



A Theater Strategy of Focused Cooperation and Mutual Security United States Southern Command



2005



MESSAGE FROM THE COMBATANT COMMANDER

The United States Southern Command's (USSOUTHCOM's) Theater Strategy outlines our philosophy and strategic objectives. It supports the foreign policy of the United States as set forth by our civilian leadership and is the cornerstone for formulating USSOUTHCOM's Theater Security Cooperation Strategy. This strategy provides a regional vision of military cooperation and is designed to combat terrorism, strengthen regional stability, and protect U.S. security interests in Latin America and the Caribbean. It supports the War on Terrorism by leading USSOUTHCOM efforts toward the achievement of strategic objectives to: ensure the forward defense of the United States, establish regional partnerships, and enhance hemispheric stability and security.



VISION

The U.S. Southern Command is the recognized partner of choice and center of excellence for regional security affairs within a hemisphere of escalating importance. The command is organized to support the defense of the U.S. and is focused on achieving regional partnerships which:


- **Are committed to democratic values and principles;**
- **Demonstrate respect for human rights;**
- **Support partner nations' capabilities to secure their territories and defend their borders;**
- **Collectively ensure regional and hemispheric security;**
- **Deter, dissuade, and defeat transnational threats to the stability of the region.**

USSOUTHCOM derived its strategy from national objectives and interests and incorporated the intent of the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, the National Military Strategy, Security Cooperation Guidance, and Presidential Directives.

The conditions of poverty, inequality, and corruption foster threats and challenges in USSOUTHCOM's area of responsibility. The unconventional threats of narco-terrorism, logistical and financial support of Islamic Radical Groups, illicit trafficking, mass migration, forgery and money laundering, kidnapping, urban gangs, and natural disasters threaten the stability and prosperity of democracy in the hemisphere. These threats are flexible and adaptive, and are not bound by borders. The security forces of the hemisphere must adapt and cooperate to deny these transnational threats the opportunity to proliferate.

Recognizing and respecting the sovereignty, capabilities, and uniqueness of each of our partner nations is crucial for success, as we have much to learn from each other. We encourage cooperation and collaboration among regional partners to eliminate common threats and to share approaches and experience. Our vision is a community

of friendly democracies working to extend the benefits of freedom, economic reform, and prosperity to all of its citizens. The dedicated effort of USSOUTHCOM's military and civilian personnel is fundamental to the achievement of this goal.


