

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF**  
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**BEFORE THE 114<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS, U.S. HOUSE**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION**

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**AS SUBMITTED BY**  
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**COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND**  
**BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

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**Introduction**

Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio, and distinguished Members of the Committee: I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss U.S. Southern Command’s efforts in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. As I finish my third and likely final year in command, I continue to be impressed by the courage and sacrifice displayed by so many countries in this part of the world. Our friends across the region are committed to winning back their streets, indeed their countries, from criminal gangs and drug traffickers, and doing so while protecting human rights. They are ready and willing to partner with the United States, and they are eager for expanded cooperation and increased learning and training opportunities with the U.S. military. But they are frustrated by what they perceive as the low prioritization of Latin America on our national security and foreign policy agendas, which is especially puzzling given the shared challenge of transnational organized crime.

The drug trade—which is exacerbated by U.S. drug consumption—has wrought devastating consequences in many of our partner nations, degrading their civilian police and justice systems, corrupting their institutions, and contributing to a breakdown in citizen safety. The tentacles of global networks involved in narcotics and arms trafficking, human smuggling, illicit finance, and other types of illegal activity reach across Latin America and the Caribbean and into the United States, yet we continue to underestimate the threat of transnational organized crime at significant and direct risk to our national security and that of our partner nations. Unless confronted by an immediate, visible, or uncomfortable crisis, our nation’s tendency is to take the security of the Western Hemisphere for granted. I believe this is a mistake.

Last year, almost half a million migrants<sup>1</sup> from Central America and Mexico—including over 50,000 unaccompanied children (UAC) and families—were apprehended on our border, many fleeing violence, poverty, and the spreading influence of criminal networks and gangs. Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson testified that the “UAC migration serves as a warning sign that the serious and longstanding challenges in Central America are worsening.”<sup>2</sup> In my opinion, the relative ease with which human smugglers moved tens of thousands of people to our nation’s doorstep also serves as another warning sign: these smuggling routes are a potential vulnerability to our homeland. As I stated last year, terrorist organizations could seek to leverage those same smuggling routes to move operatives with intent to cause grave harm to our citizens or even bring weapons of mass destruction into the United States. Mr. Chairman, Members, addressing the root causes of insecurity and instability is not just in the region’s interests, but ours as well, which is why I support President Obama’s commitment to increase assistance to Central America.

These and other challenges underscore the enduring importance of U.S. Southern Command’s mission to protect our southern approaches. We do not and cannot do this mission alone. Our strong partnerships with the U.S. interagency—especially with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. Coast Guard, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Departments of Treasury and State—are integral to our efforts to ensure the forward defense of the U.S. homeland. We are also fortunate to have strong, capable partners like Colombia, Chile, Brazil, El Salvador, and Panama, regional

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, *FY 14 Border Security Report*. According to the CBP, 239,229 migrants from the Northern Tier countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador were apprehended in 2014, representing a 68% increase compared to FY 13. 229,178 migrants from Mexico were apprehended, a 14% decrease.

<sup>2</sup> Testimony of Roberta Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, United States House of Representatives, November 18, 2014.

leaders and outstanding contributors to hemispheric and international security. Given our limited intelligence assets, interagency relationships and bilateral cooperation are critical to identifying and monitoring threats to U.S. national security and regional stability.

Finally, while I thank the Congress for mitigating some of our asset shortfalls in 2015, the specter of sequestration still hovers over everything we do. Its potential return in FY16 would jeopardize our progress; undermine our credibility and the region's trust in our commitments; and present renewed hardships for our civilian and military workforce. I have already taken painful steps to implement a mandated 20% reduction in our headquarters budget and personnel, and we have thus far managed to avoid a reduction in force while still protecting our ability to conduct our most important missions. Nevertheless, as the lowest priority Geographic Combatant Command, 'doing less with less' has a disproportionate effect on our operations, exercises, and engagement activities. Mr. Chairman, Members, the truth is we are managing to keep the pilot light of U.S. military engagement on in the region—but just barely. This presents more than just risks to our national interests; U.S. Southern Command has accepted risk for so long in this region that we now face a near-total lack of awareness of threats and the readiness to respond, should those threats reach crisis levels.

## **Security Environment**

**Transnational Organized Crime.** The spread of criminal organizations continues to tear at the social, economic, and security fabric of our Central American neighbors. Powerful and well-resourced, these groups traffic in drugs—including cocaine, heroin, marijuana, counterfeit pharmaceuticals, and methamphetamine—small arms and

### ***Spotlight: Heroin Trafficking***

- ***According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, there was a 37% increase in heroin initiates in the United States between 2008-2012.***
- ***In 2012, 51% of all heroin analyzed by the DEA originated in South America, 45% in Mexico, and 4% from Southwest Asia.***

explosives, precursor chemicals, illegally mined gold, counterfeit goods, people, and other contraband. They engage in money laundering, bribery, intimidation, and assassinations. They threaten the very underpinnings of democracy itself: citizen safety, rule of law, and economic prosperity. And they pose a direct threat to the stability of our partners and an insidious risk to the security of our nation.

While there is growing recognition of the danger posed by transnational organized crime, it is often eclipsed by other concerns. Frankly, Mr. Chairman, I believe we are overlooking a significant security threat. Despite the heroic efforts of our law enforcement colleagues, criminal organizations are constantly adapting their methods for trafficking across our borders. While there is not yet any indication that the criminal networks involved in human and drug trafficking are interested in supporting the efforts of terrorist groups, these networks could unwittingly, or even wittingly, facilitate the movement of terrorist operatives or weapons of mass destruction toward our borders, potentially undetected and almost completely unrestricted. In addition to thousands of Central Americans fleeing poverty and violence, foreign nationals from countries like Somalia, Bangladesh, Lebanon, and Pakistan are using the region's human smuggling networks to enter the United States.<sup>3</sup>

***Spotlight: Economic Citizenship Programs***

- ***Regional economic citizenship programs provide a quick path for foreign nationals to acquire citizenship.***
- ***Of concern, these "cash for passport" programs could be exploited by criminals, terrorists, or other nefarious actors to obtain freedom of movement, facilitate entry into the U.S., or launder illicitly gained funds.***

While many are merely seeking economic opportunity or fleeing war, a small subset could potentially be seeking to do us harm. Last year, ISIS

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<sup>3</sup> Texas Department of Public Safety, *2013 Threat Assessment*.

adherents posted discussions on social media calling for the infiltration of the U.S. southern border. Thankfully, we have not yet seen evidence of this occurring, but I am deeply concerned that smuggling networks are a vulnerability that terrorists could seek to exploit.

I am also troubled by the financial and operational overlap between criminal and terrorist networks in the region. Although the extent of criminal-terrorist cooperation is unclear, what is clear is that terrorists and militant organizations easily tap into the international illicit marketplace to underwrite their activities and obtain arms and funding to conduct operations.<sup>4</sup>

It's easy to see why: illicit trafficking is estimated to be a \$650 billion industry—larger than the GDP of all but 20 countries in the world—and less than 1 percent of global illicit financial flows

***Spotlight: Narco-terrorist profits***

***Colombian defense officials estimate the narco-terrorist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) earn an excess of \$3.5 billion in drug revenue, with several more billion in proceeds from illegal mining and extortion.***

is currently being seized or frozen.<sup>5</sup> The terrorist group Lebanese Hezbollah—which has long viewed the region as a potential attack venue against Israeli or other Western targets—has

supporters and sympathizers in Lebanese diaspora communities in Latin America, some of whom are involved in lucrative illicit activities like money laundering and trafficking in counterfeit goods and drugs. These clan-based criminal networks exploit corruption and lax law enforcement in places like the Tri-Border Area of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina and the Colon Free Trade Zone in Panama and generate revenue, an unknown amount of which is transferred to Lebanese Hezbollah. Unfortunately, our limited intelligence capabilities make it difficult to fully

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, twenty-two of the fifty-nine Department of State designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations are linked to the global drug trade.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Estimating Illicit Financial Flows Resulting from Drug Trafficking and Other Transnational Crimes*. Geneva, 2011.

assess the amount of terrorist financing generated in Latin America, or understand the scope of possible criminal-terrorist collaboration.

**Iranian Influence and Islamic Extremist Organizations.** Over the last 15 years Iran has periodically sought closer ties with regional governments, albeit with mixed results. Iranian legislators visited Cuba, Ecuador, and Nicaragua to advocate for increased economic and diplomatic cooperation. Iran's outreach is predicated on circumventing sanctions and countering U.S. influence. Additionally, Iran has established more than 80 'cultural centers' in a region with an extremely small Muslim population. The purported purpose of these centers is to improve Iran's image, promote Shi'a Islam, and increase Iran's political influence in the region. As the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, Iran's involvement in the region and these cultural centers is a matter for concern, and its diplomatic, economic, and political engagement is closely monitored.

