

Members of U.S. Southern Command–directed team Joint Task Force–Matthew provide humanitarian and disaster relief assistance to victims of Hurricane Matthew, Jeremie, Haiti, October 8, 2016 (U.S. Marine Corps, South/Adwin Esters)



U.S. Southern Command

Evolving to Meet 21st-Century Challenges

By Kurt W. Tidd and Tyler W. Morton

Latin America and the Caribbean is the region most closely connected to our own stability, security, and economic prosperity. This is important despite the fact other regions often figure more prominently

in U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy. Given our shared values, culture, geography, heritage, and history, security challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean often become security challenges for the

United States. Previously, U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) efforts were heavily devoted to one of these challenges: narcotics smuggling into the United States. While USSOUTHCOM—along with our interagency and regional partners—continues to be invested in the counterdrug mission, the threats in our region continue to evolve and so must we. Today’s challenges are much more likely to be transregional, multidomain, and

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Navy and Coast Guard personnel assigned to guided-missile frigate USS *Elrod* signal toward narcotics bales, April 21, 2012, during recovery operations in Caribbean Sea (U.S. Army/Andy Barrera)

multifunctional. This new era calls for increased cooperation across the U.S. Government and, more importantly for USSOUTHCOM, increased cooperation with U.S. allies and partners.

In the USSOUTHCOM area of focus, transregional and transnational threat networks (T3Ns) increasingly challenge the sovereignty of states across the region. Through the exploitation of the permissive environments they deliberately seek to create, these illicit networks carve out geographical areas of impunity in which they can operate without fear of law enforcement interference. Characterized by fragile rule of law, porous borders, and weak governance, these open zones are riddled with illicit pathways that T3Ns use to move anything and anyone across borders for great profit. Driven by the insatiable demand for their products, this lucrative business provides T3Ns with vast resources that they subsequently use to further erode

the efficacy of law enforcement agencies. Through endemic corruption and, at times, the outright co-opting of governmental services and agencies, T3Ns have the ability to destabilize societies, exacerbating the lawlessness that often creates the conditions that prompt mass migration.¹ This destabilizing effect represents a direct threat to the U.S. homeland and a national security risk. The USSOUTHCOM region also faces a threat from violent extremist organizations. While not a major area of extremist activity, the same permissive environment, created and taken advantage of by the T3Ns, allows these organizations to operate with relative impunity.

In addition to the threat posed by T3Ns and extremist organizations, Latin America and the Caribbean are extremely vulnerable to natural disasters and infectious disease outbreaks. Uneven prevention, management, and response capabilities in the region—coupled with

underlying challenges such as poverty and weak governance—amplify the impact of disasters, extend human suffering, and exacerbate existing developmental challenges. Additionally, while overall the region is politically stable, the aforementioned gap between public expectations and governmental performance frequently manifests itself in social protest. Though generally peaceful, the potential exists for violent demonstrations; a downward turn in the most at-risk countries has the potential to compel a regional response and requests for U.S. engagement or support.

While threat networks and potential crises pose the nearest and most pressing danger, the United States also faces direct competition in the region from several external state actors (ESAs). Latin America and the Caribbean present strategic opportunities for Russia, China, and Iran to achieve their respective long-term objectives and advance their global

interests, which are often incompatible with ours and those of our partners in the region. The influence of these external actors presents a transregional problem set that connects our region to the rest of the world. To counteract this evolved global challenge requires close synchronization of effort across the affected geographic combatant commands (GCCs). As such, USSOUTHCOM is diligently working with many of the other commands to ensure unity of effort. Additionally, the expanding presence—and influence—of ESAs in the region is concerning, particularly in the sphere of human rights and the promotion of regional peace and stability. Keep in mind, none of these ESAs have the Leahy Law,² restrictions on security assistance, or any independent domestic media to scrutinize their external activities. Their arms sales are not tied to international protocols, and they are not subject to human rights vetting. Additionally, the loans they provide often do not come with requirements to follow anti-corruption standards or even clear repayment terms and conditions. These occasionally unscrupulous business practices and disregard for transparent rule of law facilitate corruption and pose challenges to the shared norms and values that have brought prosperity and security to millions of people across the hemisphere.