BANTZ J. CRADDOCK
General, US Army
Commander

A THEATER STRATEGY OF FOCUSED COOPERATION AND MUTUAL SECURITY

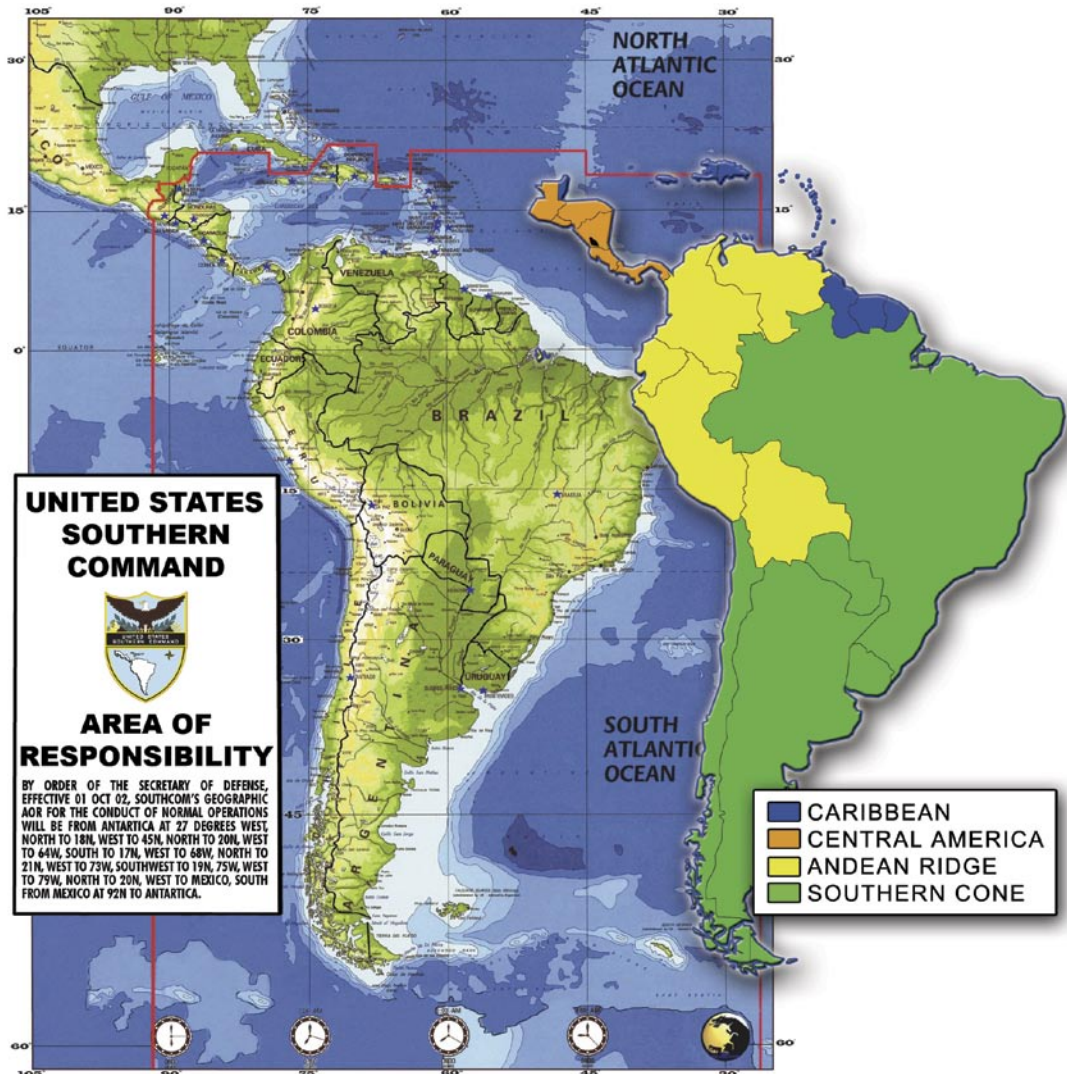
- ***Area of Responsibility***
- ***Component Commands and Task Forces***
- ***Strategic Importance of Latin America and the Caribbean***

The United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), located in Miami, Florida, is one of nine unified Combatant Commands (COCOMs) in the Department of Defense. It is responsible for providing contingency planning, operations, and security cooperation for Central and South America, the Caribbean (except U.S. commonwealths, territories, and possessions), Cuba and the Bahamas, and their territorial waters; as well as for the force protection of U.S. military resources at these locations. USSOUTHCOM is also responsible for ensuring the defense of the Panama Canal and canal area.

USSOUTHCOM is a joint command comprised of more than 1,200 military and civilian personnel representing the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and several other federal agencies. The Services provide USSOUTHCOM with component commands which, along with our Joint Special Operations component, two Joint Task Forces, one Joint Interagency Task Force, and Security Assistance Offices, perform USSOUTHCOM missions and security cooperation activities.

USSOUTHCOM exercises its COCOM authority through the commanders of its components, Joint Task Forces/Joint Interagency Task Force, and Security Assistance Organizations.

The USSOUTHCOM **Area of Responsibility (AOR)** includes partner nations in Central and South America and the Caribbean as well as dependencies of France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Each of the nations and dependencies of the AOR has its own unique issues, threats, challenges and opportunities. Four geographic regions have been identified, however, that consist of nations and territories with similar sets of demographics, economies, and issues. Those regions are the Andean Ridge, the Caribbean, Central America, and the Southern Cone.



Component Commands



U.S. Army South (USARSO) Located at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, USARSO forces include aviation, intelligence, communication, and logistics units. USARSO supports regional disaster relief and counterdrug efforts; provides oversight, planning, and logistical support for Humanitarian and Civic Assistance projects throughout the region in support of the USSOUTHCOM Theater Security Cooperation Strategy.

U.S. Southern Air Force (USSOUTHAF) Located at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, USSOUTHAF commands the Combined Air Operations Center for command and control of air component activity in the AOR; is executive agent for cooperative security locations at Curacao/Aruba, and Manta, Ecuador; provides joint/combined radar surveillance architecture oversight, and intra-theater airlift; hosts a Regional Air Forces Counterdrug Conference and Air Initiative in support of the USSOUTHCOM Theater Security Cooperation Strategy.



