



2017-2027 THEATER STRATEGY



UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND
PARTNERSHIP FOR THE AMERICAS



04 April 2017

USSOUTHCOM is committed to working with our partners to defend our shared home of the Americas. Based on more than 50 years of shared values, challenges, and opportunities, the foundation of this Partnership for the Americas is our common desire to improve citizen security and for all people in the region to enjoy the benefits of political and economic freedom.

USSOUTHCOM is adapting to an evolving security environment by shifting our central focus from disrupting the flow of illicit commodities to degrading the growing web of transregional and transnational threat networks threatening regional stability across the southern approaches to the U.S. Homeland. Our refined focus requires that we understand the security environment, cultivate a friendly network of allies and partners, and undertake all of our activities as part of a comprehensively joint effort spanning this network and all of its Joint Force, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational, and nongovernmental elements.

USSOUTHCOM has entered a period requiring operational flexibility to accommodate the uncertain nature of resource and funding availability. Under these conditions, meeting our goals will demand a disciplined approach to resource allocation. USSOUTHCOM is committed to achieving our strategic objectives to ensure we meet our nationally directed objectives. Our intent is to ensure support to broader global challenges and leverage our talent, expertise, innovation efforts, and energy to make substantive contributions to our Nation's security.

Working with our partners in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, is vital to the security, stability, and future of the western hemisphere. The nations of this region are deeply connected through trade, investment, and family remittances. Our collective success depends on all the nations working together towards a common goal of shared security and prosperity. We look forward to strengthening our Partnership for the Americas to realize the enormous potential of our common home.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K.W. Tidd', is located below the main text.

K.W. TIDD
Admiral, USN
Commander

United States Southern Command

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OVERVIEW

The U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) area of responsibility (AOR) is a large and diverse region encompassing 31 countries and 16 dependencies in Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Nearly 500 million people speaking over 100 languages and dialects inhabit the region. The AOR is characterized by a variety of government types, from Presidential Republics to Parliamentary Republics and Democracies to one Communist State. Within this area, USSOUTHCOM promotes regional security and stability while supporting U.S. national security objectives and defending the southern approaches to the United States.

The United States and the region share wide-ranging interests. In 2016, U.S. trade with Central and South America exceeded \$200 billion.¹ Today, more than 18 percent of our citizens cite Hispanic roots, with a record 27.3 million of them eligible to vote in 2016.² These demographics are shaping the future of the United States. All of these factors reinforce deep U.S. ties with the region—strategic, economic, and cultural.


“Interconnectedness and the ability to transmit information instantly can endow small groups with unprecedented influence: the garage band, the dorm-room startup, the viral blogger, and the terrorist cell.”

-GEN (R) Stanley McCrystal
Team of Teams: New Rules of
Engagement for a Complex World

This strategy is the capstone document of USSOUTHCOM and represents an evolution in our focus toward becoming a networked, more agile organization. We will re-double our commitment to, and integration with, our partners as we tackle shared concerns. “Business as usual” is no longer sufficient: our new strategic direction requires us to understand the changing and interconnected

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¹ <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c0009.html>

² <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/15/facts-for-national-hispanic-heritage-month/>

security environment, cultivate a friendly network of allies and partners, and undertake our activities as part of a comprehensive effort by this friendly network spanning the Joint Force, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational, and nongovernmental elements.

Our Theater Strategy aligns with current U.S. government policy and strategic guidance and will be operationalized by our Theater Campaign Plan. It serves as our blueprint for defending the southern approaches to the United States and promoting regional security by degrading transregional and transnational threat networks (T3Ns), responding rapidly to crises, and building relationships to meet global challenges.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Challenges

The illicit flows of goods and people, and the violence and corruption they fuel at home and abroad, are the visible manifestations of complex, adaptive, and networked threats. T3Ns are now the principal threat to regional security and stability. These networks operate unconstrained by national and geographic boundaries, unimpeded by rule of law, and fueled by enormous profits. Their interests, influence, capabilities, and reach undercut U.S. and partner nation interests across multiple domains. They prey on weak institutions and exploit the interconnected nature of our modern financial, transportation and technological systems, and the seams in our organizational boundaries.

