

THE AERIAL SUPERIORITY IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST OF COLOMBIA: A NEED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY¹

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Introduction

From the foundation of the first States, those established at the dawn of civilization, their framework is built upon the idea of “military security against external enemies” (Marquardt 2012, p. 75). The archeological vestiges of the military fortifications that delimited the States and the traces of inter-state warfare are proof of this. In this sense the political leader of antiquity is also presented as a military leader and with this he is conceived as the guarantor of the physical protection and daily development of the population that he governs.

Linked to the development of state security processes, it identifies the evolution of military organizations along with the ambition to control more territory with development purposes and to ensure, in essence, the access to sources of support and wealth for the kingdoms. Due to this, there is the consequent military expansion of a state expansion, developing with this expansion conflicts in the dominated populations by the coercion of their culture under the imposition of the invader; the success of a State and the true

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demonstration of its power then consists in developing a real process of integration of the communities, for which it was necessary to establish different institutions that foster a balance based on the protection of the population, citizenship and laws, essentially configuring “a common political identity” (Marquardt 2012, p. 77).

With the establishment of political institutions accepted by citizens, the state’s task of guaranteeing tranquility and internal security is strengthened, for which the State “developed a catalog of socially and ethically reprehensible behaviors” (Marquardt 2012, p. 78). This led to the homogeneity of the social evolution linked to the legality and the right of which the State should also be guarantor.

Thus, with the emergence and expansion of the States, a process of interaction between individual members of a community begins to be built, with the establishment of legal, political, economic and cultural criteria, or in other words establishing the foundations of nation-states.

The definition and conceptualization of the State is fundamental, since it constitutes the backbone of international studies. Also, it takes into account at the same time the security and defense considering the development of conflicts and interaction with other states. This is established as the pillar of the institutional construction of the state.

From identity to national interest

The common political identity that has been talked about becomes a complex concept to analyze and more if it is delimited in its interstate action. However, constructivism based on the Social Theory of International Politics of Alexander Wendt can be useful for clarify the results and be able to link it further to the development of the Nation and the *construction* of its interest as an international demonstration.

In that sense, Zehfuss (2006, p. 95), based on Wendt’s conception of identity, considers identity as a process in which there are different inter-subjective structures that influence the behaviors of the actors. Therefore, from the construction of collective responses, actors can conceive the identity, defining it within the international scope as “the property of international actors to generate dispositions, motivations and behavior” thus establishing the basis for the understanding of interest.

Throughout Wendt’s theoretical discussion, different questions to be solved are identified for the purpose of clarifying the type of interest that is capable of consolidating a State, and this will depend on the positive identi-

fication that the State has against others, the way in which he perceives the achievement of his security in association with the rest of the actors; however, it shows that this process does not belong to a private discussion scenario within the state institutions but instead must be linked to the maximum number of actors, in order to develop a collective identification of needs and thus apply it in the field of security; nevertheless it is clear that the international behavior of the States, which must clearly respond to the collective construction of the interests of the Nation, depends on the behavior and recognition that one has of himself and other States, arriving to determine the security interests which will be developed exclusively under interaction, becoming "the key to the development of different security environments ..." (Zehfuss 2006, p. 96).

From this understanding, a debate is created between constructivists and rationalists, in which the latter establish that identity can be variable depending on the interaction of scenarios to which it is exposed in a theater such as the international system. However, at the same time, Wendt establishes identity as a pillar of the construction of interest and under it the difficult task of modifying interest on behalf of interactions is structured, since it requires the modification of behaviors, which would turn this scenario into a framework of analysis of very high complexity and even more difficult to materialize as is usually done by States in a Foreign Policy (Zehfuss 2006, p. 96).

In this sense, from the structure of determination of national interest, discriminating against the development of state policies, it is clear that the authorities can clarify the position, in essence, of concepts such as national security or foreign policy, mentioning only the relevant ones in this analysis; internal politics and transnational relations themselves (Lake 2008, p. 46).

Approaching a reality where the construction of identity and interest formation materialize in the recognition of the national structure, combined with the state institutions that support the political and legal characteristics, we must link from the constructivism the understanding of national security and defense, which is not carried out from the theoretical aspect but rather from the analytical one, understanding the advantages that for this exercise presents depart from traditional concepts, to focus on the particular understanding of the behaviors of the actors in the construction of their own national intentions.

