



# STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL ACTION

Peruvian- Colombian experience

In the Amazon region, rural communities are moved away from the State presence. Through Armed Forces, Peru and Colombia cooperate with sustainable social action focused on safety, welfare and community integration.

KEYWORDS: SOCIAL ACTION / SUSTAINABILITY / ITINERANT PLATFORM / AMAZON

---

By **Pedro Iriarte**

---

## INTRODUCTION

The forested areas of a country constitute a large reservoir of energy and natural resources highly important for its development. For instance, most of Amazon Rainforest is in Brazil however significant areas extent to Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. This area depicts a natural reservoir of infinite and immeasurable resources as well as a priceless cultural importance due to it preserves the most ancient indigenous people intrinsic nature.

The immensity of the Amazon represents a large area of each country mentioned before; its extension and complex geography compose a location extremely difficult to monitor. The global importance of this region is undoubtedly; scientific studies reveal the regulating effect this natural area provides global weather. It constitutes the largest reservoir of fresh water in the world, therefore, its importance increases even more if we take into consideration the slightly reflections from scientists. Its singularity is built by the ecological

**AMAZON BASIN: DELIMITATION OF THE AMAZON REGION IN SOUTH AMERICA**

heterogeneous and diverse habitats together with its enormous biodiversity, knowledge, innovations and routines performed by the native tribes.

From geopolitical and geostrategic 'perspective, this area is highly important since it represents the entire

border among Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. More than 14,000 kilometres of navigable rivers frame the most important waterways of communication and traffic in the Amazon Rainforest. These features are essential to Peru and Colombia, nevertheless, in real life, there were flawed structural policies to guarantee a steady and sustainable development for people, especially in connection with the environment they live in. As a result of the lack of strong policies, the depletion of some resources, beside the insufficient state's presence, there was a progressive increase in illegal trade in the area.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The most remarkable reasons of Peru and Colombia' underdevelopment is the absence of social programmes and demographic infrastructure in connection with the slight awareness of cultural and socio-economic situation. Originally, the implemented management systems were based on inaccurate preconception about the extension and tangled Amazon areas. Usually, these systems have an urban bias kept insufficiently adapted to the rural communities' lifestyle.

Although the establishment of control posts, military bases and detachments along the Amazon Peruvian- Colombian area is considered vital to enforce the regional safety and State's presence, criminal organizations 'activities have spread and evolved in organization and a obtained a broader scope. Drug

**PUTUMAYO RIVER AERIAL VIEW**

Source: Peruvian Air Force (2012)

*“After being studied, analyzed and considered as a unit, then it led the military strategist to bear in mind social, moral and psychological factors to coordinate military actions”.*

### *Karl Von Clausewitz*

traffickers, terrorists and criminals “traditional framework was focused on weapons smuggling, illegal drug trafficking; however, the main activity has expanded to a wide-ranging and systematic approach in order to optimize the capacity and gain a greater profitably.

Criminal gangs seek for inhospitable and remote areas far from security forces to proceed with illegal activities which are centred in explode civilian population to supply their necessities; such operations are widespread organized, transnational developed, characterized by the invasion to different levels in native communities, and dynamic financial standing connected to illegitimate issues. The desolation in the middle of the forest, the negative effects of the climate changed, poverty in rural population, being settled far from developed urban areas, the absence of State and deprivation of opportunities have become a prosperous scenario to perform unlawful actions.

### **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

With internal and external threats’ arising, all countries involved in the Amazon Rainforest were forced to take a determination about the institutional challenges immediately. Legality and legitimacy were the axis of the decisions to be considered, therefore, it was mandatory to maintain, to enforce and to enhance ethical and professional standards being focused on respect for and protection of International Humanitarian Law in order to foster mutual confidence between people.

By means of deterrence and repression strategies besides enforcement measures, each government had set the stage for military forces and police work together against the public order and foreign safety’ menaces. A new safety context emerged due to the success of these policies implementation in order to protect nation democracy; this situation leads the illegal organizations to seek other tactics and strategies to perpetuate their power. Despite of the fact that these measures were satisfactory, the threats had evolved in such a way that they adapted to de dynamic of the conflict.

