligence across nations & domains (LNOs required).	Sufficient access to intelligence across nations to allow high-tempo operations.
Fires	N/A	Voice Procedures only.	Common voice call for fire procedures. Some CL V interchangeable.	Networked fires C2. All CL V interchangeable.
Sustainment	N/A	National forces provide their own logistics support.	LNOs and manual processes for logistics.	Logistics replenishment by digital automation.

Agreeing to a commonly understood translation of the terminology in the interoperability matrix is a large part of this initiative. Of note, some concepts and terms commonly used in the U.S. military do not always have a standard internationally accepted translation. For example, the word “de-conflicted.” A great deal of time and effort was spent during the conference grappling with the correct meaning of this one word. However, it proved absolutely key to making the matrix understood by all. In the first draft presented to the delegates, the U.S. Army South translators used the word “coexistente” or “co-existing” in English. The delegates did not feel this term captured the nuances of “de-conflicted.” After extensive debate, opted for the term “sin conflictu” or “without conflict” in English to better express the concept.

The draft matrix, widely accepted as a valid tool by most delegates, also elicited ideas in improving its use to confront the unique challenges faced within the SOUTHCOM AOR. In terms of CTN operations, working group 2 identified four obstacles to interoperability, including:

- Legal framework of each country.
- Technical obstacles – communications, intelligence, technological systems, and lack of systems integration.
- Human obstacles – lack of confidence, political influence, leadership, language, and organizational culture.
- Procedural obstacles – lack of common terminology, processes, and rules of engagement.



WG #2 in Session

Delegates recommend the matrix consider the following actions to address known interoperability obstacles:

- Human. Develop and train personnel at all levels. Conduct planning, table top exercises without troops, and simulations. Establish, maintain, and expand the inter-agency contacts network. Select liaison officers who are well integrated across the program. Use interpreters and/or communications facilitators (more than interpreters).
- Technical. Exchange technology. Leverage common communications, logistics, mobility, compatible weapons systems, shared/compatible data bases, mapping, and simulators.
- Procedural. Strengthen information exchange channels, implement multinational exercises, and establish a common protocol.

To dissuade / disable potential threats and/or have the capacity to respond more effectively, individually or with support from other countries to the threats, in order to increase the strength of the forces with the aim of promoting regional stability.

Common Desired End state for CAA Interoperability

WG 3 also contributed by developing an agreed upon definition of the term unified action as applied to CTN that will be incorporated into the CAA CTN Guide.

All of this valuable input will be used to expand the draft matrix and make it a product that is truly worthy of consideration by the army commanders of the Western Hemisphere. This matrix may also be included as an annex to the draft CAA CTN Guide.

Unified action is the coordinated employment of all the resources of a state, or an alliance with other states of the region, aimed at countering Transnational Criminal Organizations and the networks that threaten and attempt against the security and stability of countries.