To get into this development of the construction of security and defense policies based on the identification of national interests, we must first depart from the realistic conception of the security dilemma. We must begin from the perception that Kenneth Waltz presents, facing the wide margin of choice that states have between them, especially within a system of states under an anarchic organization where fear or external threats are identified as a

position that requires rational strategies and limits the expansion of its capacities by forcing self-help and self-considered selfishness vis-à-vis the rest of the actors. Although paradoxical, this position reaffirms the basic properties of the modern construction of the states and the definition of their interests in relation to security as a causal source of the identity and survival of the state system.

Thus, supported by a constructivist analysis in relation to the variable of security and defense, in an anarchic international scenario, states will identify other states within the conception of enemies, rivals or friends; thereby generating a multiplier effect of the perceptions of the other states, forging new interests and therefore new actions determined by the use, whether of force -hard power- or socio-cultural media -soft power- (Kolodziej 2005, p. 279).

Due to this, it is necessary to address the construction of national security and defense policies together with the design and implementation of foreign policy, because “the foreign policy of a State is a means to achieve its national interests” (Guáqueta 2005, page 39), and likewise the national interest depends, as we have indicated previously, on the vision about a State and how the other actors are identified in an anarchic scenario of interactions to be clarified.

Foreign policy in coordination with security and defense policy in Colombia

To get closer to Colombia’s international behavior, we must turn away from the constructivist analysis that we have been developing, and irreversibly link in the realistic current on account of the dynamics of national security based on the internal armed conflict. This is due to the lack of association of society in the processes of determination of national interests, and giving priority to the exercise of physical protection of the territory and the personalist exercise of Colombian international politics.

The participation of military components in the structuring of foreign policy, by influence or by invitation, has developed based on the need to link the country’s anti-subversive struggle with the main interests of international powers, specifically in the United States, where Colombia presents itself as “a key interlocutor in relation to issues that were included in the international agenda in the past, and still are, such as drug trafficking and in some ways the democratic stability of the States.” (González & Rodríguez 2017, p. 340).

In this sense, a flaw in the formulation of foreign policy is identi-

fied, since the country is presented as weak and unable to cope with internal threats, which for an international scenario, as we referred to earlier, may be a call to inability to repel external threats, especially if they develop alongside internal conflicts. Then, the development of national's defense potential must be constant and evident, without neglecting the domestic.

Added to the above, it can be clearly inferred that the institutions that should promote the definition of national interests for the collective construction of foreign policy are, in effect, the Foreign Ministry, which have not fulfilled the role exemplary. In addition, this has been overlapped by the participation of internal security on behalf of the military sector to determine Colombia's participation in the international are. All of this is catalyzed and encouraged by an exercise of the personalist foreign policy in the sole power of the presidents of the Republic that little or nothing refers to the true interests of Colombians.

At this point, it is not our intention to show that it is necessary to separate the actors related to the security and defense from the construction of foreign policy. On the contrary, these two aspects need to be interdependent in the definition and protection of the National interests. However, they are not the first actors called upon for the direct formulation of this policy, but should serve as participants in the construction of it, as part of the community and defenders and promoters of state policies. At the same time, security and defense policy should be constructed, in accordance with the living forces, the society as a whole interacting to guarantee the achievement of the national interest.

It has been repeatedly indicated that the lack of conceptual clarity in Colombia regarding security and defense are the architects of the impossibility of establishing a specific policy in this regard. Apart from the contributions from the plans of presidential governments there is no clear vision policy on how such policies should be developed, and even less they consider the international aspects and internal dynamics to contemplate. Little by little we have identified security and defense as a single concept. Because of this, it had not been possible to define a position against "the strategic attitude of the nation, which determines the functions of society, of powers , of institutions and social organizations "(Bonett 2008, p. 14).

Currently, national security is understood in Colombia as "the situation in which the interests of the nation are protected against interference and substantial disturbances" (Bonett 2008, p. 14). However this condition must be fundamental to link the interests of state institutions and national behaviors, that is the true foundation of national interest that must be reflected abroad, with the clear conviction of achieving and consolidating a promi-

nent role of the country internationally, achieving better internal conditions and recognition of the rest of the actors of the system that prevents an action against our territory from any part of the world.

Considering the presentation of the multidimensional concept to the analysis of security from the Copenhagen school, a new panorama is developed to link the levels of the nation in the construction of public security and defense policy, making room for “recognition of the diversity of problems that directly affect the security of the States and the relationship between them generate the multidimensionality and transnationality of the new security approaches” (González & Castillo 2017, p. 189). The interaction of citizens in the State that represents them is needed and they develop a new “conception of the security system and in its execution, because the effectiveness of the national strategy depends on this interaction, which does not seek anything other than the achievement of the essential purposes of the State” (Bonett, 2008, p. 15), thus allowing the consolidation of the interactive structures of the Nation-State, in accordance with the fundamental establishment of national interest and the safeguarding of what that means.

