

UNCLASSIFIED



UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

STRATEGY

2 January 2023

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As the White House recognizes, we are living in a “decisive decade” with the world at an inflection point. With authoritarianism on the march, democracies around the globe are increasingly under siege. This is true for our democratic neighbors in Latin America and the Caribbean as anti-democratic forces exploit instability and sow division within free nations. Doing our part to deter threats to the U.S. homeland requires U.S. Southern Command to campaign across all domains and the spectrum of conflict to counter the coercive activities from numerous threats to Latin America and the Caribbean.

This region—our shared neighborhood—is under assault from a host of threats and challenges that directly threaten partner nations and our own homeland. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) continues its relentless pursuit of expanded influence in the region while challenging U.S. access and influence. Russia intensifies instability through its ties with Venezuela, entrenchment in Cuba and Nicaragua, and extensive disinformation operations. Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) operate in areas of instability, forging a trail of corruption and violence that create conditions that allow the PRC and Russia to exploit. These threats, along with transboundary challenges – climate change, corruption, and irregular migration – can overwhelm the region’s state institutions, springing unrest and increasingly frustrated populations. This combination of factors pushes many nations in the region to seek resources and support from alternative sources, including our adversaries who are eager to undermine U.S. presence and interests.

We must keep in mind that where there are threats and challenges there are also opportunities. Now is the time to seize them. We must operate with a sense of urgency to mitigate the mounting threats to the homeland and to our democratic partners in the region. This strategy will guide our operations, activities, and investments while acknowledging that the integration of our partners – the U.S. interagency, Allies and Partner Nations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector – is the linchpin to achieving our strategic objectives. To achieve these objectives, we must campaign with these partners to gain and maintain an advantage to counter our competitors’ coercion that place the interests of our nation and our democratic partners at risk.

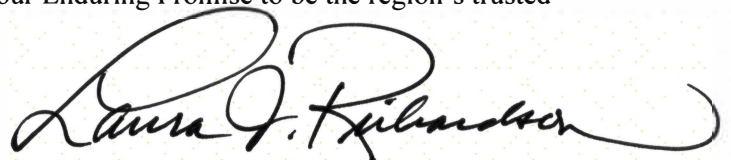
Our USSOUTHCOM strategy is organized along three lines of effort:

Strengthen Partnerships—Build Trust: We are putting Integrated Deterrence into action, working with the interagency, allies and partner nations, and civil society.

Counter Threats—Be Aggressive: We are building partner nation capacity and taking the fight to our adversaries through campaigning, operations, activities, and investments, and strategic messaging.

Build Our Team—Don’t Settle: People and teams are our greatest asset. We will promote a dynamic learning environment that embraces training, processes, and professional development so that our teammates – at home and abroad – have the skills and prioritization of efforts they need to carry out our mission.

The safety of our homeland is directly linked to the resilience, stability, and security of our Latin American and Caribbean Partners. To address the region’s many challenges, we are using all available levers—assets, resources, and authorities—to fulfill our Enduring Promise to be the region’s trusted partner—today, tomorrow, and always.



LAURA J. RICHARDSON
General, USA
Commanding

United States Southern Command Strategy “Enduring Promise for the Americas”

Introduction

The National Security Strategy defines the present time as the “decisive decade” in determining how the United States will compete with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and respond to shared security challenges to include climate change and pandemics. The next decade is a critical period for our nation, our democratic neighbors in Latin America and the Caribbean, and democracies across the globe. The President states that “democracy holds the key to freedom, prosperity, peace, and dignity” while still delivering for the United States and for people around the world. Antagonistic authoritarian powers are increasingly preying on fragile democratic societies that are challenged from within by corruption, inequality, and illiberal threats to the rule of law. These corrosive actions are on display in our neighborhood and close to our shores as democracies in Latin America and the Caribbean are exposed to a myriad of threats and challenges. This region is under assault from global threats, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), and transboundary challenges that combine to directly threaten our own homeland. Countering these threats requires greater U.S. commitment. Prioritizing these investments in the region enables the access and presence our nation needs to partner with like-minded nations to confront the security challenges that we collectively share.

