



IADC

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2024 - FEBRUARY 2025



Dear IADC Alumni and Friends,

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I welcome you to this edition of the IADC Alumni Newsletter. As always, this publication serves as a vital link between our College and the distinguished graduates, faculty, and partners who continue to shape the defense and security landscape of our hemisphere.

At the Inter-American Defense College, we remain committed to fostering a strong and engaged alumni network. Your leadership, dedication, and shared experiences not only enrich our community but also reinforce the values of cooperation, critical thinking, and strategic vision that define the IADC.

In this edition, you will find highlights of recent activities, alumni achievements, and updates on key initiatives, and the upcoming OCONUS Field Study Trip to Chile and Peru, where our Class 64 students will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of regional security dynamics and strengthen ties with key institutions. These international engagements are essential to preparing future strategic leaders and fostering collaboration among nations.

I encourage you to stay engaged, share your insights, and participate in the various opportunities available to our alumni community. Your continued involvement is essential to the growth and success of the IADC and its mission to prepare leaders capable of addressing the complex security challenges of our region.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment. I look forward to seeing many of you at upcoming events and hearing about your ongoing contributions to hemispheric security and defense.

La Mejor!

Major General Richard J. Heitkamp
Director and Commandant, Inter-American Defense College.

XVI CONFERENCE OF DEFENSE MINISTERS OF THE AMERICAS - CDMA



Mendoza, Argentina

The XVI Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas (CDMA) concluded with the signing of the Mendoza Declaration by Argentine Defense Minister Luis Petri. Held in Mendoza from October 12–16, 2024, the conference brought together representatives from 34 countries across the hemisphere. The Inter-American Defense College had the privilege of participating in this important event, providing an opportunity to engage with senior defense leaders, including some of our distinguished alumni.



CDMA 2024



The Conference provided a valuable platform for bringing together the highest hemispheric authorities in security and defense to address shared challenges and exchange solutions aimed at fulfilling the mandates of the Organization of American States (OAS) and contributing to regional peace. For the Inter-American Defense College, participating in this event was an opportunity to engage directly with key decision-makers, strengthen institutional relationships, and reinforce its role in shaping strategic discussions on hemispheric security and defense.





ARGENTINA

During his visit to the Argentine Republic, the Director of the Inter-American Defense College had the opportunity to reconnect with members of the Argentine Alumni Chapter. The meeting took place in a symbolic setting aboard the Frigate Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in Puerto Madero, providing a meaningful space to strengthen ties and celebrate the enduring connection between the College and its alumni.



The Director of the Inter-American Defense College had the honor of inducting Brigadier Carlos Adrián Pesante, Class 56, into the Hall of Honor while meeting with the Argentine Alumni Chapter. This recognition highlights his distinguished military career and lasting contributions following his time at the College.





ARGENTINA

Our IADC Director had the privilege and honor of meeting the esteemed Vice Admiral Julio Juan Bardi, a distinguished graduate from Class 5 and the oldest alumnus of the College. At 99 years old, he continues to exhibit extraordinary health and energy, serving as an inspiration to our community.

Encounters like these reinforce the enduring value of our program, strengthening the bonds between generations of graduates. We look forward to future meetings with Vice Admiral Bardi to continue learning from his vast experience, wisdom, and vitality.



GUATEMALA



During his visit to Guatemala, our director had the opportunity to meet with Colonel Erick Ricardo Aragón González, a distinguished alumni from Class 61. Currently serving as Director of the D6 Peacekeeping Directorate and overseeing the coordinated deployment of parliamentarians in Haiti, Colonel Aragón González shared insights on key issues related to his role. The discussion also highlighted how his experience at the IADC has enriched his career and prepared him for the various leadership positions he has undertaken. he has since assumed.



