

**POSTURE STATEMENT OF  
GENERAL DOUGLAS M. FRASER, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND**

**BEFORE THE 112<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**

**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**April 5, 2011**



## **Introduction**

Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, and distinguished members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss United States Southern Command's accomplishments and future efforts in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Over the past year, we worked in close collaboration with U.S. Government agencies and our partner nations to respond to the unprecedented natural disaster in Haiti and to the ongoing threats to regional security. This year, with the support of Congress, we will build on our accomplishments and continue to foster close cooperation and engagement throughout the region. We will also continue to evolve as a joint and interagency organization that promotes U.S. national and regional security interests through enduring partnerships.

These partnerships are not only enduring; they are essential. U.S. Southern Command envisions sustaining a shared partnership for the Americas; all nations working together to address problems of mutual concern. Under this vision, each exercise, program, and operation we conduct in the region augments the training of our joint forces, improves our ability to work with partner armed forces, and enhances the capabilities of our partners to confront regional security challenges. In addition, our programs directly integrate with and support other U.S. Government agencies' efforts to enhance citizen safety, democratic governance, and economic prosperity. We also continuously coordinate our programs with other U.S. government departments and agencies. Our response to the January 12, 2010 earthquake in Haiti demonstrated the effectiveness of these efforts.

Before continuing, I would like to thank Congress for funding the construction of U.S. Southern Command's new headquarters in Miami. This state-of-the-art building ensures that we are fully prepared to accomplish our mission: we are *ready to conduct joint and combined full-*

*spectrum military operations and to support whole-of-government efforts to enhance regional security and cooperation.* The new headquarters enhances internal and external collaboration, improves our ability to conduct operations, and raises quality of life for assigned personnel. Our integrated, interagency headquarters significantly enhances our collaborative approach in working to achieve our strategic objectives in the region.

## **Regional Context**

### *Positive Trends*

Latin America and the Caribbean are comprised of a multitude of cultures, languages, heritages, and histories. The United States is connected to this region by more than physical proximity; increasing travel and trade ensure our countries remain connected culturally, socially, and economically.<sup>i</sup> We are also connected by many shared values and a commitment to democratic ideals. The majority of countries throughout the region seek to consolidate the democratic, security, and economic progress achieved in recent years. U.S. Southern Command endeavors to support our partner nations in these efforts through enduring engagement and continued collaboration.

The region's recent history is characterized by sustained economic growth that benefits Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States. Over the past 12 years, U.S. trade with countries in the region grew at a faster rate than with China or the European Union. Although trade with Latin American and Caribbean economies still makes up a small percentage of overall U.S. trading activity (8.3 percent of all U. S. trading activity in 2009), this share grew by 15.3 percent over the past fourteen years.<sup>ii</sup> Economic indicators throughout the region have been

generally positive: growth rates averaged 3.4 percent per year over the past decade and regional GDP grew 6 percent in 2010,<sup>iii</sup> due in large part to strong economies in South America.

This significant economic growth has allowed some of our regional partners to invest in social and educational programs designed to alleviate poverty and reduce inequality. Both poverty and extreme poverty in the region fell by 3 percent from 2009 to 2010.<sup>iv</sup> Income inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean is exhibiting some signs of lowering, thanks in part to targeted social investments.<sup>v</sup> In 2003, the Brazilian government launched “Bolsa Familia,” which provides income support to poor families. In return, families commit to keeping their children in school and taking them for regular health checks.<sup>vi</sup> As of 2008, Bolsa Familia has reached 46 million people<sup>vii</sup> and has contributed to the improvement of income distribution in Brazil, resulting in the lowest levels of income inequality in the country’s recent history.<sup>lviii</sup> Chile’s strong economic performance in the past decade has permitted the government to invest heavily in hospitals, housing, education and pension reform.<sup>ix</sup> Between 1990 and 2000, poverty rates were reduced from 40% of the population to 20%; the 2009 poverty figure is currently 11.5%.<sup>x, xi</sup>

Sustained economic growth and positive social developments have been nurtured by a strong regional commitment to democracy. In the past decade, there have been numerous free and fair national elections resulting in peaceful transfers of power. Across the region, more than 60 percent of people surveyed prefer democratic governance to any other political system.<sup>2xii</sup> Regional militaries have also made great strides improving professionalism, subordinating to civilian rule and respecting human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Brazil’s 2010 Gini coefficient=0.55

<sup>2</sup> According to the Latinobarometro 2010: regionally, 15 percent of respondents support an authoritarian system; 23 percent did not know or were indifferent. In comparison, the USAID-sponsored AmericasBarometer survey by the Latin American Public Opinion Project indicates 70 percent support for democracy in countries surveyed in 2010 ([www.lapopsurveys.org](http://www.lapopsurveys.org)).

