



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 29, 2009

## International Military Force Lands on Florida Beach

More than 20 naval ships, many of them foreign, have gathered off the coast of Mayport, Florida, for the two weeks of training. Also present are four submarines, over 50 aircraft, and more than 7,000 sailors and marines, according to the Department of Defense. "We're helping each other to train the future navies of the world," said Commodore Rudy Laco, the man in charge of the operation's ships. Other countries participating include Canada, Argentina, Germany, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile.



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"It's a perfect opportunity for us all to work together, with the different countries," said Lt. Mathias Rix of the German Navy. Admiral Joseph Kernan, the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (NAVSO) and the U.S. 4th Fleet, agreed, saying, "As we move forward together, I am confident the future opportunities to work with our partners will not only strengthen our ability to operate together for our nations' security, but will also build personal and professional respect and friendships."

According to officials cited in a report from the Armed Forces Press Service, the training includes live-fire exercises, undersea warfare, shipboard operations, maritime interdiction operations, anti-air and anti-surface warfare, amphibious operations, electronic warfare, and "special" warfare. The multinational force will also be sinking a retired destroyer. Among the participating U.S. vessels are the amphibious transport dock ship *USS Mesa Verde*, guided missile destroyer *USS Donald Cook*, the U.S. Coast Guard's *Thetis*, and guided-missile frigates *USS Doyle* and *USS Kauffman*.

The UNITAS program started during the cold war in 1959, but continues despite the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is the first time the exercises have been held off the coast of the U.S. mainland, however. In its 50th year, the UNITAS gold, as the anniversary has been called, is being held in conjunction with the Partnership for the Americas. Among the new priorities are piracy, drug interdiction, "promoting maritime security and stability in the region" and more "cooperation" in general. The price tag is reported to be in the neighborhood of seven million dollars.

"Our country is involved in many international operations involving the United Nations, that are joint operations," explained Uruguayan Rear Admiral Oscar Deballi. "Joint operations are the operations of the future." The U.S. military is also involved in "international operations" under the United Nations, despite the fact that the UN is dominated by dictators, leaders hostile to U.S. interests, and other assorted undesirables. Ecuador, for example, which participated in this year's UNITAS, has been accused by its former foreign minister of aiding leftist-terrorist groups in Latin America. It is also in the process of what its president calls a "Socialist Revolution."

Holding these multi-million-dollar "multinational" training exercises is not only a waste of money, it's dangerous. Training foreign militaries — especially ones with track-records like Mexico and other Latin American countries — will not help our "security." Allowing these nations' armed forces to witness how



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the U.S. military operates doesn't make much sense either.

*Photo: — U.S. Navy*



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