T3Ns extend beyond transnational criminal organizations and gangs to ideologically motivated violent extremist organizations (VEOs) such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Lebanese Hezbollah. VEOs

focus on spreading their influence and building a network of radicalized supporters and adherents—to include foreign terrorist fighters—especially in vulnerable populations in the Caribbean and parts of South and Central America. Their supporters move weapons, cash, and other contraband. The motivation for this activity could be personal profit or to further the financial or ideological aims of designated terrorist groups. Other criminal networks have expanded into weapons and people smuggling, including Special Interest Aliens (SIAs) — individuals who pose a potential threat to national security—through the region and into the U.S.

In addition to T3N, the region is also extremely vulnerable to natural disasters and the outbreak of infectious diseases. Uneven prevention, management, and response capabilities in the region—coupled with underlying challenges like poverty and inadequate governance—amplify the impact of disasters, extend human suffering, and exacerbate existing developmental challenges.

While threat networks and other humanitarian crises pose a near and persistent danger to regional stability and security, the U.S. and our partner nations also face strategic challenges. Over the past decade, China, Russia, and Iran have established a greater presence in the region. Their actions and rhetoric require separate and serious consideration. These global actors view the region's economic, political, and security landscape as fertile ground through which to achieve their respective, long-term objectives and to advance interests that may be incompatible with ours and those of our partners. Their vision for an alternative international order poses a challenge to every nation that values non-aggression, rule of law, and respect for human rights—the very same principles that

underlie the Inter-American system of peace and cooperation.

To address these security challenges, USSOUTHCOM developed a networked approach to defend our southern approaches, keep our nation safe, and secure our shared home. This approach recognizes the critical role friendly networks play in helping to counter transregional, multi-domain, and multi-dimensional (TMM) threats, as defined by the 2016 National Military Strategy (NMS).

Opportunities

Naturally, these strategic challenges also present opportunities to advance regional security and stability. Over the past five decades, USSOUTHCOM worked diligently to earn—and keep—the region’s trust. We now aim to build upon this trust to deepen bilateral cooperation and expand cooperation to trilateral, multilateral, or transregional dimensions. For example, we are encouraging Pacific-facing countries like Chile, Colombia, and Peru to better integrate and export security best practices to Asia Pacific partners.

Our new approach also includes increasing information and subject matter expert exchanges (SMEEs); developing multi-user interfaces to improve interagency and intergovernmental collaboration; and expanding the friendly networks to include new public and private sector partners to strengthen our collective capability, capacity, and interoperability. We seek to leverage cutting-edge technologies to advance how we process and share information. To this end, we are investing in advanced data analytics of publicly available information to further the collective understanding of the operational environment and the development of strategies to counter threat networks.

We will challenge ourselves to be a more responsive, outward-looking, networked organization through deepened integration and cooperation with our USG (United States Government), multinational, and civil society partners.