## *Challenges to Regional Security*

Despite these positive economic, social, and political gains, several threats to security and stability in the region remain. Natural disasters wreak havoc and create humanitarian crises; social exclusion and poverty remain pervasive; and threats to democratic consolidation persist. As you know, the Americas, our common home, is vulnerable to many forms of natural disasters: hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, and floods are regular occurrences. Although the region was largely spared from the ravages of hurricanes this past year, it was devastated by two major earthquakes and experienced significant flooding. Inevitably, the region will be impacted by additional natural disasters in the coming year.

While improving in some countries, poverty remains an ongoing challenge, particularly in Central America.<sup>xiii</sup> In many countries, poverty is difficult to reduce because of restraints on social mobility due to race and social class.<sup>xiv</sup> This social stagnation creates openings for criminal organizations to recruit new members who see crime as an opportunity for socio-economic advancement. Positive change in social mobility is slowly occurring, but not at a rate that will significantly reduce the influence of criminal organizations in the short term.

While many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean continue consolidating their democracies, some governments have hollowed out democratic institutions and eroded constitutional checks and balances—the key ingredients essential for a functioning democratic system. These undemocratic measures go against the shared values of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Though the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are the lead agencies in supporting democracy and good governance initiatives to address such measures, U.S. Southern Command engages with the armed forces in

the region to promote professionalization, respect for human rights, and subordination to democratically-elected governments.

While natural disasters, social inequalities, and undemocratic tendencies undermine regional stability, threats to citizen safety and border security represent broad concerns across the region. Weak institutions, inadequate support for the rule of law and lack of independent judiciaries limits accountability for corrupt government officials, business leaders, and criminals. In too many countries, less than 5 percent of all violent crimes are prosecuted.<sup>xv</sup> Widespread impunity undermines state institutions and provides safe haven for Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) to operate in an environment of lawlessness. An estimated \$100 billion per year in illicit goods—drugs, weapons, counterfeit products—and an estimated 100,000 humans are trafficked through porous borders throughout the region.<sup>xvi, xvii</sup>

Violence is an inherent aspect of illicit activity; it is no coincidence that the countries in Latin America with the highest rates of violence are besieged by TCOs and criminal gangs. TCOs and supporting criminal elements exploit weak institutions and corrupt officials to conduct their illicit operations with impunity. As a result, insecurity is a fact of life for many of the citizens in the region. In recent years, the Central American corridor has seen a dramatic increase in illicit trafficking and brutal violence and is now the most violent region in the world outside of active war zones.<sup>xviii</sup> This is due, in part, to success in stemming illicit trafficking elsewhere in the region, which has pushed their activities into Central America. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, homicides in Latin America and the Caribbean increased from 19.9 per 100,000 people in 2003 to 32.6 per 100,000 people in 2008 (the U.S.

murder rate is 5.0 per 100,000 people).<sup>xix 3</sup> Much of the violence related to TCOs is connected to the protection of trafficking routes and internal power struggles, but the criminality associated with the illegal drug trade and TCO activities increases the level of related crimes, including kidnapping, murder, money laundering, and firearms trafficking, the majority of which go unpunished.

Confronting the threat posed by TCOs to citizen safety requires coordinated diplomatic, law enforcement, and military cooperation among countries in the region. In countering this threat, Department of Defense efforts are aligned and coordinated with our interagency partners. We focus our efforts on the *consequences* of security challenges in the region, and support our interagency and international partners in confronting the *causes* of these challenges. U.S. Southern Command strongly supports increased Congressional funding to our interagency partners—including USAID and the Departments of State, Justice, and Homeland Security—to strengthen regional civilian law enforcement agencies and judiciaries. We will continue to improve our collaboration with international and interagency colleagues to combine our efforts to disrupt and reduce transnational threats to the United States and regional security.

