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POSTURE STATEMENT OF  
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BEFORE THE 108<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Mr. Chairman, Representative Skelton, Members of the Committee, it is a pleasure to appear before you today to present the United States Southern Command's current posture statement. I am honored to have the opportunity to highlight the important contributions the men and women of our command are making to the War on Terrorism. These Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, members of the Coast Guard, and our civilians are working in virtually every nation in the region to promote U.S. national security interests. Their work has done much to preserve stability and strengthen relationships with our allies.

Since taking command seven months ago, I have traveled extensively throughout the region and have witnessed the mounting challenges facing regional leaders and their people. The expectations derived from popular elections and free market reforms, seemingly so achievable at the close of the last century, are not being realized at the dawn of this one. Economic stagnation, endemic corruption, and unprecedented challenges to sovereignty by international terrorists, narcoterrorists, and drugs, arms, and human trafficking organizations threaten many of the hemisphere's fledgling democracies. Without sustained international support, some of these democracies could collapse, signaling the return of authoritarian regimes that respect neither human rights nor democratic principles. Today, I will outline the United States Southern Command's priorities in the hemisphere and the impact of what we do, or fail to do, on our own national security. The strategic importance of the hemisphere, the War on Terrorism, and our interests in Colombia remain central.

## **Importance of the Region**

The nations of our hemisphere are largely at peace with each other and have foresworn the development of weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the regional nuclear non-proliferation Treaty of Tlatelolco, is one of the most successful in history. Military spending on a per capita basis is lower in Latin America than anywhere else in the world. There are many cultural, economic, and political reasons to suggest that U.S. – Latin relationships should be increasingly important, yet world events keep U.S. security policy focused appropriately in other directions.

The region is the number one source of new Americans as more than 34 million residents in the U.S. are of Latin origin. Latin Americans are the largest and fastest growing minority group in the country and by 2050 are projected to comprise one quarter of the U.S. population. Their growing numbers are having a profound influence on our society and culture.

Our economic and strategic ties to Latin America and the Caribbean have never been stronger. The region provides over 31 percent of our imported oil, more than all Middle Eastern countries combined. The volatility of the Middle East makes the availability of oil supplies from Latin America and the Caribbean all the more critical. The U.S. conducts more than 360 billion dollars of annual trade with Latin America and the Caribbean, nearly as much as with the entire European Community. By the year 2010, trade with Latin America is expected to exceed that with the European Economic Community and Japan combined. This exchange translates into millions of American jobs and businesses linked to this region. As our recently negotiated Free Trade Agreement with Chile shows, these links will only grow as we progress toward the

president's vision of a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. Latin America is also critical to the global environment as the Amazon Basin produces 20 percent of the world's freshwater runoff and 25 percent of the world's oxygen. Also, 25 percent of United States pharmaceuticals are derived from sources in this same area.

During the past twenty-five years, Latin American and Caribbean nations have emerged from limited democracies and dictatorial regimes to democracies governed by elected civilian leaders that have increased respect human rights and control their military forces. This transformation is in no small measure a result of Southern Command's ongoing engagement and security cooperation activities. Such activities now include military operations in support of the War on Terrorism; counterdrug operations; military training and exercises; and professionalization of the region's militaries emphasizing the role of the military in a democratic society, respect for human rights, and the protection of civil liberties.

The true test of a nation's democracy and military professionalism, however, is how well that nation endures crisis. Many Latin American and Caribbean nations are currently experiencing political, economic, and social crises, and never before have their militaries demonstrated such restraint and support for their elected civilian leadership.

While much is going right in the region, there still is much that is discouraging. Millions of Latin Americans remain mired in poverty, living in urban slums or neglected rural areas with crumbling infrastructure, inadequate sanitation, little access to proper health care, and perhaps most tragically, minimal educational opportunities for their children. Some telling statistics illustrate the magnitude of the economic crisis now facing the region. According to the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin

America and Caribbean (ECLAC), 214 million people in the region, 44 percent of the population, live below the poverty level. Seven million people were added to the ranks of the poor in 2002, and 20 percent of the region's population is unable to provide for even their most basic food needs. Developmental assistance and international investment are inhibited by the lack of security in the region. These figures illustrate in very real terms the enormous challenges faced by our democratic allies in the region.