U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (USNAVSOC) Located at Mayport Naval Base, Florida, USNAVSOC exercises command and control over all U.S. naval operations in the USSOUTHCOM AOR including naval exercises, maritime operations, and port visits. USNAVSOC is also the executive agent for the operation of the cooperative security location at Comalapa, El Salvador, which provides basing in support of aerial counter narco-terrorism operations.

U.S. Marine Forces South (USMARFORSOUTH) Located in Miami, Florida, USMARFORSOUTH provides Marine Air-Ground Task Force elements from throughout the Marine Corps in support of USSOUTHCOM's Theater Security Cooperation Strategy. These scalable forces provide a tailorable amphibious force capable of providing a wide range of options in the War on Terrorism and against other regional threats.



U.S. Special Operations Command South (USSOC SOUTH) Located at Homestead Air Reserve Base near Miami, Florida, USSOC SOUTH provides the primary theater contingency response force and plans, prepares for, and conducts special operations in support of USSOUTHCOM. USSOC SOUTH controls all Special Operations Forces in the AOR and also establishes and operates a Joint Special Operations Task Force when required.

Task Forces



Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF B) Located at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, JTF Bravo operates a forward, all-weather day/night C-5-capable airbase. JTF Bravo organizes multilateral exercises and supports, in cooperation with our partner nations, Humanitarian and Civic Assistance, counterdrug, contingency and disaster relief operations in Central America.

Joint Task Force Guantanamo (JTF GTMO) Located at Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, JTF Guantanamo conducts detention and interrogation operations in support of the War on Terrorism, coordinates and implements detainee screening operations, and supports law enforcement and war crimes investigations. JTF Guantanamo is also prepared to support mass migration operations at Naval Base GTMO.

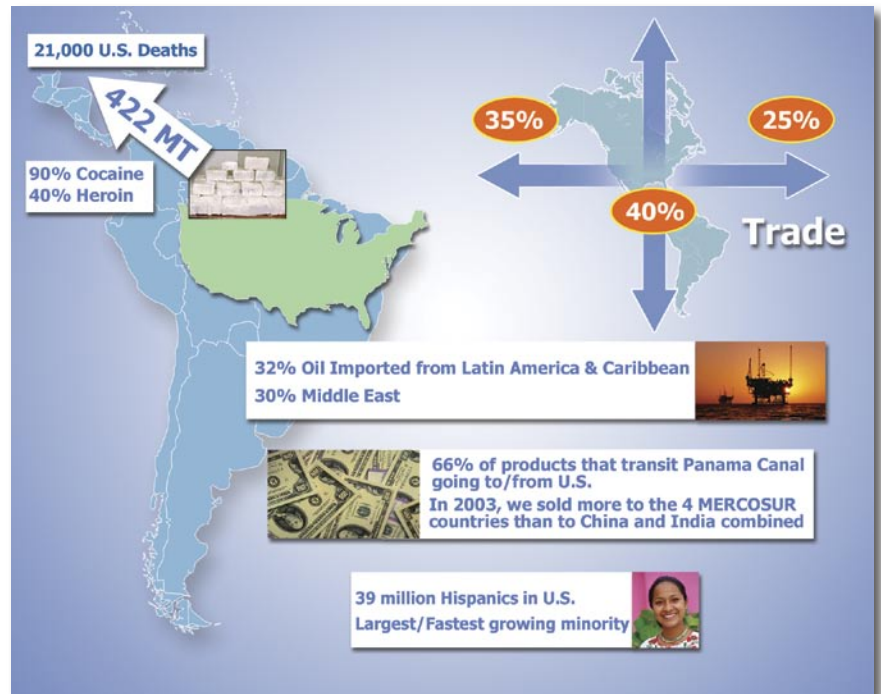


Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S) Located in Key West, Florida, JIATF-South is an interagency task force which serves as the catalyst for integrated and synchronized interagency counterdrug operations, and is responsible for the detection and monitoring of suspect air and maritime drug activity within the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and the eastern Pacific. JIATF-South also collects, processes, and disseminates counterdrug information for interagency operations.

Strategic Importance of Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin American and Caribbean nations are strategically important to the national security and economic future of the United States - an often-overlooked reality. We are linked by geography, history, demography, economics and a shared security environment. But most importantly, we are linked by the democratic aspirations of our peoples. The long-term interests of the U.S. are best served by a hemisphere of stable, secure, and democratic nations. A prosperous future will rest on a foundation of shared values, efficient governments, free societies, and open, market-based economies.

