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**POSTURE STATEMENT OF
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COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND**

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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Introduction

Chairman Skelton, Ranking Member McKeon, and distinguished Members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the United States Southern Command and our area of responsibility in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is my privilege to report to you on the successes and accomplishments of our men and women over the past year, and to share our appreciation for the outstanding support Congress has shown us. The devastating earthquake in Haiti has shown how suddenly the strategic environment can change; but it has also shown how your investments in U.S. Southern Command through the years enable us to respond to such challenges. With your continued support, we will build upon this foundation and strengthen the bonds of security cooperation throughout this region.

The nations of the Americas are strongly linked together in ways beyond physical and sociological proximity: our hemisphere is linked demographically, economically, socially, politically, culturally, linguistically and militarily. These shared qualities and beliefs connect us and provide the basis for addressing the common challenges that affect the security and stability of all nations in the region, today. These common traits also enable strong partnerships and serve as the foundation for the enduring relationships we will need as we face the future together.

As globalization trends continue, our security will depend upon expanding cooperative engagement with multinational, multi-agency and public-private partners in our hemisphere. We will be better able to meet complex challenges of the 21st Century security environment by building robust, enduring partnerships now. Together we are stronger and more effective than working as a single organization or nation operating individually. Our vision embodies this belief.

The Region—Enduring and Evolving

U.S. Southern Command is responsible for conducting military operations and promoting security cooperation in Central America, the Caribbean and South America in order to achieve US strategic objectives. Successfully accomplishing this mission enhances the security and stability in the Western Hemisphere and ensures the forward defense of the United States.

The Americas, a home we share, is a strategically vital, culturally rich, and widely diverse and vibrant region. Since taking command nine months ago, I have traveled extensively throughout the region and have witnessed the challenges facing regional leaders and their people. I have also learned that many of these challenges are shared by all of us. Although our nations may at times disagree on political and economic matters, we are united by a common view that we can settle our problems through negotiated agreements. This view provides the key for security for our citizens and requires a steadfast dedication to protecting our fundamental liberties and defending our common commitment to maintaining democracy and the rule of law.

International commerce and trade between the U.S. and Latin American and Caribbean countries is strong, and experts forecast this growth to continue. The Western Hemisphere is the United States' largest market with nearly 38 percent of US trade travelling north and south, equating to \$1.5 trillion.¹ We obtain more crude oil imports—52 percent—from this region than from the Persian Gulf, which only provides 13 percent.² The Panama Canal is paramount in strategic and economic importance as nearly two-thirds of ships transiting the Canal are going to or coming from a US port, carrying 16 percent of US trade; expansion of the Canal is expected to

¹ Economic Interdependence 2008 Trade Figures (www.census.gov/foreign-trade). ~38 percent to Western Hemisphere versus ~31 percent to PACRIM and ~21 percent to Europe.

² Energy Information Administration (www.eia.doe.gov) Aug 2009 Figures: More than 52 percent from Western Hemisphere (incl CAN and MEX), 30 percent from LATAM (incl MEX), 19 percent from AOR, versus 13 percent from Persian Gulf

almost double the capacity to approximately 600 million tons a year.³ The Commerce Department reports the overall sum of US foreign direct investment in the hemisphere (minus Canada) is 17.8 percent of our total foreign direct investment worldwide. Further, ten of the 17 US Free Trade Agreements are with countries in the Americas. In terms of percentage, our total foreign direct investment in the hemisphere (including Canada) equals our direct investment in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, combined. Additionally, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) studies estimate \$42.3 billion in remittances flowed from the U.S. to the region in 2009, slightly more than two-thirds of the IADB's estimated world-wide total of remittances.⁴ Economic partnerships are strong today, and according to Commerce Department and World Trade Organization data, by 2011, US trade with Latin America is expected to exceed trade with Europe and Japan.

In addition to demographic and economic ties with Latin America and the Caribbean, we share social and political views rooted in a common commitment to democracy, freedom, justice and respect for human rights. Compared to three decades ago when the form of government in the majority of these countries was non-democratic, most nations in the region now subscribe to democracy and agree that free governments should be accountable to their people in order to govern effectively.

We are fortunate to share similar main languages and interwoven cultures. Although there are many different dialects, people of the region use four primary languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. While the U.S. is thought of as a primarily English-speaking nation, we are also the fifth largest Spanish speaking country in the world. Our significant

³ Panama Canal Authority (www.pancanal.com) 5 percent of world trade transits the canal / 16 percent of U.S. trade transits the canal, 2/3s ships transiting Panama Canal are going to/from US ports

⁴ Inter-American Development Bank, Press Release, Migrant Remittances, October 18, 2009, December 7, 2009, <http://www.iadb.org/NEWS/articledetail.cfm?Language=En2&artType+PR&artid=3348>.

cultural ties will grow stronger in the decades ahead, as by 2050, the number of people in the United States citing Hispanic heritage will comprise approximately 30 percent of the total US population⁵.

Despite the constant ebb and flow of political tides in this hemisphere, U.S. Southern Command has been fortunate to maintain strong professional relationships with our military and security force counterparts in almost every nation in the region. We engage with these nations continuously during peacetime through numerous bilateral and multilateral exercises, conferences, and other training engagements designed to prepare for the host of challenges that may confront us. Regional partnerships with and among our partner forces directly enhance hemispheric security and stability, as evidenced by the outstanding professional teamwork and unity of effort displayed by the region's militaries as part of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE.

In addition to our more than 20 large-scale joint and combined exercises annually, we host and sponsor hundreds of unit and individual exchanges, and assist with arrangements for approximately 5,000 students from Latin America and the Caribbean who attend US military schools and training sessions throughout the region. Future senior military leaders interact with US military personnel at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, the Inter-American Defense College, and the Inter-American Air Forces Academy. The camaraderie developed and the schools' strong emphasis on democratic values and respect for human rights contribute to the professionalization of military establishments who are subordinate to civilian control and capable of effective combined operations.

⁵ Source: Pew Research Center, *U.S. Population Projections:2005-2050: February 2008*.

Despite the number of enduring linkages we share with our neighbors in the region, we are also in a period of profound strategic change. Globalization has enabled nations, non-state actors, multilateral institutions and non-governmental organizations to affect—both positively and negatively—the condition of millions throughout our region and across the globe. Our world is shrinking. The Atlantic and Pacific oceans are not the borders or barriers they once were. There are multiple approaches in several domains—including, increasingly, cyberspace—by which adversaries can enter the United States. At U.S. Southern Command, we remain committed to helping achieve hemispheric security by developing and maintaining strong partnerships to meet the dynamic and uncertain future.

Challenges

The nations within our area of responsibility are largely at peace with one another and have formally foresworn the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Military spending on a per capita basis remains lower in Latin America and the Caribbean than anywhere else in the world. The likelihood of conventional 20th Century military threats also remains low for the foreseeable future. However, we do face non-traditional challenges that threaten security and stability throughout the hemisphere.

These challenges are multiple and complex and include a broad and growing spectrum of public security threats, the possibility of natural and man-made disasters, and an emerging class of issues, such as those relating to the environment. More specifically, illicit trafficking, transnational terrorism, crime, gangs and the potential spread of WMD pose the principal security challenges within the region, none of which fall to DoD to take the lead in confronting. Most of these issues, in turn, are fueled by the endemic and underlying conditions of poverty,

income inequality and corruption. Thus, our primary focus is on doing what we can to support other agencies of our government and our partner nations as they confront these problems and try to prevent them from becoming issues that require the military to address.