This strategy guides U.S. military operations, activities, and investments (OAI) to deter security threats to the homeland by building strong partnerships and reversing the scope and impact of strategic competitors’ coercive and malign activities in Latin America and the Caribbean. It incorporates the National Defense Strategy (NDS) strategic approach of integrated deterrence executed through campaigning to deter and degrade threats, both regionally and globally. The strategic environment is increasingly defined by interconnected threats and the intensifying strategic competition for geopolitical influence. This competition is highlighted by the Department’s pacing challenge, the PRC, and the acute threat that Russia poses as illustrated by its brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Our partnerships – based on shared values of democracy, sovereignty, human rights, and the rule of law – coupled with an aggressive counter-threats campaign, are central to countering the malign influence of strategic competitors, TCOs, and transboundary challenges that combine to undermine regional security and stability.

Integrated Deterrence: entails working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict, all instruments of U.S. national power, and our network of Alliances and partnerships.

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Our strategy reflects United States Southern Command’s (USSOUTHCOM) Enduring Promise to be a trusted and committed partner. Our strong military-to-military relationships, grounded in shared values and professionalism, are at the core of our contributions to an integrated whole-of-government effort to enable regional security and stability. We refer to this region as our “neighborhood” because of physical proximity, interrelated culture and values, and shared economic and security challenges. The security and defense of the U.S. homeland is directly linked to the resilience and stability of Latin America and the Caribbean. Our nation derives immense benefit from a stable, peaceful hemisphere that reduces security threats to the American people.

Strategic Environment

As the 2022 National Security Strategy (NSS) recognizes, “no region impacts the United States more directly than the Western Hemisphere.” USSOUTHCOM, in collaboration with our Partners, enhances security and stability in the Western Hemisphere by mitigating Malign State Actor (MSA) access and influence to defend the U.S. homeland and our national security interests. USSOUTHCOM is responsible for military-to-military engagements and the employment of U.S. forces in an area of responsibility (AOR) encompassing 31 countries, 11 dependencies and areas of special sovereignty, and 3 administrative divisions. The AOR covers Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, excluding the Bahamas, the Turks and Caicos, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Our partnerships and engagements in this region are based on a commitment to economic prosperity, security, and human rights.

The USSOUTHCOM AOR is a resource rich region with great potential, increasing strategic competitor interest and ambition for presence and influence. The region contains 60% of the world’s lithium, 30% of the world’s fresh water, the world’s largest oil reserves, and the environmentally significant Amazon basin. In the AOR, 28 of the 31 countries are democracies with \$740 billion in annual trade with the United States. Additionally, South America is the closest continent to Antarctica—a continent that has recently seen a significant increase in interest from our Partner Nations and competitors alike. Due to the proximity to the U.S. homeland, Latin America and the Caribbean are critical regions for the United States in terms of national security, economic opportunity, and climate resiliency. By increasing security and stability in the region, opportunities will expand for trade and investment while building resilience. These efforts decrease the ability of adversaries and illicit networks to exploit the region at the expense of our shared interests.

Threats and Challenges. Latin America and the Caribbean face a complex array of threats and challenges. Malign state and non-state actors continue to expand their influence and undermine democracy and the rule of law by taking actions that exploit or exacerbate weak governance and endemic corruption. Protecting human rights is a critical challenge along with the challenges associated with regional vulnerabilities to environmental shocks: natural disasters, climate change, and pandemics. These challenges contribute to underperforming formal economies, increased internal displacement or regional migration, and a persistent threat to citizen security.

Strategic Competition with the PRC/Russia as an Acute Threat. Our competitors, particularly the PRC, are pursuing holistic strategies that employ varied forms of coercion, malign behavior, and aggression to achieve their objectives and weaken the foundations of a stable and open international system. The PRC and Russia intend to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian models. Their actions within the region attempt to contest U.S. legitimacy, while undermining the principles of democracy, sovereignty, human rights, and rule of law. In 2020, the PRC surpassed the United States as the largest trading partner in USSOUTHCOM’s AOR. The PRC’s access to deep water ports, space tracking facilities, and telecommunications infrastructure across the region has likely enhanced its operational posture and places U.S. and regional Partners’ security operations, intellectual property, and private data at risk. Russia collects intelligence, spreads disinformation to sow disunity, and deploys strategic assets such as warships and nuclear capable bombers to the region to demonstrate its global reach, deliberately challenging the United States. Russia is able to maintain its presence in the region by exploiting financial, military, and security partnerships with Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.