VISIT OF HIGH SECURITY AND DEFENSE AUTHORITIES OF GUATEMALA



In early February, the Inter-American Defense College (IADC) had the honor of welcoming a distinguished delegation from the Republic of Guatemala, led by Minister of National Defense, Major General Henry David Sáenz Ramos; Minister of the Interior, Francisco Jiménez Iruñaray; and Technical Secretary of the Security Council, Brigadier General (R) Ismaél Alejandro Cifuentes Bustamante. Their visit aimed to advance a comprehensive institutional agenda focused on regional security and defense cooperation.

During their time at IADC, the delegation engaged in high-level bilateral meetings, participated in a dedicated session of the Bilateral Defense Working Group, and delivered an insightful conference to Class 64 on "The Role of Defense and Security Institutions in Non-Traditional Threats and Missions." These discussions contributed to a deeper understanding of contemporary security challenges and reinforced collaboration between Guatemala and regional defense institutions.

This visit underscores IADC's ongoing commitment to fostering dialogue and cooperation among defense and security leaders across the Western Hemisphere.



GUATEMALA



RECEPTION IN HONOR OF THE GUATEMALAN DELEGATION



As part of the official visit of high-ranking Guatemalan security and defense authorities, Major General Richard Heitkamp, Director of the Inter-American Defense College (IADC), hosted a distinguished reception in honor of the delegation.

The event brought together prominent officials, including Ambassador Hugo Beteta, Head of the Guatemalan Diplomatic Mission to the United States; Minister of National Defense, Major General Henry David Sáenz Ramos; Minister of the Interior, Francisco Jiménez Irungaray; and Brigadier General Iván Saúl Agreda Álvarez, Guatemala's Defense, Military, Naval, and Air Attaché to the United States, and an esteemed IADC alumnus from Class 57.



INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

D
O
M
I
N
I
C
A
N



R
E
P
U
B
L
I
C

On February 27, in celebration of the Dominican Republic's Independence Day, Major General Richard Heitkamp, Director of the Inter-American Defense College (IADC), participated in a special gathering at the Patio Azteca of the Organization of American States (OAS). The event brought together high-ranking Dominican officials from the fields of security, defense, and diplomacy to commemorate this important occasion.

During the event, Major General Heitkamp had the opportunity to reconnect with Colonel Mario Ramón Valdéz Rijo, Representative of the National Police of the Dominican Republic to the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB) and a proud IADC Class 61 alumnus, along with his distinguished wife, Sofía Castillo de Valdéz.



VISIT FROM ALONDRA FÉLIX

D
O
M
I
N
I
C
A
N



R
E
P
U
B
L
I
C

The Alumni Program is proud to share a heartfelt story that beautifully illustrates the lasting impact of the academic and cultural experience at the Inter-American Defense College (IADC). It is a testament to how the College leaves a profound and enriching mark not only on its graduates but also on their families, creating cherished memories that endure over time.

At the heart of this inspiring story is Ms. Alondra Félix Silvestre, daughter of the late Brigadier General Demóstenes Félix Paniagua of the Dominican Republic, a distinguished alumni from Class 42. Currently pursuing a Master's degree in Public Administration in the United States, Ms. Félix took advantage of an academic trip to Washington, D.C., to visit the IADC. Her visit was a meaningful tribute to her father's legacy and a nostalgic return to a place where, as a child, she and her family shared wonderful moments with other alumni families.



VISIT FROM ALONDRA FÉLIX DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



This visit held profound emotional significance for Ms. Alondra Félix Silvestre, as it reconnected her with cherished memories of her father. She shared that his academic experience at the IADC played a pivotal role in shaping her own future, career, and professional success.

However, the most meaningful part of her visit was the chance to relive the treasured moments of her childhood—reminiscing about the joyful gatherings with the families of Class 42. As she walked through the IADC’s halls after nearly 22 years, vivid memories flooded back, like scenes from a cherished film. She revisited the very places where her father, supported wholeheartedly by his family, pursued his academic dreams, built lifelong friendships, and experienced some of the happiest moments of his life.