Poverty and Income Inequality. Perhaps the single factor contributing most to unrest, insecurity and instability in our region is the pervasive nature of poverty. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in 2009, the number of people living in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean—defined as living on less than \$2 a day—rose for the first time in six years, increasing by 1.1 percent over the previous year, from 180 million to 189 million people, or just over 34 percent of the population. The number of truly destitute—those living in extreme poverty, defined as living on less than \$1 a day—increased from 71 to 76 million. That is an additional ***9 million*** people living in poverty and ***5 million*** living in extreme poverty. These figures illustrate in very real terms the enormous challenges faced by our partner nations and neighbors in the region. Coupled with this poverty is a disparity in income levels that is, according to the World Bank, the most unequal sub-region in the world. The richest ten percent of the Latin American population earns 48 percent of the region's income, 30 times the percentage of the poorest ten percent, which earns 1.6 percent.

Areas with lower levels of economic investment, development and growth can provide a breeding ground for illicit trafficking, other related criminal activities, and the full range of terrorism. Impoverished citizens, with little trust in their governments or hope for a better life, are easy prey for illicit traffickers, terrorist organizations and political demagogues. They provide fertile soil in which international criminals and terrorists can recruit, take root, and flourish, thus directly undermining state sovereignty, threatening public safety and contributing to rising regional instability.

Illicit trafficking: The confluence of money, power and the ability to breach the integrity of national borders makes the illicit trafficking problem a significant security challenge for nations throughout the Americas. Border insecurity, increased violence, public fear, corruption, weakening support for democratic institutions, and heavily burdened local, county and state agencies are the by-products of this illegitimate and criminal activity, which is estimated to cost legitimate economies more than \$245 billion annually. Furthermore, the same routes and networks by which illicit traffickers smuggle 1,250-1,500 metric tons of cocaine per year around the region, could be used wittingly or unwittingly to smuggle weapons, cash, fissile material or terrorists. As a threat to our homeland and the long-term stability of the region, illicit trafficking is of critical concern as it provides a possible nexus for transnational terrorism and the potential proliferation of WMD.

Internal and cross-border—via air, land and/or sea—trafficking in drugs, weapons, human beings, money and terrorists poses a threat to every nation’s security and stability. Revenue from illicit trafficking has weakened state structures throughout the region, subverted the rule of law, and ripped apart the fabric of social order. I am particularly troubled by the progressively negative impact of these activities on the Caribbean and Central America regions. As progress in Colombia continues, air and maritime interdiction efforts are increasingly effective, and the Government of Mexico continues to apply pressure to drug trafficking organizations, these traffickers are being progressively squeezed out of their previous operating locations. This resultant “balloon effect” causes the trafficking organizations to seek safe havens in “undergoverned spaces” like the Petén in Guatemala, the Miskito Coast in Honduras and Nicaragua, and the Darién regions in Panama. Similarly, our Caribbean neighbors are also seeing an increase and return of illicit trafficking organization presence in their territories,

particularly the island of Hispaniola. The governments and institutions in these countries contend with the onslaught of violence, instability and insecurity associated with illicit trafficking as best they can, but they do not yet possess the capability or capacity to do so without help.

Underlying all this is the illegal narcotics industry. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, 31,000 deaths in the United States each year are attributed directly to drug-induced causes. The demand for drugs in the U.S. remains strong and creates incentives for illegal activities. The Andean Ridge produces nearly all of the world's cocaine and it and Central America are increasingly providers of heroin consumed in the U.S. Of the approximately 1200 metric tons of export quality cocaine that shipped from source countries in South America in 2009, approximately 60 percent of that was headed north, destined for the United States; in addition, we are seeing a growing amount (approximately 30 percent) heading to new and expanding markets in Europe and the Middle East, as evidenced by Spain becoming the world's largest per capita drug user.

This is not simply an issue of supply and demand for illegal narcotics, however. Traffic is bidirectional and equally congested in both lanes with contraband. As traffickers exchange drugs for arms and services in the transit zones, transit nations become drug consumers as well. Brazil provides an illustration of how such an evolution can occur, as it is now the second largest consumer of cocaine in the world behind the U.S. While drugs and people tend to go out from the region, increasingly, we are seeing money, arms and technology/know-how (from communications gear to gangland tactics) flowing back into the region. This cycle has expanded to become more than a localized or even regional issue—it has become a global enterprise and thus requires a global strategy to countermand it. While partner nations are willing to work with

us to develop regional approaches to counter the production and trafficking of illegal narcotics, effective and sustainable counter illicit trafficking operations severely test the capabilities and capacity of their thinly stretched forces. I see the illicit trafficking threat as a multi-faceted equation—demand, production, transit and finances—all supporting micro-markets of instability and violence.

The Drug Enforcement Administration estimates the illegal worldwide trafficking industry to be a \$394 billion per year industry. In addition to illegal narcotics, illicit human trafficking nets approximately \$32 billion per year; illegal arms smuggling nets roughly \$10 billion per year, and the exotic wildlife industry nets a surprising \$80 billion a year. Traffickers are constantly developing new means of preventing interference with their illegal activities. As we modify our tactics, drug producers and traffickers find innovative methods to develop the drugs as well as alternative trafficking routes to transport them. The traffickers of yesterday have become much more lethal today, and this trend is expected to continue.

Terrorism: The blurring of the lines that used to separate terrorists from narcotics traffickers can be seen in groups like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in Peru. These entities define a category of “narco-terrorists” and they derive a majority of their funding and power from their involvement in the illicit drugs industry. These organizations and a number of extremely violent gangs have driven up the rates of homicide and kidnappings throughout the region and do not operate within traditional nation-state boundaries—they live among and terrorize the populace, and take advantage of ungoverned and undergoverned spaces without any regard or respect for national sovereignty.

As these two threat vectors merge into one new hybrid, so must our efforts to counter it. We thank the Congress for providing the dedicated resources necessary for this mission and for

working with us in the specific case of Colombia to authorize flexible funding sources that allow us to adapt and stay ahead with a blending of counterterrorism (CT) and counternarcotics (CN). This expanded authority and flexibility is essential to helping us rapidly address emerging capability gaps with our partners as the strategic situation continues to evolve. We now need to ensure that we have this authority in other areas as appropriate where we see this nexus potentially occurring, such as Peru.

Crime and gangs: A close corollary of the spread of illegal trafficking is the alarming growth of criminal violence in the region. Rising crime, coupled with corruption, exacerbates the conditions of poverty and inequality, hampering development efforts and reducing an already fragile economic growth environment. One out of every three homicides in the world takes place in our region, as does one out of every two kidnappings. According to United Nations data, Latin America and the Caribbean's annual homicide rate is one of the highest in the world, with more than 27 homicides per 100,000 people—murder now ranks as one of the five main causes of death in several Central American countries. Central America is the region with the highest levels of non-political crime worldwide, with an average murder rate of 33 per 100,000 inhabitants last year, three times greater than the global average, according to the UN Development Program (UNDP) Report on Human Development in Central America 2009-2010. These reports all emphasize the toll—both human and economic—of insecurity, violence and crime on the day-to-day decisions of the population, making insecurity a clear impediment to development and a destabilizing element for many nations in the Western Hemisphere. For example, in recent surveys of the region, delinquency and lack of personal security rank as the top social ill for the majority of countries.⁶

⁶ Latinobarómetro.

