

Joint Task Force Six Gets New Name, New Mission

Press Release

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FORT BLISS, Texas ? Joint Task Force–North (JTF–North) assumed its new name and new homeland defense support mission during a unit redesignation ceremony at Biggs Army Airfield, Texas, Sept. 28.

Gen. Ed Eberhart, North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command commander, and Brig. Gen. Jose D. Riojas, JTF–North commander, announced the changes during the ceremony.

JTF–North, previously known as Joint Task Force–Six, will focus on detecting and monitoring transnational threats within and along approaches to the continental United States.

Transnational threats are activities conducted by individuals or groups involved in international terrorism, narcotics trafficking, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the delivery systems for such weapons, and organized crime that threatens the national security of the United States.

?Our transition to Joint Task Force–North does not mark the end of this command; it is simply an evolution into a new chapter in the proud history of a proven organization brought about by an ever changing world,? said Riojas. ?This evolutionary process will enable us to better meet the current and future defense and security needs of our great nation.?

Eberhart said Joint Task Force–North has become ?even more relevant to the safety and security of our nation.?

The new homeland defense mission aligns JTF–North more closely with its higher headquarters, USNORTHCOM, which was created in October 2002 to defend the nation against threats by air, land and sea. The command also coordinates all Department of Defense civil support missions.

Initially, JTF–North will focus on land approaches along the northern and southern U.S. borders. The unit also will continue to provide counter–drug support to law enforcement agencies, said Riojas.

?For our law enforcement partners, the synchronization and integration of the Department of Defense?s vast capabilities has given them an unprecedented edge in their counter–drug efforts. Last year alone, JTF–6 counter–drug support missions directly contributed to the seizure of illegal drugs valued at almost 2 billion dollars,? Riojas said.

Since its inception in 1989, the joint task force has completed more than 5,800 counter–drug missions in direct support of more than 430 different local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and counter–drug task forces.

?As we assume our new homeland defense mission, we will capitalize on our proven experiences,? said Riojas.

?As we continue to develop and prepare to execute our new homeland defense support mission, we do so with the knowledge that our fellow Americans, our nation and our allies are counting on our continued success,? he said.