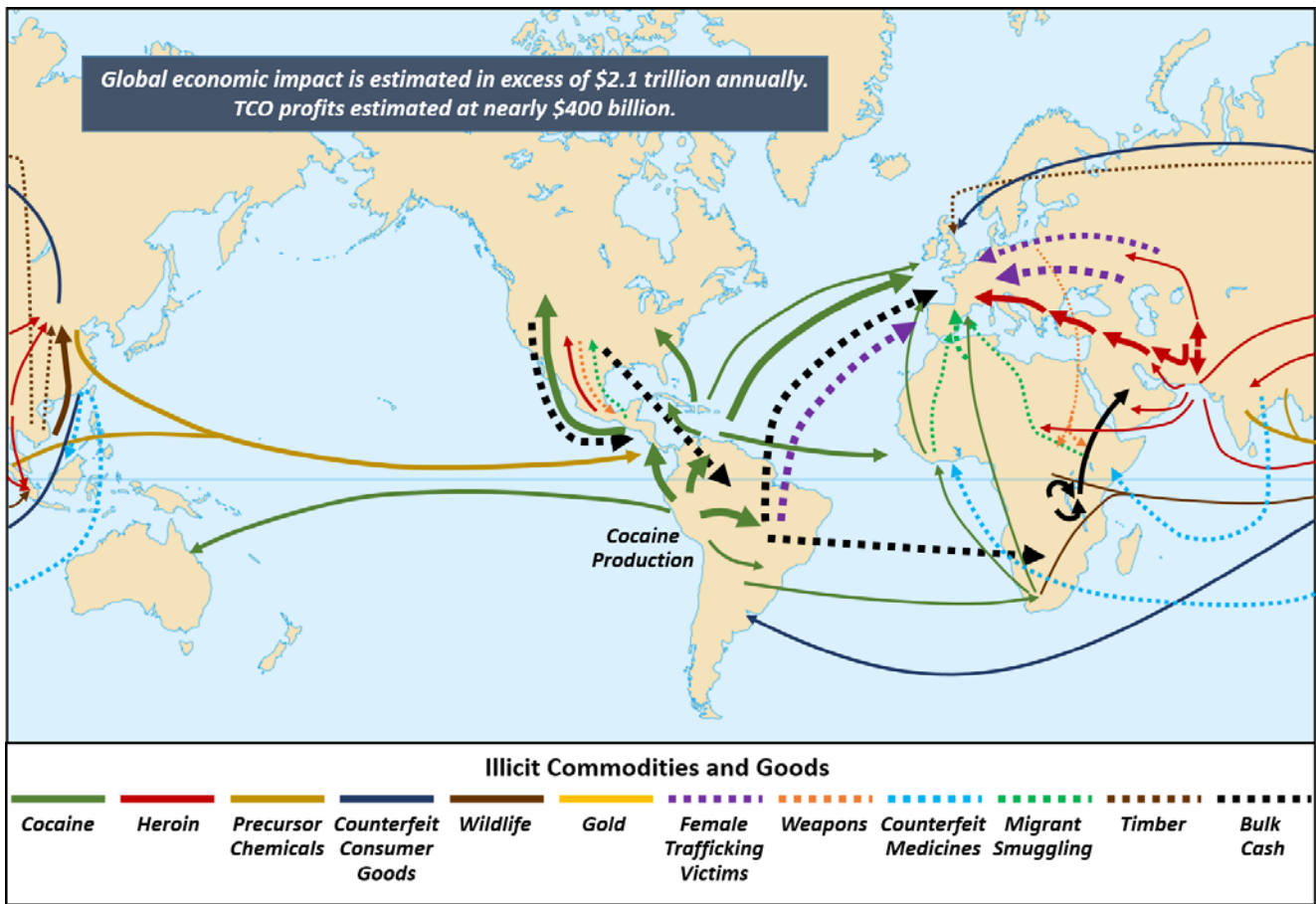


Figure 1: Global Illicit Pathways

THEORY OF SUCCESS: A NETWORK OF NETWORKS

Despite our history of supporting law enforcement, diplomatic, and development efforts, our capabilities and approach have not fully kept pace with the evolution of T3Ns. For years, we have been triaging the symptoms of the problem (commodities) rather than addressing the problem itself: the illicit networks, which develop, traffic, trade, and profit from those commodities (Figure 1). We will approach our challenges as a network of networks to degrade the effects of these T3Ns. Our Theory of Success is a friendly network of

interagency, regional, and non-governmental partners working together to disrupt T3N subnetworks (financial, transportation, leadership, etc.) and affecting the underlying conditions that allow them to flourish, enabling us to achieve the ultimate goal of degrading threat networks.

In USSOUTHCOM, we will operate using a networked defense. Operations in the region, in concert with our capable and willing USG partners, allies, and partner nations, are the forward presence in a layered defense against threat networks. This layered defense illuminates, degrades, and ensures threat networks and their enablers engaged in

nefarious operations cannot expand their operations. Success is defined as threat networks degraded in the region by our allies and partners with USG assistance provided through a combination of diplomacy, development, and defense.

Our strategy outlines our vision, mission, and strategic approach to provide guidance and assist in developing supporting plans for the USSOUTHCOM staff, components, Joint Task Forces, and Embassy Defense Teams.

Vision

We will be an innovative and trustworthy partner, enabling a networked defense approach that is grounded in mutual respect

and cooperative security to promote regional stability while advancing our shared interests.

Mission

U.S. Southern Command leverages rapid response capabilities, partner nation collaboration, and regional cooperation within our area of responsibility in order to support U.S. national security objectives, defend the Southern approaches of the United States, and promote regional security and stability.

Strategic approach

USSOUTHCOM’s strategic approach describes the ways we will use our means to achieve our strategic objectives while accounting for threats and risk to both the mission and to the force (Figure 2).

