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# DOCA

Defense Orientation Conference Association



## Southcom & Colombia Executive Summary

April 2015

DOCA members recently gathered in Miami to meet with U.S. Southern Command before flying on to Bogota and Cartagena, Colombia. Two new members attended their first DOCA program: Tony David of San Francisco, CA and Jane Terry of Newport Beach, CA. In addition, Jane's husband, Dan, and Susan Shyne, wife of Michael Shyne and Cassie Kane, wife of Thomas Kane joined us. We were especially fortunate to have Dr. Cynthia Watson of the National War College travel with us and share her insights throughout the trip.

General John Kelly, commander of U.S. Southern Command greeted us the first morning and led an "all-star" group of Flag and General officers in informing us of SOUTHCOM's mission and Area of Responsibility. After a very informative session, General Kelly and his staff joined us for lunch at a nearby restaurant to continue our discussions.

That evening, as we arrived in Bogota, we were met at the airport by a cadre of senior officers from the Defense Attaché's office and the Office of Security Cooperation. Their discussions with us while en route to the hotel primed us for more formal presentations the next morning.

Tuesday was primarily spent at the U.S. Embassy as we heard from a wide variety of the Ambassador's "Country Team" officials. After lunch, the president of the Colombian-American Chamber of Commerce met with us, and that evening we drove to the beautiful residence of the Ambassador for a reception with senior Embassy and Colombian government officials.

The next morning we met with the Ministry of Defense and officials from the office of the Chief of Defense, (Colombia's equivalent to our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs). Unfortunately, the night before the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) had broken the cease fire and conducted an attack on a Colombian Army unit, so some of the senior officials who had planned to meet with us were understandably called away. After lunch, we flew on to Cartagena for the rest of the program.

The next two days were spent visiting the Colombian Navy and Coast Guard. We were able to see captured semi-submersibles that the drug dealers use to smuggle drugs offshore and tour one of the newest ships in Colombia's fleet: the Offshore Patrol Vessel. Lunch, and later an evening reception at the Officer's Club, were well-attended by senior officers from the Colombian Navy. We also enjoyed a tour of COTECMAR, the Colombian Navy's shipyard, and meetings with our DEA and DHS agents who run counterdrug and counterterrorism operations out of Cartagena. The program concluded Friday evening with our traditional wrap-up dinner where Dr. Watson provided a summary of her observations during the week.