### *Extra-Regional Actors in the Region*

As the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean develop, they look beyond the hemisphere for trading partners, diplomatic support, and sources of aid, leading to increased activity in the hemisphere by various extra-regional state actors. U.S. Southern Command views this activity as both an opportunity and a challenge. We have a long history of regional security

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<sup>3</sup> Comparing homicide rates puts the magnitude and deterioration of citizen insecurity in Latin America into perspective: in 2010, the homicide rate in Afghanistan was 8.6 per 100,000; 13.7 in Iraq; 71.0 in El Salvador; and 77.0 in Honduras. Sources (multiple): United Nations Mission to Afghanistan; Iraq Body Count; and National Civilian Police figures.

cooperation with the armed forces of countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, and Spain, and we also work with Canada on many issues related to hemispheric security. Additionally, we welcome activities by other countries when they are conducive to regional security and stability. However, as evident in the following observations, objectives for such activities are difficult to discern.

For example, China has engaged with Latin American militaries through high-level personnel exchanges<sup>4</sup> and arms sales. In summer 2010, China sold 18 K-8 light attack and training aircraft worth millions to Venezuela. Earlier significant arms transfer agreements include air surveillance radars to Venezuela and Ecuador, as well as K-8 aircraft to Bolivia. Additionally, China has become one of the largest providers of investment and trade in the region. With a large appetite for the natural resources needed to supply its manufacturing sector, China's imports of raw materials from the region reached \$41 billion in 2009.<sup>xx</sup> The region is now also the second-largest destination for Chinese investments, which extend to local manufacturing as well as resource extraction.<sup>xxi, xxii</sup>

Although not a significant investor in the region, Russia has also found markets for arms sales in Latin America and the Caribbean. From 2002-2009, arms transfer agreements between Russia and Latin America increased several fold, peaking at \$5 billion in sales in 2009.<sup>xxiii</sup> However, overall military spending remains low in Central and South America, and we expect some specific incidences of Russian arms and equipment sales to enhance the region's ability to counter TCOs<sup>5</sup>. In other cases, though, these sales have the potential to undermine regional stability. My principal concern with Russian arms in the region is the large number of man-portable air defence systems and automatic weapons sold to Venezuela, and the potential they

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<sup>4</sup> At least 12 in 2010

<sup>5</sup> For example, Peru's purchase of 8 Russian-made helicopters in July 2010 to conduct counter illicit trafficking operations.



could reach the hands of organizations like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Beyond arms sales, Russia is also participating in infrastructure development programs. For example, in 2010 Russia agreed to assist Argentina—as well as Venezuela—with nuclear energy programs. Russia is also widening its influence in the region by expanding diplomatic activities beyond its traditional allies of Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.

Finally, Iran continues expanding regional ties to support its own diplomatic goal of reducing the impact of international sanctions connected with its nuclear program. While much of Iran's engagement in the region has been with Venezuela and Bolivia, it has nearly doubled the number of embassies in the region in the past decade<sup>6</sup> and hosted three regional heads of state in 2010.<sup>7</sup> Currently, Iranian engagement with Venezuela appears to be based on shared interests: avoiding international isolation; access to military and petroleum technologies; and the reduction of U.S. influence. Together with our interagency partners, U.S. Southern Command will continue to monitor Iranian activity in the region consistent with law and policy to ensure that U.S. laws and international sanctions are respected, and that our existing partnerships remain strong and well-functioning.

In addition to extra-regional state actors, members of violent extremist organizations (VEOs) from the Middle East remain active in Latin America and the Caribbean and constitute a potential threat. Hezbollah supporters continue to raise funds within the region to finance their worldwide activities. Several entities affiliated with Islamic extremism are increasing efforts to recruit adherents in the region, and we continue to monitor this situation closely. Additionally, we deploy military information and civil affairs teams to under-governed spaces to help our regional partners to hinder these recruitment efforts and counter VEO propaganda.

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<sup>6</sup> Iran had six embassies in the AOR in 2005 and ten in 2010.