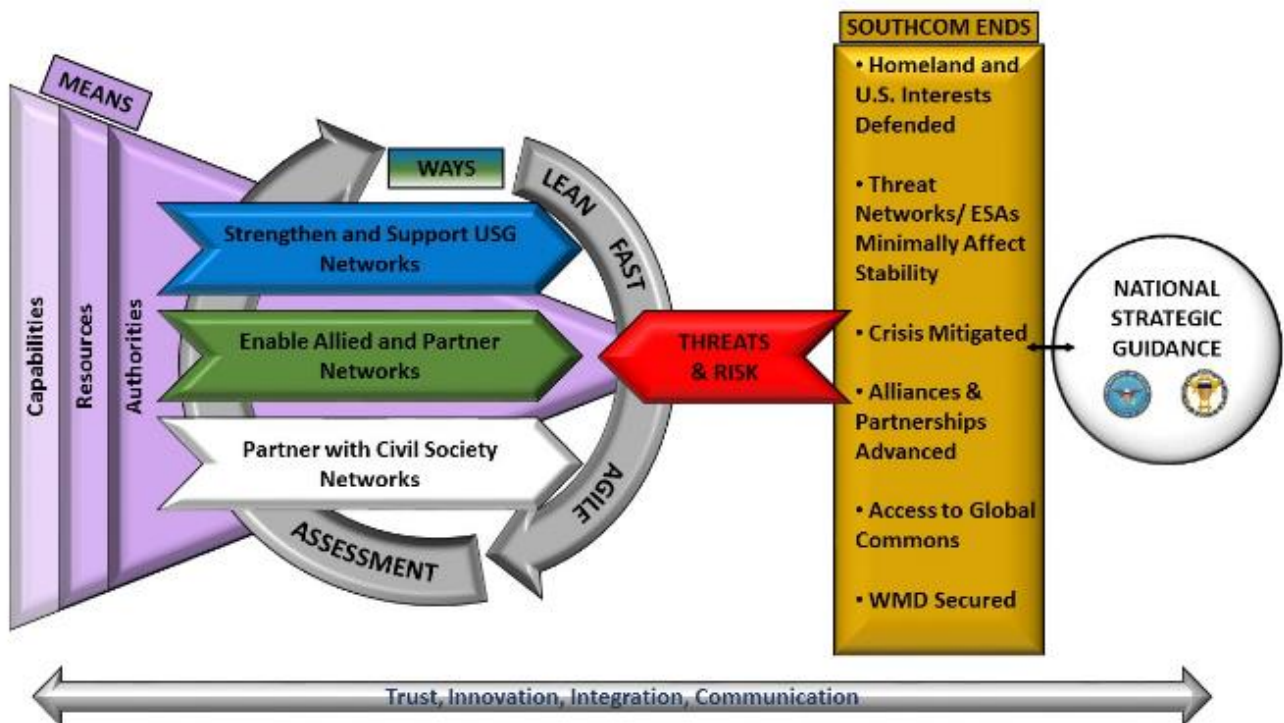


Figure 2: USSOUTHCOM Strategic Approach

OUR ENDS - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

We are publishing USSOUTHCOM's Theater Strategy during a transitional period of national security guidance. Our objectives are derived from existing strategic guidance and nest with the 2016 NMS, which acknowledges the complex, TMM nature of the challenges and threats we face. Our strategic objectives are the desired conditions that guide the development of defined, decisive, and attainable campaign objectives.

- U.S. Homeland defended and U.S. interests secured against threats emanating from, or transiting through, the AOR
- Stability within the AOR minimally affected by threat networks and malign external state actors
- USSOUTHCOM and partner nations prepared to respond rapidly and mitigate the effects of crises
- Global Alliances and current and emerging security partnerships maintained/established
- The U.S. and International community maintains freedom of movement and strategic access through the Panama Canal and in the global commons (international maritime, air, space, and cyberspace domains) throughout the AOR
- WMD materials and technologies remain safeguarded and proliferation prevented in the AOR

WAYS

A networked approach consisting of three ways explains how we will accomplish our strategic objectives through the employment of our available means.

Strengthen and Support USG Networks

This is the foundational and most critical network. USSOUTHCOM primarily plays a supporting role to U.S. country teams, U.S. law enforcement, and other lead federal agencies. Trust underpins our efforts to strengthen this network and is critical to our indirect approach enabling and complementing activities planned and executed by others.

USSOUTHCOM's ability to achieve effects will be enhanced if the enterprise is networked via virtual and physical associations promoting and improving common awareness; intelligence, plans, and operations fusion; awareness of weak signals; and the ability to scale responses. Three examples of how we are implementing this approach are establishing communities of interest (COIs), the creation of a Network Engagement Team, and support to Homeland Security Investigation's Operation CITADEL.