Sunni extremists, while small in number, are actively involved in the radicalization of converts and other Muslims in the region and also provide financial and logistical support to designated terrorist organizations within and outside Latin America. Partner nation officials throughout the region have expressed concern over the increasing number of suspected Islamic extremists from the hemisphere who are traveling to Syria to participate in jihad. Some take part in military and weapons training before departing; last year 19 Trinidadian Muslims were detained in Venezuela for conducting training with high-powered weapons. When these foreign fighters return, they will possess operational experience, ties to global extremists, and possible intent to harm Western interests—and they will reside in a region rife with smuggling routes that lead directly and easily into the United States.



**Chinese Outreach.** As in other regions around the world, China has growing influence in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 2005, it has provided financing to the region in excess of \$100 billion.<sup>6</sup> Chinese investment is concentrated in commodities, manufacturing, telecommunications, and construction sectors, including a \$40 billion investment in a Nicaraguan ‘alternative’ to the Panama Canal by a Chinese company.<sup>7</sup> In my view, just as we have ‘pivoted’ to the Pacific, China has pivoted to the Western Hemisphere. It views good relations with the region as useful for two reasons: to gain access to natural resources and to increase its global influence. China continues to increase its cooperation with regional organizations such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and leverages its position in BRICS<sup>8</sup> to advance its interests regionally. Of note, Beijing recently hosted a two-day China-CELAC Forum to discuss opportunities for increasing bilateral partnerships. Although cultural differences often preclude close cooperation, Chinese engagement with regional militaries is gradually expanding, especially with Cuba and Venezuela. This outreach, while not a threat to U.S. interests at this time, does underscore the importance of continued engagement by the U.S. military to maintain our valued security partnerships.

**Increased Russian Presence.** In contrast, Russian activities in the region are more concerning. Periodically since 2008, Russia has pursued an increased presence in Latin America through propaganda, military arms and equipment sales, counterdrug agreements, and trade. Under President Putin, however, we have seen a clear return to Cold War-tactics. As part of its

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<sup>6</sup> Amos Irwin and Kevin Gallagher. *Chinese Finance to Latin America Tops \$100 Billion Since 2005*. Inter-American Dialogue, April 2, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> R. Evan Ellis. *The Rise of China in the Americas*. Security and Defense Studies Review. Volume 16, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

global strategy, Russia is using power projection in an attempt to erode U.S. leadership and challenge U.S. influence in the Western Hemisphere. Last year and again this year, a Russian intelligence ship docked in Havana multiple times while conducting operations in the Gulf of Mexico and along the east coast of the United States. Russia has courted Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua to gain access to air bases and ports for resupply of Russian naval assets and strategic bombers operating in the Western Hemisphere. Russian media also announced Russia would begin sending long-range strategic bombers to patrol the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, in an effort to “monitor foreign powers’ military activities and maritime communications.”<sup>9</sup> While these actions do not pose an immediate threat, Russia’s activities in the hemisphere are concerning and underscore the importance of remaining engaged with our partners.

**Regional Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Influence.** The United States also faces challenges from regional bodies like CELAC, which deliberately exclude the United States and seek to limit our role in the hemisphere. Other regional organizations such as the Central America Integration System (SICA), however, offer the United States opportunity for engagement. Just this past year, we hosted SICA leaders and asked the Colombian Minister of Defense to share his perspective on Colombia’s success and lessons learned over the past decades. Additionally, ALBA<sup>10</sup> nations like Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia restrict defense ties with the United States and have sought in some cases to eliminate the U.S. military presence from their countries. As one example, in 2014 the Ecuadorian government directed that the U.S. Embassy close its security cooperation office, further restricting defense cooperation between our countries. Despite such complex and evolving regional dynamics and within our current

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<sup>9</sup>Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, November 12, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> ALBA (in its Spanish acronym) stands for the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America

resource constraints, U.S. Southern Command is ready and willing to partner with all regional militaries on issues like respect for human rights, disaster response, and illicit trafficking.

### **Implications of Venezuelan**

**Instability.** Mr. Chairman, Members, our efforts to enhance regional stability are directly connected to our ability to engage.

#### ***Spotlight: Venezuela's Deteriorating Citizen Security***

- ***According to respected NGO Observatorio Venezolana de Violencia (OVV), Venezuela is the second most violent country in the world.***
- ***Venezuela's homicide rate is now 82 per 100,000; in 1998, the rate was 19 per 100,000.***

Since 2003, the Venezuelan government has reduced its traditionally close military and defense ties with the United States, and in the course of the past ten years we have witnessed a dramatic decline in the country's democratic institutions. Venezuela now faces significant economic, social, and political instability due to rampant violent crime and poverty, runaway inflation, serious shortages of food, medicine, and electricity. Human rights abuses by security forces and the government's continued mismanagement of the country are contributing to an environment of uncertainty, and large segments of the population say the country is on the wrong track. Additionally, falling oil prices and deteriorating economic conditions could lead the Venezuelan government to cut social welfare programs and its foreign oil subsidy program, PetroCaribe. Further cuts to social welfare programs and continued shortages—which seem unavoidable—could likely lead to increased tensions and violent protests, encouraging President Maduro and his party to engage in additional repressive measures against protestors and the opposition. Cuts to PetroCaribe deliveries to its member nations could trigger regional economic downturns, which could elevate the risk of increased migration, especially in the Caribbean.

## **Command Priorities**

The U.S. military plays an important role in addressing these and other challenges to our hemisphere's security and stability. Despite significant resource constraints, U.S. Southern Command remains postured to contribute to a whole-of-government approach to advancing U.S. interests in the region. This important work is carried out by our command's most valuable assets: our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and civilian employees. Last year was an active one for U.S. Southern Command, and I am proud of our contributions to the security of Latin America and the Caribbean. Looking to the year ahead, we hope to build on our past achievements and deepen our security partnerships, as we continue safeguarding the southern approaches to the United States.

**Detention Operations.** As we begin the thirteenth year of detention operations at Guantanamo, we continue to provide dignified, humane, and lawful care and treatment of detainees. In fact, the only people *not* treated humanely or having their human rights protected are the guards, especially our female and minority ones, who find themselves in a challenging environment where they regularly confront verbal and physical abuse and 'splashings' by many detainees. Mr. Chairman, Members, our guard and medical force is doing a superb job, and our nation should be extremely proud of these young military professionals. They execute a difficult, no-fail mission with honor, integrity, and the utmost professionalism, all within a pressure cooker of unrelenting public scrutiny and fabricated accusations of inhumane treatment and abuse. It is worth reiterating that everything they do—including supporting ongoing transfers, enteral feeding, military commissions, and periodic review boards—is done entirely at the direction of our military chain of command, in execution of U.S. national policy. Like all our men and women in uniform, these young Service members are second to none, and I thank the

Congress for sharing that sentiment and for its continued support to our troops stationed at Guantanamo.

We also greatly appreciate congressional support to construct a new dining facility and medical clinic at Naval Station Guantanamo, which will address the health and safety concerns posed by the current facilities. As our service members perform our directed detention mission in an honorable and professional manner, the facilities in which they reside have long exceeded their useful life. Each year we struggle to maintain, repair, or replace obsolete or sub-standard facilities. It is difficult and expensive to mitigate life, health, and safety issues in an incremental, piecemeal manner. Our troops deserve better.

Finally, it is important to note that the strategic importance of U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay is independent of the presence of the Joint Task Force. Its airfield and port facilities are indispensable to the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and State's operational and contingency plans. The Naval Station plays a crucial role in the interception and repatriation of migrants and serves as a critical distribution and staging area for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. As the only permanent U.S. military base in Latin America and the Caribbean, its location provides persistent U.S. presence and immediate access to the region, as well as supporting a layered defense to secure the air and maritime approaches to the United States.

**Countering Transnational Organized Crime.** Our efforts to counter transnational organized crime focus on two complementary missions: defending the southern approaches of the United States and supporting partner nation efforts, in coordination with our U.S. interagency partners, to stem the flow of illicit trafficking. In both missions, we rely heavily on support from

the DHS, especially the U.S. Coast Guard. Secretary Jeh Johnson and the heroic men and women at DHS deserve enormous recognition

***Spotlight: Counter Threat Finance***

- ***In collaboration with the Department of the Treasury, U.S. Southern Command maps illicit networks, conducts all-source intelligence analysis and production, and works with U.S. and regional partners to support targeted financial measures and U.S. law enforcement efforts.***

working cooperatively across the interagency to help us safeguard our nation's southern approaches. Secretary Johnson and I both share the conviction that homeland defense does not begin at the 'one yard line' of our Southwest border, but instead extends forward, throughout the hemisphere, to keep threats far from our nation's shores. Along with DHS, we work with the FBI, DEA, and the Departments of State and the Treasury to do exactly that.