As result, temporal weakness of illegal organizations’ safety system, criminal gangs connected to drug

### PERUVIAN AMAZON ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES ORGANIZATION



Source: Peruvian General Command of Operations (2013)

trafficking turned up. Consequently, it was necessary to be updated according any sort of variations in the most dangerous areas; armed forces monitoring included any detail of communities in order to be aware of the consolidation steps of each region. The idea of these procedures was to be stepping forward the criminals and take into action on time.

The strategy combined three concepts: sustainable development, sustainability principle and social action. **Sustainable Development** is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the resources and possibilities from the future generations. Naturally, a sustainable action deals about an activity that can endure for a long period of time. Nowadays, it is known that many activities which are performed over medium and long-term time are non-sustainable<sup>1</sup>.

The **Principle of Sustainability** is based on environmental studies and sustainability science<sup>2</sup>; both settle the bases for analytical and philosophical structure, however, the figures are obtained by means of sustainability measures. The results of these studies are implemented in sustainability policy plans<sup>3</sup>.

**Social Action** refers to individual or group behaviour that involves interaction with other individuals or group especially organized action toward social reform<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, Colombia

1. U.N World Commission on Environment and Development, Brundlant Commission, Our Common Future, Dec. 1987

2. U.N. Annual Report United Nations Human Development Programme 2010, 2009, 2008-2007. Ed.2007.

3. RRojas Mullor, Mauricio; Progress idea and Development concept; 2011; page 21.

4. Weber, Max; Economy and Society, 1977; page 32.



State owns Social Prosperity Department which attempt to fulfil social action's principles.

### STRATEGIC PLAN FOR INTEGRAL ACTION

Agree with mentioned principles and policies, each government implemented the Strategic Plan for Integral Action which establishes a framework for working together:

- › Be aware of the actual difficulties and be able to solve them creatively and consciously, then the Integral Action procedures will be successful.
- › To achieve a greater efficiency, it will be necessary astuteness, Integral Action initiative and thorough planning.
- › The definitive primer for all the actions to be performed will be principles, norms and Military Honour.
- › To achieve synergy between Armed Forces and government offices 'institutional effort, it will be indispensable to reach an effective recovery and social insertion.
- › National and international citizen trust consolidation by means of legitimacy and legality towards Armed Forces.

Since 2010, Colombia's government have determined to innovate integral action campaigns in order to reinforce troops' combative principle and patriotic discourse; in few words, why the armed forces fought

*The immensity of the Amazon represents a large area of each country mentioned before; its extension and complex geography compose a location extremely difficult to monitor*

for. The goal was to earn respect and support under legitimacy and legality Armed Forces' framework with the intention to restore and consolidate quietness. In cooperation with other State Departments, the aim was encouraging voluntary disarmament by means of individual or collective demobilization process.

On the other hand, since 2011 Peruvian government has promoted as development and social inclusion national plan, diverse social programmes in order to assist the most vulnerable Peruvian people to emerge from poverty; therefore, they would be able to become part of productive chains that encourage the country's development; the aim was to break the generational poverty and generate labour force. All these social programmes were carried out by

Government Departments uttered by Prime Minister's Office what has contributed to the development and social inclusion of the countries in the last five years.

Hence, Integral Action must broaden the spectrum of action to prevent civilians, especially younger, from choosing as way of living illegal activities characterized by trickery and untruth or just as basic needs for survival. In addition, people who have access to media (web pages, newspaper, magazines, radio, social media network, etc) is provided with an accurate, clear, appropriate and truthful message in favour of Armed Forces and State's credibility. It is precise to keep contact with people and important figures which are considered vital for this purpose; mainly, the aim was to give the exact and positive information to understand the real role of Armed Forces and State' intervention by means of Integral Action.

### MILITARY INSTITUTIONS IN THE AMAZON

The image of Armed Forces and National Police members has been rejected at first instance owing to the scarce presence of both in previous times; to make the matter worse, it was complicated to get information about the criminal gangs since people refuse to be in contact with law enforcement authorities. In fact, it was necessary to recruit younger for being part of Armed Forces, unfortunately, many of them were not able to enlist because of they lacked basic education.

Development and Social Inclusion State policies were supported by Ministries of Defence according to the articulation of its Departments (Army, Navy and Air Force) through a series of social assistance programmes aimed at improving the quality of life of those people who are helpless.