<sup>7</sup> The Presidents of Bolivia, Guyana, and Venezuela.

## **Focus Areas**

As we look to the future, United States Southern Command will continue supporting whole-of-government efforts that enhance the United States' role as an enduring partner of choice in the region. We will continue to do our part to sustain a region of secure, stable, and prosperous partner nations that work cooperatively to address shared challenges. In this regard, we will focus in three key areas: countering TCOs and illicit trafficking; providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief; and supporting peacekeeping operations.

### *Counter Illicit Trafficking*

TCOs and the illicit trafficking they conduct continue to be the primary threat to regional security. These groups construct flexible, resilient networks which use multiple paths to support illicit activity. In countering this international threat, working with our partners, we must attack TCOs in a broad, coordinated manner, to include demand reduction; eradication and regulation of source materials; suppression of money laundering; interdiction of the illicit shipments as they transit to the United States and other end-user countries; and ultimately the disruption and dismantling of TCOs operating in the region. However, TCOs are increasingly sophisticated and have proven resilient and adaptive to attempts to disrupt their operations. They are innovative; to minimize and avoid detection and interdiction by U.S. and regional authorities, criminal organizations have begun using self-propelled fully submersibles to conduct illicit trafficking from South America to Central America and Mexico. These submersibles, built in the jungles of western Colombia and Ecuador, provide TCOs with a multi-ton, long-range cargo capacity. They are hard to detect and difficult to intercept. U.S. Southern Command is working with our

interagency partners, the military services, and our partner nations' armed forces to counter this evolving threat.

Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South) in Key West, Florida is the center of U.S. maritime interdiction efforts in the Caribbean Basin and eastern Pacific. Using information from law enforcement, JIATF-South detects and monitors suspect aircraft and maritime vessels, and then provides this information to international and interagency partners who have the authority to interdict illicit shipments and arrest members of TCOs. This past year, JIATF-South and our international and interagency partners were directly responsible for interdicting 142 metric tons of cocaine, 3,419 pounds of marijuana, and 309 arrests, denying TCOs \$2.8 billion in revenue.

JIATF-South's collaborative, interagency approach serves as the model for our partnerships with other combatant commands and U.S. Government agencies. U.S. Southern Command works directly with U.S. Northern Command to synchronize Department of Defense operations in the Western Hemisphere, prevent TCOs from exploiting seams in our AORs, and coordinate the employment of our combined resources. Specifically, U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Northern Command are coordinating counter-TCO actions with Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico to enhance our combined efforts to reduce trafficking along their borders. In addition, U.S. Southern Command coordinates counter-TCO activities with our other partners throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Active engagement with our partner nations is a key component to effectively counter transnational criminal activities. U.S. Southern Command supports U.S. Government security initiatives in Colombia, Central America, and the Caribbean. Our ongoing strategic partnership with Colombia—undertaken within the framework of the Colombian Strategic Development

Initiative (CSDI) originally developed by the U.S. Embassy in Bogota—serves as a model for integrated collaboration. CSDI aligns the U.S. government support to Colombia with the Colombian government’s National Consolidation Plan, a whole-of-government effort to expand state presence and services in targeted areas where poverty, violence, illicit crop cultivation, and drug trafficking have historically converged. Colombia has suffered from decades of violence and instability as narco-terrorist groups, financing their activities through drug trafficking, waged an insurgency against the government. While challenges remain, the security situation today in Colombia is drastically different, thanks in large part to the sustained efforts of the Government of Colombia, supported by Plan Colombia and its corresponding U.S. Government-sponsored initiatives. Since August 2002, more than 54,000 combatants from Colombia’s illegal armed groups have demobilized. Of these, 58 percent demobilized collectively as a result of an agreement between the Government of Colombia and the paramilitary United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). The FARC’s strength has declined from over 18,000 in 2002 to around 8,000 today and its territorial control has decreased significantly. The successes of Plan Colombia and Colombia’s own democratic security initiatives resulted in the acceleration of economic development; security and stability have helped Colombia achieve annual growth rates averaging 4 percent.<sup>xxiv</sup>