While these partnerships are superb at the tactical level, I am frustrated by the lack of a comprehensive U.S. government effort to counter the TOC threat. Nearly four years after the release of the President's *National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*, interagency CTOC activities in the region—especially in Central America—remain poorly coordinated and minimally funded. Fortunately, there is growing recognition that the magnitude, scope, and complexity of this threat demand an integrated counternetwork approach. I thank the Congress for recognizing this threat and expanding section 1004 authorities to include CTOC operations, and I fully support efforts to improve interagency coordination on this critical national security issue.

I am hopeful that the new *Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America* will broaden our approach to achieving lasting security in Central America and help reinvigorate our partnerships with the sub-region. As I have often said, we cannot shoot our way out of the CTOC challenge. It will truly take a whole-of-government effort, because Central America's prosperity, governance, and security are intrinsically connected. Economic growth is only

sustainable in an environment where democratic values and institutions flourish, citizens feel secure in their communities, impunity is reduced, and civil society and the media can play their rightful roles. President Obama requested \$1 billion in the FY2016 budget for the Department of State and USAID to implement the new Strategy. As Vice President Biden rightly points out, the cost of investing now to address Central America’s challenges is modest compared with the costs of letting festering violence, poverty, and insecurity become full-blown crises.<sup>11</sup> I fully support the President’s efforts to prioritize Central America at this crucial time, and urge Congress to support the President’s budget request.

In another positive development, we are seeing significant improvements in regional cooperation. Although we receive a tiny fraction of the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets we need, our ongoing Operation MARTILLO continues to yield tactical successes thanks to increased contributions by our partner nations and our continued coordination with DEA. The Coast Guard Commandant shares my view that transnational organized crime poses a significant threat to our hemisphere, and he has committed a 50% increase in

***Spotlight: Operation MARTILLO***

***Orchestrated by the Joint Interagency Task Force South, and coordinated with our interagency partners, MARTILLO has resulted in the disruption of over 400 metric tons of cocaine over the past four years, denying drug traffickers \$8 billion in potential revenue.***

cutters equipped with ability to land a helicopter , plus a commensurate plus-up in maritime patrol aircraft hours. While the Commandant is doing everything he can to support us, the Coast Guard faces its own limitations, and this increase only translates to an additional two to three cutters, far below the 16 flight-deck equipped vessels required to conduct our detection and monitoring mission. This support, however, comes at a critical juncture for the counterdrug

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<sup>11</sup> Vice President Joseph Biden, “A Plan for Central America.” January 29, 2015.

mission, as the U.S. Navy decommissions its frigates and deploys its new Littoral Combat Ships to the Pacific. I would like to go on record here today before the Congress in strong support of the Coast Guard and DHS' efforts to recapitalize their fleet of cutters, some of which are in their fifth decade of service. The Coast Guard and U.S. Southern Command need these replacement cutters as soon as possible to continue the important work of securing our southern approaches.

Additionally, I believe we have a window of opportunity in Central America to capitalize on the region's growing political will to combat criminal networks. Last year the presidents of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador developed a coordinated plan to address their countries' endemic challenges. These leaders recognize the magnitude of the tasks ahead and are prepared to address them, but they need our support. They are frustrated, however by conditions on U.S. security assistance—some of which are not even related to military-to-military engagements—and our cumbersome Foreign Military Sales procurement processes, which delay or even hinder cooperation efforts. Unfortunately, these conditions are often placed on governments that most need our help, providing an opening for other actors to successfully conduct outreach to the region. Unlike the United States, some countries place no emphasis on promoting human rights, anti-corruption measures, fair labor practices, and environmental protection as part of their offers of security assistance.

Our president has recognized the importance of supporting our Central American partners, making the region one of his top foreign policy priorities. We are now seeing real progress being made by the three 'Northern Triangle' countries. While there are many good examples, the situation is especially encouraging in Honduras, where the government is working hard to combat the drug trade, re-establish governance in remote areas, and take meaningful action to protect human rights. In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice, and for the



first time in the country's history, the Government of Honduras extradited seven Honduran nationals wanted to face drug trafficking charges in the United States. The Honduran government also deserves recognition for the establishment of a special investigative unit to combat impunity in Bajo Aguán and to improve citizen security. According to government figures, the 2014 homicide rate dropped to 66.4 per 100,000, a nearly 25% reduction in only two years. Although some groups expressed concerns over the use of the Honduran military in a domestic security role, the government of Honduras has developed a comprehensive strategy to phase out the use of its Military Police of Public Order (PMOP); has increasingly investigated and brought charges against high-level officials involved in corruption; and is making efforts to swiftly arrest those security forces implicated in human rights abuse. At the request of the Honduran president, the United Nations will open an office of the UN High Commission on Human Rights. Of note, human rights groups have acknowledged to me that Honduras is making real progress in this area.

This is a historical first step, and it simply would not have happened without our superb Ambassador to Tegucigalpa, Ambassador Jim Nealon, who provided help and advice not only to the Government of Honduras, but to the entire U.S. interagency. This is reflective of the close and continuous working relationship all Combatant Commanders have with their respective ambassadors throughout their Area of Operations. It is a team effort, and as a team we are hobbled in our interaction with foreign governments when there is no U.S. Ambassador in the seat, and frankly, the individual foreign partners take offense and are confused regarding U.S. interests in their country and the region. I know there are many reasons why there are often long gaps in coverage, but the fact is the lack of an ambassador handicaps the advancement of U.S. interests. This time last year, we did not have Ambassadors in Colombia, Peru, and Argentina.

I am grateful for Congressional action to remedy the lack of Embassy leadership in these countries, and I am hopeful that Ambassador-Designate Mr. Stafford Fitzgerald Haney will be confirmed as Ambassador for Costa Rica without delay.

Finally, I would like to close this section by sharing a few examples of how our counterdrug efforts, conducted in coordination with DEA, are contributing to the region's overall security. In Guatemala, we provided infrastructure support and over \$17 million in equipment and training to the country's two interagency task forces along Guatemala's northern and southern borders. In concert with U.S. Northern Command, we also work with Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize to support Mexico's Southern Border Strategy. In Honduras, we helped create a 'maritime shield' to deflect drug trafficking off the country's northeastern coast and are supporting the Honduran government's citizen security efforts. In the Caribbean, we are prioritizing infrastructure projects designed to improve regional interdiction capabilities; last year we completed construction on new training facilities in the Dominican Republic and an operations center for the Regional Security System. To enhance our partners' efforts to counter increased drug trafficking in the Caribbean, we provide counterdrug training and support the Technical Assistance Field Teams, comprised of Coast Guard and DoD personnel who provide mentoring and technical assistance to 13 Caribbean nations. This support encourages our partners to be more self-reliant in the maintenance and upkeep of their assets, making them more dependable and capable allies in the CTOC fight. Further south, we are supporting the Peruvian military's increasingly successful efforts to improve their maritime interdiction capability, strengthen their collaboration with Colombia, and combat the scourge of narcoterrorism that has plagued their country for decades.

**Counterterrorism.** In 2014, we continued our work with the interagency, U.S. Embassy Country Teams, and our partner nations to counter Islamic extremism, recruitment, and radicalization efforts that support terrorism activities. Working closely with the interagency and partner nations, we also began monitoring the possible return of foreign fighter extremists participating in jihad in Syria. Over the past year our Special Operations Forces (SOF) conducted multiple engagements such as subject matter expert and intelligence exchanges, counterterrorism-focused exercises, and key leader engagements in countries throughout the region. Our Department of Defense Rewards Program yielded successes and offers a model for a low-cost, small footprint approach to counterterrorism. In 2014, this program enabled partner nation authorities to bring 33 members of terrorist organizations to justice. These, and other counterterrorism cooperation efforts, ensure our partners are able to mitigate terrorist threats before they can destabilize a country or reach the U.S. homeland.