Colombian and Peruvian Armies have collaborated efficiently and steady all isolated places over Amazon Rainforest to support indigenous communities' development, in particular safety and basic education

### TWIN OTTER HYDROPLANE OF PERU AIR FORCE IN THE AMAZON AREA



Source: Peru Info Environmental Press Agency(2010)

*There were flawed structural policies to guarantee a steady and sustainable development for people, especially in connection with the environment they live in. As a result of the lack of strong policies, the depletion of some resources, beside the insufficient state's presence, there was a progressive increase in illegal trade in the area.*

affairs. Continuous air patrolling over specified Amazonia airspace was part of the monitor system to alert in case of illegal activities. Moreover, Air Forces provide logistic support by means of regular flights over isolated areas; they also used air assets as hydroplanes that were convenient at coastlines or even helicopters were helpful to reach places in which it can land and take off.

Services and infrastructure settings provided by Colombian and Peruvian Naval Forces were the centre of technification basis and development to contribute to technical and professional's structure needed in each society.

It is important to mention Colombian and Peruvian' Shipyards and Navy Engineering Company intervention in metal-mechanic and technology together with waterway navigation in Amazonia Area.

Efforts performed along these years by Armed Forces from Peru and Colombia, in particular the Navy from both countries; were it not for the legitimacy and social acknowledgment from Armed Forces, these interventions would not lead them to acquire a thorough and integral knowledge from communities along Amazonia Rivers.

### ARMED FORCES ROLE IN AMAZON RAINFOREST

Colombia and Peru Army own operating and logistic equipment spread over Amazon Rainforest that allow them to operate successfully and guarantee each government Integral Action Plan to be performed. Despite of the fact that monumental efforts to encourage safety and integral action, diverse threats against social welfare it was necessary to adapt to the evolving scenario settled by criminal gangs to thwart State's plans. In other words, individual institutional actions were useless for develop an effective performance, if it were not for the multiple tasks carried out by forces in group, then the results would be completely different.

Countries' efforts to fight against at criminals can endure up to 2010, since the social scenario began to change, so

*Originally, the implemented management systems were based on inaccurate preconception about the extension and tangled Amazon areas. Usually, these systems have an urban bias kept insufficiently adapted to the rural communities' lifestyle.*

each government has to readapt to those variations. The aim was focused on those isolated areas because of their susceptibility to increasing threats. To put into practice their policies responsibly, there were two ways: on one hand, River Control that consisted in coastal monitoring, on the other hand, sustainability of social action that pretended to guarantee the State programmes' endurance with regards to health care, nutrition and education. Simultaneously, State could gain population's approach and trust, this relationship was fundamental to develop an accurate control in the area together with safety oriented to Amazonia people' need and characteristics.

### ARMED FORCES AND STRATEGY GUIDELINES

The strategy was framed within State Policy of Social Inclusion and Development; it was oriented to integrate and coordinate every public and private area's efforts to assist population properly by means of the governments programmes for health, education, nutrition and safety. As well, it was important to foster structures which make feasible and promoting sustainable population's development, therefore, there will be a long-lasting inclusive status taking into consideration the following guidelines:

- › Strategic development to fulfil population' safety demands in face to criminal activities.
- › Prevention activities are priority.
- › Evolution of Assistance approach towards sustainable development.

### COMPLETION OF THE BINATIONAL CIVIL ACTION PERU-COLOMBIA 2014



Source: Diario La Región Loreto. Julio 2014.



- › Innovative approach from Armed Forces to Social Development.
- › Population as central core of State action.
- › Multispectral and coordinated State's working group.
- › Stages' perspectives to national forecast.
- › New priorities for assistance.
- › Respect for indigenous' culture and identity.
- › Enlarge native people labour activities.
- › Geographic approach of river basins.
- › Amazon reality adaptation and flexibility.
- › Corporate and institutions' integration.
- › Conservation of environment, biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources.
- › Integral planning of coordinated displacements, independent execution and integrated supervision.

According to the initial overview, governments evaluated if it was prosperous or not establishing sustainability social action with the intervention of Armed Forces. It was concluded that this strategy applied transversally and adaptable to Peru and Colombia will achieve in short- and medium-term inclusion and protection of Amazon population; the goal was to release



communities from criminal networks of drug trafficking, illicit mining, human trafficking, illegal logging among other infringements. State intervention and social programmes guarantee population' assistance they needed to become independent from illegal activities.