The growing presence and influence of gangs contributes to rising crime rates and severely challenges personal security in many areas. In Central America, Jamaica, and major cities in Brazil, gangs are infecting society's ability to provide basic functions and necessities, and are thus becoming a significant security priority. The overall gang population is estimated to reach into the hundreds of thousands, primarily filling their ranks with disenfranchised youth. According to a comprehensive study conducted by the National Public Security Council in El Salvador in 2008, violent crime cost the five countries examined a combined \$6.5 billion, equivalent to 7.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).⁷ The GDP losses to crime came at the expense of government investment in social services like spending on development, infrastructure, public safety and education. Increasingly, the threat posed by gangs reaches beyond Latin America and the Caribbean—the more sophisticated groups operate regionally and even globally with deep reach back into in the United States from California to Washington, DC, and increasingly into Europe.

The compounded effects of urban violence and transnational gangs are an undeniable threat to our national security and to the larger long-term security and stability of the region. The Departments of State, Justice, Homeland Security, and USAID each have programs that fit together to augment the efforts of the nations' most affected by youth violence. In each case, U.S. Southern Command closely coordinates with and supports the lead federal agency and the U.S. Ambassador; at the same time, we continue working arm-in-arm with partner nation

⁷ *Los Costos Económicos de la Violencia en Centroamérica (The Economic Cost of Violence in Central America)*, El Salvador, 2008, pp.13-14. In 2008, the National Public Security Council of the Salvadoran presidency's office commissioned a study compiling the excess direct spending and losses caused by violence in five Central American countries in four areas, namely: increased health care; increased government spending for crime prevention, law enforcement and justice; spending on private security; and, material losses from crime. This landmark analysis found that in 2006, violent crime cost the combined states \$6.5 billion—equivalent to 7.7 percent of GDP. Though all nations suffered significant losses, the total cost of violence varied between countries: \$2.9 billion in Guatemala (7.7 percent GDP); \$2.01 billion in El Salvador (10.8 percent GDP); \$885 million in Honduras (9.6 percent GDP); \$790 million in Costa Rica (3.6 percent GDP); and, \$529 million in Nicaragua (10.0 percent GDP).

military and security forces in the region to build the necessary capabilities to enable them to provide their own national security and be able to provide responsible support to civilian authorities when required.

Competitive Marketplace: Because of globalization and its inherent empowerment of new actors, the U.S. can no longer take for granted that our way of life is the sole ideology of choice in this region. We must now actively compete to ensure our message is accurately transmitted and received by the appropriate audience. Populism, socialism and democracy are *all* now prevalent ideas within the region. Money, trade, and other interaction from expanding players like China, Russia and Iran exist in Latin America and the Caribbean. We are also beginning to see a renewed polarization in the region. All of these factors combine to form a competitive marketplace of ideas, within which non-traditional actors have become very adept at operating.

To compete in this venue, we engage proactively and counter anti-U.S. messaging with persistent demonstrations of our goodwill, competence and professionalism. We convey the strength of our ideas in both words and deeds by training and working with our regional partners to improve security, provide humanitarian assistance, and respond to disasters. We remain engaged in this marketplace through dialogue and open discussion with partners within the region as well as players external to our AOR.

China's evolving relationship with Latin America through a growing number of linkages and longer-term investments is impacting the strategic landscape in the region and further emphasizes the interconnectedness of the 21st Century. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), total bilateral trade between China (excluding Hong Kong) and Latin America has risen from \$39.3 billion in 2004 to almost \$147 billion in 2008. China is already the second

largest user of the Panama Canal. The rapid growth of China's trade with Latin America and the Caribbean shows the likelihood China could become an enduring part of the economic landscape of the Americas.

We have also noticed a marked increase in military-to-military and technology-based relations between China, Russia, Iran and the region. China is conducting more military training and educational exchanges, entering into a larger number of technology transfers agreements, and selling sophisticated defensive military items such as air surveillance radars and military aircraft. China is also finding new areas for cooperation in the commercial space sector as seen in the China-Brazil Earth Research Satellite (CBERS) program. Russia has followed suit, with arms sales and a naval tour of the Caribbean. Russia has publicly stated that improving relations with Latin America is a top priority, focused primarily on Cuba and then Venezuela. They have also increased their outreach to other countries in the region as evidenced by signing a military and scientific bilateral agreement with Peru, offering increased support to Bolivia's counter-narcotics operations, and seeking a Free Trade Agreement with Chile.

Iran, too, is strengthening its ties to the region, focusing primarily on Venezuela, while developing relationships with other nations, as evidenced by opening 11 new embassies with a 12th expected to open in the Caribbean later this year. Iran's trade activities have thus far focused on infrastructure development, medical exchanges, agriculture, mining and the oil industry. Finally, a Trade Memoranda of Understanding between Iran, Cuba and Venezuela since 2005 has now surpassed \$7 billion.

As we face this complex, dynamic and continually evolving security environment at Southern Command, we are constantly reminded that achieving our desired end state of secure stable, democratic and prosperous states throughout the Americas requires a wide variety of tool

sets beyond pure military activity. We continue to look for creative ways to approach partnerships throughout the region. We seek innovative ways to organize, plan, train and operate; to adapt new technology to ever-changing challenges; and to communicate, including how we describe and frame our challenges both with our partners and with the public in general.

Strategic Framework: Initiatives, Exercises and Operations

Our strategic approach is balanced and prioritized — confronting the most pressing and probable threats to the Nation today, while at the same time, posturing the joint, combined and multinational force to prevent, and if necessary, defeat the most consequential threats to tomorrow. We take a regional, global and long-term view of our strategic environment, our objectives, and the implications for strategic risk. It is imperative we remain capable of executing our plans, while still engaging throughout the region at the appropriate levels: building, complementing or enhancing, as appropriate, partner capability and capacity; improving international and interagency cooperation; and, fostering both security and stability.

As we confront the considerable range of challenges before us in our AOR, we continually ensure coordination across multiple levels in more than one agency and in more than one nation. This is a prerequisite for any project, exercise, initiative or operation within our region: each issue needs to be assessed as part of an interconnected and unified strategy. For example, the illicit trafficking issue cannot be adequately addressed in isolation from issues of illegal narcotics, migration, arms trafficking, money-laundering, and radical ideological terrorists. Furthermore, our strategic approach is based on the affirmation of common values held throughout the hemisphere: democracy, liberty and human rights.

In terms of military-to-military contact, Latin America and the Caribbean represent many opportunities of US engagement. We have witnessed numerous positive results from non-traditional approaches to partnering that integrate talents and capabilities from foreign and domestic, military and civilian, public and private sector entities. These efforts may be relatively low visibility, but they have a huge impact on US military and partner nation military and security force readiness, particularly when they are accomplished in a consistent and enduring manner. We pursue a host of programs in support of other lead agencies and government entities to include numerous training exercises, educational programs, technology sharing, intelligence sharing, security procurement assistance, humanitarian aid, among others. Our evolving engagement strategy commits us to build or enhance the security capability of our military counterparts and to expand the capacity for all of us to work together. Joint, international, interagency, and public-private is the essence of everything we do.

Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-South): At the tactical and operational level within U.S. Southern Command, a model for this regional engagement and international and interagency coordination is JIATF-South located in Key West, Florida. JIATF-South exists to spearhead the effort to fight one of the most pressing challenges facing the region—illicit trafficking—with an acknowledged potential nexus with narco-terrorism. This interagency task force, which celebrated twenty years of excellence last year, is led by a U.S. Coast Guard Rear Admiral and is comprised of truly amazing individuals from all four branches of the military, 14 different agencies and 13 partner nations. This group, beyond doubt, is a team: a joint, interagency, international, combined and allied ***team***—a creative and innovative body that defines “synergy”, the blending of experience, professionalism and knowledge being greater than the sum of its individual parts.

