



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON DC 20319-5066

23 January 2026

Dear Members of the Class of 2027:

Welcome to the College of International Security Affairs (CISA) at the National Defense University. You were selected for this program because your nation, your service, and your leadership recognized your potential. That selection reflects trust—and expectation. Over the coming year, you will be challenged to think rigorously about conflict, competition, and cooperation in a security environment defined by ambiguity, friction, and consequence.

As one of NDU's six senior-service colleges, CISA educates joint warfighters, national security professionals, and international partners in the theory and application of irregular warfare across our campuses at Fort McNair and Fort Bragg, North Carolina. We do not treat irregular warfare as an abstract theory. It is a practical component of real-world strategy, one that demands disciplined analysis, sound judgment, and a strong moral compass.

During your time at CISA, you will study under an exceptional faculty body that blends accomplished civilian scholars, experienced military officers, and senior practitioners from across the U.S. government. They will expect engagement, preparation, and intellectual honesty. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the College and its distinguished faculty at <http://cisa.ndu.edu>.

Equally important will be the cohort you join. Our Fort McNair campus hosts the largest number of International Fellows of any comparable U.S. professional military education institution, and our Fort Bragg campus maintains a vital partnership with the special operations community. This is by design. The relationships you build here will broaden your perspective, challenge assumptions, and reinforce a central truth of modern conflict: trust among allies and partners is a force multiplier. Many of your classmates will become close friends. Some will almost certainly become trusted colleagues in future operations and crises.

Arrive ready to contribute. Be prepared to learn from others and be willing to share your own experience and expertise. We look forward to welcoming you to CISA, and to the year ahead.

Sincerely,

GREGG P. OLSON
Chancellor
College of International Security Affairs
National Defense University