Gray Zone Activities: Competitors now commonly seek adverse changes in the status quo using gray zone methods – coercive approaches that may fall below perceived thresholds of U.S. military action and across areas of responsibility of different parts of the U.S. Government. The PRC employs state-controlled forces, cyber and space operations, and economic coercion against the United States and its Allies and partners. Russia employs disinformation, cyber, and space operations against the United States and our Allies and partners, and irregular proxy forces in multiple countries.

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Other Persistent Threats: Iran, Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs), TCOs, and Regional Malign Actors. Iran aims to maintain proxy access to the region to export its revolutionary ideology and influence long-term perception through media outreach and cultural programs which fund Shi'a mosques and Islamic religious cultural centers across the AOR. Iran has increased its anti-U.S. information efforts and leverages its existing military and energy cooperation agreements with Venezuela to improve its economy and circumvent U.S. sanctions.

VEOs and TCOs threaten citizens' safety, regional stability, and the national security of the United States, Allies, and Partners. Threat networks exploit the interconnected nature of transnational trade and transportation systems to smuggle people, drugs, weapons, cash, and other contraband across borders. The region is the largest source of illicit drugs and irregular migration to the United States. In addition, the region has the highest homicide rates outside of a war zone. The use of bribery, fraud, and violence by TCOs disrupts legitimate economic opportunities and undermines the rule of law. These funds are the lifeblood for criminal organizations, violent extremists, and rogue regimes. Their assets provide them access, capabilities, and global reach to build their organizations, expand their influence, and give life to their personal, political, and ideological ambitions. Many of these groups are better funded and organized than the security organizations that confront them. The illicit revenue generated in the region annually is estimated to exceed the collective security force budgets by 5-to-1 (\$300 billion to \$60 billion).

TCOs and VEOs continue to expand their influence and undermine democracy and the rule of law by taking actions that exploit weak governance and endemic corruption. These activities generate the conditions that the PRC and Russia exploit to engage in malign activity to reinforce their global influence and coercive strategies. TCOs blaze a trail of corruption and violence that exacerbate state fragility, allowing the PRC and Russia to gain access and influence within affected states. Additionally, these challenges contribute to underperforming formal economies, increased internal displacement or irregular migration, and a persistent threat to citizen security.

Cuba, like the PRC and Russia, supports the authoritarian Maduro regime in Venezuela and was complicit in the country's transformation to an autocracy. Following the Cuban government's advice, and assisted in part by its intelligence apparatus, Maduro is executing the same autocratic blueprint Cuban leaders have ruthlessly executed for over six decades. Venezuela is increasingly taking provocative actions that eradicate any political opposition, and threaten the sovereignty of its neighbors. Nicaragua went down a similar path, suppressing opposition parties during the 2021 elections, to include incarcerating nearly 40 opposition figures, resulting in the Ortega regime winning a fraudulent election.

Climate Change and Other Serious Transboundary Challenges. Central American and Caribbean nations are among the most vulnerable in the world to climate change and environmental degradation. Some of the key factors include the geographic location of many of these countries in the hurricane belt, the concentration of their populations and economic infrastructure in coastal zones, and vulnerability to natural events such as droughts, floods, earthquakes, and storms. Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua are among the most vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation in Central America due to their dependency on agriculture and tourism. In the Caribbean, Haiti is considered to be among the most vulnerable countries in the world because of a confluence of factors ranging from pervasive deforestation, earthquakes, land degradation stemming from high poverty rates, weak institutions, and an unstable government.

The outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus in 2019 (COVID-19) produced wide-ranging challenges to Latin America and the Caribbean. The region was disproportionately affected by the pandemic, suffering about a third of global COVID-19 deaths, but accounting for approximately eight percent of the world's population. Military readiness was negatively affected in many countries as recruiting, training, and exercises were cancelled; armed forces were redirected to assist law enforcement with COVID-related tasks; and economic contraction reduced security force budgets. Slow vaccination rates and emerging variants further delayed economic recovery efforts, particularly in tourism-dependent economies; impacts likely will be felt beyond 2023. Economic contractions and weak healthcare systems expanded outreach opportunities for the PRC and Russia, who leveraged vaccine diplomacy and economic incentives in an attempt to erode U.S. influence. Some TCOs and violent extremist organizations increased recruitment among idle populations or adapted their posture to leverage financial opportunities afforded by the pandemic.