As outlined above, the threats to the region are complex and often go overlooked given the increasingly crowded national security agenda. To better confront them, USSOUTHCOM is currently undergoing a sea change in the way we think about, analyze, and address these national security concerns. Beginning in summer 2016, the command established a series of cross-functional teams to dissect the problems we face and forge new ways to confront and overcome the challenges. These teams were focused on three areas that comprise the bulk of our main efforts: countering T3Ns (C-T3Ns), rapid response, and building relationships. After extensive work, the teams produced a series of actions that will drive the tasks, initiatives, and strategic planning as we move forward.

Countering Transnational and Transregional Threat Networks

To keep pace with the challenges posed by T3Ns, we must do more than simply target the illicit commodities they move.³ Though we are not walking away from our statutorily mandated support to the counterdrug mission, to truly degrade the T3Ns requires a shift away from isolated efforts aimed at stopping the commodities they traffic and a refocus on dismantling the networks themselves. This shift in thinking has been the biggest change at USSOUTHCOM. By employing a networked approach that integrates the command's capabilities with those of U.S. allies and partners across the region, we hope to stop the threats—whatever they may be—as far away from the U.S. homeland as possible. To that end, we are working ever more closely with our interagency and regional partners to affect the networks that control the pathways in the region. While we have always cooperated with teams from across the region, what has changed is *how* we are now working as a team to maximize effects.

Building a Joint, Interagency Team.

To better enable efforts to disrupt, degrade, dismantle, and, ultimately, defeat the T3Ns, we have created multiple communities of interest (COIs) that bring together various U.S. Government stakeholders. The members of these COIs meet weekly to share information and intelligence; expand understanding and awareness about the networks and our activities to counter them; and guide our efforts to ensure maximum disruption of T3N activities. In 2016, information-sharing and support to tactical operations generated by our Central America COI (CENTAM COI), which is hosted by our Joint Task Force–Bravo (JTF-Bravo) and includes over 700 participants from various U.S. Government agencies, helped dismantle several T3N nodes and subnetworks. By sharing information in the CENTAM COI, interagency participants are better prepared to apply pressure at points that force the T3Ns to modify their operations and change their tactics; this shift exposes, or illuminates, the network and makes

them vulnerable. The CENTAM COI continues to grow and recently expanded to include representatives from U.S. Northern Command. This collaboration between the two commands charged with defending the U.S. homeland has already yielded results and strengthened the seams along the commands' boundaries.

Building on the CENTAM COI success, we have also established a counter-T3N cross-directorate team at the command's headquarters in Doral, Florida. This team is a group of dedicated analysts and operators who work directly with our interagency partners to improve the fusion of intelligence analysis and operations. Through network mapping and enhanced collaboration, this team will lead the command's C-T3N efforts. Though the initial focus of the team will be to stem the flow of special interest aliens (SIAs) and foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), we expect their roles to expand as the team's capability matures.⁴ Additionally, we have partnered with the greater Intelligence Community to pursue innovative approaches to integrate unclassified open source, social media, and publically available information into our shared knowledge base. By doing so, we will better characterize the regional security environment and facilitate increased information and intelligence exchanges with regional and interagency partners.

To complement these efforts and fill a requirement identified in the National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel Act of 2016, we have greatly expanded our support to the Department of Homeland Security effort to counter the migration of SIAs.⁵ In 2016, in a combined effort with U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Special Operations Command, we dedicated analysts and resources to Homeland Security Investigation's Operation *Citadel*—a multiyear, multiagency effort to dismantle human-smuggling networks and identify migrants who may present security threats. In fiscal year 2017, our increased planning support, intelligence capabilities, and airlift will significantly enhance Homeland Security Investigation's ability to prevent persons of interest from transiting the region,

reaching the U.S. border, and potentially gaining entry into the United States.