### STRATEGIC PLANS DEVELOPED

Both countries considered safety, development and defence fields in order to achieve the fulfilment of the roles and mission of the State besides work together with other departments, as a result, this co working led them to participate in the weaknesses of Amazon community's reality. Developed plans were settled by three strategies well determined to specific areas in which private and public assistance articulate themselves in order to work in pursuit of national purposes achievement.

### STRATEGIES FRAMING

› Social sustainability and Occupation of remote areas: This action allows government to settle the state apparatus in those regions where it was absent o has been snatched by criminals. In this way, State can reach the rural people

needs and by means of services, social programmes carried out by responsible institutions providing basic attention to communities.

› Surveillance and Safety of the area: This strategy allow State to align bilateral and trilateral mechanisms of South American Sub region considering both

AREA	STRATEGY	PARTICIPANTS
Safety	Occupation of remote areas	Armed Forces, police, public institutions related to safety.
Development	Social sustainability	Public or private sector institutions dedicated to manage or collaborate with social programmes.
Defence	Surveillance and Safety of the area	Adjacent countries.

**NAPO RIVER PIAS WORKING TOGETHER WITH MORONA RIVER AND PUTUMAYO RIVER**



Source: Naval Army of Peru 2015



aspects, Sustainability Social Action and Occupation of remote areas, therefore, it could be possible to fight against the complex network of illegal activities co-ordinately.

Evidently, the compound scenario demanded a concerted effort to achieve the materialisation of these initiatives besides the compromise of multiple institutions and departments. For that purpose, some academic and informative workshops were held; these were named as social action workshops, and the idea was to align and agree on intervention criteria by creating flexible strategies which adapt to circumstances and conflicts demanding an integral solution.

Each social programmes were coordinated and interrelated due to the strategy must not to being overlapped, distorted or replaced by any institution or initiative which look for relevance, or a parallel works that generate a huge damage to this endeavour pursuing social identification and authority's acknowledgement by means of the main organism, the State.

**DESIGN OF NATIONAL STRATEGY (P.I.A.S)**

State articulation and steady intervention are essential to design a national strategy. Therefore, there were created three kinds of action platforms which were controlled and administrated by Coordinated Platforms.

The following are described each of the main components of the strategies:

- › **Itinerant Social Action Platform:** Consists of the implementation of fluvial transport itinerantly operated by Navy. Methodically, its aim is at providing State services and programmes to rural Amazonia people. Complemented by Local Platform, both State strategies required assistance from Air Force.
- › **Local Management Platform:**
  - › Local Management Councils: Integrated by local participants such as community's authorities, businessmen, community leaders, and public and private institutions people who work all together in local areas.
  - › Local Infrastructure: Medical centres, schools, police precincts, military bases stores, programmes monitoring centres, watering holes, solar panels, generator sets.
- › **Telecommunications Centre Platform:** State Management of new information and communication technologies.

**AXIS ARTICULATION AND INTERVENTION PLATFORMS**



Source: Peruvian General Command of Operations (2013)



PLATFORMS	INTERVENTION MECHANISMS	OBJECTIVE
Itinerant Social Action Platform	Itinerant Social Action Platform Vessel (P.I.A.S)	Methodically, its aim is at providing State services and programmes to rural Amazonia people where Local Platform has partial or null intervention. Complemented by Local Platform, both State strategies required assistance from Air Force.
Local Platform	Support Committee Local Infrastructure Strategy	Integrated by local participants such as community's authorities, businessmen, community leaders, and public and private institutions people who work all together in local areas.
Support Platform	Tele State Network (telecommunication centre platform)	State Management of new information and communication technologies. This became the bases to a successful function of Local Management and Itinerant Platforms.
Coordination Platform	Social Action Coordinated Centre	This centre allows State to administrate and monitor the programme part of Coordination Platform in all basins involved in the Amazon area to articulate the planning according to the circumstances.

This became the bases to a successful function of Local Management and Itinerant Platforms.

