

CENTCOM Launches Innovation Joint Task Force to Rapidly Equip Warfighters

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TAMPA, Fla. – On Sept. 23, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) announced the establishment of an innovation task force designed to accelerate the delivery of combat capabilities to warfighters.

The new organization, called the Rapid Employment Joint Task Force (REJTF), will be led by CENTCOM's chief technology officer to fast-track processes for outfitting deployed forces with cutting-edge capabilities.

"This is about getting new warfighting capabilities into the hands of our skilled warfighters faster," said Adm. Brad Cooper, CENTCOM commander. "The new task force will synergize existing efforts among our Service components and support Secretary Hegseth's drive to rapidly equip our warriors."

In July, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth issued a directive to accelerate the acquisition and fielding of affordable drone technology for combat units. CENTCOM's creation of the REJTF supports this initiative.

The joint task force will coordinate innovation efforts in three focus areas: capability, software, and tech diplomacy – building on progress achieved by Service-component task forces in prior years.

"Our goal is to rapidly deliver innovation, meaning putting combat-credible capability into the hands of our warfighters in 60 days or less," said Joy Shanaberger, CENTCOM's chief technology officer. "Equipping skilled warfighters faster with

cutting-edge capabilities will deter bad actors.”

The REJTF will include a cross-section of experts in resourcing, assessments, information systems, data integration, acquisitions, logistics and warfighter integration.

“We will find newer, better, and more efficient ways to equip our forces while working alongside our regional partners,” said Shanaberger.

Last week, U.S. and Saudi forces completed the Middle East region’s largest live-fire counter-unmanned aerial system exercise called Red Sands. The multi-day event featured more than 300 personnel who fielded 20 counter-unmanned aerial systems at the Shamal-2 Range in northeastern Saudi Arabia.

“Red Sands brought together U.S., Saudi and industry capabilities and expertise to identify ‘best in breed’ systems for detecting, tracking and eliminating modern aerial drone threats,” said Cooper. “Working shoulder-to-shoulder with regional partners to innovate and adapt is more critical than ever.”