VISIT FROM LIEUTENANT COLONEL (R) WILLIAM RAY SOUTHWICK – USA



On January 15, 2025, we had the honor of welcoming Lieutenant Colonel (R) William Ray Southwick from Class 35, accompanied by his brother Fred Dean Southwick. During their visit, they were warmly received by the Director of the College, Major General Richard Heitkamp. The group engaged in an enriching exchange of views on various aspects of the IADC, discussing how Lieutenant Colonel Southwick's academic experience at the College played a key role in enhancing his military career. He also took the opportunity to share fond memories and anecdotes from his time at the IADC.

Following their discussion, they toured the IADC facilities, stopping at the old auditorium where classes were once held. There, Lieutenant Colonel Southwick posed for a photo in the very spot where he had sat as a student. The tour continued with a visit to the photo gallery showcasing all the IADC classes, where he found the image of his own class. This moment sparked a wave of beautiful memories, and he expressed a desire to reconnect with his classmates from Class 35.



VISIT FROM LIEUTENANT COLONEL (R) WILLIAM RAY SOUTHWICK – USA



Finally, their visit concluded with a tour of several administrative offices, including a special stop at the External Relations Office, home to the Alumni Program. There, they were welcomed by Colonel Aldo Victoria of the Mexican Army, our Liaison Officer between the College and its alumni. Colonel Victoria provided a brief overview of the office's functions and presented the visitors with institutional gifts.

Lieutenant Colonel Southwick's visit was deeply emotional, but the most touching moment came when his brother, Fred, placed the Inter-American Defense College pin on his chest, with the Class of 35 photograph as the backdrop. Moments like this truly make our work both satisfying and rewarding.



HALL OF HONOR

MAJOR GENERAL



JAIME GONZÁLEZ ÁVALOS

MEXICO



On January 23, the Inter-American Defense College had the honor of welcoming Major General Jaime González Ávalos, Inspector and Comptroller General of the Mexican Army and Air Force. A distinguished alumni of IADC Class 42, General González Ávalos was recognized for his outstanding military career and

contributions to the defense community.

During the event, a ceremony was held at Building 60 to induct General González Ávalos into the IADC Hall of Honor. In recognition of his outstanding achievements, leadership, and dedication to the College's mission, he was also awarded the IADC Honoris Insignia for his contributions to democratic values and the promotion of mutual understanding among the nations of the Western Hemisphere.



HALL OF HONOR – PERU

As part of the institutional visit by the Peruvian Army War College (ESGE) to the Inter-American Defense College (IADC), a special Induction Ceremony was held to honor Lieutenant General Alberto Rojo, General Commander of Education and Doctrine of ESGE and a distinguished alumnus of IADC Class 52. The ceremony, which took place on Wednesday, October 16, 2024, in Building 60, marked his official induction into the IADC Hall of Honor.

The event was attended by Major General Carlos Eduardo Barbosa, Vice Director of the IADC, representing Major General Richard Heitkamp, along with Major General Abel Martínez, Chief of Studies at the IADC, faculty members, Major General Juan Kenneth Valverde Virhuez, Director of ESGE-Peru, coordinating officers, and students.

These ceremonies play a vital role in strengthening the bond between IADC and its alumni, allowing the College to closely follow their professional careers while recognizing key hemispheric leaders trained at IADC. Through their critical thinking and multidimensional approach, these leaders continue to contribute to joint solutions for defense and security challenges across the region.



LIEUTENANT GENERAL ALBERTO ROJO



GUEST SPEAKER



P
E
R
U

Major General Richard Heitkamp, Director of the Inter-American Defense College (IADC), welcomed Lieutenant General Rubén Samuel Gambarini Oñath, Chief of the General Staff of the Peruvian Air Force and a distinguished alumnus of IADC Class 49, during his visit to the College. As part of his visit, Lieutenant General Gambarini Oñath delivered a presentation to the students of Class 64 in the academic auditorium.

His lecture, titled "Reflections on Civil-Military Relations," provided valuable insights into the dynamics of collaboration between military institutions and civil society. The event was further honored by the presence of Major General César Augusto Macedo García, a proud alumnus of Class 55, who joined in this enriching academic exchange.