There may be circumstances and threats where USSOUTHCOM will leverage our network relationships to respond to critical threats to national security directly. As the military command with the responsibility to defend the southern approaches to the U.S., USSOUTHCOM must be prepared to respond rapidly and directly in order to, for example, deter and, if necessary, disrupt T3Ns involved in developing, acquiring, or proliferating WMD.

Enable Allied and Partner Nation Networks

USSOUTHCOM will enable partners to manage internal security threats and crises and contribute to regional and international security efforts. We will focus on train and equip, infrastructure, and building capability and capacity programs for countering T3N (C-T3N) activities. We will strengthen our relationships with the region's security forces. We will continue to strengthen and build network linkages to regional militaries, civilian agencies, and experts with whom we will cooperate in the event of a crisis. And we will work to improve preparedness and response capabilities across the AOR.

“Regional players almost always understand their neighborhood’s security challenges better than we do. To make capacity building more effective, we must leverage these countries’ unique skills and knowledge to our collect[ive] advantage.”

-General Martin Dempsey
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Foreign Policy, *“The Bend of Power”*
25 July 2014

Promoting the continued professionalization of partner nation defense and security institutions is a key tenet of our strategy. We have identified four key areas to enhance professionalism in militaries across the region: respect for human rights, the institutionalization of ‘jointness,’ the development of a professional non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps, and the integration of gender perspectives. These military imperatives describe the characteristics of modern national defense forces.

We will promote these military imperatives in all of our endeavors.

Partner with Civil Society Networks

USSOUTHCOM will partner with civil society, academia, the private sector, and populations that extend governance, improve community resilience, expand economic and social opportunities, and help vulnerable populations resist the corruptive influence of threat networks, the effects of natural and man-made disasters, and that of malign external actors.

MEANS

Our means are the resources, capabilities, and authorities we will use to achieve our strategic objectives. We do not anticipate any major increases in our means over the course of this strategy. USSOUTHCOM must devote increased attention to our fiscal management, assessment, and advocacy processes while leveraging resources, capabilities, and authorities from the functional combatant commands, components, and interagency partners. In addition, we will encourage partner nations to accept a greater role in achieving common security goals.

Our resources are the forces, footprint, and other assets and capabilities assigned or allocated to USSOUTHCOM to complete our mission. Figure 3 describes these resources and capabilities.

Components, Joint Task Forces, and Security Cooperation Organizations (SCOs)

USSOUTHCOM exercises its Combatant Command authority to accomplish missions through its service components, joint task forces, and other organizations; these organizations regularly conduct exercises, operations, and SMEEs. The military



Figure 3: USSOUTHCOM Components and JTFs

services provide USSOUTHCOM with component commands that perform our mission-specific and security cooperation activities. Joint Task Force-Bravo, located at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, provides an agile, responsive, and forward-stationed capability enabling security cooperation, C-T3N operations, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief. Joint Task Force-Guantanamo, located at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, conducts safe and humane legal care and custody of detainees supporting global contingency operations. Joint Interagency Task Force-South, located in Key West, Florida, conducts detection and monitoring operations to facilitate the interdiction of illicit trafficking and C-T3N operations. Our SCOs are our forward elements

in the region and conduct interagency coordination within the U.S. Embassy Country Teams ensuring the alignment of our security cooperation activities with the Embassy’s Integrated Country Strategy. The SCOs provide invaluable insight into partner nation requirements and perspectives.

The National Guard forces and capabilities employed through the National Guard Bureau’s State Partnership Program enable USSOUTHCOM to leverage enduring National Guard relationships as an instrument to advance civil-military cooperation.

Interagency, Civil Society, and broader Department of Defense (DoD) Collaboration

Through our organizational culture and unique regional security environment, USSOUTHCOM is

considered the premier interagency and public-private cooperation Geographic Combatant Command. Our interagency and private sector partners provide unique authorities, capabilities, and expertise that, in most cases, can only be found outside of DoD. Working by, with, and through interagency partners like the Department of State (DoS), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Justice, and collaborating with non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, businesses, and academia enables progress toward national aims that would be impossible with military power alone. We also work closely with combat support agencies (CSAs) and other geographic and functional combatant commands. CSAs include both logistics and intelligence oriented agencies and provide unique expertise and enabling capabilities. The TMM challenges we face require the arrangement of cohesive Joint Force actions in time, space, and purpose. We can only achieve this through persistent coordination with other combatant commands.