Further C-T3N efforts include broadening the detection and monitoring mission of the USSOUTHCOM-subordinate Joint Interagency Task Force–South (JIATF-S) in Key West, Florida. Often recognized as the model for interagency cooperation, JIATF-S was countering threat networks long before the term became vogue.⁶ While its core detection and monitoring mission will continue to support interagency law enforcement efforts to stem the ever-increasing flow of drugs, JIATF-S is also broadening its scope by targeting global money laundering, bulk cash smuggling, and other facilitator-based illicit activities that enable narcotics trafficking.

Teaming with Partner Nations. We have also worked diligently with our allies and partners to increase the entire region's ability to counter threat networks. Though the Colombian government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) recently signed a peace agreement ending over 50 years of armed conflict, our cooperation with Colombia remains vital as powerful, illegally armed groups will undoubtedly seek to fill the power vacuum created by the FARC's agreement to abandon the drug trade.⁷ With coca cultivation and production in the Andean region increasing almost 40 percent in 2016 alone, these networks could complicate Colombia's post-FARC transitional period.⁸ To preempt this, USSOUTHCOM is leveraging our unique relationship with Colombia to synchronize the delivery of counter-T3N capability-building efforts with our continued training and equipping of key units across the Colombian armed forces and law enforcement.⁹ We believe these efforts will continue to help Colombia as it transitions into the post-FARC era.

Elsewhere, USSOUTHCOM joined other Defense Department and U.S. Government agencies to team with Brazil during the 2016 Rio Olympics. This successful partnership provided new opportunities to work with Brazil in the areas of C-T3Ns, counter-weapons of mass destruction, cyber, space, and information-sharing. In the Caribbean,

we work bilaterally and multilaterally with partners such as the Caribbean Community's Implementing Agency for Crime and Security and the Regional Intelligence Fusion Center to facilitate greater information-sharing and to close our capability gaps in addressing illicit flows of drugs, SIAs, and FTFs. We also support the Caribbean Community as it develops a regional counterterrorism strategy and work with key partners such as Trinidad and Tobago to illuminate and degrade extremist networks with global ties to the so-called Islamic State and other dangerous groups.¹⁰

Working with our allies and partners, USSOUTHCOM counternarcotic programs (including train and equip, infrastructure, and building partner-nation capacity and capability) play an important role in stabilizing the region from the effects of T3Ns. Central American partners are increasingly capable, playing a role in nearly 50 percent of JIATF-South's maritime interdiction operations and conducting operations on their own, and with each other. USSOUTHCOM has also helped enhance land interdiction capabilities across the region by providing training, infrastructure, and communication equipment. As a result, there has been significant improvement across Central American security and military forces. Guatemala's Interagency Task Forces combine the best of military and law enforcement authorities and capabilities; these organizations unite at the task forces to reduce the flow of drugs, people, and other illicit goods. Honduras has also made a concerted effort to dismantle threat networks, expedite suspected drug traffickers to the United States, and eliminate corruption.¹¹ Panamanian efforts to counter a wide spectrum of threats showcase them as an increasingly capable partner that is positioned at a critical geographic chokepoint.¹² In 2017, USSOUTHCOM will expand its support to Panama and Costa Rica to help dissuade T3Ns from moving into the southern portion of Central America's isthmus.

Building Public-Private Collaboration. Finally, as T3Ns exploit socioeconomic vulnerabilities in the

region, USSOUTHCOM is integrating the efforts and expertise of the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society to mitigate the conditions that contribute to the social service vacuum. The command routinely conducts community support activities in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean where we work alongside our partners in civil society to expand the skills necessary to demonstrate state presence and reduce the malign influence of T3Ns.