### **Building Partner Nation**

**Capacity.** Our engagement—through our humanitarian and civic assistance programs, defense institution building efforts like the Defense Institution Reform Initiative, and the U.S. Southern Command-sponsored Human Rights

Initiative—helps partner nations strengthen governance and development, professionalize their militaries and security forces, and increase their ability to conduct peacekeeping, stability, and disaster relief operations. Our military components are at the forefront of these engagement efforts and perform superb work in strengthening our security partnerships. While we engage on

#### ***Spotlight: USS AMERICA Visits the Americas***

- *In 2014, the USS AMERICA, the Navy's newest class of amphibious assault ship, conducted a 10-week transit of South America while en route to her home port.*
- *USS AMERICA embarked Expeditionary Strike Group THREE (ESG 3) and a Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF), which conducted numerous engagement activities during port calls in Colombia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru.*
- *This transit offered a clear example of U.S. Navy-Marine Corps integration and set the standard for future new ship transits in the region.*

a variety of different issues, I would like to highlight a few of our capacity-building efforts that are making a significant difference in the region.<sup>12</sup>

*Support to Colombia.* Colombia is a terrific example of how sustained U.S. support can help a partner nation gain control of their security situation, strengthen government institutions, eradicate corruption, and bolster their economy. Colombia's turnaround is nothing short of phenomenal, and it stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States as together we work to improve regional stability. Mr. Chairman, Members, as you know, the United States has a special relationship with only a handful of countries throughout the world. These relationships are with countries that we rely on to act as regional stabilizers, countries that we look to for international leadership, countries that we consider our strongest friends and most steadfast allies. Colombia unquestionably plays that role in Latin America. Through the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security, Colombia provides vital assistance to its Central American

***Spotlight: Building Colombia's Counter-IED Capacity***

- ***U.S. Southern Command and the Joint IED Defeat Organization work with the Colombian military to counter IED threats.***
- ***Though it remains the #3 country in the world for IED incidents, Colombian casualties from IEDs were down 20% in 2014.***

and Mexican counterparts in the fight against criminal networks. I want to note that every aspect of U.S. collaboration under this Plan, including activities conducted by U.S. Southern Command,

is facilitated through U.S. security assistance and governed by the same U.S. laws and regulations—especially those requiring the human rights vetting of units—governing my own personnel.

I fully support the government of Colombia's efforts to ensure that justice and accountability are integral parts of the peace process. We must sustain U.S. support throughout

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<sup>12</sup> A complete list of activities by our military components can be found in the Annex.

this process and during the post-conflict phase as our closest partner works to end a decades-long insurgency. As I have told my Colombian colleagues, the last 50 years were easy compared to what the next five hold in store. Our goal is to ensure Colombia can sustain U.S.-funded programs, and to that end we work with the Defense Institution Reform Initiative to improve the Colombian Ministry of National Defense's strategic planning capabilities. As testament to the enduring strength of our relationship, Colombia wants to partner with the United States for planning and implementation of their Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process. We are exploring options to provide verification, advice, and monitoring of these efforts.

*Exercise Program.* Bilateral and multilateral exercises with partner nations improve staff planning and operations, promote interoperability, and support national security objectives. While the technical skills our partners learn during these exercises are important, the personal relationships that are made are invaluable, binding participating countries together as equal partners and true friends. In 2014, our four operational exercises included INTEGRATED ADVANCE, which exercises our response to various regional contingencies, and FUSED RESPONSE, designed to improve the training, readiness, and capability of Belizean, Brazilian, Canadian, and U.S. special operations forces. We also held four multilateral exercises, including TRADEWINDS, which aims to improve the capability of Caribbean nations to counter transnational organized crime and respond to a natural disaster; PANAMAX, which focuses on the defense of the Panama Canal by a 17-nation multinational force; and FUERZAS ALIADAS HUMANITARIAS, which brings together 11 partner nations and regional humanitarian organizations to improve coordination on disaster response.

*Humanitarian and Civic Assistance.* As a complement to our multinational exercises, our

humanitarian and civic assistance program help demonstrates the United States' enduring commitment

***Spotlight: 2014 Beyond the Horizons and New Horizons Exercises***

- ***Working alongside partner nation personnel, U.S. military forces provided free medical and dental services to more than 42,000 patients in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Belize.***
- ***U.S. forces also constructed 16 new classrooms, a hospital addition, and two healthcare clinics in remotely located communities.***

to the citizens of Latin America. There are no better symbols of this commitment than our humanitarian exercises and the USNS COMFORT, which returns to the region to conduct humanitarian missions in 11 countries as part of CONTINUING PROMISE 2015.

Our humanitarian mission also helps strengthen governance and partner nation response capacities. In coordination with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in 2014 we funded the construction of 172 humanitarian projects in the region, building disaster relief warehouses, emergency operations centers, and emergency shelters. This infrastructure helps increase partner nation capacity to respond to a regional disaster, often without U.S. assistance. Last year, the Government of Haiti successfully responded to flooding in Nord using emergency response facilities constructed under this program. This is a major step and a sign of continued progress in Haiti; in the past, such an event would have required U.S. or outside assistance.

*Public-Private Cooperation.* U.S. Southern Command remains at the forefront of public-private cooperation, a force multiplier in our exercises, operations, and engagement activities. In 2014, our collaboration with non-governmental and private sector entities yielded over \$10 million in service and gifts-in-kind—such as school furniture and medical equipment—to partner nations in conjunction with our annual exercises. Early this year we held a forum that brought together U.S. and partner nation government officials and private sector leaders to brainstorm

ways to improve security and economic investment in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The forum featured lessons learned from Colombia and Mexico on the importance of security to economic development and identifying near-term activities to improve the security situation and, by extension, the investment climate in these three countries. To quote Paul Brinkley, who wrote one of the most impressive books I have read on the subject, the greatest element of our national power is our “private-sector economic dynamism.”<sup>13</sup> I am hopeful American businesses will help advance our President’s goal of a stable, prosperous, and secure Central America.

*Promoting Respect for Human Rights.* Mr. Chairman, Members, human rights are fundamental to our capacity-building efforts in the region. During my time as Commander of U.S. Southern Command, I have aggressively worked to promote genuine and concrete respect for human rights throughout Latin America. One of my greatest tools in this mission is actually something pretty simple, and doesn’t cost the taxpayer one penny: open and frank dialogue with both our closest partners and our fiercest critics. Every conversation I have—whether with a president, with a minister, with a chief of defense or his subordinates, with U.S. or regional media outlets, or human rights representatives from Washington to Montevideo—begins and ends with a straightforward discussion on human rights.

I am proud to state that I incorporate meetings and engagements specifically focused on human rights into nearly every one of my numerous trips to the region. I do this because I have long recognized the vital role human rights organizations play in supporting democracy and open societies, strengthening the rule of law, and ensuring that government officials are accountable to their citizens. As I have said before, the U.S. military doesn’t just talk about human rights, we

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<sup>13</sup> Paul Brinkley, *War Front to Store Front: Americans Rebuilding Trust and Hope in Nations Under Fire*. New York: 2014.

*do* human rights. We teach it. We enforce it. We live it. The protection of human rights is embedded in our doctrine, our training, and our education, and above all, in our moral code. It is the source of our great strength as a military power, and it is also our best defense against losing legitimacy in the hearts and minds of the people we have taken an oath to protect.

Mr. Chairman, I believe without question that improvement in human rights most often comes when countries have the opportunity to work directly with Americans. Human rights improvements in this region have largely come as a direct result of close and continuous dialogue and engagement by the United States government. Additionally, because of partner nation interaction with brave and dedicated U.S. law enforcement personnel like the FBI, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the U.S. Coast Guard and particularly DEA, we have seen a concrete and I believe long-term positive effect on the professionalism of law enforcement institutions in the region. It is what our partners learn in our military and law enforcement training, by the example we show and the attitudes they absorb from us—when they attend our courses, exercises, and in senior officer conferences and seminars, but most powerfully by simply working shoulder-to-shoulder with young American professionals that do human rights, do their duties entirely without thought of corruption, who do not preach while they wave their fingers in the faces of their counterparts, but treat them like equal partners in activities that are in the national security interests of both their nations—that are, together, making a difference.

For our part, U.S. Southern Command's commitment to promoting respect for human rights can be seen in many activities we carry out with our partners in the region, and I am proud to lead the only Combatant Command with a dedicated Human Rights Office. This office also has a long history of providing support and expertise to our partner nation militaries in



strengthening their human rights programs and improving their human rights performance. In 2014, U.S. Southern Command sponsored a series of civil-

**Spotlight: 2014 Human Rights Officers Workshop**

- *The 2014 Workshop brought together military, government, and civil society representatives from 14 countries in the hemisphere to discuss the duty of military and security forces in protecting human rights.*

military dialogues in Guatemala and Honduras, two countries facing a ruthless onslaught of transnational criminal activity. These dialogues brought together influential human rights NGOs and key military leaders to discuss shared concerns, including the deployment of military forces in citizen safety missions. I thank the Congress for recognizing the enduring value of this mission, and we deeply appreciate the flexibility to soon provide human rights training to units that might not have been previously eligible to receive it.

