



Ricardo Lagos Escobar

President of the Republic of Chile

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Ricardo Lagos Escobar". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive script.

Foreword by the President of the Republic

As with all public assets, Defense must benefit everyone equally, but it is a service that can only be provided by the public sector.

This is why the citizens must take responsibility for analyzing and determining the best defense policy, including its objectives and direction, as well as the most effective and efficient way to achieve these with the public funds allocated to this sector. This second edition of the Book of Defense contributes to this analysis and allows for a more transparent discussion of these issues, at both the national and the international level. Of special importance in this sense, is the standardized measuring of military expenses in Chile and Argentine, which both countries carried out in conjunction with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). This standardized measuring constitutes an open proposal to the region as a whole and to other developing countries.

The Armed Forces are a part of Chile, a country that is integrating rapidly into the world through an open and pluralistic democratic system, which aims to ensure growth with equity. They have regained their republican status, which was ensured to them shortly after Chile obtained its independence as a nation. Today, as along with the rest of the public sector, they are working towards modernization through democracy.

Consequently, the Armed Forces participate in the living history of the Chilean people. Far from being predetermined, this history marked by our quests and by our disagreements, by our successes and our mistakes. On the national level, in a democracy, this involves a search for institutions that serve all Chilean citizens. The purpose of National Security is to assure that this effort is not interrupted by external aggression.

The Ministry of National Defense directs this process, beginning with an appraisal of the regional and global security situation, which is flexible and must incorporate the political, economic and social dynamics of international relations. Modernization involves the incorporation of strategic systems of the future, including sustained development to achieve full interoperability among the Armed Forces services.

Chile's objectives are not aggressive; they are dissuasive. Chile and its Armed Forces are working towards peace in the region and in the world. It is therefore a cause of pride to us to see our flag in Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations.

There are still important issues that need to be addressed: a modern defense requires updating the Armed Forces social security system and reorganizing the upper echelons of the Ministry of Defense. The integration of women into the Armed Forces will be an issue of growing importance. We have also opened a debate on how the annual Defense budget should be financed.

The progress compiled in this Book of National Defense and the definitions which we, as a country, will continue to adopt in this sphere, are and will be directed towards achieving our will to guarantee peace in a safer world for all of us.