HALL OF HONOR

P
E
R
U



**LIEUTENANT GENERAL
RUBÉN SAMUEL GAMBARINI OÑATH**

Following his special lecture to Class 64 in the academic auditorium, Lieutenant General Rubén Samuel Gambarini Oñath and the attending delegation proceeded to Building 60 for a distinguished induction ceremony. Presided over by Major General Richard Heitkamp, Director of the IADC, the event marked Lieutenant General Gambarini's official inclusion in the College's Hall of Honor as a proud alumnus of Class 55.

During the ceremony, Major General Heitkamp highlighted Lieutenant General Gambarini's outstanding military career and recognized his significant contributions to his nation's armed forces. His dedication to regional peace and the defense of democratic values exemplifies the leadership and commitment characteristic of IADC alumni honored in the Hall of Honor.



HALL OF HONOR

P
E
R
U



**MAJOR GENERAL
CÉSAR AUGUSTO MACEDO GARCÍA**

As part of the activities surrounding the Special Conference, Major General Richard Heitkamp, Director of the IADC, had the honor of inducting Major General César Augusto Macedo García, a distinguished alumnus of Class 55, into the College's Hall of Honor. This recognition highlights his exceptional contributions to the advancement of peace and security in the Western Hemisphere, as well as his achievements as a proud graduate of the Inter-American Defense College.



CHILE



ALUMNI CONNECTION EVENT

On December 13, the Chile Chapter of the Inter-American Defense College Alumni Program held a fellowship gathering as part of its scheduled activities. The event brought together alumni from various classes to reconnect, share stories, and reminisce about their time at the College.

The gathering aimed to strengthen the bonds of friendship, camaraderie, and sense of belonging that define the Chile Chapter while encouraging active alumni participation in the country. The warm and welcoming atmosphere reflected the commitment of its members to maintaining and expanding this valued network.

Among the attendees were Colonel Luis Filipi (Class 39), Colonel Bernardo Castro (Class 36), Mr. Fernando Martínez (Class 63), and Colonel Germán Celedón (Class 54), who posed together for a commemorative photograph to capture the special occasion.

These gatherings not only reinforce the bonds among alumni but also solidify the Chile Chapter's role as a hub for integration, dialogue, and collaboration among graduates of the esteemed Inter-American Defense College.

By fostering these connections, the Chile Chapter reaffirms its commitment to promoting diverse activities that enhance the experiences of its members and strengthen the unity of the IADC-Chile Alumni community.





IADC FOUNDATION



The IADC Foundation proudly supports IADC's post-graduate academic programs and community. In October, the IADC Foundation co-sponsored a Halloween Cultural Event at the IADC for the students and faculty. They are also working closely with the IADC Spirit team regarding selling IADC logo merchandise.



Since its inception, the IADCF has built financial support for academic initiatives and expanded the College's international reach. This Fall, we regained our 501(c)(3) IRS status solidifying our public charity status, enabling donations to be tax-free. In November, the IADC Foundation established an inaugural offer for IADC Foundation Memberships for Life Membership, Student-rate Life Membership (honored during your academic year) and annual membership rates. Life Members will receive recognition by the IADCF. We invite you to join us as a Life Member! Both donations and Life membership can be purchased at <https://iadcf.org>

Collaborating with the Alumni Program, we enhance connections with graduates, former advisors, staff members, and friends who share the unique College experience. Together with the Alumni Office, we presented and participated in the sixteen-country online NOV 18, 2025 IADC Alumni Leaders Virtual Meeting. With the Association of Spanish Defense and Security Graduates (ADESyD) and the Ecuadorian Association of Former Advisors and Graduates of the Inter-American Defense College (ASOCID Ecuador), we continue to jointly develop the IADC Alumni 1st Hemispheric Security and Defense Conference which will be held in Madrid, Spain 18-19 September 2025. In addition to the programming, we are actively seeking donors to sponsor some of these associated social events.