› **Social Action Coordinated Centre (CCASS):** This centre allows State to administrate and monitor the programme part of Coordination Platform. In this context, by the middle of 2013, a number of 12 Itinerant Social Action Platforms (P.I.A.S) was set by Peruvian government to assist seven river basins managed by Prime Minister's Office (PMO). This programme started at functioning in Mazan City located in Loreto department, it was known as Napo River (Rio Napo). Currently, this platform is working actively in Amazon Rivers and the activation of the second platform is forecasted to end of 2015.

### Pedro Iriarte Ch.

Lieutenant Commander Peruvian Navy. Staff Officer. In 2014, Iriarte took Command and Staff Course at Naval War College ARA (ESGA ARA- Peru). He is a Bachelor of Science of Naval at Naval College specializing in Surface Warfare and Electronic-Communications. He is a graduated of Catholic Pontifical University of Peru with Master Degree in Engineering and Automation Control. At the moment, he attends to Joint War College to Staff and Joint Planning Course

Professionals from different areas of expertise take part in this crusade, for instance physicians, dentists, social workers, nurses, bank assistants and other public and private sector workers collaborated to develop properly each stage of the platform. In case of emergency, it was foreseen the use of Air Forces by means of hydroplanes to transfer staff and/or material.

A number of health care services are provided, for example, odontology, gynaecology, laboratory testing, immunizations, general medicine, triage, vaccination, telemedicine, deliveries and surgeries. Paying and civil registry are controlled by National Registration of each country; then it was provided an identification Card (ID), Health insurance, Integral health system affiliation. In addition, payment and bank deposits in cash machines of National Bank, even more, everybody who was registered in the social action programme it could be possible for him/her to affiliate anybody else to the system of P.I.A.S. Moreover, it was provided advice on child abuse and mistreatment of women, giving information about also to professors to be involved in the campaign as well.

### CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

Regards to information obtained by community local platforms it was possible to develop and implement programmes to capacitate social and State workers. The idea was to strength management ability between community and government. Service performance is no assistance character, but supporting and complementing State Departments (City Halls decentralised Bodies) when it was provided the services through P.I.A.S.

The intervention of different agents along the Amazon area actually act as a local support network close to information technologies and then generate telecommunication mechanisms to connect basins communities. As result, this teamwork assures the efficiently management and application of the services included in the platforms (Education, health, protection to vulnerable people, provide identity, justice).



In order to go ahead, the National strategy demanded regular and updated interinstitutional agreements which overcome inter sectorial operation, in particular, Armed Forces role in country's development.

Nowadays, for a period of four months, Peruvian and Colombian government are developing sustainability social action in Rio Putumayo basin making use of naval, ground and air equipment provisioned by both countries' Armed Forces. In the same way, it is being developing in Napo River basin in Ecuador.

National Armed Forces civic action role is implemented in countries which suffered from the same social needs; this led Armed Forces to work together in other to achieve the same goals.

The diffusion campaign of Armed Forces' flourishing role, in particular P.I.A.S Platform, provides the opportunities to achieve a closer relationship between society and State besides the new concept shared to international Armed Forces about the new role of internal order of a country and benefits of this advantage.

## CONCLUSIONS

Peru and Colombia have developed national range strategy, in a coordinated and jointly way in order to achieve the following objectives:

- › Contribute to obtain the solution to multiple and complex issues in Amazon Rainforest.
- › Provide an adequate platform for arguing, achieving an agreement, being aware of the reality in order to create and establish policies and programmes to guarantee safety and development.
- › Pursuit a new safety approach to facilitate a closer relationship with population that is considered as "The Core".
- › Incorporate researching, technology and professionals to create and implement means and mechanisms to support development and safety process.
- › Portray a pivotal scheme of Regional Integration in boundaries countries.

- › Suggest a new Armed Forces' role in pursuit of society and country progression, therefore, State Institutions' presence will be considered by communities.
- › Incorporate as political instrument this kind of strategy at international scale within border communities.

It was fundamental the creation of communities- State trustiness bonds to the development of sustainability social action strategy because of up to that period of time, there was a little presence from the government. Without the Armed Forces active intervention, strategies' implementation would be impossible. The Army has provided infrastructure, material and personnel to achieve the successful of Itinerant Platform. As a result, Armed Forces' institutional image has become superb due to the ideological and logistical support provided to the enlargement of countries. Consequently, Army has become in an example for Peruvian and Colombian population, in particular to isolated communities which lacked of State' assistance.