In recent years, economic desperation and volatile social environments in the hemisphere have set the conditions for the proliferation of international terrorism, narcoterrorism, illegal drugs, and arms trafficking. This is the crux of my concern and my responsibility. Unless and until Latin American and Caribbean governments can provide both security and stability and a reasonable opportunity for positive change in the lives of their citizens, these activities will continue to fester and grow and the foundations of democracy could crumble under the weight of these transnational threats.

## **Threats**

### **Terrorism in the Region**

The War on Terrorism is our number one priority. The events of September 11, 2001 provided a cruel and graphic illustration of the evils of terrorists and their ability to attack at a time and place of their choosing. The recent El Nogal nightclub bombing in Bogotá, Colombia, in which at least 35 people were killed and 173 wounded is just one example of the incessant terrorist attacks in that country. Last year's bombing outside the U.S. Embassy in Peru by the Shining Path is an indication that terrorist groups in the region are deliberately targeting U.S. citizens and interests. Economic deprivation,

political instability, rampant corruption, drug trafficking, and paralyzed judicial systems are breeding grounds for terrorists and coupled with Latin America's proximity to the U.S, increase our vulnerability to attack from the southern approaches to our homeland.

To complement Homeland Security efforts and seal the seams through which terrorists infiltrate, we must take comprehensive measures in our region to combat international terrorism. To effectively prosecute the War on Terrorism, we must have the authority to use our assets and subordinate commands to assist partner nations interdict those illicit activities that support terrorists throughout our area of responsibility. To strengthen capabilities, build coalitions, and ensure our allies can effectively defeat terrorist activities within their borders, we must continue to provide partner nation security forces with equipment and continue to train with them in bilateral and multilateral exercises. Promoting security and effective border defense in every nation of our area of responsibility denies terrorists operating locations, support structures, freedom of movement, and the financial underpinnings from drug trafficking for their destructive activities.

International terrorists and narcoterrorists, fueled by drug and arms traffickers, menace our region. While the primary front in the War on Terrorism currently lies elsewhere, Southern Command plays an important supporting role. Radical Islamic Groups operating out of the region use the profits from drug, human, and arms trafficking, false documentation, and other illicit activities in our hemisphere to fund their worldwide operations. The narcoterrorist organizations operating primarily out of Colombia are spreading their reach throughout the region, wreaking havoc, and

destabilizing legitimate governments. It is these organizational networks that remain our focus.

Middle Eastern based terrorist groups to include Hamas, Hizballah and Islamiyya al Gammat have networks and support structures throughout the region. These cells, extending from South America through Central America and the Caribbean, consist not only of logistics and support personnel, but also of terrorists who have participated in attacks in the Middle East. Radical Islamic supporters have long gathered in areas such as the Tri-border region between Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina, known for its deep links to a full range of transnational criminal activities. Similarly, we continue to be concerned by possible activities of radical Islamic groups on Margarita Island in Venezuela and Maicao, Colombia. Precise estimates of the amount of money diverted to from the region to radical Islamic groups are difficult to determine due to the illicit nature of the activity, however, the figures are likely in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

In the Tri-border area, a raid in the fall of 2001, on the business of a local Hizballah leader revealed terrorist training videos and audiotapes extolling the virtues of Jihad. He admitted having ties to businesses in Miami, New York, Chile, Brazil, and Paraguay – leaving open the question of his involvement in terrorist efforts to penetrate the United States or pass money to terrorist groups.

Last year, Paraguay arrested and tried several important Islamic radicals. Hizballah financial chief, Sohbi Fayad, was convicted on charges of tax evasion and local extremist, Ali Dahrough, is awaiting trial. Paraguay awaits the extradition of Hizballah Tri-border chief, Assad Barakat, from Brazil to face similar charges. These actions

against convicted and alleged terrorists, and those who support them, produce important disruptions of terrorists' networks.

Similar efforts are needed throughout the region to neutralize the Islamic radical structure while upholding the rights of law-abiding Muslims. Building coalitions, training, equipping forces, and improving capabilities will enable allies to significantly reduce their ungoverned spaces and gain greater control of their borders. These efforts produce skills, which are tested in U.S. sponsored multilateral exercises that promote security, improve effective border control, deny terrorists safe havens, and restrict their ability to operate.