U.S. Southern Command’s role in supporting the execution of Plan Colombia and its corresponding programs and initiatives involved equipping and training the Colombian armed forces; the sharing of technical expertise; and the facilitation of technology transfers. The armed forces of Colombia continue to yield positive results. In 2010, with the support of the U.S. Embassy country team and U.S. Southern Command, the Colombian armed forces planned and executed a string of operational successes, including eliminating Victor Julio Suarez Rojas, also

known as “Mono Jojoy” (the FARC’s long-time military leader and fourth in command) and 15 other high-ranking FARC members. I ask for continued Congressional support for Colombia; your support has resulted in a valuable and reliable partner directly involved in countering illicit trafficking and promoting regional stability. As noted in the 2010 National Drug Control Strategy, while Colombia’s gains have been impressive, they are reversible, and we value continued Congressional support to CSDI and other initiatives.<sup>xxv</sup>

Our focus on countering transnational criminal organizations and their illicit trafficking activities extends beyond Colombia to include Central America and the Caribbean. In support of the U.S. Government’s two sub-regional initiatives to improve citizen safety—the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)—U.S. Southern Command will continue to support interagency efforts to interdict illicit trafficking in international waters and airspace. Through Theater Security Cooperation activities, we will continue to enhance the capacity and capability of our partner militaries to operate within their respective territories and to support bilateral and multilateral counter illicit trafficking operations.

With its porous borders, lack of surveillance capabilities, and under-governed areas, Central America has become the TCOs’ preferred transit zone to the United States. TCOs support and use a spectrum of destabilizing activities to conduct their operations, to include corruption, intimidation, extortion, kidnapping, targeted violence, and terror tactics. Confronting this spectrum requires a sophisticated, orchestrated strategy that both guides efforts to meet current challenges as well as sets a framework for disrupting future TCO adaptations.

Our current plan to counter the trafficking threat in Central America is to support U.S. interagency efforts and help build self-sustaining regional military capacity to increase the cost and consequences to TCOs of using the Central American transit zone. Under initiatives like Enduring Friendship, we facilitated the procurement of maritime interdiction assets and command, control, and communications (C3) capabilities for Central American and Caribbean Basin countries<sup>8</sup>. To strengthen international borders, we are facilitating technology transfers that support Department of Homeland Security training that is improving our partners' ability to detect and interdict illicit shipments at international crossings. We are also providing training and equipment to partner nations' ground forces to strengthen their capacity to respond to TCO-related events requiring a military response.

However, the limited capabilities of Central American states have allowed Mexican TCOs to establish convenient points of entry for illegal drugs coming from South America. Nearly all cocaine destined for the U.S. crosses the Guatemala-Mexico border. The expansion of Mexican TCOs into Central America has created even more violence and crime, and a significant decline in citizen safety. Focusing specifically on this vulnerable Mexico-Guatemala-Belize border area, we are engaged in planning with our U.S. Northern Command, interagency, and partner nation colleagues, and are on solid footing towards developing a regional operations capability among these three countries.

With Caribbean Basin countries, we want to reduce the ability of TCOs to expand their operations. To achieve this goal, we will support CBSI and leverage existing regional initiatives

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<sup>8</sup> Enduring Friendship countries include: Dominican Republic, Bahamas (funding provided in FY06 when they were in the U. S. Southern Command AOR), Jamaica, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Belize. Enduring Friendship was expanded into the Eastern Caribbean under the "Secure Seas" rubric providing funding to the Regional Security System HQ, Barbados, Grenada, Antigua & Barbuda, St Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, St Vincent & the Grenadines, St Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, and Guyana.

in the Caribbean Basin like the Caribbean Community and the Regional Security System in the Eastern Caribbean to build capacity to conduct aerial and maritime surveillance and interdict illicit trafficking.

*Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR)*

HA/DR consists of two separate but complementary missions. Humanitarian assistance provides support for basic human needs—food, water, shelter, and sanitation—to populations temporarily or chronically underserved. Disaster relief reduces the human suffering associated with natural disasters which cause the disruption of normal transportation and commerce and destroy infrastructure. Our annual humanitarian and civic assistance exercises provide valuable training for U.S. military medical, engineering, and combat support personnel, while complementing the Department of State and USAID’s goal of advancing community development and hemispheric prosperity. Disaster relief activities go beyond deploying our own forces when disaster strikes. We also seek to improve our partner nations’ capacity to conduct disaster relief operations within their own borders, and when possible, outside their borders. We envision a region in which mutual assistance is the norm.