Enabling Rapid Response. While countering threat networks receives the preponderance of our effort, USSOUTHCOM faces other challenges. Given the inevitability of natural disasters in the Caribbean and Latin America, we continually work with our allies and partners to improve the region's collective preparedness and response capabilities. Within the USSOUTHCOM enterprise, we are focused on institutionalizing our own capabilities to provide agile and effective support to our interagency and regional partners. In the region, we are strengthening our linkages to the very network of militaries, civilian agencies, and experts with whom we will cooperate during a crisis.

Strengthening Interagency Partnerships. Cooperation starts with trust; it is the linchpin of USSOUTHCOM's ability to rapidly respond and work seamlessly with our allies and partners. We build this trust during routine exercises and deepen it during crisis response operations. This was most apparent during our response to Hurricane Matthew in October 2016. By leveraging forward-deployed forces, Joint Task Force–Matthew (JTF-Matthew) provided a tailored rapid response that was critical during the early stages of relief operations. Utilizing our presence at Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras and the U.S. Naval Station–Guantánamo Bay, the command moved elements from JTF-Bravo and a Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) to Haiti within 24 hours of notification from the lead Federal agency, in this case, the U.S. Agency for International Development. JTF-Bravo and the



Servicemember from Barbados participates in Exercise Tradewinds 2016, at Twickenham Park Gallery Range, Jamaica, June 24, 2016 (U.S. Marine Corps/ Justin T. Updegraff)

SPMAGTF team—which had previously been conducting security cooperation activities in Central America—provided unique U.S. military capabilities that significantly aided the delivery of humanitarian supplies and alleviated the suffering of tens of thousands of Haitians.

Additionally, the rapid deployment of elements from the U.S. Transportation Command’s Joint Enabling Capabilities Command was critical to the success of JTF-Matthew. U.S. forces deployed aboard the USS *Mesa Verde* and USS *Iwo Jima* provided robust relief from the sea as they moved hundreds of tons of supplies to the hardest hit areas. During the relief mission, we also coordinated with our U.S. Coast Guard partners to deter potential migration in the aftermath of the hurricane and supported the Department of State’s outreach to regional partners seeking to contribute to the response effort.

Working with Allies and Partner Nations. Exercises like Panamax, Integrated Advance, Tradewinds, and

Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias test multinational responses to diverse scenarios such as the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction, terrorist acts, and natural disasters. Multinational exercises are the most important way we train with our partner nations’ military forces, law enforcement agencies, and civil society aid organizations. These exercises improve our interoperability, institutionalize preparedness and response measures, and build confidence in the United States as a reliable partner. The trust built during these exercises helps reduce the scope and duration of a crisis and increases the likelihood our partners can respond to crises on their own if necessary.

Regionally, the command’s health and medical readiness engagements build partner-nation capacity and capability to prevent, detect, and respond to disease outbreaks. USSOUTHCOM does this through a series of in-country engagements. Taking the spotlight this year is Continuing Promise 2017 (CP-17), a USSOUTHCOM-sponsored

humanitarian aid mission that will bring medical, dental, and veterinary assistance to Guatemala, Honduras, and Colombia. During CP-17, U.S. personnel work hand-in-hand with their host-nation counterparts, local government officials, health professionals, nongovernmental organizations, and private volunteer organizations to respond to the medical needs of the local populations. Additionally, at the early stages of the Zika outbreak, the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit 6 based in Lima, Peru, established research sites in partnership with Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Peru to actively support partner-nation response efforts. This quick reaction was critical to slowing the spread of Zika in Central and South America.

Many of these building partner-nation capacity and capability efforts would not be possible without the dedication of our Total Force partners from the National Guard and Reserves. The National Guard’s State Partnership Program has

been especially valuable to building trust and cooperation in the region as illustrated by the following examples. In 2016, the relationship between the Florida National Guard and Barbados strengthened the Barbadian government's ability to respond to national disasters with a focus on critical infrastructure and interagency collaboration.¹³ Additionally, the Massachusetts National Guard's partnership with Paraguay has allowed for the training of over 2,000 Paraguayan military personnel as peacekeepers and observers. Now, Paraguay supports United Nations missions in Africa, Haiti, Cyprus, and Colombia.¹⁴ This commitment further highlights the desire of many of the region's nations to contribute globally to the common good.