Narcoterrorism is most pervasive in Colombia where citizens suffer daily from murder, bombings, kidnappings, and lawlessness. However, narcoterrorism is spreading increasingly throughout the region. Narcoterrorist groups are involved in kidnappings in Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador and Paraguay. They smuggle weapons and drugs in Brazil, Suriname, Guyana, Mexico, and Peru, are making inroads in Bolivia, and use the same routes and infrastructure for drugs, arms, illegal aliens and other illicit activities. The narcoterrorists are very well financed by their involvement in every aspect of drug cultivation and production, kidnapping, and extortion. These drug-fueled terrorist groups with their ideologically appealing names -- the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or FARC, the National Liberation Army or ELN, and the United Defense Forces or AUC -- directly attack the legitimate authority of the Colombian government. Ideology is no longer the moving force it once was for these organizations. Today, they are motivated by money, and power, and protecting, and sustaining themselves through drug trafficking and terror. The arrest last year in Houston, Texas of an AUC operative arranging an



exchange of \$25 million worth of drugs for arms is a clear indication of the symbiotic relationship among terrorists, drugs, and arms traffickers. The re-emergence of the Shining Path in Peru is being fueled by their involvement in the drug trade.

Narcoterrorism also negatively impacts the environment. Over four million hectares of rain forest have been destroyed in order to plant coca. Forty eight thousand metric tons of precursor chemicals used in coca production per year, are dumped into the environment. Terrorist pipeline attacks have spilled three million gallons of oil, the equivalent of twelve Exxon Valdez'.

### **Drug Trafficking**

Underlying all of this is the illegal drug industry – a scourge that constantly threatens the sovereignty, stability, and rule of law in Latin America and the Caribbean. Drug traffickers generate violence, foster crime, fuel gangs, and corrupt public institutions. The Drug Enforcement Administration believes that a substantial number of foreign terrorist organizations are trafficking in large amounts of narcotics – six of these organizations are operating in this hemisphere. In addition to all three of the Colombian terrorist groups, the Shining Path, Jama'at Al Musilmeen, and Hizballah generate revenues through the drug trafficking business.

According to the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), over 19,000 Americans die annually from drug-induced causes. This constitutes, in my mind, a weapon of mass destruction. If we define national security as the safety and well being of our citizenry, illegal drugs must be considered a major national security concern.

Narcotrafficking not only threatens the security of the United States, but also the survival of democratic allies in the region through unabated violence, terror, and

corruption, while forcing these countries to devote precious resources to address these problems. Additionally, as traffickers exchange drugs for arms and services in the transit countries, transit nations become drug consumers as well. Brazil provides an illustration of how such an evolution can occur; it is now the second largest consumer of cocaine in the world behind the United States. While partner nations are willing to work with us to develop regional approaches to counter the production and trafficking of illegal drugs, effective and sustainable counterdrug operations severely test the capabilities of their thinly stretched security forces.

### **Arms Trafficking**

A nearly unchecked flow of illegal arms throughout the region poses another serious threat to the security of several nations and exacerbates terrorist violence throughout the region. Many of these arms are leftover from the region's civil wars, while others are from former Soviet bloc countries or even purchased legally in the United States. They are then shipped through the region's porous borders destined to the terrorist organizations in Colombia or gangs elsewhere, often in exchange for drugs. Arms traffickers use a variety of land, maritime, and air routes that often mirror drug and human trafficking routes.

## **Regional Assessments**

### **Andean Region**

Colombians suffer daily from a level of violence and terror practically unimaginable to us. In this war-torn country, a decades-old conflict waged by narcoterrorists and fueled by illicit drug money continues unabated, claiming thousands of lives. More than 1.5 million Colombians have been displaced from their homes by

war, terror, and violence. Last year there were more terrorist attacks in Colombia -- an average of four per day -- than in all other nations of the world combined. Colombia has the highest homicide rate in the world. Last year more than 28,000 Colombians were murdered -- 13 times the U.S. rate -- making homicide the most likely cause of death. More than 2,900 Colombians were kidnapped, also the highest rate in the world. Violence has become so endemic that a Colombian company now specializes in bulletproof vests for children.