We look forward to working with you to best support our IADC. Please contact us with your suggestions, comments, and donations via our website or directly at IADCFoundation@iadc.edu or our Director of Alumni Relations at joanna.esty@iadc.edu





IADC FOUNDATION



MEET THE LEADERSHIP

President:	Ricardo Vanella , Argentina
VP/Dir Alumni Relations:	Joanna Esty , Class 36, USA
Executive Director:	Shannon Heitkamp , USA
Secretary:	Vinicius Alencar Moretto , Class 62, Brazil
Treasurer:	Mariela Cardona , Class 47, USA
At-Large:	MG(R) William Walker , Class 45, USA

The following individuals have been elected to join the IADCF Board of Directors at the IADCF Annual board meeting on 19 March 2025 at the IADC/Ft McNair:

- RADM (R) **Jeff Lemmons**, Former IADC Director
- Mr. **Iñigo Guevara**, Janes Defence
- Dra **Marian Caracuel Rayas**, Class 47, Spain
- Ambassador (R) **Maria Cecilia Rozas Ponce De Leon**, Class 35 and Advisor Class 36-40 Perú.

Also, upon thanking Julio Hang for his service, the IADCF unanimously named him IADCF EMERITUS.

Please help us congratulate them!



1ST MEETING OF ALUMNI CHAPTER LEADERS



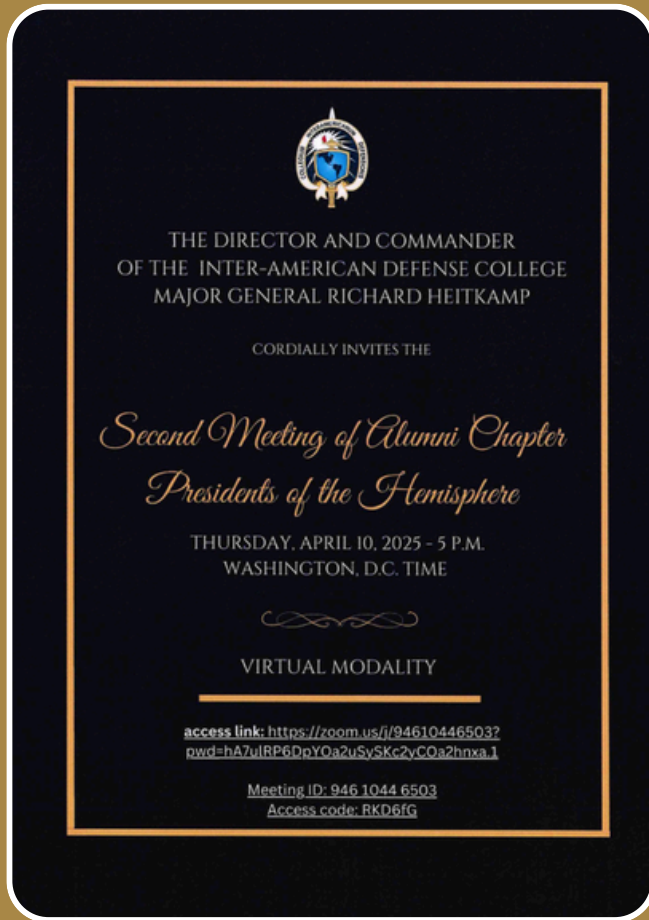
The primary goal of this group is to enable Chapter leaders to share official news and important updates from the College with their colleagues, using this unified communication platform in addition to the other contact channels the IADC provides to its graduates.

Additionally, the group will serve as a channel for promoting and supporting activities organized by the Inter-American Defense College Foundation (IADCF). Through this platform, updates on the progress of the 1st HEMISPHERIC CONVENTION ON SECURITY AND DEFENSE will also be shared. This event is scheduled to take place on September 18 and 19, 2025, in Madrid, Spain.

Building on the discussions from the 1st Meeting of Alumni Chapter Leaders across the Hemisphere, held on November 19, 2024, which focused on organizing future events for alumni from Chapters throughout the Americas, the Alumni Program launched a dedicated WhatsApp group on January 8, 2025. This group is exclusively for the presidents and leaders of hemispheric Chapters.