By 2010, U.S. trade with this region is projected to exceed trade with Europe and Japan combined; in the aggregate, today, 40 percent of U.S.-conducted trade is within the Western Hemisphere. Latin America and the Caribbean are also major suppliers of oil to the U.S. Additionally, the Panama Canal is essential for world trade and the economies of the hemisphere. Two-thirds of all products transiting the Panama Canal are moving to or from the U.S., and canal security remains a U.S. national priority.



Apart from economic ties to the region, the U.S. has the world's fifth-largest Spanish-speaking population and maintains important cultural links to the nations in USSOUTHCOM's AOR. Citizens of Hispanic descent are now the largest and fastest growing minority in the U.S.

Our futures and mutual prosperity are being undermined by a number of growing threats, not the least of which is international illicit trafficking. Illicit drugs, much of which originate in South America, take more than 21,000 American lives annually and negatively affect the productivity of hundreds of thousands more. The same routes that allow this drug flow also permit the movement of illegal aliens, weapons and, potentially, terrorists. National security along our southern approaches has never been more critical.

32% of U.S. oil imports are from Latin America and the Caribbean



66% of products transiting the Panama Canal are moving to and from the U.S.

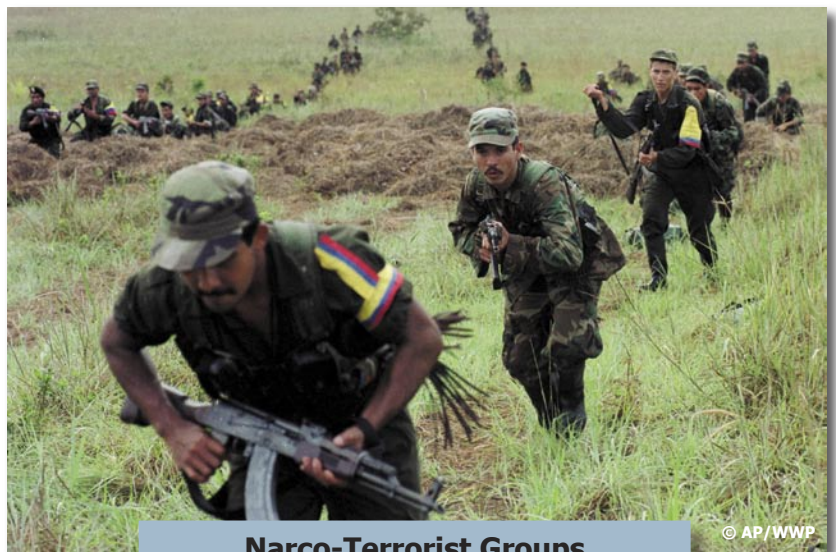


THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

- *Threats*
- *Challenges*

During the past 25 years, the consolidation of democratic rule and pursuit of economic reforms throughout much of the AOR have dramatically reduced the potential for conventional military conflict. All of our partner nations are now governed by democratically elected civilian officials. Countries of the hemisphere have made important strides toward resolving long-standing border disputes, implementing innovative arms control measures, developing confidence and security building measures, and forging regional cooperation to assist governments in crisis. Today, the Western Hemisphere is among the least militarized regions in the world, representing less than four percent of the world's annual defense spending (excluding the U.S. and Canada).

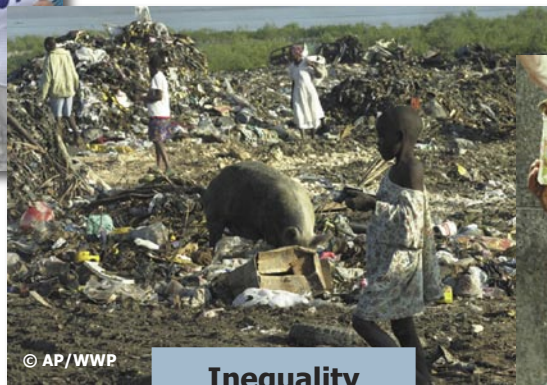
Despite these positive trends, many nations in the AOR continue to struggle with conditions that create opportunities for transnational crime and terrorism while inhibiting economic and social opportunity. The absence of transparency in both the public and private sectors and the perennial, endemic problems of corruption and inequality (in distribution of wealth and in regard to civil rights) continue to impede the development of governmental and social institutions. Poverty and a lack of economic opportunity grip more than 40 percent of the population in the AOR. These factors combine to create fertile recruiting grounds for illegally armed and narco-terrorist groups, and threaten the region's ability to achieve its social and economic aspirations.