Common Desired End state for CAA Unified Action

Threats Consensus

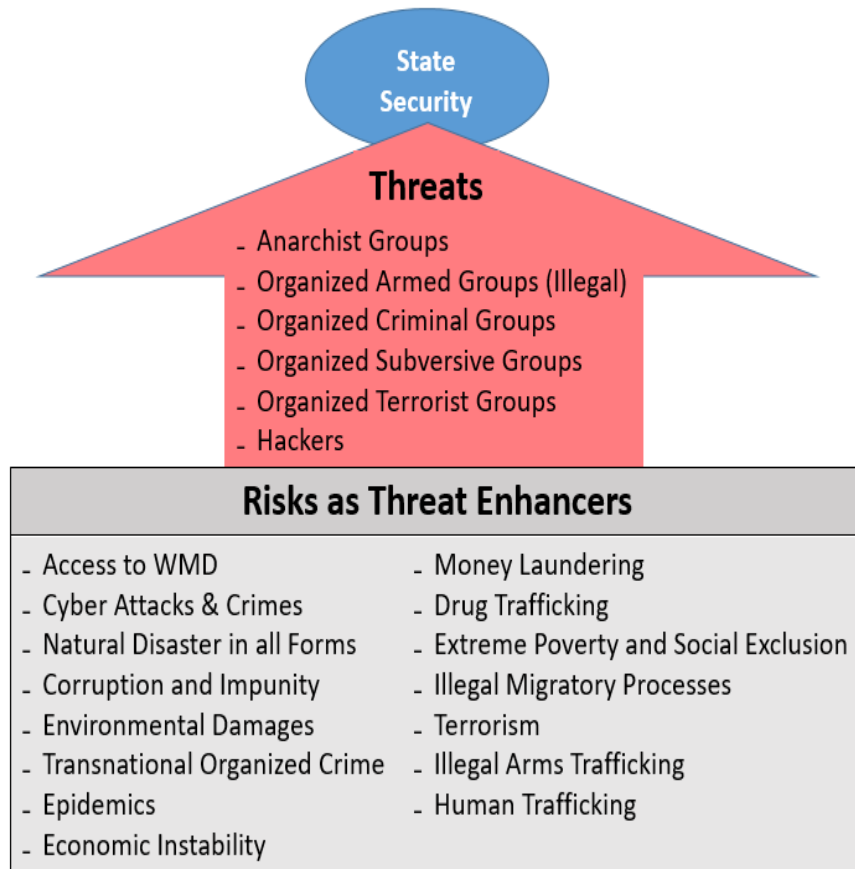
Within the CAA, developing consensus concerning the threats faced by the 25 armies in the Western Hemisphere has been a long-term challenge since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Born as an instrument of the Cold War, the CAA has struggled for 30 years to find a suitable replacement for communism as its common focus.

Peacekeeping and disaster response operations served as that focal point for several cycles. However, the emerging challenges in the hemisphere can no longer be ignored. Until recently, many nations saw terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, transnational criminal organizations and their illicit trafficking of drugs, arms, persons, money, and other contraband as primarily a problem for the United States.

At the conclusion of the 30th CAA Cycle, led by Mexico in 2012-2013, the army commanders signed an accord recognizing 17 threats affecting all of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. This was very significant because the list included terrorism, transnational criminal organizations, the illicit trafficking of drugs, arms, and persons, money-laundering, and weapons of mass destruction as common threats to all. But, it proved very difficult to use such a long list of threats effectively within the organization. Therefore, during the 31st CAA Cycle, led by Colombia in 2014-2015, attempts were made to prioritize the list and to focus on what was most important to the organization as a whole. This effort resulted in a decision placing transnational criminal organizations and their illicit trafficking of drugs, arms, and persons at the top of the list.