JIATF-South continues to make incredible headway, producing extraordinary results every year. For example: JIATF-South's joint operating area (JOA) covers nearly 42 million square miles, almost 21 percent of the earth's surface; in the 20 years it has been conducting operations in this region, 2500 metric tons of cocaine have been seized, 705,000 pounds of marijuana interdicted, 4600 traffickers arrested, 1100 vessels captured, and a grand total of approximately \$195 billion taken out of the pockets of the drug cartels. They have accomplished these results while possessing zero assets of their own—every aircraft and vessel involved with detection, monitoring, interdiction and apprehension is allocated through the Department of Defense Global Force Management process, Department of Homeland Security Statement of Intent, and International contributions that place the assets under tactical control (TACON) of JIATF-South, which can be recalled by their service provider or operational control (OPCON) authority if unexpected circumstances warrant, such as Haiti relief efforts, search and rescue (SAR), or other national interests. In 2009, JIATF-South had TACON of USCG, USN, and international ships for a total of 2915 on-station days, equating to an approximately 8.0 surface asset laydown on any given day within the JIATF-South JOA. Similarly, JIATF-South had TACON of Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), USCG, DOD and international long range maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) for a total of 9446 on-station hours, equating to an approximately 3.0 air asset laydown on any given day within the JIATF-South JOA. Based on JIATF-South's analysis, a 14.0 surface asset laydown and a 5.0 air asset laydown are required to meet the National Interdiction goal of 40 percent.

In addition to the need for organic surface and air assets, additional challenges that restrict JIATF-South from realizing their full effectiveness include: policy limitations on the amount and degree of intelligence and other data that can be shared with partner agencies and

nations; structural and technological hurdles in situational awareness, particularly Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA); and, an unequal level of “end game” capabilities present in the military and security forces in the AOR. Still, in 2009, JIATF-South was responsible for greater than 61 percent of all global transit zone seizures and disruptions, and 45 percent of all cocaine seizures in the world; additionally, they were responsible for the interdiction of 226 metric tons of cocaine, equivalent to a net \$4.5 billion loss for the cartels and traffickers. While doing all this, JIATF-South set the benchmark for workplace quality in a recent organizational study.⁸ This kind of success demands total commitment from the entire organization—inspirational leadership, complete integration, collaboration and partnership which exists at every level throughout the command. JIATF-South is *the* standard for integrating and synchronizing “whole of government”, “whole of nation”, and “whole of many nations” solutions in confronting challenges to our national and shared regional security.

Exercises: Southern Command is committed to being a good partner—more to the point, we want to be *the enduring* partner of choice throughout the region. Day in and day out, year after year, we dedicate the majority of our resources toward strengthening the security capabilities of our partners, while working to encourage an environment of cooperation among all the nations in the region. We conduct frequent and wide-ranging multinational exercises and international exchanges with our partners, send thousands of partner military and civilian experts to various leading academic institutions, and provide other critical security assistance to our friends in the region. All these activities focus on strengthening regional bonds and enhancing collective capabilities we believe are integral to US national security and stability in the Western Hemisphere as a whole. These exercises focus on confronting regional threats such as maritime

⁸ 2009 Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) Organizational Climate Survey: JIATF-South surpassed the national average in every category (13 of 13).

insecurity, terrorism, illicit trafficking, and illegal migration, while also increasing partner nation ability to support peacekeeping, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance operations. The fruit of these labors can be seen in the overwhelmingly positive and unified response in Haiti.

PANAMAX, UNITAS and FUERZAS COMMANDO: Building confidence, capability, and cooperation within our AOR is essential to confronting today's security challenges. Our exercise Fuerzas Aliadas (Allied Forces) PANAMAX has matured over the last seven years and has become one of our flagship programs as well as the world's largest multinational and multi-agency training exercise. PANAMAX focuses on improving the hemisphere's ability to provide air, sea and land forces to assist the government of Panama in its excellent work of securing the Panama Canal and defending it from traditional and non-traditional threats. The exercise began in 2003 as a limited naval exercise with just three participating nations: Panama, Chile and the U.S. Due to past successes and efforts to expand partnerships, the exercise has grown to include a roster of more than 20 nations, several U.S. Government departments and agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and multiple military branches of service.

Another large-scale exercise we support that emphasizes such cooperation and integration is UNITAS, which trains participating forces to ensure maximum interoperability in future coalition operations. We hosted the 50th iteration and celebration in Jacksonville in May 2009. Seven thousand international sailors and mariners participated, including personnel from Canada and Germany, making it the longest running multinational maritime training exercise in the world.

Shortly afterward, U.S. Southern Command hosted Counter Terrorism Exercise Fuerzas Commando in Brazil in 2009. This unique exercise consisting of 21 partner nations involved a

competition in counterterrorism (CT) skills by the elite CT units in the region as well as bringing together civilian counterterrorism leadership from each of the countries to exchange ideas on training and complementary evolutions. Exercises like PANAMAX, UNITAS and FUERZAS COMANDO provide excellent forums for military-to-military relationship building and I thank Congress for providing the flexibility in my Combatant Commander Exercise Engagement funds that allow us to execute these kinds of exercises, as well as the funds designed to assist the participation of the developing countries within our AOR.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief: While our programs and initiatives focus primarily on security, increasingly our approach has broadened to support stability efforts as part of a larger national path to true partnering and engagement in the Western Hemisphere. A key element of these efforts is a variety of humanitarian goodwill activities that directly help those in need while providing needed training to our team. These engagement missions range from planned events such as the construction and/or refurbishment of wells, schools, community centers and medical facilities to rapid response missions in the wake of disasters.

In 2009, as part of our annual operation Continuing Promise, *USNS COMFORT* returned to our waters with the mission to bring short-term modern medical care, provide preventive medicine engagement, and conduct long-term medical training and education. With over 100,000 patient encounters, 1600 surgeries performed, 135,000 pharmacies dispensed, 13,000 animals treated and 37,000 students trained, we were able to engage on a scale previously unimaginable just four years ago. In 2010, through Continuing Promise in combination with our Medical Readiness and Dental Readiness Training Exercises (MEDRETEs and DENTRETEs, respectively), we hope to surpass the '1 million patient treatments' mark since the inception of this program.

The impact of Continuing Promise on the Host Nations has been greater than just numbers, however; the *types* of procedures performed and training conducted speak to the long-term positive effects on society and citizen security as our joint, combined and integrated crews focused on hysterectomies, thyroids, cataract removals, and education on disease prevention. The impact has been more than just the *USNS COMFORT*, as well. On the engineering side for example, Construction Battalions (SeaBees) personnel repaired and improved five hospitals and clinics; provided refurbishments to seven schools; and renovated one baseball field. Additionally, in direct support of existing USAID projects, *USNS COMFORT* personnel assisted in a laboratory completion in the Dominican Republic and assisted in dock repairs in Panama that buttressed a USAID eco-tourism project.

Access to health care is a critical component of security and stability and the *COMFORT*'s mission is only one of many medical outreach efforts. As mentioned previously, U.S. Southern Command also sponsors MEDRETEs and DENTRETEs, consisting of military medical teams that treat over a quarter of a million patients annually in the region, focusing primarily on needy rural, isolated populations. These unique training exercises have had tremendous impact inland throughout the AOR over 75 separate locations—changing lives, providing alternative perceptions, and spreading goodwill through quality donated medical assistance. In 2009, 89 MEDRETEs were conducted in 18 countries, treating over 220,000 patients, performing almost 1,200 surgeries and inoculating and treating more than 31,000 animals. More than just a medical deployment, these humanitarian assistance missions have also provided dental care to approximately 50,000 patients, conducted medical training for almost 60,000 host nation students and medical providers, and sponsored over 40 construction and restoration projects at local schools and health care facilities. These visits also extended

veterinarian services throughout their journeys, treating and vaccinating thousands of animals, which constitute the livelihood of many families.