Many familiar with Colombia's conflict romantically describe the illegal groups as "revolutionaries," "guerrillas," or "rebels." These terms are inaccurate and out of date. The FARC, ELN, and AUC, directly challenge the legitimate authority of the Colombian Government, yet offer no alternative form of government. Simply put, these are narcoterrorists who profit at the expense of Colombia and its people.

All three of these groups target elected government officials and the civilian population with their brutal attacks. International human rights groups have publicly denounced the massacres, assassinations, political kidnappings, forced displacements, and forced recruitment of minors by all three groups. Human rights groups have also denounced the FARC's use of illegal weapons to attack protected sites and civilian institutions such as the May 2002 battle between the FARC and AUC, in which a FARC mortar fell attack on a church in Bojayá, killing more than 100 people, many of them children. The FARC's latest innovation of forcing kidnapped individuals to drive bomb-laden cars on suicide missions represents yet another step in the downward spiral toward the terrorists' total disregard for the sanctity of human life. Attempting to protect

Colombians from this lawlessness is a paralyzed judicial system in which 97 percent of crimes go unpunished and three million cases remain backlogged.

In the face of these enormous challenges, President Álvaro Uribe is vigorously proceeding with changes to reform the nation's political and legal systems, promote socio-economic development, protect human rights, provide help to displaced persons, enlarge and professionalize the security forces, and combat narcoterrorism. I have traveled to Colombia nine times and am impressed by President Uribe and his strong and principled team's determination to defeat the forces that are ripping his country apart.

President Uribe's initiatives are solidly supported by internal control and legislative measures designed to hold military members responsible for their own actions. Education and training initiatives, including human rights training implemented by the Colombian Ministry of Defense, have produced some of the best-trained and most professional military personnel in Colombia's history. Allegations of human rights violations by the military have dropped to less than two percent of all allegations, and today the Colombian military is one of the most respected organizations in the nation.

Colombia remains the world's leading producer of cocaine and accounts for 90 percent of the U.S. supply. Furthermore, we are seeing a surge in poppy cultivation and heroin production in Colombia. While Colombia's heroin production is a modest eight metric tons per year, virtually all of it is smuggled into the U.S.

Although it has the political will to fight drug traffickers, Ecuador remains a significant transshipment country for illicit drugs and is the country most vulnerable to spillover from Colombia. Economic limitations and security concerns hamper Ecuador's ability to strengthen border control operations. Ecuador is host to one of the Southern

Command's Forward Operating Locations (FOL) in Manta. The FOL has proven to be an effective launch site and critical element in our source zone counterdrug operations. This FOL provides coverage in the eastern Pacific where we have seen the greatest increase in drug smuggling activity. Runway improvement, construction of living quarters, and maintenance facility projects were completed in 2002. Continued infrastructure improvement will ensure the airfield meets U.S. operations and safety standards. Manta's substantial contributions to counterdrug efforts will become even more valuable with the resumption of the Air Bridge Denial Program in Colombia. The effectiveness of the Air Bridge Denial Program is unquestionable. The incorporation of additional safety measures will facilitate the resumption of this program, which will improve our ability to assist Colombia in its efforts to interdict the flow of illegal drugs.

Venezuela continues to deteriorate with its declining per capita income, financial crisis, increased instability, violence, and crime. Despite this political and societal crisis, the U.S.-Venezuelan military contacts continue with Venezuelan military students attending U.S. schools. We have a longstanding institutional relationship with the Venezuelan military and will continue to pursue common security concerns, as long as the military remains within its constitutional authority.

### **Caribbean**

In the Caribbean the primary challenge comes from narcotrafficking and the corruption that accompanies it. With the exception of Haiti, democratic institutions remain relatively stable but the police and security forces are often overwhelmed or outgunned by the resources of drug traffickers and others engaging in illicit activity. The significant economic slowdown in the Caribbean provides a fertile environment for the

corruption of government and security personnel as well as the proliferation of drug trafficking and other illicit activities. To meet these challenges regional governments are attempting to focus on cooperative efforts such as the Regional Security System (RSS) and CARICOM. There is a growing understanding among Caribbean leaders that leveraging each other's limited resources is the only way to deal with the threats they face. Our efforts are focused on supporting these cooperative approaches.