Narco-Terrorist Groups



Corruption



Inequality



Endemic Poverty

Threats

We live in a world of complex and evolving threats that cross national borders and often require a holistic multi-national approach with multidimensional solutions. USSOUTHCOM will continue to work with other U.S. government agencies and partner nations to find those solutions, addressing law enforcement, judicial, economic, educational, and health issues. The threats range from narco-terrorism, criminal gangs, and transnational terrorism, to natural disasters and mass migration.

Narco-terrorism, criminal gangs, and kidnapping combine to make Latin America and the Caribbean one of the world's most violent regions. The annual homicide rate in Latin America has risen from 8 per 100,000 people in the 1970s to 13 per 100,000 in the 1990s, to 27.7 per 100,000 in 2002.

Hurricanes, fires, floods, and other natural disasters destroy millions of dollars of infrastructure and commerce throughout the AOR and trigger the displacement of thousands of people each year. Whether caused by natural disasters or man-made conditions, mass migration constitutes a threat to the region and to thousands of people who seek to escape their countries under dangerous and life-threatening conditions.

The AOR contains expanses of territory where governmental efforts to assert influence are seriously hampered by difficult-to-traverse terrain and limited resources. Terrorists continue to seek and exploit seams, whether territorial or jurisdictional, and use ungoverned spaces as sanctuaries for illegal activities such as illicit trafficking of weapons, drugs, and humans; document forgery; and money laundering. Often these activities fund worldwide terrorism. The illicit drug trade has become inextricably linked to terrorism, with drug traffickers benefiting from terrorists' military skills, weapon supplies, and access to clandestine organizations. USSOUTHCOM's support for the War on Terrorism includes detecting and addressing transnational threats emanating from or transiting through our AOR, as well as overseeing detainee operations at U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.



Challenges

While each of our partner nations has its own unique challenges, a set of common challenges exists throughout the hemisphere. USSOUTHCOM remains mindful of this reality as we execute our mission.

A strong trend toward respect for human rights, together with democratization, are two success stories of the last 20 years. USSOUTHCOM is proud of the work it has done with partner nations to advance this effort; however, there is more to do. Fragile democracies are susceptible to hijacking by segments of society that advocate violence to extort governmental reforms or to achieve personal gain. We must be alert for regimes that use the ballot box to gain power, but then systematically undermine democratic institutions and eliminate the checks and balances that make government truly accountable to the people.

Many partner nations face fiscal constraints limiting their ability to adequately fund the military and security forces as required to successfully deal with the threats they face. Conflict reduction and improved relations in Latin America and the Caribbean, combined with the rise of conflict elsewhere in the world, have drawn resources away from the USSOUTHCOM AOR. Additionally, some countries have seen their security assistance from the U.S. curtailed since 2002 when the U.S. Congress passed the American Servicemembers' Protection Act. This act withholds foreign military assistance from those countries that have signed and ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, but have not signed an Article 98 agreement with the U.S.

Partner nation military and security forces are trained and equipped to differing standards, making combined operations difficult. This limited interoperability impedes regional cooperation, hampers comprehensive law enforcement efforts, and contributes to the presence of permissive environments for the operations of criminal and terrorist organizations.

Lastly, anti-U.S. government sentiment is present in the AOR due to a widespread and mistaken perception that the U.S. maintains a unilateral approach and an imperialist attitude toward partner nations. At a time when USSOUTHCOM's cooperative security programs face legal constraints and resource limitations, non-hemispheric countries are establishing their own economic, military, and diplomatic influence to attain their strategic goals, which may be counter to those of the U.S.



Anti-U.S. Government Sentiment

THEATER STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

- *Ensure the Forward Defense of the United States*
- *Establish Regional Partnerships*
- *Enhance Hemispheric Stability and Security*



The security environment in the AOR has changed significantly during the past decade. Although border tensions have not been completely eliminated, the traditional threat of nations attacking neighbors with military force has diminished dramatically. Increasingly, asymmetric threats posed by non-state actors attempting to exploit nations' vulnerabilities have supplanted conventional force-on-force challenges. In response to the events of September 11, 2001, the President's *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* established that, "Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal government."

The *National Defense Strategy* supports the *National Security Strategy* and identifies four Defense objectives: secure the United States from direct attack, secure strategic access and retain global freedom of action, invigorate existing and develop new alliances and partnerships, and establish favorable security conditions. The *National Military Strategy*, in turn, provides focus for military activities to support the guidance from the President and Secretary of Defense: protect the United States, prevent conflict and surprise attack, and prevail against adversaries when called upon by the President.