Our annual training exercises in the Caribbean Basin and Central America help improve our ability to conduct disaster relief and humanitarian assistance at both the tactical and operational levels. In 2010, we conducted 76 medical readiness training exercises (MEDRETEs), resulting in the treatment of 276,827 patients throughout the region. During our annual engineering exercises—NEW HORIZONS and BEYOND THE HORIZONS—our forces built or renovated ten schools, six health centers, six sanitation facilities, two police stations, and seven water wells in communities in Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. These exercises also helped increase response capabilities of the participating partner

nations; during the course of the training, our forces provided valuable training to first responders and disaster managers in the host countries.

Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B) at Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras provides regional support for responding to natural disasters and supporting counter drug operations with our partners in Central America and the Caribbean. In 2010, JTF-B medical personnel conducted four Medical Capability Projects in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, treating 6,981 patients and also supported relief efforts in Haiti and in Guatemala after the eruption of the Pacaya volcano and the landfall of Tropical Storm Agatha. I thank Congress for its continued support of JTF-B, especially for the appropriation of funds to support construction of new barracks at Soto Cano.

Unquestionably, the most significant 2010 HA/DR operation for U. S. Southern Command was Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE in Haiti. The situation after the January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake was grim: over 230,000 people killed, 300,000 wounded, and one million people displaced in our hemisphere's poorest country. Critical infrastructure, including the Port-au-Prince airport and seaport, was destroyed or unserviceable. Thirteen of fifteen government ministries were destroyed, crippling the Haitian government's ability to respond.

We established Joint Task Force-Haiti in support of USAID, the lead federal agency for the disaster response effort. Our response was immediate: within hours the airport was re-opened; within days maritime transportation was reestablished, allowing the influx of food, water, and medical supplies. U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines provided critical rescue, medical, and relief supply distribution support for the Haitian people. During Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE, U.S. forces delivered 2.3 million meals, 17 million pounds of bulk food, 2.6 million bottles of water, and almost 150,000 pounds of medical supplies. In addition,



Department of Defense medical personnel—operating on the ground as well as onboard USNS COMFORT—treated almost 10,000 patients, and conducted 1,025 surgeries and 343 medical evacuations. In partnership with non-governmental organizations and the private sector, U.S. Southern Command coordinated both the delivery of additional relief supplies worth \$36.2 million and the integration of 200 civilian medical specialists and translators into our relief efforts.

JTF-Haiti completed its mission on May 15<sup>th</sup>, but the end of our operation did not signify the end of our support to Haiti. Instead, we transitioned to a smaller mission consisting of targeted humanitarian and civic assistance exercises. As part of NEW HORIZONS HAITI 2010, approximately 500 personnel—mainly from the Louisiana National Guard—deployed to Haiti from June to September 2010. Engineers completed thirteen projects, building schools, improving wells, and constructing sanitation facilities. Medical forces conducted ten MEDRETES and established clinics that each served four to five thousand patients. Equally noteworthy, the exercise involved forces from another country in the region. Belize—partnering with the Louisiana National Guard under the State Partnership Program—deployed an engineer company to assist with reconstruction efforts. This example of regional collaboration represents the type of capability we actively seek to build and sustain throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Our commitment to Haiti is ongoing. As Haiti rebuilds, U.S. Southern Command will continue to conduct annual humanitarian and civil assistance exercises and respond to lingering effects of the devastating earthquake, as well as other humanitarian challenges.

U.S. Southern Command also supported U.S. Government disaster relief efforts in Chile following a devastating 8.8 magnitude earthquake on February 27<sup>th</sup> 2010. In support of USAID, approximately 150 U. S. military personnel deployed to Chile and worked with local and

international responders to deliver 300,000 pounds of relief supplies. Working with Chilean counterparts, a U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Medical Support team treated more than 300 patients. U.S. Southern Command also partnered with the private sector, which donated \$1.2 million in transportation assistance to ship 40,000 meals-ready-to-eat to Chile. It is important to note that Chile possessed the internal capacity to effectively respond to the disaster, requiring limited assistance from the U.S and other nations. This epitomizes the type of capability we seek to promote with our other regional partners.