The fallout of the pandemic comes at a time in which strategic competition is playing out globally, across all domains and all sectors, public and private, foreign and domestic. Within this increasingly fragile socioeconomic environment, MSAs are relentlessly pursuing geopolitical dominance through geo-economic coercion and anti-democratic influence throughout the Western Hemisphere, most acutely in Latin America and the Caribbean. Simultaneously, non-state actors continue to drive instability through their illicit activity, weakening fragile democracies and degrading governance in the process. These concerning trends are likely to hinder the recovery of Partner Nation institutions in the AOR. This change could potentially accelerate a shift in ideological orientation away from pro-West institutions and a pivot towards pragmatic adoption of opportunities presented by the PRC and Russia.

Transboundary Challenges: Beyond state and non-state actors, changes in global climate and other dangerous transboundary threats are already transforming the context in which the Department operates... [Climate change] will increase demands, including on the Joint Force, for disaster response and defense support of civil authorities, and affect security relationships with some Allies and partners.

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Desired Outcomes (ENDS). Our strategic objectives are derived from national strategic guidance which acknowledge the global challenges to vital U.S. national interests associated with dramatic geopolitical, technological, economic, and environmental change. Our strategic objectives support the following national security priorities identified in the 2022 NDS:

- Protect the security of the American people
- Expand economic prosperity and opportunity
- Realize and defend values at the heart of American democracy

Strategic Ends for the USSOUTHCOM AOR.

- **Shared Values and Greater Opportunities.** Nations support democracy, sovereignty, human rights, and the rule of law. USSOUTHCOM partnerships are strengthened through our demonstration of commitment to our Allies and Partners in combined operations and exercises that contribute to strengthening and sustaining deterrence in the region.
- **Stronger Security Partnerships.** USSOUTHCOM has enduring partnerships with professional security forces and institutions. Innovation and capabilities to assist U.S. Government (USG) efforts to expose and degrade key MSA activities and disinformation are improved. Security cooperation activities contribute to professional military partners capable of responding rapidly and effectively to crises both within and external to the region.
- **Enhanced Regional Resilience that Enables Stability and Security.** Partner Nation institutions retain the capability to meet and address the needs of its populace, particularly in events involving transboundary challenges. Conditions enabling maneuver space for MSAs and TCOs are degraded by utilizing joint and interagency partners.

<p>Resilience: the ability to withstand, fight through, and recover quickly from disruption. – 2022 NDS</p>
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Strategic Approach

This strategy relies on integration and alignment with the Joint Force, U.S. interagency, Allies and Partner Nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector to achieve our strategic objectives. Through the integration of our partners, we campaign across all domains to directly engage global and regional security challenges – MSAs, TCOs and VEOs, and transboundary challenges such as climate change and natural disasters, corruption, and the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure that we are ready to meet current challenges and future contingencies, we will strive to enhance the capacity of our Partner Nations to enable a region that is resilient to the corrosive influence posed by state and non-state competitors and transboundary challenges.

- **Mission:** USSOUTHCOM deters aggression, defeats threats, rapidly responds to crises, and builds regional capacity, working with our Allies, Partner Nations, and USG team members to enhance security and defend the U.S. homeland and our national interests.
- **Vision:** USSOUTHCOM is a mission-ready trusted partner that works collaboratively to ensure the Western Hemisphere is secure, free, and prosperous.

Method (WAYS). We organize along three lines of effort: Strengthen Partnerships, Counter Threats, and Build our Team. We apply a campaigning approach integrating our partners using all available levers to achieve our strategic objectives. We aggressively deter and counter threats through deliberate multi-domain operations, activities, and investments across all lines of effort.

Campaigning: the conduct and sequencing of logically-linked military activities to achieve strategy-aligned objectives over time.

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Strengthen Partnerships – Build Trust. Our partnerships are vital to hemispheric security, prosperity, and our collective ability to meet an array of complex security challenges. Working from a foundation of trust, mutual respect, shared interests in cooperation and interoperability, and pursuit of human rights to include gender integration, we recognize that we are a part of a broader team invested in advancing security, freedom, and prosperity in the Western Hemisphere and globally. We foster relationships across three broad categories of partners while incorporating these partners into our integrated deterrence efforts: USG agencies, Partner Nations and Allies, and civil society or “whole-of-society.”

