



The Chairman and Secretary of Defense meeting with Guatemalan Minister of Defense at the Pentagon

Fleet Combat Camera Group, Pacific (Chad J. McNeeley)

## A Word from the Chairman

**A**s I visit U.S. military personnel around the world, I feel a profound sense of gratitude for the extraordinary performance of our troops. Their hard work, perseverance, and courage—in the midst of difficult hardships—will ensure success in the war on terror. Today, our Service members seek to enhance the security of the people of Afghanistan and Iraq and to facilitate a path toward economic development and democratic reform. These efforts are of preeminent importance to the Nation and the world.

While operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility are of great significance, we must remain vigilant of our key interests elsewhere on the globe. Latin America, for instance, has perhaps receded

in the national consciousness in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, even though the region has grown steadily in its economic importance. This issue of *Joint Force Quarterly* examines topics of importance to the Western Hemisphere, providing an opportunity to assess our relations with Latin America. The issue also addresses Department of Defense (DOD) transformation.

In the early 1990s, Latin America was filled with optimism following the region's near-total return to democratic rule. Cuba remained as the lone totalitarian holdout. The Cold War that fueled and intensified many internal conflicts in the region was over. Insurgents in only Colombia and Peru refused to lay down their arms.

Optimism toward the future was in some instances short-lived; a number of

governments fell short of fulfilling the expectations of their citizens. With this backdrop, dissatisfied voters throughout much of the region have progressively turned to leaders from the left of the political spectrum.

Despite changes in government, many nations in the Western Hemisphere, such as Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, have sustained recent gains resulting from democratization and market economic reforms. Notwithstanding areas of disagreement, these and other countries in the region have continued their longstanding cooperation with the United States. As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has indicated, the United States now enjoys good relations with governments across the political spectrum in Latin America.



**U.S. Soldier discussing security and safety with member of Salvadoran army, Operation Iraqi Freedom**

Uruguay has expressed an interest in exploring trade negotiations as well.

In November 2005, President George W. Bush joined 33 other democratically elected leaders of the Western Hemisphere at the Fourth Summit of the Americas held in Argentina. The President called on other heads of state to join him in developing “Opportunity Zones” to generate jobs and pro-business attitudes in key areas of the hemisphere. The President also made available funds to launch the “Infrastructure Facility of the Americas” initiative to promote private infrastructure investment.

### Political Dynamics

In contrast to the broad partnership we enjoy with many government leaders in Latin America, President Hugo Chavez in Venezuela has openly expressed hostility to U.S. influence in the region. President Chavez has developed close ties with Fidel Castro and has made overtures to Iran. His stated ideological affinity with narco-terrorists in neighboring Colombia has also been a source of concern.

A recent Department of State report indicates that, under President Chavez, Venezuela has experienced “politicization of the judiciary, restrictions on the media, and harassment of the political opposition.”<sup>1</sup> The report concludes that “civil society and independent media are under siege, fundamental freedoms of expression, association, and assembly are undermined.” These developments, combined with Venezuela’s arms build-up and organization of civilian militias, place Venezuela out of step with Latin America’s march toward the maturation of democratic

### Security Issues

The Nation continues to have a robust security partnership with many countries in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility. El Salvador has been an exemplary member of the coalition in Iraq, and its soldiers have served with distinction and courage. The United States is steadfast in its support of the government and people of Colombia, as the South American nation continues a heroic struggle to defeat narco-terrorists and to establish the rule of law throughout its territory.

An area of great interest to all the Americas in regard to regional security cooperation is Haiti. Under Brazilian leadership, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and other nations in the hemisphere have military forces serving with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. Their historic efforts, combined with the contributions of other international partners, played a key role in the successful Haitian presidential elections in February.

### Economic Development

The United States has sought to cooperate with partners in Latin America on the economic front as well. The World Bank states that Latin America has led the way in the global trend to reduce protectionism. The U.S. Census Bureau indicates that last year the United States exported over \$72 billion to the region (not including Mexico), up 21.7 percent in the last 5 years. Many countries in the region are experiencing strong economic growth, while others continue to face difficult

challenges on the path toward development and prosperity.