Collaborating with Civil Society. In addition to collaborating with our interagency and regional partners, we seek to build a culture of crisis management and trust across our network of nongovernmental partners. During the lead-up to the Rio Olympics, we teamed with international cruise lines and law enforcement agencies to share information about potential threats and ensure security protocols were in place. We are beginning work with the College of William & Mary's Violent International Political Conflict and Terrorism laboratory to help predict violence in partner nations, assess deterrence option effectiveness, and forecast tactical successes. We also regularly join chaplains in our partner-nation militaries to engage religious leaders in the region about their role in disaster recovery and potential opportunities to work together when crisis hits.

Led by U.S. Army South and U.S. Air Forces Southern, the Beyond the Horizon and New Horizons humanitarian and civic assistance exercises incorporated more than 2,000 U.S., partner-nation, and public/private participants from seven nations. This network treated nearly 30,000 patients, conducted 242 surgeries, and constructed schools and clinics in remote areas. Similarly, our training missions such as JTF-Bravo's medical engagements and CP-17 bring together U.S. military personnel, partner-nation forces, and civilian volunteers

to treat tens of thousands of the region's citizens. We are also building basic infrastructure like schools, medical clinics, and emergency operations centers and warehouses for relief supplies. These activities provide training opportunities for our own personnel, while also improving the ability of our partners to provide essential services to their citizens and meet their humanitarian needs during a disaster or emergency response.

Building Relationships to Meet Global Challenges

Whether we are remaining vigilant against the activities of ESAs, fostering greater regional and multinational cooperation against shared challenges, or reinforcing the rules-based international order, security partnerships are the foundation of everything we do. These relationships—based on shared values, mutual respect, and principled U.S. and regional leadership—ensure our Hemisphere remains a beacon of peace and prosperity.

Solidifying Interagency Partnerships.

Over the past year, we have expanded our collaboration with the interagency community, our allies and partners, and fellow GCCs to address the global challenges posed by ESAs. We work with the Intelligence Community to build a better shared understanding of ESA intentions and how their activities in Latin America and the Caribbean advance their respective global strategies. We routinely share information with U.S. European Command, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), U.S. Central Command, and U.S. Special Operations Command on issues of mutual interest and concern. In 2017, USSOUTHCOM and USPACOM will cohost a meeting with our allies and partners in Southeast Asia and South America to share information on Asia-Pacific security and T3Ns.

Increasing Partner Capacity and Capability. While our capacity- and capability-building efforts help partner nations address immediate threats, over time we seek to encourage a network of willing partners who contribute to international security and advance shared principles like good governance and

human rights. Chile is a regular participant in USPACOM's annual Rim of the Pacific exercise and will assume a greater exercise leadership role in the future. Colombia is leading an effort to integrate a block of Pacific alliance nations into the Western Pacific Naval Symposium and is expanding defense cooperation with South Korea, Japan, and potentially Vietnam. Brazil is deepening its maritime security cooperation with West Africa and focusing on countering illicit trade between the South American and African continents. These nations join many other regional leaders in supporting United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world, including the mission in Haiti.

Military Imperatives. The institutionalization of jointness, respect for human rights, development of professional noncommissioned officer (NCO) corps, and integration of gender perspectives are interconnected and interdependent characteristics of capable, modern defense forces.¹⁵ These characteristics are military imperatives for national defense forces that seek to maintain legitimacy and gain the trust of those they exist to serve. Militaries that fail to advance in these areas risk finding themselves at a distinct competitive disadvantage in the modern security arena.