2ND MEETING OF ALUMNI CHAPTER LEADERS



The IADC Alumni Program is coordinating details for the "Second Meeting of IADC Alumni Chapter Presidents from across the Hemisphere," scheduled for Thursday, April 10, 2025.

At the meeting, the Director and Commander of the Inter-American Defense College (IADC), Major General Richard Hetikamp, will cordially greet the meeting participants, which will be held virtually.

This new opportunity for communication and exchange will not only strengthen the connection between Alumni Chapter presidents and the IADC but also provide a space for sharing important updates on the College's activities. Additionally, it will allow for the collection of feedback, opinions, and ideas from our esteemed Chapter leaders, who will then be responsible for passing this information on to their fellow members.

We look forward to seeing you all. Don't forget that for us, you will always be LA MEJOR!



M
A
D
R
I
D

2
0
2
5

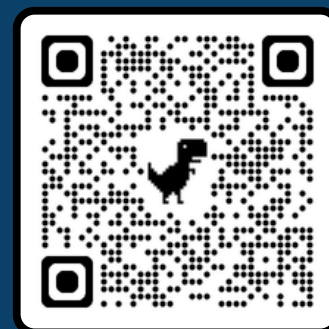


The Inter-American Defense College (IADC) is committed to strengthening its connections with alumni, former advisors, staff, and friends who have been integral to its unique academic experience. A key partner in maintaining this synergy is the Inter-American Defense College Foundation (IADCF), a nonprofit organization that actively supports the IADC's initiatives.

Likewise, the IADC collaborates closely with the IADCF on its initiatives. In this spirit, the Alumni Program has been engaged in ongoing virtual coordination meetings with the IADCF and partner organizations to organize the 1st Hemispheric Convention on Security and Defense, set to take place in Madrid, Spain, on September 18–19, 2025. This landmark event will bring together the extended IADC Alumni and IADCF family outside the hemisphere for the first time, and we are confident it will be a great success!

Register now to be part of this historic gathering:

<https://forms.gle/UH9hG162ejHfLTY49>



Scan to register



IADC ALUMNI PROGRAM AND FOUNDATION MEETING WITH MS. KARA O'RYAN OF THE WILLIAM J. PERRY CENTER FOR HEMISPHERIC DEFENSE STUDIES



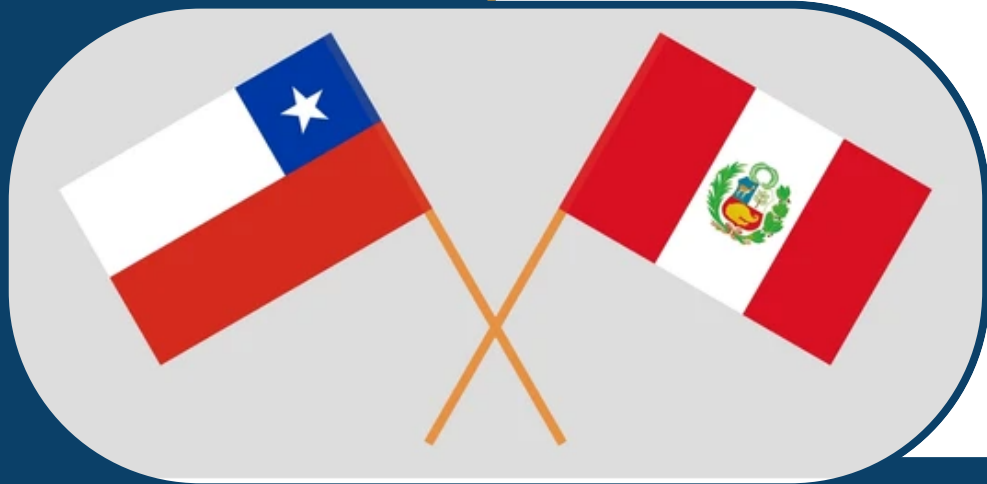
On December 17, 2024, Colonel (R) Ricardo Lebrón, Director of External Relations at the IADC, Kathryn Phillips, representing the Inter-American Defense College Foundation (IADCF), and Zoraya Alas, Alumni Program Coordinator at the IADC, met with Ms. Kara O'Ryan, Head of Outreach and Alumni Affairs at the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (WJPC). The meeting aimed to further strengthen the long-standing ties between the IADC and the academic security and defense communities in the Washington, DC area, particularly those within Fort Lesley J. McNair, where both institutions share physical space.

