

U.S. Navy Leaders Observe Joint Task Force Southern Guard Operations



GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba (Feb. 5, 2025) U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet Commander Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello meets with Sailors attached to Freedom-variant Littoral Combat Ship USS Saint Louis (LCS 19) aboard the ship during their support of Operation Southern Guard at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Feb. 5, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Public Affairs)

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NAVAL STATION GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba – Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, Commander U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet, and Rear Adm. John Hewitt, Commander, Navy Region Southeast, visited Joint Task Force Southern Guard onboard Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (NSGB) Feb. 5 and 6, as the Joint

Task Force prepares to receive illegal aliens from the United States. Sardiello and Hewitt accompanied Adm. Alvin Holsey, Commander, U.S. Southern Command, during the visit.

At the direction of the President to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. military service members are supporting Illegal Aliens holding operations led by DHS at NGSB. U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) has set up Joint Task Force Southern Guard at the Naval Station to execute the directive.

“The Naval Station is fully committed to ensuring we have the infrastructure and resources in place to support this vital mission,” said Capt. Michael Stephen, Commander, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. “From the moment we received the mission, our team has worked with urgency, executing contingency plans, and rapidly strengthening our capabilities.

“The level of teamwork—both within the base and across the joint force—has been outstanding,” said Stephen “Everyone is engaged, working together seamlessly to tackle challenges and ensure we’re ready for what’s ahead. The progress we’ve made in such a short time is a testament to their dedication and professionalism,” he said.

As the United States’ oldest overseas military installation, established in 1903, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay is in the USSOUTHCOM Area of Responsibility. U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. Fourth Fleet serves as USSOUTHCOM’s maritime component commander and therefore has responsibilities in contingency plans involving the naval station. U.S. Navy Region Southeast manages and oversees shore installation support for the naval station as it does for a total of 18 Navy bases in the Southeast region.

“We are very proud of our Sailors, Marines and civilians who have responded to this contingency plan at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, which is a critical forward-operating base

that enables the United States to maintain a persistent presence in the Caribbean,” said Rear Adm. Sardiello. “This mission exemplifies how we integrate and deploy all-domain combat power to respond to crises, maintain regional security, and protect U.S. interests.”

Military service members and contractors have provided the manpower and organization to accommodate thousands’ illegal aliens. Additional phases of expansion will follow to meet the President’s directive to host up to 30,000 illegal aliens. This work includes the construction of large, secure tent facilities to house illegal aliens, the installation of high-security fencing and barriers to protect all personnel, and a huge increase in providing essential services, including food, medical care, and housing, to all DOD and DHS personnel. The Navy is also delivering comprehensive logistical support, ensuring the infrastructure and resources needed to sustain operations are in place.

Naval Station Guantanamo Bay ensures the freedom of action in the maritime domain and contributes to enhancing U.S. alliances and partnerships throughout the region. By executing this critical role in the enforcement of national immigration policies, the station continues to be an integral asset in supporting the defense and security objectives of the United States.