Throughout the year, U.S. Southern Command's Humanitarian Assistance Program augments traditional military-to-civilian engagement activities in order to increase our partner nations' ability to respond independently to natural and man-made disasters. New Horizons (Andean Ridge) and Beyond the Horizons (Caribbean and Central Americas) are a series of joint and combined humanitarian assistance exercises that U.S. Southern Command conducts with Latin American and Caribbean nations to provide readiness training for U.S. Engineer, Medical, and Combat Service Support units, but also provide great benefit to the host nation. Each exercise lasts several months and usually takes place in remote areas. We strive to combine these efforts with those of host nation doctors and civic personnel. Our programs help local populations who can benefit from completed projects such as schools, clinics, community centers, orphanages, emergency operations centers, disaster response warehouses, wells, and potable water systems. In 2009, we conducted these exercises in six countries in the AOR, supporting the renovation, construction and repair on 12 schools, two community centers, four health clinics, three water wells, two sports complexes, two road repairs, and one pedestrian bridge, in addition to providing critical training programs for first responders, disaster managers, firefighters, and disaster warehouse managers.

These examples of our consistent and enduring engagement throughout the region further advance our strategic messaging and help build confidence, capability, and goodwill in numerous countries in the region, bring renewed hope to those enduring hardship and challenging conditions, and serve as a visible and lasting counterweight to anti-U.S. messaging. The cumulative effects of our humanitarian assistance missions have directly and indirectly touched

and bettered the lives of several hundred thousand throughout our shared home, as well as laying the foundation for relationships and experience that pays large dividends when the United States responds to a humanitarian crisis in the region...as we did and are still doing in Haiti.

Haiti—Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE

On January 12th, the nation of Haiti experienced a 7.0 magnitude earthquake with an epicenter located approximately ten miles WSW of its capital city, Port au Prince. The size and destructive capability of this temblor was made even worse by several contributing factors, namely: the earthquake was relatively shallow, making the shockwaves much more pronounced; the capital city was overcrowded and over-developed with construction standards inconsistently applied and loosely enforced; and, much of Haiti was still recovering from a string of three hurricanes and one tropical storm that struck during a 23-day period in the summer of 2008. It had been almost 150 years since an earthquake of this magnitude had struck Haiti and the devastation was tremendous. Latest UN estimates indicate over 222,517 people were killed, 300,000 injured, and 1.2 million displaced by the earthquake and the 59 subsequent aftershocks. Thirteen of the fifteen government ministry buildings were completely destroyed. Between 40-50 percent of all buildings sustained significant damage in Port au Prince and surrounding villages, with some suffering as much as 80 percent damage as in Leogane. The airport control tower was rendered inoperable and more than half the seaport was left in ruins. Later that night, the President of Haiti declared a national state of emergency and in doing so, requested the United States assist in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief aid. The United States Ambassador to Haiti responded by issuing a disaster declaration, confirming the situation warranted U.S. Government assistance.

The US response was swift and comprised of federal, state, military and civilian agencies and units. There were several DOD and USG assets already in the vicinity of Haiti. Just before dawn the next morning, 13 January, the USCG Cutter *FORWARD* arrived off the coast of Haiti, established a liaison with the Haitian Coast Guard facility at Killick to conduct damage assessments, set up critical command and control procedures, and began providing humanitarian assistance, helping the most seriously wounded, and evacuating injured American citizens. Shortly thereafter, two USCG C-130 aircraft also arrived to support US relief efforts.

At 1020 that morning, President Obama expressed “the deep condolences and declared the unwavering support of the American people” and ordered a “swift, coordinated and aggressive effort to save lives” with USAID designated as the Lead Federal Agency. During the course of the day, an Air Forces Southern (AFSOUTH) assessment team landed in Port au Prince to survey the airport while elements of the First Special Operations Wing arrived to reopen Port au Prince International Airport. A US Navy P-3 aircraft from the Cooperative Security Location of Comalapa, El Salvador, conducted the first US aerial reconnaissance of the area affected by the earthquake. DOD officials ordered the aircraft carrier *USS CARL VINSON* and *USS BATAAN* Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG) with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (22nd MEU) embarked to make best speed to Haiti. The first US urban search and rescue team, a 72-member unit from Fairfax County, Virginia, arrived in Haiti before even 24 hours had elapsed.

Later that day U.S. Southern Command deployed two planeloads of personnel from our Standing Joint Forces Headquarters (SJFHQ) element, an organic, free-standing, deployable joint military headquarters, which included experts in the field of engineering, operational planners, communications specialists, medicine, interagency coordination, and a command and control group. They arrived and began coordinating with the US Embassy in Port au Prince, as well as

United Nations and other international personnel who were leading the initial recovery efforts. In addition, this core team began conducting assessments of damage and determining areas where the unique capabilities of the military could rapidly be brought to bear in support of the Government of Haiti.

On 14 January, the size and scope of DOD's response grew as more forces flowed to the assistance and relief effort. Four more USCG Cutters and the *USS HIGGINS* arrived off shore. Throughout the day, P-3s continued aerial reconnaissance. An engineering assessment team arrived and determined the pier and wharf at Port au Prince port were inoperable for movement of bulk stores. Later that night, the Secretary of Defense ordered the *USS NASSAU* ARG with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (24th MEU) embarked, the XVIII Airborne Corps, 2nd Brigade Combat Team 82nd Airborne Division, and the hospital ship *USNS COMFORT* to deploy to Haiti. As elements of these assets and others arrived over the course of the next 4 days, they formed the core of DOD's overall contribution to the massive humanitarian assistance mission—providing unique capabilities and an initial surge capacity in what became our primary lines of operation: *security, critical engineering, medical and logistics*. To organize the response of the military forces, we established Joint Task Force-Haiti (JTF-H) under the command of my Deputy, Lieutenant General Keen, who was already on the ground in Haiti for previously scheduled meetings.

The mission of JTF-H was to conduct Foreign Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (FHA/DR) in support of U.S. Government efforts in Haiti, in order to mitigate near term human suffering and accelerate recovery. We would not have been able to perform this mission to the level of success we have achieved if not for the more than 500 augmentees we requested and received from every other geographic combatant command, U.S. Special Operations

Command, U.S. Transportation Command, the Services, the Joint Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The General and Flag Officers, Action Officers and civilian personnel we received were immediately value-added and were instrumental in helping us develop well-coordinated planning efforts that translated into unity of effort on the ground. These personnel were also distributed to JTF-H in the form of planning staffs, the Joint Information Center (JIC), assessment teams, Joint Center Operational Analysis (JCOA) teams, and many other teams. The men and women of these contributing units have performed magnificently and been the very embodiment of teamwork and jointness across the Department of Defense. They have been outstanding representatives of your military with their professionalism, sense of urgency, focus and compassion. They continue to make all of us extremely proud.