Finally, during hurricane season in the Caribbean Basin, U.S. Southern Command remains prepared to assist any partner nation in the region affected by a tropical cyclone. We design our annual maritime deployment, CONTINUING PROMISE, to conduct humanitarian assistance in the Caribbean Basin while maintaining readiness to respond to disaster relief efforts, if requested. This past year, USS IWO JIMA—with a Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force of approximately 500 Marines, 128 NGO personnel, and 44 partner nation personnel embarked—deployed to the Caribbean Basin between July and November. During eight port visits, U.S. medical personnel treated 45,517 patients and performed 329 surgeries; dental personnel treated 15,472 patients; and veterinarians treated 26,969 animals. Engineers completed 23 projects over the course of the deployment. In late October, when Hurricane Tomas was forecast to strike Haiti with Category 3 strength, U.S. Southern Command diverted USS IWO JIMA from a scheduled port visit in Suriname to a safe location near Hispaniola as part of U.S. Government response preparations. Following landfall of the storm, USS IWO JIMA moved into the area quickly and U.S. Marine helicopters conducted several damage assessment flights. Fortunately, Hurricane Tomas only struck a glancing blow to southwestern

Haiti, and relief organizations already on the ground were able to respond to the minimal damage caused by the hurricane.

### *Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)*

Our partner nations exhibit a tremendous capacity to conduct peacekeeping operations in the region and around the globe. During Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE, U.S. Southern Command drew on the strengths of our South American regional partners who comprised the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Led by a Brazilian general officer, peacekeepers from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and Uruguay were on the ground when the earthquake occurred and were instrumental in maintaining security and leading the initial response. MINUSTAH continues to play an invaluable role in Haiti through the on-going efforts of our hemispheric partners. U.S. Southern Command also supports peacekeeping efforts through our partnership in the Department of State's Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI). Joining with nine countries in the region, we develop or enhance national training capabilities and equip potential peacekeeping units for deployment of U.N. Peace Support Operations.<sup>9</sup> We conduct the annual PKO Americas exercise, which is designed to improve partner nation capacity to plan and conduct peacekeeping operations. In the coming year, we will continue to support GPOI and our regional partners who take the lead in peacekeeping operations.

## **Enduring Engagement**

### *Military-to-Military*

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<sup>9</sup> GPOI countries: Belize, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Dominican Republic. Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador are pending diplomatic agreements.

Building partner nation capacity and enhancing interoperability is at the core of everything we do in our AOR. In implementing this strategy, we facilitate exchanges, seminars, and training exercises throughout the region with our partner militaries. A cornerstone of our engagement strategy is the International Military Education and Training program, which provides professional development for foreign military officers and senior enlisted personnel from Latin America and the Caribbean. Each year, U.S. Southern Command helps send approximately 5,000 students from the AOR to attend U.S. military training programs across the Department of Defense, to include the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, the Inter-American Defense College, and the Inter-American Air Forces Academy. Our goal is to encourage our partner nation militaries to promote institutional professionalism within the context of democratic governance. These programs are vital to building and sustaining relations with our partners throughout the region.

Our training and education programs also promote respect for human rights with our military partners. These programs remain important across the region, but hold particular relevance in the few countries whose militaries are being asked by their governments to assist local police forces in supporting and enhancing internal security. U.S. Southern Command's programs support our military partners in preparing to assume these roles and help them provide clear instructions to their soldiers to support and respect human rights. Our human rights programs and initiatives remain an important aspect of our engagement throughout the region.

Our engagement strategy is reinforced through our Foreign Military Interaction (FMI) exercise program. Every year U.S. Southern Command sponsors seven military exercises specifically designed to facilitate interoperability, build capabilities, and provide venues to share best practices among the military and security forces in the region. Our largest multinational

exercise, PANAMAX 2010, brought together eighteen nations from the Western Hemisphere to train for the defense of the Panama Canal<sup>10</sup>. Other key FMI exercises in the region include TRADEWINDS, FUERZAS COMANDO, and UNITAS. These exercises provide a venue for participating militaries to train together and maintain security and stability within the region.

