

Southcom Establishes Joint Task Force Western Hemisphere



U.S. Southern Command activated Joint Task Force Western Hemisphere yesterday, a purpose-built, joint task force that will synchronize U.S. military operations with allies and partners to counter threats, strengthen regional security and respond rapidly to crises across the hemisphere.

Marine Corps Gen. Francis L. Donovan, Southcom commander, directed the activation of the task force, which provides unified command and control at the tactical and operational levels and integrates military capabilities with the 18 partner nations of the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition.

The establishment of the force will increase Southcom operational effectiveness against threats that undermine regional security and impact the United States and partner nations, while also strengthening the command's ability to

respond quickly to contingencies and humanitarian crises throughout the region.

Malign actors threaten national security, destabilize the region and exploit vulnerable populations.

"JTF-WHEM strengthens our ability to work alongside trusted allies and partners, synchronize military capabilities and apply sustained pressure against the networks that threaten our collective security," Donovan said. "Together, we are increasing security across the hemisphere and protecting our homeland."

Donovan selected Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Kevin Jarrard to command the new task force. Jarrard most recently led U.S. military support to State Department-led disaster relief operations following the June earthquakes in Venezuela.

As Southcom's operational headquarters for executing missions across the region, JTF-WHEM integrates intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, operational planning and multinational coordination to increase pressure on nefarious organizations operating throughout the hemisphere.

In coordination with regional partners, the task force will strengthen intelligence sharing, expand combined training, enhance interoperability, support maritime interdiction efforts, build partner capacity and remain prepared to deliver humanitarian assistance and disaster response when called upon.

"Joint Task Force Western Hemisphere is Southcom's action arm for confronting threats across the hemisphere," Donovan said. "Purpose-built and task-organized, this headquarters brings together tailored military capabilities and trusted partnerships to increase total systemic friction [and] operational tempo, impose sustained pressure on criminal organizations, and strengthen the security of the United States and our partners. Together with the 18 nations of [the

Americas Counter Cartel Coalition], we are changing the way we confront these threats.”

The joint task force activation reinforces Southcom’s commitment to a whole-of-government and multinational approach to defending the homeland, strengthening regional partnerships and promoting a secure, stable and prosperous Western Hemisphere.