**Planning for Contingencies.** Finally, planning and preparing for crisis and contingency response are essential elements of U.S. Southern Command's mission. Contingency planning

**Spotlight: Partnering to Promote Ebola Preparedness**

- *In coordination with the Pan American Health Organizations, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Defense Institute for Medical Operations, U.S. Southern Command is providing Ebola preparedness assessments, training, and equipment for partner nations*
- *We are also working with Ministries of Defense in the region to develop protocols for peacekeepers deploying to Ebola-affected regions in West Africa.*

and preparation, including exercises like PANAMAX, FUSED RESPONSE, and INTEGRATED ADVANCE, prepares our organization to respond to various

scenarios such as an attack on critical infrastructure, Caribbean mass migration, humanitarian crises, natural disasters, or the evacuation of U.S. citizens in the region. We work closely with the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and other interagency and regional partners to monitor events like the increase in Haitian and Cuban migrant flows, the potential spread of infectious diseases like Ebola, and the devastating drought in Central America, all of which could trigger a crisis event. While we stand ready to support U.S.

government response efforts should the need arise, mandated budget and workforce reductions limit our ability to rapidly respond to any significant contingency without substantial headquarters augmentation.

## **Critical Needs and Concerns**

*Budget Cuts.* U.S. Southern Command is grappling with the cumulative effect of the various budget cuts enacted over the past few years. Force allocation cuts by the Services—including troops, ships, planes, Coast Guard cutters, and ISR platforms—are having the greatest impact on our operations, exercises, and security cooperation activities. I fully expect reductions to affect all aspects of our operations and engagements with our partner nations, including capacity-building activities, multinational exercises, information operations, interagency support, and our ability to respond to crises or contingencies.

We are already feeling the impact at our headquarters, where we have implemented a 13% reduction in civilian billets and an 11% reduction in military ones. As an economy of force Combatant Command, these cuts have a disproportionate effect on our daily operations. During last year's capstone exercise PANAMAX, it became clear that resource constraints and manpower reductions are compromising our training and readiness. Fortunately, these limitations were revealed in an exercise scenario and not during a real-world contingency, and we are taking steps to mitigate some of these shortfalls. To that end, we are instituting a Strategic Human Capital Management Plan and have realigned personnel to support our most critical missions. We are also improving our business practices to gain greater efficiencies in our management of mission requirements and application of resources. I want to stress, however,

that if sequestration returns in FY16, our ability to support national security objectives, including conducting many of our essential missions, will be significantly undermined.

*Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Shortfalls.* We deeply appreciate Congressional assistance to mitigating some of our chronic ISR shortfalls. Thanks to the support of Congress, we have increased maritime patrol capacity in support of counterdrug operations in the region. We are also thankful to the Congress for recognizing the urgency of the challenges we face in the region and the importance of adequately sourcing our missions. I continue to be concerned, however, by the long-term consequences of our limited awareness and lack of insight into security challenges in the region. The longer these shortfalls persist, the more difficult it is to track and monitor potential threats to our nation's security, including the growing influence of extra-regional actors, the overlap between criminal and terrorist networks, and signs of potential regional instability. While we recognize that global defense priorities must be adequately sourced, limited tactical ISR allocation and national technical focus is impairing virtually every one of our assigned missions and exposing the southern approaches to the United States to significant risk. Sequestration will compound this challenge; when it comes to sourcing, we are already the lowest priority Geographic Combatant Command, and sequestration will likely eviscerate our already limited ISR capacity.

To mitigate some of these shortfalls, we have successfully employed non-traditional assets in support of our Title 10 detection and monitoring obligations. The Air Force's JSTARS is especially important, providing a detailed maritime surveillance capability that is unsurpassed and increasing the efficiency of wide area surveillance and long-range maritime patrol aircraft. A single JSTARS sortie can cover the same search area as 10 maritime patrol aircraft sorties. The use of these types of assets is a 'win-win' for U.S. Southern Command and the Services; we

receive much-needed assets while the Services receive pre-deployment training opportunities in a ‘target-rich’ environment.

*Military Construction.* In support of our nationally-directed contingency response mission, we are also seeking \$28 million in funding to construct basic horizontal infrastructure that would be needed to operate migrant camps at Guantanamo in the event of a maritime mass migration. These projects would include the shaping of terrain and installation of drainage and utilities infrastructure. Without this funding, we will not be able to quickly house the required number of migrants without compromising United Nations’ standards and placing severe constraints on current operations at the Naval Station. I look forward to working with the Congress to find a solution to these and other requirements.

*Quality of Life and Military Housing.* Mr. Chairman, the men and women assigned to U.S. Southern Command are at a huge financial and benefits disadvantage, working and living in one of the most expensive cities in the world and receiving little in the way of adequate compensation. Access to commissary and PX facilities are an integral part of the benefits package guaranteed by law, yet we lack both at our installation. Our assigned personnel receive minimal Cost of Living Allowances for South Florida, even though non-housing expenditures like car insurance are high.<sup>14</sup> This is particularly hard on our junior enlisted personnel. An E-3 receives a mere \$29 for a monthly Cost of Living Allowance, while an E-9 receives \$44; neither amount covers monthly tolls on South Florida’s roads.

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<sup>14</sup> According to the Economic Policy Institute, it takes nearly three times the federal poverty line to cover basic living expenses in Miami.

Given current housing allowances, many of our families cannot afford to live near the Command, and government housing acquired through domestic leasing is both expensive and extremely competitive. The housing situation will become even more challenging for our officer-grade personnel, who will see, on average, approximately 9% reduction in their BAH. I would like to go on record and note that I have serious concerns over the validity of the process used to calculate BAH for our assigned troops. A permanent military housing solution in Doral would allow us to bring our service members and their families into a secure and affordable community close to our facility. We are working with U.S. Army Installation Management Command to find a long-term housing solution for our Service members and their families.

### **Conclusion**

I would like to conclude my testimony with a note of warning and a sign of hope. Two decades ago, U.S. policy makers and the defense and intelligence communities failed to anticipate the collapse of the Soviet Union or the rise of international terrorism. Today, another challenge is in plain sight: transnational organized crime threatens not only our own security, but the stability and prosperity of our Latin American neighbors. As the Congress knows, the United States and our partners worked hard to ensure the Western Hemisphere is a beacon of freedom, democracy, and peace. In the face of the corrosive spread of criminal networks and other threats, we must work even harder to ensure it remains that way.

The good news is we know how to win this fight. Colombia taught us that the key to defeating insurgents is the same as defeating criminal networks: a strong, accountable government that protects its citizens, upholds the rule of law, and expands economic opportunity for all. It taught us that countering illicit trafficking and countering terrorism often go hand in hand. It taught us that U.S. interagency cooperation, coupled with a committed partner, can help

bring a country back from the brink—and for a fraction of the cost of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. And above all, Colombia taught us that sustained engagement by the United States can make a real and lasting difference. We have learned these lessons. Now is the time to apply them to the region as a whole. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

## Annex: 2014 Component Accomplishments

### **U.S. Army South (ARSOUTH) Headquarters: San Antonio, Texas**

- **Security Cooperation:** ARSOUTH conducted 174 security cooperation events with 18 countries in U.S. Southern Command's (USSOUTHCOM's) area of responsibility. These events included: Army-to-Army Staff Talks with key countries, Foreign Liaison Officers assigned to ARSOUTH, Conference of American Armies activities, professional development exchanges on multiple topics, Army commander and distinguished visitor program, and Joint/Combined/Multinational Exercises and Operations. These events represent engagements aimed at building partner nation capabilities with other militaries in the region.
- **Countering Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC):** ARSOUTH conducted numerous CTOC training sessions with the El Salvador Army Intelligence Battalion, the two new Guatemalan Interagency Task Forces (IATF), and two Honduran Brigades associated with border security. These efforts have greatly improved the individual country's capability to disrupt TOC operations and has set the stage for the next training phase in FY15.
- **Intelligence Security Cooperation:** In addition to the El Salvador effort, the ARSOUTH Intelligence Team conducted engagement activities enabling military intelligence capacity building in support of countering transnational threats in Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Chile, and Peru.
- **Counter Terrorism:** ARSOUTH conducted 20 Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs) in ten countries that included over 750 host nation soldiers. The engagements included: Medical, Search and Rescue, Logistics, Force Protection, and Communications.
- **Civil Military Relations:** ARSOUTH conducted Civil Military Relations Professional Development Exchanges in Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, improving the ability of these countries to conduct inter-organizational coordination during humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations, and to counter transnational criminal organizations. These exchanges provide a forum for bilateral executive-level information.
- **Humanitarian Assistance Program (HAP):** HAP conducts activities to build partner nation capacity in providing essential services to its civilian population including: responding to disaster and other crises; reinforcing security; and sustaining stability in a host nation or region. ARSOUTH, USSOUTHCOM's HAP construction program manager, completed 19 projects in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Peru, and initiated the planning for nine new construction projects in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Peru.
- **Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI):** GPOI is a U.S. government-funded security assistance program to enhance international capacity to effectively conduct United Nations and regional peace support operations. ARSOUTH, as USSOUTHCOM's GPOI construction program manager, completed four projects in Guatemala, Paraguay and Peru, with four ongoing construction projects in El Salvador and Guatemala.
- **Reintegration:** ARSOUTH executed a Reintegration operation for the surviving crew members of aircraft BAT 02 following their crash in Colombia, a Post Isolation Support

Activity in support of the FBI for an American Citizen held hostage by the FARC in Colombia, and for a repatriated POW from Afghanistan.