Security: Apart from isolated looting incidents, small-scale crime and demonstrations which parallel the security environment prior to the earthquake, the situation in Haiti remains relatively calm. US military personnel are engaged primarily with safeguarding humanitarian supplies and distribution networks in support of MINUSTAH, who has maintained a peacekeeping presence since 2004, comprised of primarily Latin American military forces under Brazilian leadership. They have been working with the Haitian government to provide security and build the capacity of the Haitian National Police (HNP). Our JTF Commander and the Brazilian MINUSTAH Commander have had an outstanding personal and professional relationship. This has permeated all levels of interaction and engagement between the two forces, alleviating many of the potential frictions that could arise from two parallel military command structures operating in the same vicinity. A division of labor was established whereby JTF-H military forces would provide local security for humanitarian assistance missions, while MINUSTAH and the HNP maintained overall responsibility for security in the country. To

underscore the scope of responsibility, on 19 January, the UN Security Council authorized the expansion of MINUSTAH's force size by 2,000 military and 1,500 police personnel.

Critical Engineering: Initial assessment teams determined that although there was no physical damage to the airport runway, taxiway and field operations, the field was unusable because of no power and structural damage to the control tower. Similarly, a team of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assessed the entire sea port at Port au Prince was unusable for large vessels, with buildings, cranes and piers damaged, and debris and containers in the water. The roads remained largely impassable except by motorcycle and foot traffic. Communication services in Haiti were severely degraded, with the power grid, radio, landline and cellular telephone services working sporadically in pockets.

Assessments and emergency repairs continued throughout Haiti, but the primary focus of initial effort was the seaport in Port Au Prince. Haiti has other port facilities throughout the country, but due to proximity to the most affected areas and the depth of water, Port au Prince was critical to the relief efforts. The North pier was completely destroyed and the South pier, missing 700 feet, was determined to be non-operational. To address this requirement, USTRANSCOM immediately deployed Joint Task Force Port Opening (JTF-PO), a unit capable of port command and control and operations, followed closely by service contributions in the form of Joint Logistics Over the Shore (JLOTS). The JLOTS capability consisted of boats, litorage, cranes and crane ships allowing for rapid cargo offload at other locations within the harbor, thus overcoming the logistical hurdles caused by damage. USTRANSCOM also contracted with marine engineering experts from Crowley Marine to begin installation of a combination of barges and cranes that would eventually restore operational capability to the port. Utilizing this combination of JLOTS and commercial capability, the seaport capacity exceeded

pre-quake offload capacity by 22 January and steadily increased as additional over-the-shore assets arrived.

The current container per day capacity, based only on the in-place commercial capability, exceeds demand, thus enabling the GOH, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and USAID to manage flow based on the requirements on the ground while also enabling Haitian commercial capabilities to resume. Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster and Civic Aid Appropriation (OHDACA) funded repairs to the South Pier are underway, as are contracted removal of a gantry crane and other debris which had fouled the port during the earthquake. In addition, US military engineer teams continue to assess critical infrastructure, including port facilities and piers, airfields, roads, bridges, water wells and electrical grids to determine how best to assist repair and restore these essential needs. Future U.S. Southern Command-sponsored MEDRETEs, New Horizons and Beyond the Horizons medical, construction and engineering exercises will provide a consistent and continuing assistance to the Haitian people as part of our larger Theater Security Cooperation program.

Medical: The magnitude of the catastrophe necessitated the rapid deployment of military assets with sufficient medical capability to help alleviate suffering and save lives in the wake of the disaster. U.S. Southern Command responded by requesting the deployment of needed medical capability to Haiti. The *USS CARL VINSON* arrived on 15 January; the *USS BATAAN* and *JTF-B Forward Surgical Team (FST)* on 18 January; the *USNS COMFORT* on 20 January; and, the 24th *Medical Group Expeditionary Medical Support (EMEDS)* on 24 January. *USNS COMFORT* arrived on station just six days after the initial mobilization order; she and her nearly 1000 medical personnel—including medical and surgical teams from Project Hope, Operation Smile, Red Cross translators and support personnel, and medical schools around the U.S.—

joined other DOD assets already on station to provide an immediate surge triage capability and 1400-plus bed capacity to help cope with the enormity of the task. We are fortunate to have worked with many of these professionals previously; they had come together to provide humanitarian assistance and preventative medical treatment and training as part of our annual Continuing Promise which visited Haiti in the summer of 2009 and will return to the many countries of the AOR during the summer of 2010. As of 28 February, DOD personnel were directly responsible for performing 964 total surgeries and treating 9,985 patients.

The GOH Ministry of Health initial priorities outlined to JTF-H were medical supplies and emergency/trauma medical care. Numerous field hospitals were established by international partners including Argentina, Canada, China, Colombia, France, Israel, Jordan, Mexico, Russia, Spain and Turkey, in addition to the six Haitian hospitals that remained operational and another nine that were partially operational. Combined afloat and ashore medical professionals provided medical evacuation and care to thousands of injured Haitians daily and conducted hundreds of complex surgical procedures as part of the concerted international effort. The Program on Essential Medicine and Supplies (PROMESS) warehouse continues to be a key institution in post-earthquake Haiti. US military medical logistics experts assisted in the initial setup and organization of PROMESS, which has now become a nerve center for distribution of supplies to healthcare facilities throughout Port au prince.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) supported USAID in its coordination of the US medical and public health response and later activated the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) to facilitate the transfer of non-US citizens to medical facilities in the United States. As of 28 February, 189 Haitian citizens in need of higher levels of care have been transferred via US military aircraft to healthcare facilities within the United

States. Despite initial fears, there was no indication of widespread communicable diseases and no report to indicate an imminent epidemic. Public health experts from the HHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continue to monitor health conditions related to water safety, food supply, shelter conditions and other health threats in order to prioritize immediate interventions aimed at preventing major health-related crises. The capability of off-shore medical treatment by our surface assets has largely been assumed by the GoH, UN and NGO expertise on the ground and we anticipate being able to release these assets in the near future.

Logistics: Joint Task Force-Haiti, in support of the lead federal agency, USAID, focused on expanding and securing aid distribution networks to speed delivery of relief supplies to the Haitian people. With the port damaged, the only means of initially flowing relief supplies *in*—and evacuating US citizens and eligible family members, orphans and medical patients *out*—was through the Port au Prince airport. Although the control tower was destroyed, the runway was intact. We therefore immediately requested specialized capabilities to rapidly open the airport to receive relief supplies, equipment, personnel, and forces. This included the combat controllers of the 720th Special Operations Group who were on the ground within 26 hours of the earthquake, providing critical Air Traffic Control capabilities as well as directing ramp operations. From zero inbound traffic hours after the quake, these battlefield Airmen had the airport back operating at 60 flights per day within 72 hours, approximately triple the normal capacity before the earthquake. These specialists worked all-day, all-night and in all weather conditions...and they did all this without any radar. The special operators were followed closely by aviation elements from USTRANSCOM as part of their JTF-PO deployment. To meet the tremendous demand, we also worked with the government of the Dominican Republic and opened additional

air and sea ports of entry within their territory and contracted commercial carriers to move supplies and equipment overland from these airfields into Haiti.

Working with Haitian aviation administration officials, JTF-H personnel established the Haiti Flight Operations Coordination Center which constructed a phone, then web-based, system for flight slot allocation scheduling. This greatly increased our scheduling efficiency and tracking effectiveness, quickly bringing the airfield to a 120-140 flights per day average. The total number of flights eventually began a steady decline at the airport as demand decreased and efforts to reopen the seaport steadily progressed to eventually exceeding pre-quake delivery capacity. Today the majority of flights are being controlled by Haitian air traffic controllers. On 18 February, we safely and successfully evacuated the last of 16,412 US citizens and eligible family members, perhaps the largest ever peacetime single evacuation of US citizens. Beginning 19 February, commercial air service from American Airlines resumed with 3 daily flights between Haiti and the U.S. and twice a week Air France flights between Paris and Haiti. The return of service is a positive indicator of stability and signals to the international community that the situation is normalizing.

