

**XVI Conference of Ministers of Defense of the Americas  
*Ad hoc* Working Group "Cyber Defense and Cyberspace."  
May 16-17, 2024  
Virtual**

**Meeting minutes**

**I - Background**

- A. The Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, hereinafter referred to as the CDMA, is a biennial multilateral political meeting of the Defense Ministers of the Americas. The CDMA is the most important meeting of the hemisphere's defense sector with the objective of promoting reciprocal knowledge, analysis, debate and exchange of ideas and experiences in the field of defense and security.
- B. The meeting of the *Ad hoc* Working Group "Cyber Defense and Cyberspace" held on November 4 and 5, 2021, organized by the Pro Tempore Secretary of the Ministry of Defense of Brazil and the Ministry of Defense of Colombia as leader of the *Ad hoc* Working Group, analyzed the inappropriate use of social networks and their implications for the national security of States. He also presented recommendations that were delivered to the Ministers at the XV meeting of the CDMA.
- C. In the "Brasilia Declaration", emanating from the XV meeting of the CDMA, which was held in Brazil between July 25 and 29, 2022, the Ministers agreed:
- In paragraph N°11 its recognition of the progress made by the Member States of the CDMA in the discussion of the area of Cyber Defense and Cyberspace, considering: the need for cooperation and exchange of information on an ongoing basis, with a view to developing capabilities to mitigate malicious cyber activities; the need to carry out joint activities to improve knowledge on the subject and build trust among countries; and the need to involve government institutions and civil society to create a holistic view of the phenomenon of Cyberspace, contributing to the generation of better responses to these malicious activities, in accordance with the domestic legal system of each country.
  - Likewise, paragraph 24 thanks and acknowledges Colombia for its collaboration in the development of the virtual *Ad hoc* Working Group "Cyberdefense and Cyberspace".

**II - Participating delegations:**

**A. Representatives of Colombia**

1. Diana Esperanza Castillo Castro, Director of International Relations and Cooperation, Ministry of National Defense.
2. Diana Catalina Calderón Millán, Coordinator of Multilateral Affairs at the Directorate of International Relations and Cooperation, Ministry of National Defense.
3. Luis Fernando Vargas Calderón, Advisor on Multilateral Affairs, Directorate of International Relations and Cooperation, Ministry of National Defense.
4. Major of the Colombian Air Force Luis Carlos Herrera, Head of the Cyber Incident Response Office CSIRT, Ministry of National Defense.

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5. Captain of the Colombian Air Force Sebastián Montañez Márquez, Proactive Services Group Coordinator, Cyber Incident Response Office - CSIRT, Ministry of National Defense.
6. Carlos Eduardo Garzón Astorquiza, Advisor, Cyber Incident Response Office - CSIRT, Ministry of National Defense.

**B. Representatives of the Pro Tempore Presidency of the XVI CDMA**

1. Mg. Juan E. Battaleme Martinez, General Secretary of the XVI CDMA.
2. Mg. Ana Carolina Podlesker, Executive Secretary of the XVI CDMA.

**C. National Delegations**

**Argentina**

Mr. Juan Pablo Villalba, Secretariat of Strategy and Military Affairs, Undersecretariat of Cyberdefense.

Mr. Gonzalo Gamba, Secretariat of Strategy and Military Affairs, Undersecretariat of Cyberdefense.

**Brazil**

Colonel José Ruben Marques, Interamerican Organizations Coordinator, Ministry of Defense.

Colonel Elton Luiz Mendina Rodrigues, Cyber Defense Command of the Armed Forces of Brazil.

Colonel (R1) Luciano Martins Menna, Cyber Defense Command of the Armed Forces of Brazil.

Captain Lieutenant Janize Monteiro de Castilho, Cyber Defense Command of the Armed Forces of Brazil.

**Canada**

Ms. Carrie Elliott, Section Chief, Latin America and Caribbean Policy, Department of Defence, Canada.

Mr. Alex Miranda, Deputy Director Western Hemisphere Policy, Department of Defence, Canada.

Mr. Loic Seguin-Favre, Policy Officer, Department of Defence, Canada.

Mr. Jean-Philippe Veilleux, Policy Officer, Department of Defence, Canada.

Ms. Maliha Mollah, Policy Officer, Department of Defence, Canada.

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**Costa Rica**

Mr. Raúl Rivera Bonilla, Police Commissioner to the Ministry of Public Security.