Authorities

U.S. law provides authorities for USSOUTHCOM to perform specific activities especially those focusing on training and supporting U.S. Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), supporting partner nation (PN) LEAs to counter T3N, and the authority to build partner capacity (BPC). The BPC authority supports C-T3N activities, maritime and border security, military intelligence, and other operations the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) determines to be in the national interest.

Other mission-critical authorities authorize USSOUTHCOM to support ongoing Special

Operations Forces (SOF) counterterrorism operations and provide logistics support, supply, and services to friendly foreign countries conducting SecDef-designated operations, such as joint operations with DoD, or military/stability operations benefitting U.S. Armed Forces or national security.

RISK

Strategy is about balancing our strategic objectives with our selected ways and available means. For the purposes of this strategy, we define risk as the probability and severity of failure, or unacceptable consequences in failing to achieve a strategic objective. Because we anticipate fewer means to apply to our strategic objectives, we must determine what we anticipate to be the likelihood of not meeting our objectives, the effects on the command and the region should we fail to do so, and what actions and activities we can undertake to mitigate those effects.

USSOUTHCOM is committed to achieving our strategic objectives to ensure we meet our nationally directed objectives; however, this Command cannot do more with less. Our intent is to tie our efforts to broader global challenges and leverage our talent, expertise, innovation efforts, and energy to mitigate negative consequences to our Nation's security, our AOR, and our collective interests.

Our major risk drivers are insufficient resourcing of maritime vessels and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms. We are also critically dependent on SOF, which we rely on for our persistent forward presence. We will mitigate some of these resource limitations by leveraging and sharing capabilities within our partner networks.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

The TCP and implementation orders will operationalize this strategy. The TCP will establish lines of effort, intermediate military objectives, and effects to guide our operations, actions, and activities. The TCP lines of effort will center on:

Countering Transnational and Transregional Threat Networks (C-T3N)

C-T3N is our main effort. The goal of our approach is to ensure the friendly networks degrade threat network capabilities, their operations, and affect the underlying conditions allowing them to flourish. We will undertake this approach to ensure regional stability and reduce threats to our mutual interests.

Building relationships to meet global challenges

Security partnerships are the foundation of everything we do. These partnerships—based on trust, shared values, mutual respect, and principled U.S. and regional leadership—ensure our hemisphere remains a beacon of peace and prosperity. To meet these challenges directly, we will work with our USG partners, including the Intelligence Community, and our regional partners to improve our shared understanding of what global challengers intend by their actions and how their activities in the AOR advance their respective global interests. We will continue to share information with our fellow Combatant Commands and multinational partners to support global planning.

USSOUTHCOM's capability and capacity-building efforts assist our partners to improve managing internal threats, securing their borders, responding to natural disasters, and delivering essential services like medical care and infrastructure to their citizens. But training is not an end in and of itself: it

is an opportunity to connect on a personal and professional level and to engage with regional militaries and security forces on important issues like human rights, rule of law, and accountable institutions. This engagement accomplishes several objectives: it helps us understand PN requirements and subsequently improve partner capabilities to stop threats before they destabilize the region; it helps deepen U.S. partnerships with the region; it encourages greater regional cooperation on shared challenges, such as threat networks and crisis response; and it reinforces the rules-based international order.

Enabling Rapid Response

We will help our partners, individual states, and regional organizations prepare for and mitigate crisis. This includes those actions taken supporting DoS and USAID to reduce risk, build resiliency, and develop emergency response capabilities throughout the region as well as our own efforts to build a culture of readiness within the Command. Our ability to negotiate the chaotic first 72 hours of any contingency is essential; we must be ready to stand alone, if necessary, until reinforcements arrive. Beyond crisis onset, we must simultaneously manage crisis and, to some degree, steady state operations potentially for an extended period. Key to this effort is an innovative and comprehensive exercise program that prepares us and our USG and multinational partners for contingency response, including the Defense of the Panama Canal and Panama Canal Area; Migration Operations; Humanitarian Assistance (HA); Disaster Response (DR) (including epidemic response); and unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral military operations by crisis response forces.

CONCLUSION

In terms of geographic proximity, trade, immigration, and culture, no other part of the world more greatly affects daily life in the United States than Central and South America and the Caribbean. The transregional challenges we must address provide opportunities to integrate our activities with our regional partners and to tie our collective efforts to the greater global whole. Flexibility will be crucial as we adjust to support the global security environment; we must be lean, fast, and agile. Together, with our network of partners, we will defend the southern approaches and ensure the Western Hemisphere remains a beacon of shared progress, shared prosperity, and shared democratic values.