The USSOUTHCOM strategy is built upon the guidance of the three preceding documents and addresses threats and challenges specific to USSOUTHCOM's AOR. In keeping with the highest priority of the nation, USSOUTHCOM will **ensure the forward defense of the United States**. We must protect the southern approaches to our nation with an active defense in-depth that counters -- early and at a safe distance -- those who seek to harm the U.S.

The forward defense of the U.S. can best be accomplished through the broad cooperation of partner nations. USSOUTHCOM must strengthen existing relationships and **establish regional partnerships** necessary to provide collective security across the broad spectrum of threats facing peaceful nations in the region. Coalitions and regional partnerships comprised of capable and willing nations build mutual security, deter aggression and extremism, and provide the underlying conditions for success if military action is required.

Strong regional partnerships will enable USSOUTHCOM and our partner nations to **enhance hemispheric stability and security**. The stability and security of the U.S. and partner nations hinge upon our ability to work together in a mutual effort to confront and defeat common security challenges. Focused regional security cooperation is key to building interoperability and other capabilities required to confront challenges before they mature into direct threats.

Ensure the Forward Defense of the United States

- *Assure, Dissuade, Deter, and Defeat*
- *Develop Mechanisms for Information Sharing*
- *Ensure Access for Peacetime Operations and Contingency Response*

USSOUTHCOM continues to support the War on Terrorism within our AOR and provides a forward defense against known threats transiting through or emanating from it. We seek to deter aggression and coercion while retaining the capability to act promptly in self-defense and remain cognizant that the deterrence and defeat of certain threats, particularly Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), may require preemptive action. USSOUTHCOM will remain vigilant against threats at all times. We will build regional coalitions that **assure** our partners and **dissuade, deter, and defeat** transnational threats against U.S. and partner nation interests throughout the AOR.



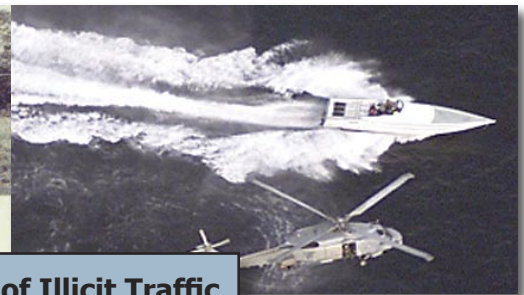
Trans-National Threats

partner nations, to counter: transnational terrorism and crime; illegal narcotics production; illicit trafficking (narcotics, arms, and humans); and the proliferation of WMD, their precursors, and delivery systems. Working with other agencies of the U.S. government, we will support partner nation efforts to prevent internal and transnational threats from destabilizing democratically elected governments. We will develop and implement effective integrated **information sharing** and provide security assistance to regional partners to promote regional security arrangements and support nations engaged in the War on Terrorism. When requested by partner nations, we will assist in the restructuring and training of defense and security forces to combat transnational threats.

Illegal aerial and maritime traffic remains a significant transnational challenge and constitutes a serious threat to the security of the United States and other nations in our hemisphere. USSOUTHCOM will assist partner nations to develop capabilities, within a lawful framework, that support civil authority. We support multinational cooperation to enhance each partner nation's capabilities to detect, track, monitor, and share such tracking information. We also encourage multinational coordination of communication, asset allocation, and the interception of illegal traffic. Together, U.S. and partner nation participation in aerial and maritime hemispheric coalitions will greatly enhance our efforts to counter the security and stability threats posed by international terrorist organizations and transnational criminal groups.



Interdiction of Illicit Traffic



Through strategic and operational planning, USSOUTHCOM will ensure effective security cooperation to confront mutual threats and challenges before they mature into a crisis, and enable the execution of military operations when the need arises. USSOUTHCOM will **ensure access for peacetime operations and contingency response** by developing cooperative security locations in conjunction with host partner nations. We will work collectively to improve logistics distribution and expand opportunities for multinational exercises to support the development of regional cooperation capabilities.