- **Conference of the American Armies (CAA):** The Conference of American Armies (20 member nations, 5 observer nations and two International Military Organizations) strengthens relationships and improves interoperability in peacekeeping and disaster relief operations through the creation and implementation of practical initiatives approved by the commanders of the member Armies. ARSOUTH delegations represented the U.S. Army Chief of Staff at the Transfer Ceremony to Colombia, a 1st Communications Exercise and a Specialized Conference on IEDs in Colombia, a Geospatial Terrain data base Ad-Hoc Committee in Peru, and a Disaster Relief Field Training Exercise in Argentina.
- **Beyond the Horizon (BTH):** The Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Field Training Exercise, BTH Dominican Republic (APR-JUN 14), consisted of five engineer projects, two general medical and one dental exercises (MEDRETEs and DENTRETE), treating over 12,917 patients. 1,468 U.S. troops participated in the exercise and the Dominican military provided 107 personnel. BTH Guatemala (MAR-JUL 14) consisted of five engineer projects, and three general MEDRETEs, treating over 21,000 residents. 1,242 U.S. troops participated and the Guatemalan military provided over 120 personnel.
- **Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias (FAHUM):** The Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Command Post Exercise was hosted by El Salvador to build Partner Nation capacity to respond to a major disaster and strengthen military/security force collaboration and cooperation in the region. Participants included 300 from El Salvador, 66 U.S. and 33 from other Partner Nations.
- **PANAMAX 2014:** This year's Joint/Combined operational exercise focused on the defense of the Panama Canal designated ARSOUTH as HQ, Multi-National Forces-South with a total of 380 participants (65 participants coming from 17 Partner Nations). ARSOUTH also hosted the CFLCC with Brazil as the lead country which included 91 participants with 61 of them coming from 12 partner nations (PNs). In addition, ARSOUTH participated in a bilateral exercise with the Government of Panama called PANAMAX – Alpha. Forty U.S. personnel worked with the Panamanians coordinating U.S. forces assistance during a simulated national disaster.

### **U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (COMUSNAVSO) Headquarters: Mayport, Florida**

- U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/ U.S. FOURTH Fleet (USNAVSO/FOURTHFLT) employs maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations in order to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships that foster regional security in the USSOUTHCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR).
- **“AMERICA visits The Americas” 2014:** USS AMERICA, lead ship of a new class of amphibious ships for the U.S. Navy, completed an historic transit of the USSOUTHCOM AOR. AMERICA conducted Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) events and completed basic maritime operations while circumnavigating South America. “AMERICA Visits the Americas” served as our best Key Leader Engagement (KLE) opportunity in years, as AMERICA conducted TSC port visits to Cartagena, Colombia; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Valparaiso, Chile; and Callao, Peru. AMERICA also flew out distinguished visitors from



Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and El Salvador to visit the U.S. Navy's newest ship while she sailed in the vicinity of those three Partner Nations.

- **Southern Partnership Station (SPS):** SPS is a series of Navy/Marine Corps engagements focused on TSC, specifically Building Partner Capacity (BPC), through Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs) with partner nation militaries and civilian security forces. SPS engagements include Community Relations Projects that focus on our partnerships, shared interests, and shared values. 2014 SPS Deployments:
  - **SPS Joint High Speed Vessel 2014 (SPS JHSV 14):** USNS SPEARHEAD, lead ship of a new class of ships for the U.S. Navy, built partner capacity while conducting TSC engagements through the use of Adaptive Force Packages (AFPs) ashore in Belize, Guatemala, Colombia, and Honduras. At sea, SPEARHEAD conducted Detection and Monitoring (D&M) Operations at sea in support of Operation MARTILLO. The success of the Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, NCIS Agents, and Civilian Mariners making up the SPEARHEAD Team set a firm foundation for future JHSV and AFP deployments to the USSOUTHCOM AOR. Detailed planning is in progress for SPS JHSV-15.
  - **SPS Oceanographic 2014 (SPS OCEANO 14):** In support of USSOUTHCOM's priority Oceanographic, Hydrographic, and Bathymetric requirements, there were multiple engagements with Partner Nation counterparts. With the support of the Naval Oceanographic Office, survey ship USNS PATHFINDER conducted hydrographic surveys in the Western Caribbean, shore-based Fleet Survey Teams conducted hydrographic surveys in coastal waters of Peru and Honduras, and a Light Detection and Ranging aircraft and crew conducted hydrographic surveys in the coastal waters of Honduras. All SPS OCEANO surveys are conducted with the assistance of Partner Nation personnel and equipment, and the hydrographic survey and environmental assessment data is shared to enable safe and effective maritime navigation.
- **Operation MARTILLO:** Seven frigates, JHSV USNS SPEARHEAD, four fixed-wing Maritime Patrol aircraft and two Scientific Development Squadron ONE detachments deployed to support Operation MARTILLO, conducting D&M Operations under the tactical control of Joint Interagency Task Force South, targeting illicit trafficking routes in the waters off Central America.
- **PANAMAX 2014:** Colombia served as Combined Forces Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC) for the annual PANAMAX Exercise, which exercises defense of the approaches to the Panama Canal. The Colombian Navy led a multinational staff of more than 300 military and civilian personnel from 15 Partner Nations (including the U.S.), all based at USNAVSO/FOURTHFLT Headquarters in Mayport. Now in its 12th year, PANAMAX is designed to train U.S. and partner nation personnel in the execution of stability operations under the auspices of United Nations' Security Council resolutions; provide interoperability training for the participating multinational staffs; and build participating nation capability to plan and execute complex multinational operations.
- **UNITAS 2014:** UNITAS, Latin for "Unity", is the longest-running multinational maritime exercise in the world. Peru hosted the 55th iteration, featuring 14 Partner Nations (including

the U.S.), 20 ships, patrol boats, two submarines, seven helicopters, four maritime patrol aircraft, 10 fixed-wing tactical aircraft, and several thousand Sailors. The two-week exercise consisted of a multi-threat, multi-day scenario where participants operated as a multinational force working under a United Nations Security Council Resolution.

- **SIFOREX 2014:** "Silent Forces Exercise," or SIFOREX, is a biennial exercise hosted by Peru that focuses on Anti-Submarine Warfare proficiency against diesel submarines. U.S. participation included USS INGRAHAM, P-8 Poseidon and P-3 Orion Aircraft, and Commander Destroyer Squadron 40 Staff. For the first time, Naval Forces from Brazil and Colombia joined Peru and the U.S. for SIFOREX.