Mr. Jose Eduardo Mora Tames, Police Officer to the Ministry of Public Security.

**Dominican Republic**

Brigadier General Frank Mauricio Cabrera Rizek, ERD., Delegate of the Ministry of Defense of the Dominican Republic to the CDMA.

Colonel Nelton Baralt Blanco, ERD Director of the School of High Strategic Studies, UNADE/MIDE.

A/M Elsa M. Encarnación Gómez, MIDE. Director of Cybersecurity and Cyberdefense of the C5i of the Armed Forces.

Mr. Carlos Leonardo, Dominican Republic CSIRT Director

**El Salvador**

Colonel José Napoleón Moran Hernández, Head of the Informatics Unit at the Ministry of the National Defense.

Major Leonel Antonio Maye Menjivar, Head of Research and Development at the Ministry of the National Defense.

**Guatemala**

Colonel Julio Cesar Taracena Garavito, Commander of the Computer and Technology Command, Ministry of Defense.

Lieutenant Colonel Fausto David Rumpich Noj, Executive of the Cyber Defense Battalion of the Computer and Technology Command.

**Mexico**

Colonel I.C.E. Héctor Maldonado Zepeda, Deputy Director of the Cyberspace Operations Center of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the National Defense.

Captain 1/o. I.C.I. Brenda García Cruz, Officer of the Cyberspace Operations Center of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the National Defense.

**Trinidad and Tobago**

Flight Lieutenant Nadia Pierre, ICT Officer to the Ministry of Defense.

Lieutenant Kenneth Goodridge, ICT Director to the Ministry of Defense.

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**United States of America**

Mr. Max Shafron, Leader of the CDMA at the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Ms. Bethan Saunders, Cyber Policy Advisor, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Ms. Jacqueline Baumgartner, Director for Colombia, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

**D. Observer Institutions**

Lieutenant Colonel Flavio Augusto Coelho Regueira Costa, Cyber Defense Advisor to the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB).

**III - Development of the event**

- A. **Inauguration.** The Executive Secretary of the CDMA, Mag. Ana Carolina Podlesker, National Director of International Defense Policy of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Argentina, delivered the welcoming remarks on behalf of the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the XVI CDMA emphasizing the importance of hemispheric cooperation in cyber defense and cyberspace.

Afterwards, Mrs. Diana Esperanza Castillo Castro, Director of International Relations and Cooperation, Ministry of National Defense, thanked the members of the delegations of the Member Countries and experts for joining this meeting and encouraged them to nurture the discussion and results with their questions and comments on the proposed panels that seek to reflect on the challenges of the strategic context of cybersecurity and cyberdefense in the region.

**Panels.** With the moderation of Major of the Colombian Air Force Luis Carlos Herrera, Head of the Cyber Incident Response Office CSIRT-Defense, the Member States actively participated in the reflection on the challenges of the strategic context of cybersecurity and cyber defense in the region, through the presentations of experts presented below:

**Thursday, May 16**

- a. Panel "**Training 4 Gaining not Winning**", by Mr. Andrés Ricardo Almanza (Colombia), CEO of Cisos Club.
- b. Panel "**Cyberintelligence, OSINT and Virtual Humint for Strategic Actions in Cyberspace**", by Mr. Carlos Seisdedos (Spain), researcher and analyst.
- c. Panel "**Actions of the Secretariat of National Defense in Cybersecurity and Cyberdefense**", by Captain Brenda Garcia (Mexico), Computer and Informatics Engineer of the Secretariat of National Defense of Mexico.

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- d. Panel "**Artificial Intelligence and National Defense: Canada's National Defense Strategy 2024**", by Mr. Loïc Seguin-Faivre (Canada), Technology Policy Advisor, Department of National Defence of Canada.

*Friday, May 17th*

- e. Panel "**International Law on Cyber Operations**", by Mr. Carlos Leonardo (Dominican Republic), Director CSIRT Dominican Republic.
- f. Panel "**Merging Horizons: Disruptive Trends and their Influence on Cybersecurity**" by Mr. Fabian Valero (Colombia), Senior Cybersecurity Engineer for Power Digital Marketing.