Integrating Gender Perspectives. At USSOUTHCOM, we recognize that, as an inter-American defense community, we can attain a competitive, and even asymmetric, advantage by unlocking the full potential of our security and defense workforce. To be the most effective team we can be, we simply cannot afford to cut ourselves off from 50 percent of our population, 50 percent of our talent, and 50 percent of our capabilities. Gender integration is much more than simply numbers, however. The quest for gender integration is about finding the right teammates; those people—both men and women—with the irresistible drive to contribute to mission success, who have the right team ethos, and who possess a diverse way of looking at problems. Effective gender integration is really part of a larger question: how do we attract, develop, and retain the best



Colombian naval infantrymen explain their water purification and jungle survival techniques to U.S. Marines during Amphibious-Southern Partnership Station near Turbo, Colombia, October 10, 2011 (U.S. Army/Juancarlos Paz)

people, with the right skill sets, to meet the ever-accelerating demands of military operations in the 21st century? Gender integration needs to evolve from beyond a simple argument of whether women can meet standards to a full acceptance that female military professionals want to be judged on the basis of their grit, their determination, and their tenacity. Women want the opportunity to compete, just like their male counterparts. At USSOUTHCOM, we are committed to instilling this way of thinking throughout our partner-nation military forces and law enforcement organizations. To ensure maximum integration of gender perspectives, we have included several objectives in our strategic planning documents and country-specific strategies that commit our staff to assisting our partners in incorporating fully qualified women into their defense sectors, countering trafficking in persons, and protecting vulnerable populations during military operations.

USSOUTHCOM has also hired a full-time Gender Advisor, a U.S. Navy master chief petty officer with combat experience in Iraq, to work with and advise our partners. These initiatives have already yielded results: from exchanging best practices with Paraguay regarding women in peacekeeping operations to hosting a visit by Argentinean leaders to discuss ways to integrate women into operational military units, the region's militaries are steadily capitalizing on diversity and moving forward as one integrated team.

Institutionalizing and Achieving Enhanced Jointness. Operating jointly is fundamental to our ability to confront challenges in today's complex world. Conflict now happens in a transregional, multidomain, multifunctional environment that is evolving daily. For militaries to keep pace, they must incorporate the unique capabilities that each service brings to the fight. The USSOUTHCOM approach to jointness

includes learning about and leveraging complementary service-specific capabilities and subsequently exchanging lessons learned with our various partners across the region. We truly embrace the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) principles in our approach as we integrate the capabilities of allies and partners from across the region.¹⁶ This was evidenced in our response to Hurricane Matthew as forces from the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, and Jamaica all contributed aid. Their contributions were critical to success in Haiti and were a direct reflection of the jointness, or JIIM, mindset.

Human Rights. One of USSOUTHCOM's highest priorities is the promotion of respect for human rights, a mission it has integrated into its activities and engagements since the 1990s. The Latin American region has made great strides in democracy and

human rights in recent decades, and today our hemisphere is interconnected by shared democratic principles. Respect for human rights is a critical military imperative in order for defense and security operations to be successful. Without it, we lose our legitimacy, the trust and confidence of the people we aim to protect, and the effectiveness of the security missions entrusted to us. To date, USSOUTHCOM remains the only combatant command with a dedicated Human Rights Office, which has both an internal and external focus. This means that we ensure our own personnel are properly trained and educated on this military imperative while supporting our partners' efforts to build strong human rights programs within the armed forces. The USSOUTHCOM-sponsored Human Rights Initiative (HRI) is a fundamental tool that drives this imperative. HRI brings together representatives of military, security forces, civilian government, and civil society to develop a model human rights program for military forces focused in four areas: doctrine, education and training, internal control systems, and cooperation with civilian authorities. Currently, USSOUTHCOM supports the efforts of 11 nations in the USSOUTHCOM area of operations and 1 regional organization that have formally committed to implementing HRI within their militaries. HRI also creates a network of partner nation militaries formally committed to respecting human rights.