### **12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern) Headquarters: Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, Arizona**

- **Security Cooperation:** Air Forces Southern (AFSOUTH) led 41 security cooperation events in 11 USSOUTHCOM Partner Nations. Engagements focused on communications, aircraft operations and maintenance, ISR, air patrol operations, NVG, aerial port, maintenance, space, cyber, mishap investigation, command and control, space capabilities, close air support, legal, public affairs, flight medicine capabilities, and a Contingency Airfield Pavements Evaluation. The 571<sup>st</sup> Mobility Support Advisory Squadron completed 17 air adviser events to Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Chile, and El Salvador, training 241 partner nation military members.
- **Legal:** The AFSOUTH Staff Judge Advocate promoted Law of Armed Conflict adherence and Human Rights Law in 12 legal engagement activities with Colombia, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, and the Dominican Republic.
- **NEW HORIZONS 2014 (Belize):** AFSOUTH trained 444 US military personnel in joint/combined/interagency environments, in addition to 8 Canadian medical personnel, 25 Belize Defense Force (BDF) engineers, and over 40 BDF personnel. Personnel built five classrooms, which will accommodate 390 additional students, and one hospital addition. US and Canadian medical personnel treated over 19,000 patients during five medical, surgical, & dental events. SMEEs covered maternal & child health, public health, and biomedical equipment topics. Veterinarian services provided 500+ animal vaccinations.
- **ISR Missions:** AFSOUTH provided command and control for ISR missions in support of USSOUTHCOM priorities. AFSOUTH executed 897 ISR missions and 5,004 flight hours, resulting in over 27,841 images and nearly 13,497 minutes of video. This information assisted in numerous drug trafficking seizures in the SOUTHCOM AOR by the United States and its Partner nations in FY14. AFSOUTH is assisting critical partner nations in CD/CNT efforts and is currently working to enable Air Force operational and ISR capability in both Guatemala and Honduras. AFSOUTH continues to assist both Colombia and Peru in maintaining the strategic initiative against illegally-armed combatants who previously threatened the very existence of those nations.
- **Airlift Missions:** AFSOUTH executed 80 theater airlift missions, moving more than 3,900 passengers and 280 tons of cargo throughout USSOUTHCOM's area of responsibility.
- **Medical Deployments:** AFSOUTH International Health Specialists had 25 global health engagements with partner nations, including aerospace physiology programs in safety, human factors, and hypobaric chambers; also focusing on standards for aeromedical

evacuation/patient movement/critical care air transport teams. The AFSOUTH Command Surgeon's directorate hosted nine priority nations for an Aerospace Medicine Symposium.

**Marine Corps Forces South (MARFORSOUTH)  
Headquarters: Doral, Florida**

- **Theater Security Cooperation:** In 2014, MARFORSOUTH completed over 88 Security Cooperation events in 27 countries. This resulted in over 750 Partner Nation Marine Corps and Defense Force personnel trained. While continuing to foster long-term relationships based on mutual respect and common values, MARFORSOUTH conducted a variety of key leader engagements throughout the USSOUTHCOM area of responsibility that reinforced our commitment to partner nation leadership. To meet shared security objectives in combatting transnational organized crime, MARFORSOUTH delivered tailor-made training to our partners by establishing persistent presence security cooperation teams in Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. This was often hand-in-hand with our Colombian Marine Corps partners through the U.S./Colombia Action Plan.
- **Special purpose Marine Air/Ground Task Force – South (SPMAGTF-S):** Demonstrating the strength of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Team, MARFORSOUTH embarked a SPMAGTF aboard the USS AMERICA during its transit through the USSOUTHCOM area of responsibility. This transit featured MV-22 Ospreys that conducted basic maritime operations at sea and supported strategic-level diplomatic engagements in Colombia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and El Salvador. Marines, alongside the U.S. Navy, partnered with other Nation's Sailors and Marines in a variety of theater security cooperation events that included passage-at-sea exercises, SMEEs, tours for partner nation military and civilian personnel, community relations projects, and sporting events.
- **SPS-JHSV 14 – Marine Detachment (MARDET):** In support of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. Fourth Fleet's SPS-JHSV, MARFORSOUTH deployed 45 Marines and Sailors to Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras to provide training in small-unit tactics, and support with engineering, civil affairs, and information operations activities. The MARDET enhanced the SPS-JHSV mission by building partner capacity in riverine infantry integration for 100 partner nation forces, conducting 14 humanitarian assistance and military construction projects and 175 civil-military engagements, and promoting a nation-wide civilian reporting system in Belize.
- **TRADEWINDS Phase II Ground:** The Dominican Republic hosted this JCS-directed exercise for over 250 participants, spanning 15 countries. In partnership with the Dominican Republic Marine Corps and the Canadian Army, U.S. Marines provided logistics, casualty evacuation and medical support while leading classroom instruction and field training. Exercise participants collaborated on countering illicit traffic activity, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, small arms weapons handling, basic infantry skills, civil affairs, human rights and law enforcement tactics, techniques and procedures.
- **Partnership of the Americas (POA):** MARFORSOUTH, in conjunction with USNAVSO and regional (PNs), conducted a multinational exercise incorporating amphibious ships from Mexico and Chile and eight other partner nation naval infantries. A combined task force executed a simulated humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operation, successfully demonstrating interoperability and security cooperation while focusing on amphibious staff

planning, training and equipping for future peace support operations and humanitarian assistance missions.

- **Security Augmentation Force (SAF):** The SAF is MARFORSOUTH's designated company of Marines that reinforces Diplomatic Missions in the AOR, as required. In close coordination with Department of State, the SAF is postured in CONUS should an Ambassador decide that the local guard force is unwilling, unable, or insufficient to provide security to his mission. While there are currently no high threat posts in the AOR, the potential for a natural disaster or popular unrest are likely for many Embassy locations. MARFORSOUTH deploys its Marine Liaison Element to visit each Embassy, solidifies plans of action with the Country Team, and captures relevant information that will enable SAF in rapidly responding to crisis.

### **Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH) Headquarters: Homestead, Florida**

- **Building Partner Capacity:** In 2014, SOCSOUTH maintained small elements in Belize, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Guyana, Panama, and Peru working with key units to improve ground and maritime interdiction, civil affairs, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), and intelligence capacities. SOCSOUTH used episodic engagements – including 36 Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) events – with multiple Central American, South American, and Caribbean partners to develop U.S. forces' skills and expand partner nation capacity. In Honduras, SOCSOUTH teams and Colombian counterparts helped train over 200 Honduran National Police officers for the new Tigres special response unit as part of expanded U.S. support to Honduran authorities as they confront sources of insecurity in urban and remote rural areas. In the Andean Ridge, SOCSOUTH continued to partner with Colombia and Peru to confront narco-terrorist insurgencies whose illicit trafficking operations extend throughout the hemisphere.
- **Civil Affairs:** In 2014, 14 civil affairs teams and civil-military support elements engaged nine partner nations to reduce the vulnerability of key populations influenced by transnational organized crime or violent extremism. The teams assisted with counter-recruitment programs and, in many cases, supported partner nations in building civil affairs capacities.
- **Military Information Support Operations:** SOCSOUTH maintained military information support teams in six key partner nations supporting Colombia's Demobilization and Counter-Recruitment Programs, Guatemalan Interagency Task Forces, Panamanian security services' outreach programs in the Darien border region, the DoD Rewards Program, U.S. Government Anti-Trafficking in Persons efforts, and expanded active tip lines to under-governed spaces. These activities supported a broad range of efforts against transnational organized criminal and violent extremist organizations.
- **Intelligence Analytical Support to US Country Teams:** SOCSOUTH provides intelligence and counter-threat financing support to U.S. Country Teams focusing on terrorism, human smuggling networks, and transnational organized crime. In Belize, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras, SOCSOUTH helped develop host nation capabilities

and country team support through a number of subject matter exchanges, and mentored them in institutionalizing intelligence pipelines.

- **Building Intellectual Capital:** SOCSOUTH, in conjunction with the Colombian Joint Staff College, conducted five Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program-funded seminars in Bogota, Colombia during 2014. Approximately 70 subject-matter expert presenters from the U.S., Colombia, and other nations collaborated with over 700 participants from 18 Western Hemisphere and NATO countries
- **FUERZAS COMANDO 2014:** FUERZAS COMANDO is a USSOUTHCOM-sponsored, SOCSOUTH-executed multinational exercise encompassing a Special Operations skills competition and a Senior Leader Seminar designed to foster relations and improve cooperation throughout the theater. The 2014 edition of FUERZAS COMANDO was held at Fort Tolemaida, Colombia with 17 Partner Nations participating. Colombia placed first overall, the U.S. placed second, and third place went to El Salvador.
- **FUSED RESPONSE 2014:** SOCSOUTH executes an annual CJCS-directed exercise to validate time sensitive crisis action planning, as well as training, readiness, interoperability and capability of Special Operations Forces in support of regional crises and contingencies. FUSED RESPONSE 2014 was a Joint and Combined exercise held in Belize in conjunction with the Belize Defence Force and featured guest observers from Brazil and Canada to foster stronger relationships and greater interoperability with these fellow Western Hemisphere nations. Involving SOCSOUTH staff and personnel from each of its components, the exercise focused on improving the capabilities of the participant forces and increasing their capacity to confront common threats such as illicit traffic, organized crime, and terrorism.