- **U.S. Government/Interagency Partners.** We will work closely with our USG partners to align our resources, capabilities, and authorities in a cohesive manner. This includes working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, other combatant commands (CCMD), and internal and external interagency partners. We will improve the alignment of our OAI related to countering MSA influence and degrading the role of TCOs and VEOs. To effectively mitigate an array of interconnected threats, we will employ an approach that expands our global partnerships to work across CCMD AORs. We will do this through integrating our OAI with other CCMDs along with facilitating Partner Nation participation in global exercises.
- **Allies and Partner Nations.** It is equally vital that we continue to build and maintain partnerships with our neighbors throughout the Western Hemisphere. We will continue to enhance our strong partnerships through programs that improve partner institutional capacity while developing diverse and inclusive militaries that support the rule of law and human rights. We will increase strategic integration and coordination with NATO Allies – Canada, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom – who share our regional and global interests. Closer strategic integration and coordination increases the potential to maintain a favorable balance of power in the Western Hemisphere while narrowing the opportunities of malign actor influence. We will increase the visibility of our network of Alliances and partnerships in the information space to demonstrate our resolve to deter shared threats and challenges.
- **Civil Society and Multinational, Multilateral, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).** This network includes organizations such as NGOs, multilateral organizations, private sector businesses, academia, and Partner Nation populations. Through security cooperation activities, USSOUTHCOM will work with these partners to enhance security, improve community resilience, and expand economic and social opportunity. We must leverage these relationships as a critical enabler to achieving whole-of-society effects to expand a competitive advantage against our shared threats.

Counter Threats – Be Aggressive. The U.S. homeland and our Partner Nations face a wide range of threats emanating from the Western Hemisphere and across the globe that include state and non-state actors. These actors challenge global and regional security along with the sovereignty of our Partner

Nations. We aggressively counter threats through campaigns that integrate deliberate multi-domain operations and exercises that are aligned with priority objectives. To achieve our objectives, we must improve the alignment of our OAs and strategic messaging to maximize effects and improve the overall effectiveness of our campaigning efforts to counter threats.

- **Malign State Actors.** We will work with our Partner Nations to expose, deter, and degrade malign activity in our neighborhood, mitigating the threats MSAs pose to a free and stable Western Hemisphere that is respectful of international norms, freedoms, and collective peace, security and prosperity. Globally and regionally, both the PRC and Russia seek to change the status quo using coercive gray zone methods below the threshold of armed conflict. We will support the U.S. interagency-led efforts to contain and reverse the growth of the PRC from establishing access, presence, and influence in Latin America and the Caribbean. This includes securing U.S. access to key sea lines of communication: the Panama Canal and the Strait of Magellan. We will expose the predatory economic policies and exploitative practices that the PRC implements to exert political leverage to gain access and influence. This includes illuminating the PRC's dual-use facilities, infrastructure projects, "safe city" initiatives, resource extraction, space domain access, and other areas that enhance its global reach, access, and influence. We will continue to work with Allies and Partners to mitigate the malign activities of Russia, Iran, and regional malign actor regimes in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.
 - **Information.** We are in conflict in the information space. The generation, synchronization, and dissemination of strategic messaging with interagency partners, Allies, and Partner Nations allow us to pierce the information space and retain the offensive in exposing malign activity and associated security concerns while also countering disinformation propagated by the PRC, Russia and other malign actors. We will expand our partnerships in the information space to expose malign activity and the spread of disinformation. In addition to countering malign actor destabilizing activities, we will be more aggressive in the information space to "tell our story" of the positive outcomes in the region from our collective efforts.
 - **Space Cooperation.** Our partners in the AOR are quickly becoming space-faring nations. We will engage with our partners to increase future opportunities for combined operations utilizing the space domain to counter regional threats. Increasing our Space Domain Awareness data sharing partnerships assists Partner Nations in tracking and targeting illegal activities within their borders.
- **Transnational Criminal Organizations and Violent Extremist Organizations.** In support of Partner Nations confronting both TCOs and VEOs, we will align and integrate our efforts with the U.S. interagency and Partner Nations to disrupt illegal drug supply chains and other illicit trafficking. We will degrade TCO and VEO networks that create conditions for MSAs to exploit and undermine Partner Nation stability and security. Disruption of these illicit activities hinders TCO and VEO financing through international markets. With our partners on the frontline, we will complement their OAs through security cooperation activities and operational support in addition to the U.S. led and partnered operations directly against TCO and VEO networks and supply chains.
- **Climate Change and Transboundary Challenges.** We will support and engage with USG, NGO, Allies, and Partner Nation efforts to increase regional resilience and Partner Nation