Haiti stands out in the area of responsibility for its total political and economic paralysis. The government has refused to implement both the economic and political reforms essential for garnering vital support from the international community. Without fundamental changes in both the political and economic sphere, Haiti will continue to stagnate.

A key element of our efforts in the Caribbean is the uniquely focused Tradewinds exercise. Conducted annually, Tradewinds exercise objectives focus on combating transnational threats, counter drug operations, and disaster preparedness. This year's exercise will consist of two phases hosted respectively by Jamaica and Barbados.

### **Central America**

We are at a unique point in time in Central America, with most of the region's political and military leaders dedicated to overcoming historical border differences and tensions in order to pursue regional economic and military integration. Southern Command has a long history of providing security cooperation to Central American nations with a regional focus on disaster response, humanitarian and civic assistance, demining, peacekeeping, and counterdrug operations. Arms trafficking, originating with arms left over from the civil wars of the 1980s not only threaten this region but flow

southward to Colombia. This region is also a primary avenue for illegal migrants and drugs entering the United States. Especially troublesome is the situation in Guatemala. The administration has proven to be an unreliable partner in countering drug trafficking and according to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, there were more than 100 attacks against human rights workers in Guatemala last year.

Central America is therefore key to our counterdrug and counter terrorist efforts, which include regional operations to strengthen capabilities and foster cooperation within nations of the region. We are working more closely with the Organization of Central American Armed Forces (CFAC) to promote military integration and cooperation in maintaining regional security. El Salvador provides Southern Command the use of Comalapa Airport as a Forward Operating Location for counterdrug coverage throughout Central America, the eastern Pacific, and the western Caribbean. Joint Task Force Bravo in Honduras continues to provide a logistical support base to the critical humanitarian missions of the region, as well as counterdrug operations through support of Central Skies exercises.

### **Southern Cone**

Military to military engagement in the Southern Cone remains strong. Argentina remains in the grip of economic crisis. Recent estimates indicate that 19 million, or 53 percent of Argentines are living below the poverty line. In the midst of this crisis, the Argentine military remains a strong partner for the U.S. in the region and has carved out a useful role in U.N. peacekeeping operations and support for the War on Terrorism. Argentine military leaders strongly support democracy and the constitution and serve as a voice of restraint and respect for the democratic process. Southern Command continues

its military-to-military contact program with the Argentinean Armed Forces and expects this sustained cooperation will continue in the future.

Crime in Brazil, especially urban gang violence, remains a serious problem, and President “Lula” da Silva faces challenges from illicit drug and arms traffickers. Thus far, cooperation with the new Brazilian administration and the Brazilian military continues seamlessly.

Despite regional economic difficulties, Chile’s economy remains on firm footing and offers appreciated stability in the Southern Cone. Transparency International rates Chile as one of the least corrupt nations in the world. The United States has recognized this by concluding a Free Trade Agreement with Chile, the first nation in the region after Mexico. We look forward to a growing and cooperative relationship with Chile and its armed forces.

### **War on Terrorism**

As mentioned earlier, terrorists throughout the region bomb, murder, kidnap, traffic drugs, and smuggle arms among other illicit activities. Southern Command trains, equips and builds allied nation capabilities to confront terrorists, control borders, deny safe havens, and prevent terrorists from operating with impunity. Interagency cooperation, improving Colombian military capabilities, conducting detention operations, the use of expanded authority, and security cooperation are among the tools we employ. With the inextricable link between terrorists, drugs, and arms trafficking, counterdrug and arms interdiction operations are critical to our efforts. Joint Interagency Task Force – East (JIATF-E) is integral to our operations.



## **Inter Agency Cooperation**

JIATF-East began as an interagency coordinator of maritime counterdrug operations in the transit zone. Today, after merging with JIATF-S, collocating in Key West, Florida, assuming responsibility for the source zone, and adding international members to their staff, JIATF-East provides planning assistance for counterdrug operations in response to U.S. country teams throughout the region. Transit zone operations may or may not involve U.S. forces, but our forces do participate in planning operations supported by the U.S.