Ms. O'Ryan, as always, warmly shared insights into her work leading the outreach and alumni office at WJPC. The group exchanged ideas and explored various topics of mutual interest, including the possibility of organizing future events and joint activities to unite graduates from both academic institutions. These discussions are set to continue in upcoming meetings, further fostering collaboration between the two organizations.



OC
ON
US

2
0
2
5



ALUMNI MEETING

As is customary with the OCONUS Filed Study trips, Major General Richard Heitkamp, Director of the IADC, has included alumni engagements with the Alumni Chapters of Chile and Peru.

The Chile Chapter meeting is set for Monday, April 28, in Santiago, Chile, while the Peru Chapter meeting will take place on May 7 in Lima, both starting at 7:00 p.m. The exact locations for these meetings will be confirmed shortly.

We are confident that the OCONUS 2025 Field Study trip will be a great success, providing our graduates with a valuable opportunity to engage with the IADC leadership, the academic community, and students from across the hemisphere, fostering meaningful exchanges and reinforcing once again that they are all

LA MEJOR!

CHILE AND PERU

As part of the field study trips for IADC Class 64, two key and strategically significant countries in our hemisphere have been selected for this year's study focus: Chile and Peru.



C L A S S

6 4

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT DEBORA DURAN



College (IADC), pursuing a Master's Degree in Hemispheric Security and Defense in Class 64, "La Mejor." Designated by the Brazilian Ministry of Defense, she was encouraged by the Education and Culture Department of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of Brazil to represent the country.

Dr. Duran is a full professor of pedagogy at the Brazilian Army and works at the Ministry of Defense. With a doctorate in education, postdoctoral studies in Military Sciences, and numerous specializations, she is committed to continuous learning. She believes professionals are always evolving, which motivates her to pursue further studies.

Having lived in Brazil and Guatemala, she values intercultural experiences as essential for forming strategic leaders. Her academic interests include defense culture, strategic leadership, military education, and cognitive warfare. She is researching the effects of hyperconnectivity, AI, and social media on public opinion and decision-making, as well as new security threats in the Hemisphere.

Dr. Duran views interculturality, interdisciplinarity, and hemispheric cooperation as vital for addressing geopolitical challenges. At the IADC, she believes the diversity of people and institutions strengthens ties among American countries and fosters critical thinking to develop comprehensive solutions to shared challenges in the international arena.



Dear Alumni and Friends of the IADC:

As we conclude this edition of our newsletter, covering activities from October 2024 to February 2025, we want to express our gratitude for your continued engagement.

It has been a true pleasure for the Alumni Program - IADC to support you, tracking the activities of the various Alumni Chapters across the hemisphere and gathering updates on the key initiatives led by our distinguished Director, Major General Richard Heitkamp.

We hope you enjoy this new edition of the IADC 2025 Newsletter. As always, we encourage you to stay connected through our institutional communication channels.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to the ALUMNI Program within the External Relations Directorate of the IADC. You can contact the Director, Colonel (R) Ricardo Lebron, at ric.lebron@iadc.edu, Alumni Program Officer Colonel Aldo Victoria (Army - Mexico) at iadc_alumni@iadc.edu, or ALUMNI Coordinator Zoraya Alas (Civilian - Paraguay) at zoraya.alas@iadc.edu.

We look forward to sharing the next edition of the IADC 2025 Newsletter with you. A warm hug to each of you, and remember: your classes will always be...

LA MEJOR!