Development of Professional NCO Corps. Long referred to as the “backbone of the Army,” the NCO remains exactly that and much more.¹⁷ Today’s NCOs play critical roles in the institutional advancement and operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. Understanding this, USSOUTHCOM has partnered with regional defense institutions to improve NCO development and education across the Hemisphere. Our Noncommissioned Officer Development Partnership Program (NCODP) assists our partner nations as they develop their NCO corps and professionalize their militaries. The NCODP integrates unique capabilities and perspectives from across the U.S. joint force and delivers those to

partner nations through NCO exchanges, exercises, and hands-on training. NCOs from the U.S. Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and from across the National Guard work directly with NCOs from the partner nations to train, execute, and build the capability of their NCO corps. This investment in partner-nation enlisted leadership yields improved readiness and field forces capable of exporting security in support of regional and global security operations. To date, the NCODP has interacted with 16 hemispheric partners and has been involved in more than 50 events. Highlighting the impact of the program, during the last 24 months, USSOUTHCOM NCOs have been directly involved in the creation and/or support of an NCO Corps and Senior NCO Course in the Dominican Republic; the first designated Sergeant Major of the Army for Brazil and Chile; and the first Joint Senior Enlisted meetings in Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, El Salvador, Honduras, Argentina, and the Dominican Republic.

These four imperatives are hallmarks of modern professional militaries. While each has a separate meaning, we must remember that they are interdependent and interconnected—without any one of the four, a military’s competence is incomplete. All four must function simultaneously as each supports, facilitates, and ensures the success of the other three. As we train, exercise, and conduct operations with our partners, USSOUTHCOM seeks to inculcate the imperatives into the culture of each partner military. Sometimes quite challenging, we believe embracing the imperatives is critical for each nation’s legitimacy and ultimate success.

Conclusion

From interconnected, ruthless threat networks to the malign influence of ESAs, the national security threats we face in the Western Hemisphere are vast. Add the inevitability of natural disasters across the region and the result is a complex, diverse mixture of challenges that requires USSOUTHCOM, our allies, and our partners to be ready to react at a moment’s notice. With

our nation’s priorities oriented to more prominent global challenges, maximizing the limited resources we have and working hand-in-hand with our allies and partners are absolutely essential to our success. We do this through a networked approach that focuses on optimizing what each contributor can supply to the overall task. This was most recently apparent in the response to Hurricane Matthew, where many of our interagency, allied, and partner nations contributed everything from food and building supplies to medical care. The result was a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational solution that provided care and services across the affected parts of Haiti. Moving forward, we expect the response to Hurricane Matthew to become the norm, regardless of the nature of the challenge. Whether we are confronting the threat posed by T3Ns or reacting to another natural disaster, our first response will always be to rally a coalition of contributing partners.

Fortunately, USSOUTHCOM has created a legacy of trust. Our way forward is to use that trust to enhance the relationships we have and to help us build new ones. Together we will move past simple synchronization and coordination to a truly integrated, collaborative effort. We have been charged with defending our nation’s southern approaches; only by working together will we be able to unite our efforts to produce a faster, flatter, and more agile network of diplomatic, law enforcement, Intelligence Community, and military teammates. Here at USSOUTHCOM, we are doing just that. JFQ

Notes

¹ Kenneth Rapoza, “Immigrants Fleeing Increasingly Violent Latin America, Study Suggests,” *Forbes Magazine*, January 28, 2016, available at <www.forbes.com/sites/ken-rapoza/2016/01/28/immigrants-fleeing-increasingly-violent-latin-america-study-suggests/#1194a5d64ba7>.

² The Leahy Law is a U.S. human rights law that prohibits the Department of State and Department of Defense from providing military assistance to foreign military units that

violate human rights. For further information on the Leahy Law, see the “Leahy Fact Sheet,” available at <www.humanrights.gov/dyn/03/leahy-fact-sheet/>.

³ Joint Publication 3-25, *Countering Threat Networks* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, December 21, 2016), GL-4, defines *countering threat networks* as “the aggregation of activities across the Department of Defense and United States Government departments and agencies that identifies and neutralizes, degrades, disrupts, or defeats designated threat networks.”