Responding to Secretary Rumsfeld's guidance to participate in a Joint Interagency Coordination Group, Southern Command meets monthly to focus on the War on Terrorism with representatives from the Department of Treasury, Drug Enforcement Agency, Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Defense. The Joint Interagency Coordination Group is also a venue for sharing intelligence and effectively coordinating our regional counterterrorism efforts.

## **Andean Counterdrug Initiative**

The Andean Counterdrug Initiative, a complement to Plan Colombia, concentrates on the region rather than on Colombia alone. Success in Colombia could produce a spillover into neighboring countries that may not be prepared to deal with the consequences. These countries remain transshipment points for arms, drugs, and precursor chemicals entering and exiting Colombia. While success in Colombia is essential, we cannot risk winning the battle in Colombia and losing the war in the region. The Andean Counterdrug Initiative is intended to contain the effects of spillover and, to a lesser degree, sustain the success of Plan Colombia.

## **Improving Colombia's Military Capabilities**

Southern Command assistance programs are intended to help Colombia develop the capabilities to solve their security problems and diminish the U.S in-theatre role. Military training of Colombian units that are vetted for human rights abuses is key to realizing success on the battlefield. The training of the Counter Narcotics Brigade and the establishment and training of a Commando Battalion to pursue enemy leadership have already produced results.

U.S. Special Forces have also been training Colombian Armed Forces in Arauca as part of an infrastructure security strategy to protect a portion of the 772-kilometer pipeline and other critical infrastructure points, that have been frequent targets of terrorist attacks. This training will enable Colombia to protect remote narcoterrorist influenced areas of the countryside where the pipeline is located. The oil carried by the pipeline represents annual revenues of about 500 million dollars for the Colombian Government. The loss of this revenue seriously undermines Colombia's fiscal health and the attacks create considerable environmental and ecological damage.

## **Detention Operations**

In addition to its work in Central and South America, Southern Command has directly and actively supported the War on Terrorism by establishing a terrorist detention and intelligence operations facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in January 2002. Intelligence operations at Guantanamo have provided critical information regarding terrorist organizations' leadership, planned attacks, potential attacks, and other specific information that has already thwarted terrorist activities. As Guantanamo operations

continue, we will improve intelligence exploitation, collection and dissemination, and establish more permanent facilities to provide Servicemembers a better quality of life.

We combined Joint Task Force 160 and 170 to form Joint Task Force Guantanamo, achieving unity of command and ensuring improved coordination between the intelligence collection mission and camp operations. Detainees continue to receive medical care, three meals daily that meet Muslim dietary laws, clothing, permanent shelter, showers, and humane treatment consistent with the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

### **Expanded Authority**

The Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2002 and the Fiscal Year 2003 Defense Appropriations Act included provisions to use counterdrug assets for non-counterdrug missions within these respective years. The granting of expanded authority for operations was an important recognition that it is impossible to separate the drug threat from the threat to security and stability raised by terrorist organizations such as the FARC, ELN, and AUC. Operations are more efficient and effective because the same assets are used to confront terrorists as well as drug traffickers. We can now share more intelligence with Colombia, and they can use counterdrug-funded assets in the combined campaign against terrorists and drug production and trafficking. A great example of success as a result of expanded authority is the killing of the FARC's 15<sup>th</sup> Front Commander by the Colombian military utilizing U.S. provided UH-1 helicopters flown by Colombian pilots.

## **Security Cooperation**

Southern Command's security cooperation activities expand United States influence, assure friends, and dissuade potential adversaries. The overarching goals are to promote regional security and stability through training, equipping, and developing allied security force capabilities that improve competence and professionalism while underscoring respect for human rights.

Command programs are also intended to strengthen respect for the rule of law, civilian control of the military, and support for democratic ideals. We do this not only because it is in tune with the highest values of the American people, but also because it is a strategic, operational, and tactical necessity. Security forces must enjoy the trust and confidence of their people before they can be effective. Only by respecting the law and the dignity of all the citizens they are sworn to defend, can security forces hope to gain the respect of those they protect.

We annually coordinate and direct more than 30 legal engagement activities among military counterparts, regional governments, and non-government organizations. Specific accomplishments include the creation of a legal corps, reform of military justice codes and procedures, human rights and law of war education, and the inclusion of military lawyers in the planning and execution of military operations. Nowhere are the positive results of these efforts more apparent than in Colombia where the people now hold their military in high esteem.