capacity needed to mitigate the effects of transboundary challenges: the effects of climate change and natural disasters, the illegal extraction of natural resources, irregular migration, and food and water insecurity. We will maintain the ability to rapidly respond to crises and work to enhance the ability of Partner Nations to independently lead and contribute to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) efforts. We will support Partner Nation and U.S. interagency efforts to disrupt the illegal extraction of natural resources that provide additional means to illicit networks and contributes to environmental degradation throughout the AOR.

Build Our Team – Don’t Settle. USSOUTHCOM is part of a larger team that includes interagency partners, Allies, and Partner Nations. Together, this team advances democratic ideals, mitigates security threats in the Western Hemisphere, and underpins our integrated deterrence against our adversaries. To improve our contributions to the broader team and meet the growing challenges in the AOR, we must build enduring advantages through our people by cultivating a resilient and adaptable workforce. We will promote a learning organization that embraces training, processes, and professional development. Professional Military Education and training will focus on supporting the execution of assigned joint warfighting tasks, with the priority of countering our MSAs. We will continue to look for ways to improve internal processes and efficiency while eliminating silos and firewalls. This begins with looking at our structures, roles, and responsibilities to ensure we are postured to think deeply, act routinely, and retain the flexibility to maneuver physically and intellectually in both steady state and crisis operations. Our people are our most important resource, so we must have systems and processes in place to foster their personal and professional wellness. Our partners will associate USSOUTHCOM with professionalism, competence, and high standards worth emulating. We will constantly look for ways to strengthen unity of effort and alignment in everything we do.

MEANS. Our means are the resources (e.g. time, forces, equipment, programs, and funding) and authorities required to support our strategic approach and desired strategic outcomes. These levers enable us to be “on the field” competing, allowing us to protect the U.S. homeland through maintaining a positional advantage in the Western Hemisphere. With a smaller budget and fewer assigned, allocated, or apportioned forces than other combatant commands, we must meet our security challenges through an innovative approach that smartly leverages resources from a variety of sources.

To shore up the foundations for integrated deterrence and campaigning, we will act urgently to ***build enduring advantages*** across the defense ecosystem.

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- **Partner Capacity Building and Interoperability.** Through our Security Cooperation Offices, we engage with Partner Nations and work collaboratively to build the capacity of their security and defense forces in areas of mutual interest. This includes engagements like joint combatant command cyber assistance teams (JCATT) and cyber subject matter expert exchanges (SMEEs), mobile training teams, equipment sales, and institutional support which ensure that we are all working with the same tactics and often with the same equipment. The Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS) builds partner capacity across the tactical, operational, and strategic spectrums. Interoperability is essential for combined operations, multilateral exercises, and regional support and collaboration in the event of crisis or HA/DR events. Additionally, our Component Regional Science Offices, through "Cooperative Science & Technology," will engage our Partner Nation counterparts to increase Science & Technology (S&T) information exchanges, scientist and engineer personnel exchanges, foreign cooperative testing and joint-funded research and development (R&D) projects.