### **Joint Task Force Guantanamo (JTF-GTMO) Guantanamo Bay, Cuba**

- **Safe and Humane Custody and Control:** JTF-GTMO conducted safe, humane, legal, and transparent custody and control of detainees, including those convicted by military commission. Detainees maintained family contact via mail, telephone calls and, in areas which support this service, videophone conferences coordinated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). High quality care, to include routine and urgent medical care, was provided to detainees on a 24-hour basis. General surgical care, dental care, preventative medicine, optometry and mental health services were provided, or arranged, as was targeted specialty care on a recurring basis.
- **Legal and Transparent Operations:** Assessments of detention conditions by the ICRC continued with four visits in 2014. The ICRC verifies compliance with international standards associated with law of war detention (as specified in the Geneva Conventions and other international conventions) and provides confidential advice for suggested improvements to the United States via the Joint Task Force Commander and U.S. Southern Command. Additionally, detainees are granted access to legal representation, and received more than 847 Military Commissions and 273 Habeas attorney visits in fiscal year 2014. Committed to transparency, JTF-GTMO hosted 100 media representatives from 73 domestic and international news organizations and answered hundreds of media queries during the past year. Similarly, JTF-GTMO also hosted numerous Distinguished Visitor visits, including

U.S. Senators, Representatives, Service Chiefs and senior DoD, DHS, DOJ and DoS policy makers.

- **Military Commissions:** Support for the Military Commissions process is a priority of JTF-GTMO. These proceedings are open to observation by the media, victim family members, non-governmental organizations and other visitors. In fiscal year 2014, JTF-GTMO supported 14 days of hearings which addressed pre-trial motions in the case of *U.S. v. Mohammad, et al.*, the five individuals accused of coordinating the September 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S. (referred to in the press as “the 9/11 Five”) and 16 days of hearings to address pre-trial motions in the case of *U.S. v. Al Nashiri*, the alleged USS COLE bomber. Additionally, the Court arraigned and conducted two days of hearings to address pre-trial motions in the case of *U.S. v. Al Iraqi*, an alleged Al Qaeda commander charged with law of war offenses.

### **Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) Key West, Florida**

- **In FY 2014, Joint Interagency Task Force South** contributed to the disruption of 158 metric tons of cocaine worth nearly \$3.2 billion wholesale. This represents 76 percent of the estimated cocaine flow directed towards the U.S. market. JIATF-S executed an integrated defense forward strategy that complimented the ongoing efforts at the U.S. Southwest Border. JIATF-S exercised tactical control (TACON) of U.S. and allied ships and Maritime Patrol Aircraft, along with the Forces Surveillance Support Center’s re-locatable over-the-horizon radar (ROTHR) to detect, monitor and support interdiction of illicit traffic.
- **Operation (OP) MARTILLO** led to the majority of JIATF-S interdictions. Begun in January, 2012, OP MARTILLO has resulted in the disruption of 400 metric tons of cocaine, and the seizure of \$14.4 million in bulk cash and 325 vessels and aircraft. This multi-national operation is intended to deny the Central American littoral routes to illicit traffickers. Approaching its third anniversary, OP MARTILLO is achieving its desired effects of decreased trafficking in the Western Caribbean and Eastern Pacific littorals. This has driven increased activity in the Eastern Pacific non-littoral route, which, as a result of longer distances, provides additional time for U.S., allied and Partner Nation forces to respond once an illicit trafficking event is detected.
- **Operational Results and Impact:** The bilateral Air Bridge Denial Program with Colombia contributed to a significant reduction in illicit air traffic. JIATF-S documented a 68 percent decrease in illicit air tracks from South America to Central America (primarily Honduras) and detected only two flights into Haiti. In the maritime domain, JIATF-S assessed reductions of 73 percent and 42 percent, respectively, in activity along the Western Caribbean littoral and non-littoral trafficking vectors. JIATF-S also documented a significant decrease in trafficking via “go fast” boats using the littoral routes, which is consistent with the intent of OP MARTILLO. Eastern Pacific trafficking showed similar trends, with a 48% decrease in the littorals and a 38% increase in the non-littorals, including a recent increase in the use of routes south of the Galapagos.
- **Operation UNIFIED RESOLVE**, the counter illicit trafficking operation supporting Puerto Rico, has improved interoperability between JIATF-S, Coast Guard District 7, Coast Guard Sector San Juan, and the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Air and Marine’s

Caribbean Air and Marine Branch in Counter-Illicit Trafficking operations. Real-time information sharing improved OP UNIFIED RESOLVE effectiveness against movements of cocaine to Puerto Rico from the primary Hispaniola vector. This collaborative effort enhanced the effective sharing of resources in today's austere operating environment and resulted in interdiction of 15,342 kg of cocaine destined for Puerto Rico in FY14.

- **Role of Partner Nations:** Fifty six percent of JIATF-S disruptions happened as a result of Latin American partner nation participation. Additionally, 75 of the 204 (37 percent) illicit trafficking events disrupted by JIATF-S were a direct result of the participation of our international allies. The maritime contributions by the U.K., France, the Netherlands, and Canada continued to be significant and will be critical to future operations as U.S. Navy resources continue to be limited.
- **Counter-Transnational Organized Crime/Counter Network Operations:** While focused on its primary mission of detection and monitoring of illicit traffic, JIATFS established counter network and counter threat finance analysis cells to assist law enforcement agencies in dismantling the Transnational Criminal Organizations responsible for the production and shipment of narcotics and for undermining the stability and security of the region.

### **Joint Task Force-Bravo Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras**

- **Joint Task Force-Bravo Summary:** Joint Task Force-Bravo (JTF-Bravo) is a forward-based, expeditionary joint task force operating in the USSOUTHCOM AOR. Stationed at the Honduran Soto Cano Air Base, JTF-Bravo manages the only strategic, all-weather day/night C-5 Galaxy-capable airfield in Central America. The JTF, in cooperation with our partner nations, executes operations and enables multilateral exercises in support of the USSOUTHCOM priorities of countering transnational organized crime (CTOC), humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR), and building partner capacity (BPC) to promote regional cooperation and security in Central America. JTF-Bravo supports the USSOUTHCOM Commander's objectives in Honduras by executing assigned tasks within OPERATION ESCUDO UNIDO.
- **CTOC Operations:** At the request of the Government of Belize, JTF-Bravo provided aerial reconnaissance and air movement support for Belizean Defense Forces during two separate operations to eradicate 110,000 marijuana plants, 2000 lbs of processed marijuana and 35 lbs of seeds; destroying over 56 million dollars of profits. JTF-Bravo also participated in detection and monitoring operations off the Northeastern coast of Honduras to develop and train Fuerzas Especial Naval (FEN) boat crews, familiarizing them with communication and reporting fundamentals, illicit drug trafficking tactics, and vessel interception techniques. Finally, JTF-Bravo supported the Honduran Army's destruction of 10 illicit airfields in the Gracias a Dios Department by transporting almost 400 troops and 8,500 pounds of demolitions to damage airfields used by drug trafficking organizations.
- **HA/DR Response Operations:** At the request of the President of Honduras, and directed by USSOUTHCOM, JTF-Bravo delivered over 37,000 lbs of immediate lifesaving rations to isolated locations in GaD, which were devastated by severe flooding and heavy winds associated with Tropical Storm Hanna. JTF-Bravo executed 10 medical readiness training exercises, four mobile surgical team exercises, and weekly medical training missions in local

municipalities to improve expeditionary readiness and simultaneously provide medical care to CENTAM countries. Over the past year, the JTF treated 15,886 medical patients, 2,407 dental patients, and 779 surgical patients. JTF-Bravo routinely integrates its SOUTHCOM Situational Assessment Team (S-SAT) with regional partners to participate in natural disaster exercises. The JTF deployed its small response package to El Salvador as a part of Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias 2014 (FA-HUM 14), validating tactics, techniques, and procedures for response to natural disasters in the region.

- **BPC and Supporting Partner Nations:** JTF-Bravo conducted numerous BPC and PN supporting events. This included: deploying a Downed Aircraft Recovery Team (DART) to Guatemala to assist in recovering the wreckage from a helicopter crash on 20 August 2014; providing subject matter expertise leading to revision of the Guatemalan aviation safety and standards program; and facilitating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Government of Honduras (GoH) repatriation of 85 Honduran families from the U.S. to locations throughout Honduras, by providing limited airfield support to DHS contracted aircraft. Additionally, JTF-Bravo firefighters conducted expertise exchanges with fire departments from Central America. The exchanges reinforced firefighting tactics, techniques, and procedures, enhancing the partner nation's ability to respond and control fire emergencies. The JTF also hosted 54 firefighters from the El Salvador Port Authority at Soto Cano Air Base to conduct annual firefighting certification. Finally, JTF-Bravo coordinated and hosted a Pediatric Disaster Management Course at Soto Cano Airbase, as well as the first ever Advanced Trauma Life Support course in Honduras. Both courses certified Honduran instructors in the respective specialty areas and helped improve Honduran medical capacity.