

Lt General Ricardo Sanchez, US Army (Ret)



Ricardo Sánchez (born September 9, 1953) is a former United States Army lieutenant general who stood as a candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for the U.S. Senate election in 2012 for the seat of retiring Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison.

Sánchez was born into a poor Mexican American family in Rio Grande City, Texas. During the Vietnam War (1969–73), Sánchez was in college. He spent one year at the University of Texas at Austin on an ROTC scholarship, eventually transferring to Texas A&M University in Kingsville, Texas, where he graduated in 1973 with a double major in mathematics and history. Sánchez was named a Distinguished Military Graduate (DMG), meaning he was in the top 20% of all ROTC cadets in the nation. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Army.

Sánchez became a platoon leader in the 82nd Airborne Division, stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. By 1977, he had transferred from the infantry to armor. He received

promotions regularly and was stationed at posts in the United States, South Korea, Panama and Germany.

In 1991, then Lieutenant Colonel Sánchez served as a battalion commander during Operation Desert Storm, successfully leading his unit of the 197th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) to Basra without suffering any casualties. Shortly after the Gulf War, Sánchez was promoted to Colonel and given command of the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division. Afterwards, he served on the staff of U.S. Southern Command, first as deputy chief of staff then as director of operations.

On July 10, 2001, by then a general, Sánchez became commander of 1st Armored Division V Corps. He held that position for nearly two years before assuming command of the entire corps on June 14, 2003. On this date he also became commander of Combined Joint Task Force 7, the coalition ground forces in the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. Much of Sánchez's time commanding 1st Armored Division had been as a brigadier general.

Commander of Coalition Ground Forces in Iraq

June 2003 to June 2004

Sánchez held the top military position in Iraq during what was arguably one of the most critical periods of the war—the year after the fall of the Hussein regime, and the time the insurgency took root and began its counterattack. Highlights during his tenure as commander in Iraq include the killing of Uday and Qusay Hussein, and the capture of Saddam Hussein.

2012 U.S. Senate campaign

Having previously entered the race, Ricardo Sánchez announced on December 16, 2011 that he would not run as a candidate in the Democratic Party primary for Texas' open U.S. Senate seat in 2012. In a statement to his followers Sanchez stated:

“I am very grateful for the strong support and encouragement I have received from supporters across the country and the wonderful Texans I have met in every part of our great state. However, pressing personal challenges, coupled with the recent loss of our home due to fire and lagging fundraising numbers make a statewide election campaign impractical for me at this time.

After extensive consultation with my family, Maria Elena and I have decided to put family first and I will therefore end my campaign for the 2012 U.S. Senate seat as of today.

I am blessed to have made friends with so many great Texans on this journey. Their personal stories and their love for our homeland will continue to inspire me as I look ahead and consider future opportunities for public service. I remain steadfast in the desire to serve both my country and the State of Texas to help bring new, responsible, and fair-minded leadership to our government.

May God Bless Texas and May God Bless America.”

Personal life

In June 2004, Sánchez relinquished command of the Multi-National Force Iraq (MNF-I) to General George Casey, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. Sánchez returned to Germany where he continued as Commanding General, V Corps.

On September 6, 2006, Sánchez relinquished command of V Corps in a ceremony at Campbell Barracks, Heidelberg, Germany. Sánchez had commanded the corps for more than 3 years; longer than any previous commander in the unit's history. In deference to Sánchez' longevity, he relinquished command to General David McKiernan, Commanding General, US Army Europe and Seventh Army, his higher commander, instead of to a successor.

Sánchez retired on November 1, 2006, culminating 33 years of Army service. Sánchez now lives in his home state of Texas.