Complementing this training are disaster relief programs that teach militaries how to respond to their civilian authorities when disasters occur. Fuerzas Aliadas is the cornerstone of this program and will be hosted by Nicaragua this year. More than 20

nations will participate, including our regional partners, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and France.

Beyond disaster relief, New Horizons exercises provide unique and rigorous training opportunities to engineer, medical, and civil affairs units. These activities hone U.S. forces' engineering and medical skills in a challenging environment, under conditions nearly impossible to replicate in the U.S.

Last year the New Horizon exercises completed 33 engineer projects consisting of schools, medical clinics, wells, and rudimentary road construction and repair. The 59 humanitarian medical deployments treated more than 680,000 patients. During these deployments, our veterinary teams treated approximately 67,000 animals in varying livestock categories, which contributed significantly to sustaining local economic health. Bolivia, Panama, Belize, Dominican Republic, Grenada, and St. Kitts will host New Horizons exercises this year.

The annual naval exercise, UNITAS, is conducted throughout the region with significant participation by several countries. This year, Ecuador will host the UNITAS Pacific Phase. Argentina is scheduled to host UNITAS Cruise '04 Atlantic Phase in October. An amphibious bilateral exercise between the U.S. and Argentina is scheduled for September. Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru will each conduct a bi-lateral amphibious exercise with participating U.S. forces.

This year the Central American nations will host several exercises to include PEACEKEEPING OPERATION (PKO) NORTH that will focus on enhancing the peacekeeping skills and capabilities of the 22 participating nations. All the Central American countries and the majority of Caribbean nations will participate. We will also

conduct PKO SOUTH and Cabanas to strengthen the peacekeeping skills, cooperation, and capabilities of the rest of the region's military forces.

### **Requirements**

As the War on Terrorism progresses we will increasingly pursue operations of mutual interest with goals that increase interoperability with our allies. We will pool our resources to the extent possible, but we foresee additional threats to U.S. security interests that may require additional resources or the reprioritization of programmed funds, if circumstances warrant. We anticipate Guantanamo's operating tempo to increase, additional stress on our theater communications architecture, an escalation of detection and monitoring activities, and a greater need for interoperability of allied nations that will require Foreign Military Financing programs and a renewal of the expanded authorities.

### **Joint Task Force - Guantanamo**

Long-term operational requirements for JTF-Guantanamo detainee operations are necessary to enhance our effectiveness in the War on Terrorism, but as we continue to improve our mission capabilities there will be a cost associated with the progress. Since January 2002, Guantanamo has provided, and continues to provide, critical intelligence information on worldwide terrorist organizations' leadership, planned attacks, potential targets, and other critical information that can thwart subversive activities. We anticipate the arrival of additional detainees to be secured, screened, held, managed, and interrogated for both counterterrorist planning and law enforcement purposes. Manpower requirements will also increase to ensure a safe and secure facility.

## **Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4)**

My next priority deals with enhancing our C4 architecture for fixed and mobile operations throughout the region as outlined in previous testimonies. The current C4 infrastructure lacks the flexibility to execute the assigned mission due to over reliance on inadequate commercial communications systems, limited communications bandwidth, and fragmented operations and maintenance support. Consequently, Southern Command is unable to effectively and efficiently support a counterdrug mission simultaneously with another contingency operation such as anti-terrorism, noncombatant evacuation, migrant operations, disaster relief, or defense of the Panama Canal.

Since existing military systems alone are insufficient, it is my intention to transform, expand, and maintain a cost-effective, efficient, centrally managed, and robust infrastructure that supports the Theater Security Cooperation Strategy. This strategy includes counter-terrorism operations, regional engagement, crisis response, and counterdrug missions. We are partnering with the Defense Information Systems Agency and the Department of State's Diplomatic Telecommunications Service Program Office to explore commercial alternatives such as fiber optic communication links. This effort shows promise for improving C4 effectiveness throughout the region.

## **Detection and Monitoring**

We conduct varied and diverse detection and monitoring (D&M) operations that require a high state of readiness and a joint effort to link multi-intelligence collectors targeted against strategic, operational, and tactical requirements. This melding of organic and national collection resources will improve operations and fulfill the Quarterly

Defense Review Transformation requirement for continuous and persistent Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR).

