

Remarks by Secretary Mattis on Cybersecurity in Santiago, Chile



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JAMES N. MATTIS: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. And (inaudible), thank you so much. Mucho gracias for all your warm hospitality here today.

It's really a pleasure to meet you, to meet President Piñera for the first time in this land of poets, the home of Pablo -- Pablo Neruda and Gabriela Mistral.

In our conversations, I would say we are tending our mutual garden, building further the resilient and especially the transparent partnership between Chile and the United States, a partnership based on the shared values, as the president said, of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and individual liberty, with economic opportunity for all.

Chile's capable and reliable leadership has helped hemisphere to increasingly transform into a powerhouse of democratic stability in a world facing challenges.

Since 1996, U.S. and Chilean troops have trained side-by-side at the Rim of the Pacific Exercises, as you mentioned, Mr. Minister, the largest naval exercise in the world. And this year we were proud to note that Chile became the first Latin American nation and the first non-Five Eyes nation to serve as its combined forces maritime component commander. This achievement was no surprise to the U.S. military, who recognized this prestigious post was well-earned by the professional Chilean armed forces.

And plus I would have to add, sir, this is a fitting role for Chile's navy as it celebrates its 200th birthday.

Chile will also host the Southern Star exercise this month, when U.S. and Chilean special operations forces will come together in full transparency alongside regional and global observers to increase our combined interoperability. We have a strong, trusted foundation of military interoperability, and in our conversations today, we look to the future.

The joint statement that we signed today will enhance our defense and cooperation, specifically on cyber operations and protection of Chile's cyber domain. This agreement recognizes the threats to all our democracies we now face in this contested domain and our determination to address them together.

We also support deeper collaboration in science and technology. We -applaud Chile leadership in this area, fostering innovative institutions like INNERVYCS Universidad de Chile and Universidad Catolica.

In partnership with all three of the U.S. Armed Forces -- and by the way, we are pleased to invest in basic research; this is one of only three nations in the world where we invest in that sort of basic research -- this innovation forges a path in science and engineering, from improving command of unmanned vehicles to accelerating military medical research.

Mr. Minister, I appreciated hearing Chile's perspective on improving humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. We fully support and welcome Chile's proposal to the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas for a regional cooperation mechanism to better enable humanitarian assistance in the midst of natural disasters.

And all of this, I believe, helps to solidify Chile's global reputation as a trusted security partner, providing, for example, military education, training and technical assistance in Central America and the Caribbean, while actively participating in multilevel engagements and exercises across the Indo-Pacific.

Mr. Minister, I am confident in the bright future ahead for the U.S. and Chile. As your poet Gabriela Mistral wrote, "And we go on and on." And we intend to go on and on into the future alongside you.

Thank you again, Mr. Minister.

(APPLAUSE)