

# *U.S., Chile Deepen Military Alliance*

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Santiago, October 13 (RHC-Mercopress) –U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel met with government leaders in the Chilean capital of Santiago de Chile on Sunday to discuss deepening the U.S. military partnership with Chile.

Hagel arrived from Colombia on a six-day, three-nation trip to South America that will include participating in the Conference of the Defense Ministers of the Americas, which begins this Monday in Arequipa, Peru.

In Santiago de Chile, the secretary met with President Michelle Bachelet, Foreign Minister Heraldo Munoz and Defense Minister Jorge Burgos. At news conference with Burgos after the meeting, Hagel noted he had met with his Chilean counterpart in Washington earlier this year.

His meeting with the Chilean leaders touched on a wide scope of issues, the defense secretary said. During his meetings, he noted that as Chile develops its global relationships — particularly its partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region — the respect it enjoys as a security exporter and for its capacity and techniques will continue to be important in helping to build defense capacities for other nations.

As Pacific nations with large and growing economies and economic interests in Asia, the secretary said, both Chile and the United States have a shared interest in the continued peace and prosperity and

stability of the Asia-Pacific region.

But even as the United States and Chile expand their cooperation in other regions, both nations remain committed to continued cooperation within their own hemisphere, “because transnational security challenges -- from climate change to ungoverned spaces, as well as effective responses to natural disasters -- requires the collaboration of all nations of the Americas,” Hagel said.

The Pentagon chief emphasized the continuing U.S. support for Chile's leadership among conference nations in areas such as search and rescue cooperation, noting that Chile's expertise in that area has become a model for other countries to follow.

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