⁴ The Department of Homeland Security defines *special interest aliens* (SIAs) as “aliens from specially designated Countries that have shown a tendency to promote, produce, or protect terrorist organizations or their members.” See Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, “Supervision of Aliens Commensurate with Risk,” December 23, 2011, 5, available at <www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/OIG_11-81_Decl1.pdf>. The United Nations (UN) defines *foreign terrorist fighters* as “terrorist fighters, namely individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict.” See UN Security Council Resolution 2178, September 24, 2014, available at <www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/SCR%202178_2014_EN.pdf>.

⁵ The National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel Act of 2016 directs U.S. Government agencies to identify and address security vulnerabilities in the U.S. defense against terrorist travel. See House Resolution 4408, *National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel Act of 2016*, February 24, 2016, 114th Cong., 2nd sess., available at <www.congress.gov/114/bills/hr4408/BILLS-114hr4408rfs.pdf>.

⁶ For background information on JI-ATF-South’s long history of excellence, see Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, *Joint Interagency Task Force-South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success*, INSS Strategic Perspectives 5 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, June 2011).

⁷ Rogerio Jelmayer, Kejal Vyas, and Samantha Pearson, “Brazilian Gang Enlists FARC Rebels for Drug Trade,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 31, 2017, available at <www.wsj.com/articles/brazilian-gang-enlists-farc-rebels-for-drug-trade-1485858609>.

⁸ UN Office on Drugs and Crime, “Colombia: Monitoreo de Territorios Afectados por Cultivos Ilícitos 2015,” July 2016, 11.

⁹ For additional information on the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation, see “Joint Press Release on the United States-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation,” media note, Washington, DC, April 15, 2012, available at <<https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/04/187928.htm>>.

¹⁰ Former U.S. Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago John Estrada estimates that 100 to 130 Trinidadians have traveled to Syria to join the so-called Islamic State; that number represents the highest number per capita of all Western Hemisphere nations. Frances Robles, “Trying to Stanch Trinidad’s Flow of Young Recruits to ISIS,” *New York Times*, February 21, 2017.

¹¹ As testament to Honduras’s commitment to C-T3Ns, they will reportedly extradite Atlantic Cartel head Wilter Blanco to the United States to face trial on drug trafficking and racketeering charges. See Mike LaSusa, “Alleged Honduras Kingpin Wanted by U.S. Captured in Costa Rica,” *Insight Crime*, November 23, 2016, available at <www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/alleged-honduras-kingpin-wanted-by-us-captured-in-costa-rica>.

¹² As law enforcement has increasingly clamped down on traditional south-north migration routes, Panama’s Darién Gap has become a pathway of choice for the majority of the SIAs traveling north from South America. See Sara Schaefer Muñoz, “Global Migrants Brave Panama’s Vipers, Bats, Bandits to Reach U.S.,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 29, 2015.

¹³ For further information, see *The State Partnership Program: FY 2015 Annual Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, December 26, 2016), available at <www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/StatePartnershipProgram/FY15%20SPP%20Annual%20Report.pdf>.

¹⁴ Marta Escurra, “The United States Ratifies Military Cooperation with Paraguay,” *Diálogo Digital Military Magazine*, July 19, 2016, available at <<https://dialogo-amicas.com/en/articles/united-states-ratifies-military-cooperation-paraguay>>.

¹⁵ As part of enhanced jointness, we encourage our partners to embrace joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) mindsets.

¹⁶ For further information on the JIIM principles, see Matthew Wade Markel et al., *Developing U.S. Army Officers’ Capabilities for Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational Environments*, RAND Research Brief (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, December 6, 2011), available at <www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_briefs/2011/RAND_RB9631.pdf>.

¹⁷ The English poet Rudyard Kipling made the first reference to the noncommissioned officer (NCO) being the backbone of the army in his famous poem “The eathen,” which was his ode to British NCOs, available at <www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/eathen.html>.

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by David C. Logan



China is developing its first credible sea-based nuclear forces. This emergent nuclear ballistic missile submarine

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