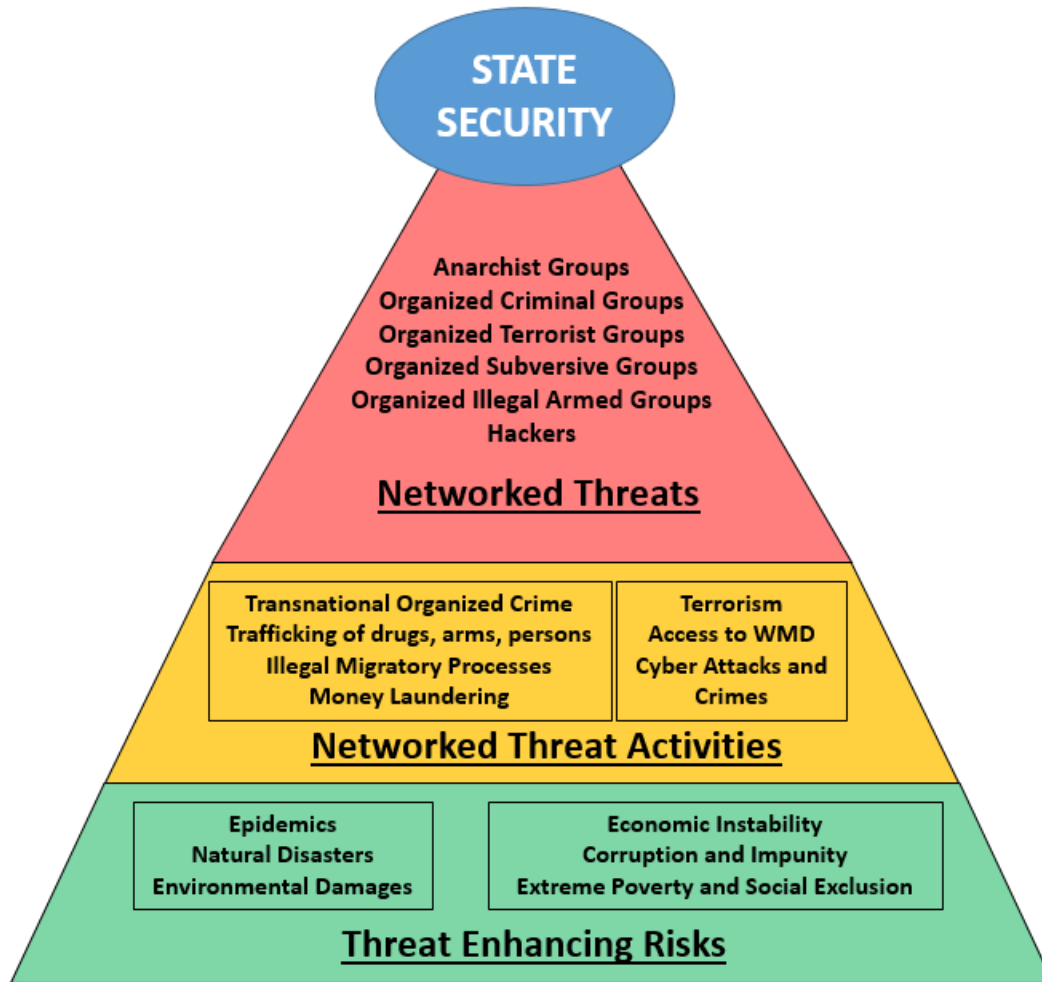
One of the greatest challenges in the CAA is building a consensus among 25 diverse armies, proven to be the case in developing a common vision of the threat. Each army must work within its own constitutional and legal framework. This often limits the types of missions it may assume. For this reason, some armies are left feeling uncomfortable with the prioritization of the threats because they are unable to legally address those threats considered to be a top priority. In several countries, their legal framework makes law enforcement agencies responsible for these threats which severely limits the armed forces' ability to provide direct support in this area.

Therefore, at the conclusion of the 32nd Cycle, 2016-2017, the Army of Chile volunteered to host an Ad Hoc committee meeting to further study this question during the 33rd Cycle. This meeting, held in November 2018, removed the prioritization, but it made progress by creating a more manageable list by separating the list into two categories of “Threats” and “Risks” represented in the graphic shown below.



Chilean Threat Graphic

During this conference, WG1 was assigned the task to build on the product developed in Chile by attempting to highlight threat network aspects. They produced the updated CTN threat graphic below. Their work once again demonstrated the challenges associated with building a consensus on such a sensitive topic. Nevertheless, their results further framed essential issues and connections. In terms of CTN concepts, the graphic identifies threat actors as key nodes in the network construct and threat activities as links.



CTN Conference Threat Graphic

Way Ahead

The U.S. Army South will continue to lead, collaborate, and work on these draft products after the conference. Intent is to prepare them for review and refinement during the CAA Preparatory Conference hosted by the Dominican Republic in August 2019. Afterward, they will be presented to the army commanders at the CAA Commanders Conference, in November 2019, for their approval and use by respective armies.

This conference enhanced the CAA's primary goals of sharing information and strengthening relationships among the member armies. Through professional interchanges, during both the formal conference and social events, delegates departed with a better understanding of CTN concepts and terminology. Additionally, all attendees acknowledged appreciation of the warm hospitality for which San Antonio and U.S. Army South are so very well known.



MG Mark R. Stammer, U.S. Army South Commander and BG Luis DeLeon, 33rd Cycle, CAA Secretary General from the Army of the Dominican Republic signing the conference accords document