Meanwhile the construction of new analytical scenarios of national security and defense develops, the states and national identity from the processes that have occurred with the arrival of the new millennium become diffuse and philosophically complex. The prominence of the phenomenon of global interdependence with clear approaches to capitalism will degenerate national interactions on the international stage, consequently leading to the rethinking of national interests and these worldwide policies. This shows that the revaluation of nationalist policies in the scenario of the development of national identity has marked a path both deadly and important for the future of the states in the 21st century.

These nationalisms from classical currents have taken root in the social behavior of the new generations worldwide, and Colombia on account of the recognition of new threats, punctually migration, has stalled in that process from which it must emerge. In that sense, nationalisms must develop new parameters within the social structures to develop interdependence processes that lead to integration scenarios; less harmful nationalisms than those that gave rise to the bloodiest fighting of the twentieth century: “the nationalisms of the 21st century will be those who understand integration more in terms of citizenship than in terms of old and obsolete molds of national cultures” (Martí 2001, p. 170).

The loss of loyalty that States have suffered from their citizens due to the development of new economic approaches that disregard the basic needs of the population has been a catalyst for discontent with representative struc-

tures such as political parties and acceptance of implementation of the different public policies in Colombia. In this sense the panorama that is presented is not at all negative but seen as an opportunity to reestablish and design a new model of public policy formulation that fosters the interaction of citizenship with state agencies, leading to agreements against the definition of national interest and with it the development of new domestic and external policies. On the one hand, this generates well-being for the population and on the other hand project an image and position the Nation State internationally in a place of relevance to help the process of internal development and guarantee recognition of the condition of power that Colombia must have vis-à-vis international society.

In that sense, the role of the Military Forces in fundamental, not only because of the *sui generis* role it has played throughout the aforementioned internal armed conflict but also because of the strength at the time of integrating military structures with social structures, developing a great recognition and appreciation of the citizens in the face of the work performed. There, the Air Force is presented with great strategic value, which together with the Air Power has been relevant to guarantee and achieve objectives such as: "The assurance of the territorial unit despite the tendency towards fragmentation. A notable contribution to economic performance in areas of wealth as well as in depressed areas. The regional projection with effects on the ability to deploy to other scenarios and the export of a specific know-how "(Strong & Jaramillo, 2014, p. 34).

Here the Air Power is presented as a pillar of the development and security of the nation as indicated by Strong & Jaramillo, by presenting three factors that give value to this statement:

"The first of these is to understand that the actions developed by the Air Power take place in the air or in space ... The second factor is based on the fact that to refer to the Air Power it is extremely important to start with the air interests of a nation, which are totally linked to the vital interests of a State. In other words, they must aim at the well-being of the population, their economic development and the guarantee of their security and defense, from the perspective of air, space and, of course, through their means... The third factor, is to know that there are some means for air power to become a reality, among which the aeronautical and airport infrastructure, airlines and airline companies in all areas, aeronautical maintenance companies, aeronautical training centers and schools and activities related to aviation, aeronautical research and development centers, aeronautical authorities, aircraft and State Aviation ... Among these actors, the Colombian Air Force stands out as a pillar of protection for these media and ex-

ecutor of the strategic will of the government to guarantee the interests of the nation, through its Defense from the aerial perspective ”(2014, p. 37).

In addition to the above, the Air Power stands out as a determining structure in the cohesion of the Nation-State and for the functioning of the structures involved in the security and defense processes; linked to this, aerial superiority is presented as an objective of the highest value in the construction of aerial scenarios that allow the achievement of strategic advantages in the scenario, whether of the internal armed conflict or of an extra territorial threat; thus, aerial superiority is presented as a vital factor in social cohesion and construction of security and development scenarios on account of its link with the processes of identity development and national interest.

Aerial superiority in the national interest of Colombia

Aerial Superiority in this context is presented as the ability of an actor to hold greater and better possibilities in the airfield. So, the ability to obtain and maintain an air advantage against the enemy, is presented on the battlefield as a possibility of developing more effective combat strategies, less deployment of human resources, and faster impacts, with which the results are presented under more effective criteria and with less wastage; however, the importance of this concept exceeds the strategic and tactical claims that can be identified when approaching the concept in a superficial way.