The United States continues to champion free trade as the best way to usher in economic expansion. The Central America Free Trade Agreement–Dominican Republic, signed August 5, 2004, created the second largest free trade zone in Latin America. Moreover, in the last several months, the United States successfully concluded bilateral free trade negotiations with Colombia and Peru. The agreements come on the heels of a similar bilateral arrangement with Chile in 2003. Colombia is already a major market for U.S. agricultural goods, and efforts are under way to conclude a free trade agreement with Ecuador.



**U.S. Ambassador to Brazil briefs Secretary of Defense on Amazon Surveillance System used to monitor environmental problems and drug trafficking**

institutions, economic development, and hemispheric cooperation.

The future of U.S. relations with the recently elected government of President Evo Morales in Bolivia is the source of much speculation, both in the international press and in foreign policy circles. President Morales attained prominence in Bolivia by advocating the interests of coca farmers and indigenous communities. As Secretary Rice has stated, our relations with Bolivia will develop as a result of the policies of the new Bolivian government. Clearly, our hope and desire are to continue the longstanding friendship and cooperation between the United States and Bolivia.

The success of democratic rule, economic development, and the avoidance of armed conflict will continue to be high priorities for the United States in the region. We must work with partners in Latin America to deny sanctuary to terrorists, narcotraffickers, and other criminal elements. These worthy goals require an effective interagency effort to leverage all instruments of national power.

### Transformation

Advancing a mindset that embraces interagency integration is a cornerstone of DOD transformation. Twenty years ago, serious institutional obstacles kept the Armed Forces from operating as a synchronized joint team. Today, in large measure due to the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986, America's military is truly a joint force, interoperable and moving toward interdependence. The post-9/11 world requires that we now find ways to forge a dynamic interagency team.

As the threats to our national interest evolve, so must the capabilities of the Armed Forces. The transformation process will ensure that we are ready to meet tomorrow's challenges.

Indeed, transformation involves more than just acquiring advanced technology. It will require that we rethink doctrine and operational concepts; adapt professional education and training; restructure organizations and business practices; improve personnel policies; and reform acquisition and budgeting processes.

Interagency collaboration is a theme throughout our National Security Strategy, Quadrennial Defense Review, National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy, Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, Security



125th Fighter Wing (Shelley Gill)



U.S. Air Force (D. Myles Cullen)

Cooperation Guidance, and Unified Command Plan. While there is broad recognition of the importance of forging a true interagency partnership, we must continue the difficult work of making it a reality.

The creation of the National Counterterrorism Center is a tremendous step forward in interagency collaboration for the war of terror, and DOD is a strong supporter of this newly formed center. We can and must do more to enhance interagency effectiveness.

Success in the war on terror is beyond attainment by military and law enforcement means alone. We must work with other countries to address conditions that allow terrorist ideology to take hold. Hope is the most potent antidote for the hate, intolerance, and cruelty of our enemy. By championing the core values of our great republic, we can help bring the light of hope to the darkest corners of the world. Today, the brave men and women of the Armed Forces, combined with our interagency and international partners, are doing just that.

I am both honored and humbled to serve as Chairman during this challenging period in the Nation's history. Among the close-knit U.S. military communities around the world, these are times of sacrifice, difficult separations, and painful loss. But there can be no question that we will prevail and that a better future lies within our grasp. We have every reason to be proud of the service and accomplishments of the U.S. military. **JFQ**

PETER PACE  
General, United States Marine Corps  
Chairman,  
Joint Chiefs of Staff



Fleet Combat Camera Group, Atlantic (David P. Coleman)



U.S. Air Force (Rick Stozaj)

### Captions from above (left to right)

Airman briefing liaison officers from Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, and Uruguay on the F-15 at Jacksonville, Florida

The Chairman talking to Pakistani general while visiting Muzaffarabad Airport in Pakistan

U.S. Army MP talking with UN security forces at Camp Unity in Gonaives, Haiti, Exercise *New Horizons*

USS *Devastator* passes through the Miraflores Locks on the Pacific side of the Panama Canal, Exercise *Panamax '05*

### NOTE

<sup>1</sup> See U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2005, "Venezuela," available at <[www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61745.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61745.htm)>.