



# FACT SHEET

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ENGAGEMENT IN SUPPORT OF CARIBBEAN PARTNERS

June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

This fact sheet is released on the occasion of the Caribbean Nations Security Conference taking place June 6-8, 2023, in Jamaica, co-hosted by Rear Admiral Antonette Wemyss Gorman, Chief of Defence Staff of the Jamaica Defence Force, and General Laura Richardson, Commander of U.S. Southern Command. Featured speakers include Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew M. Holness, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Daniel P. Erikson, and security leaders from the Caribbean, who have gathered to review regional defense and security challenges and discuss collaborative strategies to bolster regional stability.

The Department of Defense's substantial engagement with Caribbean partners demonstrates our commitment to strengthen relationships and address shared interests and threats. The Department of Defense seeks to remain the trusted defense and security partner for Caribbean nations.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

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*"No nation can find lasting security without addressing the climate crisis."*

- Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III, 15th Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, July 2022

The Department of Defense seeks to collaborate with Caribbean partners to address the risks of climate change, recognizing the threat from rising temperatures and water and more frequent storms and floods require increased humanitarian response capabilities. The 2022 National Defense Strategy prioritizes efforts to deepen security cooperation with partners to build resilience to climate and environmental change impacts.

These efforts support the Administration's initiative, led by Vice President Harris, titled the U.S.-Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis 2030 (PACC 2030). PACC 2030 is the U.S. Government's flagship partnership with the Caribbean to advance climate adaptation and resilience and clean energy cooperation through 2030. Vice President Harris launched the partnership during the Summit of the Americas in June 2022.

On March 1, 2023, the Secretary of the Navy, Carlos del Toro, conducted the first official visit by a Secretary of the Navy to The Bahamas. He delivered a speech at the University of The Bahamas on "Building Resilience and Security in Island Countries Threatened by Climate Change." Secretary del Toro highlighted a range of Navy efforts to address the climate change threat.

Department of Defense efforts with partners to build resilience to climate and environmental change include:

- (1) education and training programs for partner nations' defense leadership to increase their institutional capacity for climate resilience preparation, planning, and regional response capabilities;
- (2) bilateral and multilateral research on climate and defense security in the Western Hemisphere; and
- (3) investment in analytical tools available to partners free of cost to increase capabilities that provide actionable analytical information on climate and defense security.



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### DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND HEALTH ASSISTANCE

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In fiscal year 2023, the Department of Defense has executed or plans to execute 25 projects totaling over \$14.7M for disaster preparedness as well as 28 projects representing a \$6.7M investment in building partner nation health and education capacity. Altogether, this assistance totals over 50 projects and an investment of \$21.4M.

The Department of Defense stands ready to support humanitarian relief operations in support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Last year, the Department of Defense deployed the USNS Comfort, a hospital ship, to conduct medical assistance in support of regional partners. Between October and December 2022, the USNS Comfort visited Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. During visits to the Dominican Republic and Haiti, USNS Comfort personnel treated about 5,500 patients; filled over 24,000 prescriptions; conducted surgeries, physical therapy, X-rays, and ultrasounds; and donated 55 pallets of medical supplies and other goods.

### CAPACITY BUILDING

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The Department of Defense conducts a range of security cooperation activities to build partner capacity, complementing other U.S. assistance to the Caribbean, including support of Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) objectives. The Department of Defense is currently implementing \$37M in fiscal year 2021 and 2022 approved programs to support The Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica to develop maritime domain awareness, interdiction capabilities, and more effective defense institutions. The Department of Defense has approved \$41M in fiscal year 2023 to support Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, The Bahamas, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines to develop maritime domain awareness, cyber security, special forces capabilities, and more effective defense institutions.

### WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

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Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) collaboration with our Caribbean partners is essential to enhancing our operational effectiveness in addressing the myriad security challenges we face together in the maritime domain. Challenges such as transnational organized crime, trafficking in persons, and mass migration have a significant human security dimension that requires a gender perspective to enhance our collective prevention and response efforts. The Department of Defense promotes the role of women in the military as a cross-cutting priority through a variety of exchanges, panel discussions, and workshops. In fiscal year 2023, the Department of Defense collaborated with Caribbean partners to host five workshops to advance WPS objectives and provide additional support. The workshops addressed WPS implementation, operational planning, ways to increase service women in leadership roles, gender integration, the WPS Act and challenges to implementation, and professional growth of senior enlisted leader women and their contribution to their services. During the July 2022 Conference of the Defense Ministers of the Americas (CDMA), Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin agreed to host the CDMA Ad-Hoc WPS Working Group, which will be held in 2024.

### STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

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The Department of Defense has multiple, decades-old State Partnership Program relationships with fourteen Caribbean partner nations; one partnership is with the Eastern Caribbean eight-nation Regional Security System (Bahamas-Rhode Island; Dominican Republic-Puerto Rico; Guyana-Florida; Haiti-Louisiana; Jamaica-District of Columbia; Regional Security System-Florida and U.S. Virgin Islands; Suriname-South Dakota; and Trinidad & Tobago-Delaware).



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The State Partnership Program has featured or plans to feature over 100 events and exchanges with Caribbean partners in fiscal year 2023, focused on disaster response; rotary wing operations and maintenance; counter-illicit trafficking; medical readiness; cybersecurity; radio communications; force protection; intelligence fundamentals; capital development and engineering; logistics and supply management; military justice; ethics regulation; WPS; non-commissioned officer development; and human resources management and readiness.

### TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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In fiscal year 2023, the Department of Defense has provided or plans to provide training or education to hundreds of Caribbean defense and security students at Department of Defense schools, education events, and through in-country mobile training teams. Caribbean partners attend the Department of Defense's leading professional military education programs at schools including the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, the Air Command and Staff College, Army Command and General Staff College, and the Naval Command College.

The Department of Defense's William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies conducts academic programs to build institutional capacity and promote common perspectives on regional security. The center has engaged or plans to engage hundreds of Caribbean participants in courses and webinars in fiscal year 2023, including a new course titled Climate Change and Implications for Defense and Security (CCIDS).

### EXERCISES

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The Department of Defense's exercises involving Caribbean participants promote regional and sub-regional coordination, enable U.S. and partner forces to meet training requirements, and improve readiness. The annual flagship Caribbean exercise **TRADEWINDS**, which Guyana will host on July 14-28, 2023, will focus on regional coordination for countering-transnational organized criminal organizations and counter-violent extremist organizations. The exercise includes multiple training components that enhance readiness for humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations, climate change disasters, and environmental security. Other significant annual exercises include **FUERZAS COMANDO** for Special Forces integration, **UNITAS** for maritime security, **PANAMAX** focused on defense of the Panama Canal, and **RESTORATION ISLAND CAYS** focused on disaster response and management.

### DETECTION AND MONITORING AND INFORMATION SHARING

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Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) conducts detection and monitoring operations throughout its joint operating area, which includes the Caribbean, to facilitate the interdiction of illicit trafficking in support of domestic and international partners. The Department of Defense works closely with regional partners representing over 20 partner nations to facilitate the flow of information to their home nations' operation centers. Belize, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago have liaison officers at JIATF-S. In coordination with JIATF-South, partners have been responsible for 76 percent of cocaine drug seizures and disruptions in fiscal year 2022 across the joint operating area. The Department of Defense hosts the Cooperative Situational Information Integration (CSII) system, an online system that allows the United States and over two dozen partner nations to share air-, maritime- and land-domain awareness information to counter illicit trafficking in the Caribbean.