- **Defense Institutional Capacity Building (ICB).** We will strengthen partnerships and enhance the resilience of partners' Defense organizations through ICB programs. This program improves security sectors' legitimacy, transparency, and effectiveness. These efforts are performed by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency's Institute of Security Governance (ISG), the Defense Institute for International Legal Studies (DIILS), and the Department of Defense (DOD) William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Studies (Regional Center). Additionally, DOD programs assisting in building professional defense institutions include the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) and the Inter-American Air Force Academy (IAAFA). Complementing programs supporting the institutional development of key partners include the Department of State's Global Defense Reform Program (GDRP) and the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. The Women, Peace, and Security in the Western Hemisphere Initiative empowers the diverse role that women play as agents of change at preventing and resolving conflict in the region.
- **Persistent Presence and Engagement.** Key leader engagements by U.S. military and other government agencies assist in establishing shared security objectives while generating mutual trust and understanding. Our posture and presence at Naval Station Guantanamo (Cuba), and Soto Cano (Honduras), and the unique capabilities of Joint Task Force-Bravo and Joint Interagency Task Force-South support humanitarian/disaster relief and OAs to counter threats and transboundary challenges. Our components and rotational teams of special operations forces and the Army's Security Force Assistance Brigade provide persistent presence throughout the AOR. We incorporate a Total Force approach that employs National Guard and Reserve Component resources and capabilities such as the Air and Army National Guard's State Partnership Program. Through close coordination and integration, our team works closely with U.S. interagency as we reinforce diplomacy and interagency efforts to assure partners while exposing and degrading threats.
- **Annual Exercises.** USSOUTHCOM and Partner Nation led exercises strengthen ties and interoperability with our Allies, Partner Nations, and the interagency while building our team in order to face the threats present in the region. We will leverage our exercise resources to maximize investment in our partners and the USSOUTHCOM enterprise to ensure achievement of our strategic goals.
- **Intelligence Sharing.** Intelligence and information sharing with Allies and partners, as well as the U.S. interagency builds trust while enhancing our collective effectiveness in countering threats. Improving and expanding intelligence sharing enables us to unify efforts in time, space, and purpose to address complex security threats and all-domain challenges.
- **Interagency Programs and Resources.** Funding through programs offered by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and the Department of State (e.g., Humanitarian Assistance Program, Foreign Military Financing) assist in building partner capacity that encourage and enable partners to respond to our shared challenges. Integrating resources from the Department of State Counter Chinese and Counter Russian Influence Funds and leveraging the positive alternatives resourced in the Department of Commerce Advocacy Cases projects provide additional options to begin to outcompete the PRC and Russia in key terrain throughout the AOR.

- **Defense Innovation Programs and Resources.** Our international defense S&T cooperation must be strategically directed, properly executed, and effectively utilized. Where possible we should seek to deepen our closest partnerships to advance USSOUTHCOM interest and strengthen Partner Nation S&T capability and interoperability. To garner additional capabilities, mitigate resource shortfalls, and to assist the Joint Force in building enduring advantages, we will work to establish our AOR as a test bed for DOD innovation and experimentation while developing a strategic partnership with OSD's Joint Capability Technology Demonstrations (JCTD).
- **Authorities.** U.S. law provides authorities for USSOUTHCOM to conduct training, support U.S. and Partner Nation law enforcement agencies, build partnership capacity, and conduct operations. We will continue to advocate for those authorities that assist our team to campaign at the speed of relevance while enabling Joint Force global initiatives.

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 consequence of failing to achieve our strategic objectives. Since we anticipate fewer resources to apply to our strategy, we must improve resource prioritization to overcome constraints to achieve our strategic objectives. Failure to meet our defense objectives in the region will result in increased risk to the homeland and to Partner Nations. Even as emerging U.S. national strategy directs resources to priority theaters for regional deterrence, modest investments in this region yields outsized supporting effects to the Joint Force's global deterrence efforts. This hemisphere is the frontline of strategic competition, and without action we will continue to cede access and influence to the PRC, Russia, and other malign actors. Without continued investment, negative PRC influence in this region could soon resemble the self-serving, predatory influence it now holds in Africa.

Our major risk drivers include insufficient resourcing for security cooperation programs and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms. We must be on the field to compete, but must also be aware of our constraints that demand resource informed priorities. This prioritization creates additional risk in terms of presence, access, and influence that must be mitigated. Now, more than ever, we must seek opportunities to innovate and leverage the capabilities, authorities, and resourcing from across the DOD, the USG, industry, Allies and Partner Nations where our interests align.

Conclusion

The defense of the U.S. homeland is directly linked to the resilience, stability, and security of the Latin America and Caribbean region. Proximity places us on the frontline of strategic competition, as we share transboundary challenges and global threats. This requires the USSOUTHCOM team to be a trusted partner and pursue efforts that meet our partners where they are, maximizing our efforts where their priorities align with our own national interests. Meeting these challenges requires campaigning through an integrated approach to utilize all available levers across the DOD, U.S. interagency, Allies and Partner Nations to establish the desired conditions of peace, security, and prosperity throughout our neighborhood.



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