### *Interagency*

Very few threats in the region require a conventional military response; as a result, the predominant security challenges we face are best addressed through the coordinated efforts of many U.S. government agencies. U.S. Southern Command headquarters is organized to support this coordination and collaboration; 27 representatives from 12 different agencies are embedded throughout our structure. This integration is both efficient and effective, allowing us to combine resources, perspectives, and expertise to collectively address issues in the region. Our interagency partners contribute to the development of strategic plans and participate in our joint exercises and operations, a cooperation that is critical to our success in the region. We continue to seek innovative ways to orchestrate our efforts across the U.S. Government to maximize our results.

### **Requirements**

In order to successfully achieve our strategic objectives in the region, U.S. Southern Command has identified requirements in two key areas: *Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance* and *Foreign Military Sales*.

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<sup>10</sup> PANAMAX participants: Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) are critical enablers of U.S. Southern Command's operations. Effective countering of illicit trafficking operations is contingent upon our ability to detect and monitor illegal activities. As demonstrated during Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE, ISR is also valuable for supporting HA/DR operations. ISR components—such as improved imagery intelligence, wide area coverage, sensor integration, signals intelligence, moving target indicators, layered ISR architecture and management tools, and biometrics—will improve our ability to synthesize a common operating picture to better support our operations in the region.

An additional source of valuable regional insight is information available and disseminated on the Internet. Social media and social networks provide opportunities for increased regional awareness and improved collaboration with our partners. U.S. Southern Command is improving our ability to analyze social media sources such as Twitter and blogs so we can identify regional trends early and accurately. When appropriate, we are also seeking to improve and expand the use of the All Partners Access Network, an online community that promotes collaboration among governmental and non-governmental organizations during exercises and operations.

We continue to work with the defense industry and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to identify promising technologies that match our requirements. Specific needs include: flexible, persistent manned and unmanned aerial vehicles; light detection and ranging technologies for foliage penetration; fast and flexible unmanned surface craft to support maritime domain awareness; acoustic and electronic sensor technologies to detect semi- and fully-submersible craft; commercial satellite radars with the ability to detect high-speed watercraft; next generation Over-the-Horizon radars; non-electro-optical imagery which enables change

detection; and the associated Tasking, Collection, Processing, and Dissemination architecture. Individually and collectively, all of these technologies enable our operations and represent opportunities to develop regional capabilities.

Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Foreign Military Financing (FMF) are key components in the security assistance the U.S. Government provides our partner nations. The goal of these programs is to increase partner nation capability and capacity to help us address threats to security and stability. Ideally, FMS would be an efficient process to rapidly support and enhance partner nation capabilities and deliver products that are tailored and appropriate for a nation's requirement. Unfortunately, the current program is inflexible and does not allow for efficient coordination within the interagency community. An improved FMS program would increase interoperability, strengthen military and economic ties, and maximize the efficient use of resources. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency has begun reforms that represent a promising start to addressing the inadequacies of the current FMS system. We also support efforts to pool State and Defense resources for the purpose of funding more robust and comprehensive security sector assistance programs to respond to emergent challenges and opportunities. These and other improvements are necessary to effectively develop a comprehensive, integrated security assistance program.

### **Conclusion**

U.S. Southern Command is committed to being a trusted, reliable partner of choice in the region. Our success will depend on our ability to engage effectively and transparently with regional militaries, partner nation governments, and our interagency partners. We actively work with the countries in our AOR to build enduring, mutually beneficial partnerships that address

our shared security concerns: violence and instability caused by TCOs and illicit trafficking, and the repercussions of natural disasters. Each training exercise and operation in the region is designed to increase partner nation capabilities to help us confront these challenges; we envision a region that is capable and willing to share the responsibility of hemispheric security and stability. Although we have experienced successes, we remain vigilant for evolving threats; watchful for new opportunities; and willing to engage with our partners to enhance our international, interagency, and public-private relationships.

None of the progress we made this year would be possible without the dedication and hard work of our military and civilian personnel, the support of their families, and the cooperation by the men and women from our partner agencies who serve alongside us. I thank Congress again for your continued support to all the dedicated professionals at U.S. Southern Command as we serve together to accomplish our mission.

DOUGLAS M. FRASER

General, U. S. Air Force



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