Contingency Response

Establish Regional Partnerships

- *Foster Transparency*
- *Support Professionalization of Military and Security Forces*
- *Develop Interoperability*
- *Promote and Defend Human Rights*

Nations, working together in regional coalitions to address shared challenges, **foster transparency**, efficiency, and accountability; build a collaborative environment; and decrease tension and rivalries. USSOUTHCOM promotes this approach to create synergies and advance capabilities not normally available to countries with reduced defense budgets. We will continue to develop cooperative and productive relations with all states in the hemisphere by actively building upon existing relationships and seeking to bridge the differences in perspective that may exist. We will support the ongoing **professionalization of militaries and security forces** through activities that establish doctrine, develop crisis response capabilities, and support law enforcement in ways consistent with constitutional roles and responsibilities.



Regional Partnerships

will foster cooperation and improved security relationships to dissuade regional military competition and assist in the **development of partner nation interoperability** throughout the hemisphere. We will also promote willingness to conduct combined training and operations with minimal U.S. support. USSOUTHCOM's Theater Security Cooperation Strategy focuses on building defense relationships and providing U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to support training and military operations. USSOUTHCOM security cooperation, in coordination with U.S. embassies, manages programs to improve partner nation military/security capabilities and ensure interoperability among partner nations and U.S. forces.



Interoperability

USSOUTHCOM conducts numerous air, land, and sea-based multinational exercises yearly. Capitalizing upon the capabilities developed and interoperability improved through these exercises, USSOUTHCOM encourages participating nations to move from the exercise to the operational environment to form regional forces capable of responding to crises. Our joint training and exercise program focuses on areas such as counter narco-terrorism operations, peacekeeping operations, maritime and migrant operations, disaster consequence management, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, and health services support.



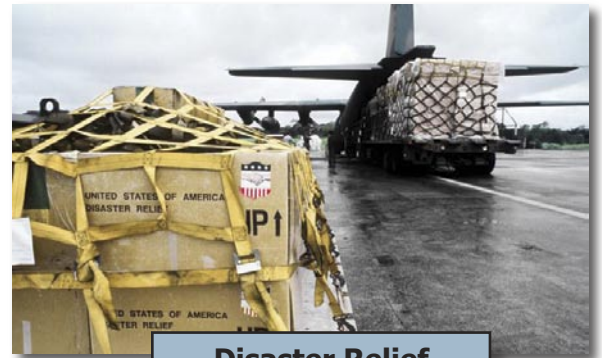
Humanitarian Assistance



Civic Assistance

Establish Regional Partnerships continued...

USSOUTHCOM's overseas humanitarian assistance and disaster relief programs build the capacity of host nations to respond to disasters and build their self-sufficiency while also empowering regional organizations. These programs provide valuable training to U.S. military units in responding effectively to assist the victims of storms, earthquakes, and other natural disasters through the provision of medical, surgical, dental, and veterinary services, as well as civil construction projects. The Humanitarian Assistance Program funds projects that enhance the capacity of host nations to respond when disasters strike and better prepare them to mitigate acts of terrorism. Humanitarian Assistance Program projects such as technical aid and the construction of disaster relief warehouses, emergency operation centers, shelters, and schools promote peace and stability, support the development of the civilian infrastructure necessary for economic and social reforms, and improve the living conditions of impoverished regions in the AOR.



Disaster Relief

USSOUTHCOM remains dedicated to **promoting and defending human rights**. We will assist partner nation militaries and security forces to institutionalize respect for human rights through the implementation of a human rights consensus document that establishes a regional model of standards and measures of effectiveness, human rights monitoring, and international humanitarian law education programs. We continue to engage proactively through regional meetings, workshops, and conferences with governmental and non-governmental organizations and security officials to reinforce a culture of respect for human rights.



**Human Rights
Regional Engagement**



Enhance Hemispheric Stability and Security

- *Support Partner Nations' Efforts to Secure their Territories and Borders*
- *Protect International Lines of Communication*

There are many conditions such as poverty, inequality, and corruption that foster the threats and challenges faced in the AOR. Predominant among these conditions is endemic poverty. High rates of poverty foster regional threats such as radical regimes, criminal activities, and violence. A secure and stable environment is necessary for the sustained improvement of economic growth and prosperity required to reduce poverty in our hemisphere.

USSOUTHCOM will **support partner nations' efforts to secure their territories and borders** through a legitimate government authority. Legitimate government authority is necessary to provide basic security for the citizenry, uphold the rule of law, protect human rights, and consolidate democracy. Secure borders and territories are essential to deny terrorists freedom to operate in ungoverned spaces. USSOUTHCOM works with nations and regional organizations to prevent conflict while supporting stability operations and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief missions. We promote policies that provide a stable security environment, encourage development, improve living standards, and expand opportunities. Collectively these efforts help to bring about fundamental, favorable, and enduring positive changes.