In addition to airlift assistance, elements of JTF-Haiti continue delivering supplies, equipment, and personnel. As of 26 February, DOD has distributed 2,292,431 meals and 2,615,888 bottles of water, in addition to assisting in expanding and securing aid distribution networks to speed delivery of relief supplies to the Haitian people. The demand for JTF assistance in the distribution of supplies has dropped significantly as the capacity of the UN, USAID, and NGOs has increased. Our personnel continue to coordinate with USAID and OCHA to define areas in which US military support is required.

Under the leadership of the GoH, the WFP began a targeted and systematic food distribution effort using predetermined distribution locations. In consultation with the GoH and interested stakeholders, 16 different sites around the capital were identified to serve as fixed distribution points, instead of attempting to deliver to different settlements throughout the city. US military forces from the 82nd Airborne Division and the 22nd and 24th MEUs worked closely with MINUSTAH forces and Haitian National Police personnel to ensure locations, routes and distribution of aid was calm, orderly and without incident. In total, the program provided humanitarian assistance (in quantities of 15-day rations) to approximately 9,000 families per site, per day. The initial 14-day operation was a large success in establishing a sustainable and predictable food distribution program that reached over 2.9 million Haitians, exceeding their original goal by almost 1 million people. WFP's Food Surge seven-day Phase 1B concluded on 20 February with an estimated 19,000 families reached. The WFP estimates that the Port-au-Prince area consumes 16-20 metric tons of rice per month. Through the combined efforts of the UN, USAID, 8 NGOs, and US forces, the surge was able to provide approximately 2/3 of the rice needed in the Port-au-Prince area for the past 30 days. The WFP began their current phase of operations on 6 March and has stated no US military presence or other support was needed, as MINUSTAH and HNP personnel would be utilized exclusively.

Overall Assessment: It has been two months since the earthquake and signs of recovery are emerging. The massive outpouring of international relief efforts, with strong support from Latin America and Caribbean countries, has not only sped up the recovery but also enabled the building of a better Haiti. The overall security situation remains stable and continues to improve, with only sporadic incidents of small-scale violence occurring. MINUSTAH forces, in conjunction with a revitalized Haitian National Police force, have a presence throughout the

country with specific emphasis on historical hot spots like Cite Soleil and other areas in and around Port au Prince.

Consistent and predictive aid distribution remains the single-most important factor in maintaining the relatively calm security situation. The immediate needs of food and water have been replaced by the more enduring stability requirements of adequate shelter and proper sanitation, particularly as the rainy season approaches. Infrastructure repairs have begun and are primarily being carried out by civilian engineering experts under contract, like the arrangement between Crowley Marine and the National Port Authority (APN). Beginning 25 February, Crowley brought their own temporary barge, placed it in the inner harbor, and then the following day the M/V CROWLEY SHIPPER delivered 50 foot sections to be used as ramps. On 27 February, APN Blue—the Crowley temporary next to the north pier of Port au Prince achieved initial operational capability (IOC) for the first time since the earthquake. As a result of such relief efforts, airport and seaport commerce are returning to pre-earthquake or higher levels of business. From all sources, there are no indications an external mass migration is imminent.

Our original mission assigned to us was conduct Foreign Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (FHA/DR) in support of U.S. Government efforts in Haiti, in order to mitigate near term human suffering and accelerate recovery. As we near achievement of that mission, I am taking a broader look at how we will support the larger USG and UN through more traditional security cooperation means to sustain security and stability. Although we have made great strides, coordinated planning and on-going communications toward unity of effort remains a challenging task; these are critical enablers to ensuring the conditions are right for our transition. The Armed Forces will continue to execute the mission in support of USAID and the international community in providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief. We do not intend to

leave a large military footprint, but we will continue to plan for and remain prepared to respond with a range of options to contingency situations, such as another natural disaster, which may necessitate a return to Haiti in the future.

When the appropriate conditions are met, we will effectively transition our relief efforts to other USG agencies, the UN, and NGOs, thereby demonstrating the ability to conduct an effective transfer of responsibility to civilian authority. The culture of cooperation, openness and transparency we have developed; the relationships we have built; and, the emphasis U.S. Southern Command has placed on partnering in the past few years have all paid a particularly high return on investment in Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE, the largest humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission ever conducted in this region. Haiti may serve as a rare unifying event, not only for the agencies and departments of the U.S. Government, but also for the nations of this region—at the end of the day, we are all here for one reason: the people of Haiti.

Finally, I offer one personal observation: I have now made 5 different trips to Haiti—one before the earthquake and four since—and on each occasion, I continue to be amazed by the strength, courage and resiliency of the Haitian people. Their collective character is evident throughout this tragedy. This is a powerful display of stoic determination--accepting and enduring the reality of the present, while foreseeing, believing in and taking the first basic steps to ensure, the promise of a better future. The citizens of Haiti have shown themselves to be a proud, strong and persevering people.

Requirements

Illegal trafficking, associated criminal activity, gangs, terrorist financing and recruitment, natural disasters—none of these recognize national sovereignty or stop at a nation’s border. These challenges to collective security, stability and prosperity cannot be overcome by any one nation alone; they require transnational solutions. They cannot be overcome by the military alone; they require a truly integrated interagency, non-governmental organization and even private sector approach.

To that end, U.S. Southern Command works not only to build partner capability and capacity, but also to build strategically important cooperative security relationships throughout the region. Among the military and security forces in the region, we focus on helping to build greater capability and capacity, as well as striving to improve our collective ability to plan, direct, and operate. Within the interagency community, we endeavor to enhance cooperation while advocating for our partner’s greater capability and capacity at every opportunity. Finally, with the private sector, business community, and non-governmental organizations, we seek to leverage their skills and expertise to greatly improve our combined impact and effect.

Supporting Interagency Partners: While remaining fully ready for combat operations, diplomacy dominates so much of what we do, and development is a mandatory requisite feature of true, long-term stability and prosperity. We support our interagency partners who have the lead in addressing the significant illicit trafficking and crime challenges in the region. To that end, we support initiatives to increase the pool of resources available to our partner agencies who are the leads and experts in these arenas. As we engage and support the lead efforts of the State Department, USAID, DHS, Justice, and others in the field, we also lend our advocacy for increased resources for these agencies to more effectively deal with the endemic problems in the

region, improve the capabilities of partner nations' police and law enforcement agencies, and strengthen judicial systems and institutions.

Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR): U.S. Southern Command has a continuous requirement for persistent ISR, defined as having the right asset able to observe and understand what is going on, especially in denied areas. Whether conducting CN/CT operations or large-scale foreign humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, we need fast, flexible and properly vetted information that then becomes actionable intelligence and helps us pinpoint the locations where our forces and resources can do the most good—and with sufficient time to get them there. However, this requires improved imagery intelligence, wide area coverage, sensor integration, signals intelligence, moving target indicators, layered ISR architecture and management tools, biometrics, counterintelligence and human collectors. The combined products create a common operating picture that can and needs to be shared with our partners and allies whenever possible. This requires, then, more relevant fusion technologies that allow all-source synthesis, distributed dissemination, collaborative planning, and multiple-node sensor resource management. We continue to work with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and industry for innovative solutions to address additional ISR sources to gain improved situational awareness.