Southern Command's role in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM includes the employment of national, airborne, ground, and maritime ISR assets that are targeted against regional terrorist groups and transnational support cells. Their combined products create a common operating picture of regional activity that can be shared with our allies as appropriate. Successful D&M operations contribute to allied nations' defenses against terrorism and promote regional security cooperation.

Detection and monitoring has eight major programs that are vital to our counterdrug campaign plan. These programs include Relocatable Over the Horizon Radar (ROTHR), Fleet Support Operations, Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), FOLs, JIATF-East, Joint Surveillance and Reconnaissance Operations Center (JSSROC), Hemispheric Radar System (HRS), and South Air Force Support. These programs, when sufficiently funded, will provide a formidable capability to detect and monitor illicit trafficking of arms, drugs and other illegal activities that fuel terrorist groups. Overall, this capability further provides critical information used by the U.S. and host nations to effectively counter the expansion of narcoterrorism.

### **Foreign Military Financing (FMF)**

Foreign Military Financing fosters cooperative security arrangements, and regional initiatives rely on partner nation participation. Many nations rely, in turn, on FMF to sustain the kind of readiness that effective partnering requires. Latin American and Caribbean militaries still have legitimate defense sustainment and modernization requirements. As we request more partner nation assistance in fighting terrorism and



transnational threats, FMF will be an important source of their equipping and training efforts. Regional militaries require force modernization to be interoperable. Without FMF support and adequate national funding, training, and maintenance, equipment in Latin American forces continues to deteriorate, which degrades allied military readiness, increases the cost of U.S. participation, reduces the capability of our hemispheric partners in the War on Terrorism, and makes military responses to natural disasters and humanitarian relief more difficult.

### **Expanded Authority**

As previously mentioned, operations today are more efficient and effective because the same assets are used to confront both drug traffickers and terrorists, thanks to the expanded authority. The authority also permits greater intelligence sharing and allows allied nations to use U.S. counterdrug funded equipment for non-counterdrug missions. Expanded Authority is essential to the command's ability to deal with both narco-traffickers and terrorists. The authorities granted in Fiscal Year 02 and Fiscal Year 03 were one-year programs confined to Colombia. Because of the successes we have experienced in both intelligence sharing and improving operations, we are requesting Expanded Authority for the entire area of responsibility in Fiscal Year 04.

### **Conclusion**

Without question, democracy has gained a foothold in Latin America. The question is how long will it prevail? Until ordinary citizens benefit from free market reforms and reduced corruption and until terrorists can no longer operate with relative impunity, that question will linger. For most nations in our area of responsibility, the threats come from within. It will be up to those nations to demonstrate their ability to

govern; to provide law and order, implement judicial reform, and develop a profound respect for human rights. These fundamentals provide the stable and secure environment necessary for economic growth – growth that will improve the quality of life for ordinary citizens. Southern Command will play a crucial role in developing the kinds of security forces that help provide the ability to govern throughout the region, and particularly in Colombia.

We are at a critical time in Colombia's history. The elected government of President Uribe enjoys unparalleled approval ratings of about 70 percent. Under his leadership, the Army is helping to regain control of urban neighborhoods long since held by narcoterrorists. Colombia's citizens are taking a more active role in their nation's defense, providing actionable intelligence to the Colombian Armed Forces. President Uribe has raised taxes to provide greater resources to his nation's security forces. There is a renewed sense of momentum, commitment, and hope as the Colombian people struggle to save their country, but there is also a small window of opportunity beyond which public opinion and support will wane without significant progress.

I would like to close by leaving the committee with this thought. I am proud to say we do a great deal to further our nation's interests in this hemisphere with very few resources and a modest presence. Beyond Colombia, we are at a critical point where the progress in eliminating conflict, reducing tension, and establishing democracy throughout the region could be at risk if we are not steadfast in our efforts. While our attention is drawn to another region of the world, we must keep in mind that we live in this hemisphere, and its continued progress as a region of democracy and prosperity is of paramount importance to our national security.

I would like to thank the Chairman and the Members of the committee for this great opportunity and for the tremendous support you have provided this command. I can assure you that the men and women of the United States Southern Command appreciate all that you do for them as they perform their noble work for our great country.