#### **IV –Conclusions**

The *Ad hoc* Working Group on "Cyber Defense and Cyberspace" has discussed the topic and shared the following perspectives thus:

- Regional cooperation is key: In addressing cybersecurity challenges, it is clear that no single entity, sector, country or region can succeed alone. Collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors, along with multi-stakeholder consultation, are essential to building strengthened cyber ecosystems. Cooperative efforts at different levels build trust, increase reliability, and ensure that the benefits of digitization are maximized while effectively mitigating its latent risks.
- The importance of conducting Joint Cyber Simulation Exercises to improve response capability.
- The relevance of cooperating on Cyberdefense and cyberspace to strengthen and integrate hemispheric capabilities in the matter.
- The Working Group identified the most frequent threats and crimes in cyber matters and recognized the importance of information exchange in cyber defense and cybersecurity.
- Recognized the rapid advances of artificial intelligence and the impact it is having for national and hemispheric defense.
- The protection of essential State services is essential to guarantee the well-being and human rights of citizens, and must play a leading role in national cybersecurity strategies. For this purpose, all cyber operations must respect current international regulations and be committed to the responsibility and guarantee of States.
- The lack of a binding legal norm requires that countries actively collaborate in a friendly manner in the face of events generated by non-state actors or cybercriminals.

#### **V –Recommendations**

In recognition of the interdependence of the hemisphere, with regard to the issues presented during the working group meeting, and depending on the different circumstances and means of each country, the following recommendations were made for the consideration of the ministers:

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- **Recommend** to the Ministers to keep the *Ad hoc* Working Group "Cyber Defense and Cyberspace" in operation.
- **Promote cybersecurity education and awareness:** Invest in cybersecurity education and awareness and problem-solving-focused programs to build a skilled workforce and cultivate a culture of cybersecurity and ciberdefense awareness among citizens, businesses and government agencies.
- **Promote the participation of women** within cyber defense teams in order to have increasingly egalitarian and participatory areas.
- **Carry out a periodic exercise and simulation** with the participation of the Member States of the CDMA during the XVII of the Conference, Cycle 2025-2026. Emphasizing the importance of returning to what is established in Art. 27, a) of the Brasilia Declaration of July 28, 2022, with the objective of seeking to verify the effectiveness of response plans for cyber incidents, thus improving coordination between the parties.
- **Assess and improve cyber preparedness:** Implement mechanisms to periodically assess cyber preparedness at the national level, including conducting cybersecurity risk assessments, gap analyses, and maturity assessments.
- **Strengthening intelligence services and capabilities** is crucial to prevent cyberattacks through early warning and proactive threat detection. Investment in the collection, analysis and dissemination of intelligence tailored to cyberspace, along with collaboration between intelligence agencies, law enforcement and the private sector, enables the collection and analysis of actionable intelligence on cyber threats.
- Recognize that **the use of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence**, improves the speed and accuracy of threat detection, while **international cooperation** fosters collective defense against transnational cyber threats.
- **Emphasize that integrating cyber threat intelligence into national strategies and adhering to legal and ethical guidelines** ensures effective, transparent and accountable cyber intelligence activities that ultimately enhance national security and resilience in cyberspace.
- **Given emerging technological trends and the rapid convergence of disruptive technologies** such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, cloud computing and blockchain, it is necessary to visualize both the opportunities and their inherent risks, in order to establish plans to face these challenges, for which the development of comprehensive cybersecurity strategies that include investment in research, the implementation of international regulations and the promotion of a culture of cybersecurity is crucial.
- **Promote ongoing discussions and regional partnerships on norms of behavior in cyberspace and cybersecurity** to ensure national laws, sovereignty, and security are preserved.

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**VI –Closing**

Ms. Diana Esperanza Castillo Castro, Director of International Relations and Cooperation of the Ministry of National Defense of Colombia, highlighted the importance of these international cooperation spaces that will allow the development of common understandings and will promote the execution of joint strategies that will strengthen our region against malicious cyber actions, promoting awareness of cybersecurity risks.

Following, being 12:00 MD. (GMT:-05 Bogotá) of May 17, 2024, the *Ad hoc* Working Group "Cyber Defense and Cyberspace" concludes with the closing remarks of the Secretary General of the XVI CDMA who highlighted the importance of this Working Group in a world of integrated physical and digital spaces where the attack surface on our citizens, critical infrastructure and vital interests expands day by day, and that the first line of defense today is made up of our women and men who are part of the different civil and military cyber commands that work for a safer region in the digital sphere, protecting us from the evil effects that occur there.

Finally, the Secretary General and the Executive Secretary signs this Joint Declaration. For registration purposes, the Executive Secretariat of the XVI CDMA will send digital copies to the Member States of the official languages of the Conference.