USSOUTHCOM, working closely with the U.S. Department of State, continues to support democracy throughout the AOR and encourage regional militaries to support their democratically elected governments. We foster the development of greater civilian participation in defense and security policy, including executive and legislative branch oversight of defense institutions and budgets. We also assist partner nation military and security forces to clearly establish roles and missions as defined by national directives and will assist in the development of national security and military strategies.

USSOUTHCOM encourages governments to field only those military capabilities appropriate for defense requirements. We foster positive relations, promote stability, ensure safe access for all legitimate international traffic in key regions and the global commons, and **protect international lines of communication**. USSOUTHCOM also ensures the security and continued operation of the Panama Canal, a transit hub vital to the free flow of strategic resources for the U.S. and world economies.

“The new threats of the 21st Century recognize no borders. Terrorists, drug traffickers, hostage takers and criminal gangs form an anti-social combination that increasingly seeks to destabilize civil societies.”

Honorable Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. Secretary of Defense

Address to 2004 Conference of Western Hemisphere Defense Ministers

KEY ENABLERS

- ***Resources***
- ***Strategic Communication***
- ***Transformation***

USSOUTHCOM will ensure that we are capable of meeting our strategic objectives. To do so, we must make certain that we have an adequate level of resources to meet regional responsibilities; our strategic communication process synchronizes themes and messages in support of U.S. policy and hemispheric cooperation; and we continue to transform our concepts, practices, organization, training, and equipment in order to keep pace with the changing environment and challenges.

While continuing to maximize effectiveness in a fiscally-constrained environment, USSOUTHCOM will identify the **resources** required to execute this strategy. At the same time, we will raise awareness of the strategic importance of Latin America and the Caribbean with members of the U.S. Congress, key interagency decision and policy makers, and the American public in order to garner the support needed to achieve our strategic objectives.

Mastering the process of **strategic communication** will improve the potential to achieve our objectives by shaping the information environment through the linkage of our words and actions. A synchronized interagency effort of public affairs and public diplomacy will provide the transmission of integrated and coordinated themes and messages, which will be reinforced through political, economic, and military actions and activities, demonstrating the validity of what we communicate. USSOUTHCOM will incorporate strategic communication into deliberate and contingency planning, exercises, and the development of operations within the AOR.

USSOUTHCOM will achieve its strategic objectives through a continual focus on the dynamic environment of the AOR and a consistent effort aimed at transforming to operate effectively in it. **Transformation** involves reorganizing and improving tactics, techniques, and procedures across the spectrum of military operations, while incorporating new technology and capabilities. It also includes updating the theater architecture and reshaping our concepts and processes to better meet the challenges and threats of the future. Our transformation effort will continue the ongoing process of reviewing force and access requirements and will expand joint experimentation in our AOR.

CONCLUSION

Through a process of partner nation and regional analysis, USSOUTHCOM identifies and responds to the challenges and threats faced by the U.S. and partner nations, considering all available resources and each nation's political, military, and cultural distinctiveness. We develop policies and strategies that address those threats and challenges, while satisfying both U.S. and partner nation goals and objectives. USSOUTHCOM also seeks, through the Department of Defense and the U.S. Government Interagency, to have a strong voice in the development of U.S. national strategies and policies that improve the security environment within our AOR, dissuade regional military competition, and promote regional solutions. We strive to implement our strategies and policies in ways that are mutually beneficial to the United States and our partner nations.

The transnational nature of threats and opportunities will continue to draw the nations of our hemisphere together to improve security as well as commerce and communication. Trade, travel, information, and ideas now flow across borders, oceans, and geographic obstacles, bringing unprecedented benefits to previously isolated people and communities. The same connectivity that promises progress, however, enables threats to move, hide, and sustain themselves with greater ease than ever before. The coming decade will see fundamental changes in how we base and employ military forces, and how we weave military power into the diplomatic, informational, and economic facets of our interaction with our partner nations in Latin America and the Caribbean. USSOUTHCOM will be at the forefront of these changes, synchronizing our actions and programs with the other agencies of the U.S. government. We will **ensure the forward defense of the United States, establish regional partnerships, and help enhance hemispheric stability and security** so that the U.S. and partner nations may extend the benefits of secure democracies and economic prosperity to all of their citizens.