This condition of importance can be threatened by the existence of failures in the civil sectors in the face of “poor performance against national defense issues and military issues, whether due to professional incompetence, instrumental inefficiency or lack of will to the time to establish priorities and public policies regarding the conduct of the Armed Forces...” (Rivera, 2008, p. 19), and here is the combination of identity factors, interest construction, formulation of public policies and consistent application of the same depending on the previous factors, almost of impressive complexity for countries like Colombia, that recharge their responsibility on the shoulders of the internal armed conflict, letting the future of that fact build sovereignty and citizenship without additional efforts or constructions.

At this point we have come to discover the complexity that resides in collective action to develop criteria of well-being above the individual, however from the theory of sets presented by Ellionor Ostrom you can think of the possibility “that individuals with common interests they would act voluntarily to try to promote these interests ”(2000, p. 31).

Thus, Ostrom presents the logical analysis that based on logical premises a group from the possibility of obtaining group benefits will develop behaviors aimed at obtaining said benefit, based on the idea that supports Mancur Olson, where an individual participating in collective action cannot be separated from obtaining the benefits and for them the motivation to act against the group will be void, however it broadens the concept also identifying that since there is no motivation to act against it, it does not exist at the time of acting for the benefit of it, because it is certain to obtain said benefit at the expense of the group; This has been called the problem of the free rider, identifying with it the lack of cooperation of the individual (Ostrom 2000, p. 32).

In context, Colombians when determining a collective identity over the partial circumstances they live in and when defining a security and defense policy, each one becomes a free rider, which is placed on a higher priority. It is indispensable and decisive for the future of the South American country to generate cooperation processes, in the sense of Ostrom or in the construction of consensus scenarios, in the sense of Wendt, to forge the national identity that will be determined by the self-recognition of the collective identity and that will allow the development of public policies in accordance with current needs.

For this, aerial superiority is presented as an intrinsic value in the very development of social structures, understanding this as the possibility of developing scenarios of protection of the territory, sovereignty and institutions, as well as their population, power conditions that will demonstrate the true collective objective of Colombia, which is conceived as the positioning in regional and international scenarios as a power in aspects of social development, and multidimensional security and defense.

In relation to the national interests of Colombia, Vicente Torrijos presents three dimensions that represent more than interests and desires in different sectors, giving priority to these “national unity, sustainability of democracy and freedom (sovereignty and independence)” followed by the “Socioeconomic development and citizen welfare”, and ending with the “integration of the country into the international system with respect for international law” (Torrijos 2008, p. 414); thus promoting the mix of the aspects presented in this article as the factors necessary to consolidate the Colombian State in accordance with the Colombian Nation, factors that strengthened with the development of aerial superiority and the consolidation of a national defense and security policy, will position the country in the position of importance that after two hundred years of existence it had been searching.

Final Remarks

In order to determine the influence of aerial superiority in Colombia's national interest and how it becomes a fundamental pillar of the required national defense and security policy, it was established that security is configured as the pillar in the construction of the States, from which it is identified as the development factor of national interest, however it is in the individual and collective identity that security is presented as a source to provide survival to the state system collapsed by the nationalist characteristics of modernity.

With this, we start from constructivism to develop the concept of identity that has its outcome in the construction of national interest. For this reason, it is important to emphasize that without identity an interest cannot be defined; and in this sense, public policies remain without an argumentative support, without any reason, since they must meet the needs or interests of the nation. Then, as a consequence the individual and then collective construction of citizens is a priority when thinking about public policy needs and even more important if the concept of security is linked to the equation.

In that sense, we conclude that Colombia lacks both a real configuration of collective identity and legitimate processes of construction and determination of national interest, without ruling out the absence of a security and defense policy that is a priority to develop, especially linking the concept of aerial superiority in it through collective recognition of its importance for its effectiveness.

Likewise, the understanding of the category of defense as a multidimensional criterion provides a framework for interaction between political decision makers and citizens, specifying the ideal scenario for linking all sectors to the process of self-determination of national interest and the formulation of domestic and external policies for the collective benefit, creating from the amalgam of foreign policy and security and defense policy the opportunity to promote Colombia to the international leadership group that it had been searching for.

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we intend to analyze the importance of the incorporation of aerial superiority as a concept and as a tool for the defense and security of national interests; the national interest can be established from the construction of national identity that should be accompanied by the formulation of public policies, especially foreign policy and security and defense policy, the latter nonexistent and the first incipient. Considering this standard, aerial superiority will be identified as the main objective of the nation's security and defense, and as a societal link in favor of welfare and development.

KEYWORDS

National Interest; Identity; Aerial Superiority; Colombia; Security and National Defense.

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