Throughout Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE, ISR assets have been an invaluable resource. UAVs and other assets have provided outstanding situational awareness and early warning indicators in areas of potential violence, determining status of critical infrastructure, assessing gathering crowds, analyzing internally displaced person (IDP) camps, determining traffic ability of lines of communication, and security at WFP distribution points. ISR assets have had a positive impact on decision making by enabling the efficient use of scarce resources.

In particular, the information provided has assisted in placing only the necessary number of USAID and NGO workers at distribution sites, scheduling the movement of supplies and personnel along the most efficient routes, and when and where to deploy security forces.

We conduct varied and diverse detection and monitoring (D&M) operations that require a high state of readiness and a joint effort to link multi-intelligence collectors targeted against strategic, operational and tactical requirements. Expanding the melding of organic and national collection resources will improve operations and fulfill the ongoing requirement for continuous and persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR). This effort requires the appropriate awareness systems, namely: unmanned aerial craft with rapid response and good transit and loiter capability; remote light detection and ranging for foliage penetration; high-speed, unmanned surface vessels for detection and identification to support maritime domain awareness; commercial satellite sensors with the ability to detect ‘go-fast’ boats; next generation ‘over the horizon’ (OTH) radars; non-electro-optical imagery that enables change detection; and, novel applications of existing technology to facilitate cross-domain awareness.

Continued Commitment to Colombia: One of the most dramatic examples of U.S. Southern Command working to build partner nation capability and capacity in our AOR can be found in our enduring engagement through providing training, logistical, and technical support to the military and security forces of Colombia. Colombia is a strategic ally, an important friend, and a crucial anchor for security and stability in the region. Unfortunately, they are also the world’s predominant source of cocaine and home to the narco-terrorist group the FARC.

Over the last eight years, the Colombians have done a magnificent job of reclaiming their nation from both right-wing and left-wing illegal armed groups. Through its own military and whole-of-government efforts, and a steady stream of resources and support from the U.S.,

Colombia has made great strides towards building security and stability. Today, the approval rating of the democratically elected government led by President Uribe is just under 70 percent. The approval rating of the FARC, on the other hand, is less than two percent. Despite this dwindling public support, the FARC still maintains approximately 8,500 fighters in the field, down from approximately 18,000. They remain kidnappers, torturers, murderers and drug dealers. This is essentially their ‘business model’ and they are unfortunately and definitively still in business.

The government’s and military’s efforts against the FARC have also significantly impacted drug cartels, as Colombia has extradited more than 900 drug traffickers to the United States. Although cocaine production is still a critical concern, interdiction and seizures of cocaine headed to the U.S. and to other destinations in the region and abroad, have more than doubled in the last ten years. This increase indicates improved state control, successful government strategies, and overall better interagency and international coordination and collaboration. These efforts have helped contribute to the fastest sustained economic growth in a decade—greater than five percent annually from 2006-2008, providing a sense of positive momentum for the entire country.

We must now capitalize on the successes achieved thus far to ensure Colombia remains a long-term strategic regional and global partner. Continued US commitment and support for the Colombian Armed Forces’ campaign to defeat the FARC, as well as for Colombian interagency efforts to bring governance and economic opportunity to areas recaptured from the FARC, is essential. This support can come in many forms but should entail continued training and development of key capabilities we are seeing showcased in their cooperation with Mexico and deployment to Haiti, and human rights programs to continue the significant improvements in

human rights by the Armed Forces in recent years. With US help, a stable and secure Colombia is achievable in the near term as they emerge as a strategic partner, positive exporter of security and democratic model for the region, directly increasing the security of all citizens of the Americas.

Countering Illicit Trafficking: The November 2009 Central American and Caribbean Chiefs of Mission Conference held at our headquarters in Miami highlighted the need for a regional, synergistic whole-of-many-governments approach to counter illicit trafficking. Just as the successes of the governments of Peru and Bolivia in reducing coca cultivation in their countries during the 1980s and early 1990s caused a shift in cultivation and production to Colombia, we are concerned that current eradication and interdiction successes in Colombia are causing a corresponding increase in Peruvian and Bolivian cultivation. For example, according to the most recent crop estimate from the U.S. government, potential cocaine production in Columbia dropped 39 percent between 2007 and 2008. The potential production of pure cocaine fell from an estimated 485 metric tons in 2007 to 295 metric tons in 2008. Further, the area under cultivation dropped 29 percent during the same time frame while Peruvian cultivation increased by fourteen percent and Bolivian cultivation by eight percent in the same time period. Furthermore, from 2000-2008, Peru's total area under illicit coca cultivation increased by 30 percent, while Bolivia's has nearly doubled.

Similarly, as President Calderon takes the fight to illicit trafficking organizations in Mexico, Central America is experiencing an increase in activity as traffickers are squeezed between Colombia and Mexico. This movement is exacerbated by successes of aerial and maritime interdiction efforts, which are pushing traffickers to favor land routes through the Central American isthmus. As traffickers and their support networks relocate to Central America,

they also bring with them the associated ills of government corruption, crime, and gang activity which undermine good governance and threaten public security.

As a result of the discussions during the Chiefs of Mission Conference, we are working with the Intelligence Community to produce an analysis of the larger, regional and global illicit trafficking enterprise, looking at networks, routes and organizations throughout the entire region, as opposed to just one or two countries. The construct we are using encompasses the production, acquisition, storage and/or transfer of illicit drugs; illegal arms trafficking; money laundering; human trafficking and smuggling of special interest aliens; WMD and WMD precursors; and, all of their supporting activities.

This analysis will help the Department of State and the interagency community to coordinate an integrated approach to counter illicit trafficking and associated activities in the Western Hemisphere. The Department of State already has several excellent sub-regional strategies to address this challenge such as Beyond Merida, the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), and the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI). U.S. Southern Command performs Theater Security Cooperation activities that are in support of Merida Initiative and Caribbean security initiative efforts, and help to build partner nation military capability and capacity in Central America and the Caribbean. Lessons learned from US support to Colombia show the importance of an integrated and unified overarching strategy to address insecurity and instability caused by the combined ills of illicit trafficking.

Conclusion

During my nine months of leading the outstanding men and women of U.S. Southern Command, I have been fortunate to work closely with our civilian and military leaders, as well as with our partners to the south, to improve the security and stability of our region. Together we are continuing the great work of those who have gone before us and building upon the foundation of their efforts in seeking multinational, “whole of government” and in some cases “whole of society” approaches to create a secure and stable environment that set the conditions for long-term prosperity for the Americas.

This region plays a critical role in the security and prosperity of the United States. Despite some challenges, I believe that through the sharing of ideas, economic interdependence, cultural understanding and harnessing innovation, we can strengthen existing ties of friendship to build an integrated approach to partnering that will ensure U.S. Southern Command is a welcomed military partner of choice in this hemisphere. There are many opportunities ahead to improve hemispheric security cooperation. We will continue to pursue multinational, multi-agency and public-private partnerships to confront the challenges and embrace the opportunities of the Americas. We will continue to dedicate the majority of our resources to building and complementing the security capabilities of our partners while encouraging an environment of cooperation among the nations in the region. We will continue to defend the United States, foster regional security, and be an enduring partner to help enhance regional hemispheric security and stability. The mutual benefits of these partnering efforts are profound.

Ultimately, our success in pursuit of these objectives depends upon our military and civilian personnel and their families, as well as those men and women serving with us from our partner agencies. I thank you again for your continued interest in, dedication to and support of

the men and women of U.S. Southern Command and their families—they are volunteers and patriots, and I am humbled to lead them and serve with them every day.

DOUGLAS M. FRASER

General, U.S. Air Force