



ALBERTO JOSÉ MEJÍA FERRERO

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Former Commander of the Colombian Military Forces, Former Commander of the Colombian National Army and Former Ambassador of Colombia to Australia and New Zealand. Former Consultant to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) on military transformation and security sector reform. Visiting professor for the University of Los Andes' Escuela de Gobierno Alberto Lleras Camargo

General Alberto José Mejía Ferrero led the Colombian Army, and subsequently the Colombian Military Forces, between 2015 and 2018. After a career spanning over more than four decades, in which he gathered extensive experience in irregular warfare and special operations, obtained distinguished academic titles and won prestigious military accolades, he came to the top post in his profession at a critical juncture in Colombian history. During his tenure, General Mejia was able to implement a comprehensive institutional transformation to modernize the Colombian military forces, while leading the institution through peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC, which resulted in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of this terrorist organization.

Institutional Transformation

During his tenure, General Mejia was able to implement a comprehensive institutional transformation to modernize the Colombian military forces, making them more effective, better equipped and trained, aligned to the best international military standards and in compliance with Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. This transformation sought to revise and update every aspect of the existing frameworks, from logistics and operations to international cooperation agreements and military doctrine.

This transformation had been years in the making – since 2011 General Mejia spearheaded the creation of the Strategic Revision and Innovation Committees “CRE-I”, which produced War Campaign Plans for the military and police forces to confront terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal mining, and transnational organized crime, among other threats and internal instability factors.

Once he reached the top military post of his career, General Mejia was able to leverage CRE-I’s advances and promote a complete doctrinal change through *Plan Damasco*. Furthermore, he created the Direction for the Application of Transparency Norms and Ethics “DANTE” in order to elevate institutional transparency levels and strengthened institutional legitimacy, and the Direction for International Relations “DIRIE”, seeking to enhance relations and consolidate military alliances all throughout the hemisphere.

Simultaneously, General Mejia played a vital role in the process that led to the inclusion of Colombia as a NATO *Global Security Partner*, a cooperation agreement to ensure that Colombian Military Forces are better trained with

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a common professional language and with enhanced technological capacity, supported on the best international practices.

Peace Negotiations with the Farc

General Mejía exercised his influence at every level of military command in support of the Colombian State. When the Colombian government and the FARC, the oldest guerilla organization in the hemisphere, engaged in peace negotiations in Cuba, General Mejia navigated a complex and polarized political scenario while observing his ethical and constitutional obligation to abide by civil-military relations and democratic principles.

He was called to provide counsel to the government's negotiators and contributed to the creation of new democratic entities and programs aimed at the consolidation of peace. He managed public opinion expectations and guided the men and women under his command in a challenging time that required adaptation and resilience, but that ultimately resulted in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the FARC in society.

Life after Retirement

General Mejia served as Colombian Ambassador to Australia and New Zealand from 2019 to 2021, projecting Colombia's national interests in the Indo-pacific Region through the Pacific Alliance and the consolidation of the bilateral relationships. He also served as an adjunct professor at Charles Sturt University in Canberra (Australia), and as a Non-Resident Scholar of Florida International University, Miami, FL. He also worked for the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) as a military transformation and security sector reform consultant. Currently, he is the honorary president of the Australia-Colombia Business Council in Bogota and visiting professor for the University of Los Andes' Escuela de Gobierno Alberto Lleras Camargo in leadership and National Security.

Military Résumé

General Alberto Mejía is graduated in Military Sciences by the Colombian Military Academy and has a Master's in International Security from the U.S. Naval Post-graduate School (Monterey, California). He also has a Master's in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College (Carlisle, Pennsylvania) and a Master's in National Security from the Colombian War College. He is a graduated of the INALDE program for Companies CEOs of "La Sabana" University (Colombia), and of the Program for University-level Teaching from the "Sergio Arboleda" University (Colombia).

General Mejia had a distinguished military career as an infantry officer. He was a U.S. Ranger student and Instructor in Camp Darby, Fort Benning, GA, from 1986 to 1987 and a graduate of the U.S. Command and General Staff School in Fort Leavenworth, KS, from 2001 to 2002. He was a member of the Colombian Special Forces for twenty years, commanding from the smallest units to the Colombian Joint Special Operations Command "CCOES". He also came to be commander of the Aviation and Air Assault Division, a fundamental tool for the National Army's mobility.

He was distinguished with Colombia's most important national decoration, the *Cruz of Boyacá*, in two instances. He also received the most elevated decorations for military virtues and was decorated for achievement in combat seven times. He was awarded with Order of Democracy by the Colombian National Congress on three occasions and was decorated by foreign governments with their most important honors, including the Legion of Merit from the US military.