

**POSTURE STATEMENT OF
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Introduction

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished Members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss U.S. Southern Command's activities in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Before I begin, I would like to thank the Congress—and this Committee in particular—for its longstanding support to our mission and to our partners in the region. Our efforts are made possible through your help and by the hard work of our service components, Joint Task Forces, and our Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen, civilians, and contractors.

In my short time in command, I have dedicated myself to expanding my knowledge of U.S. Southern Command's area of responsibility (AOR). The Latin America and Caribbean of today is far different than it was a quarter of a century ago.¹ The region is home to a substantial middle class that actively seeks more responsive and transparent governments able to deliver promised services. There is little risk of armed conflict between neighboring states; border disputes are settled in diplomatic channels, not on battlefields. Governments are more democratic and respectful of human rights than at any point in the region's history. Militaries are more capable, professional, and among their countries' most trusted institutions.² These militaries are also some of our most reliable partners, committed to working with us and with one another to confront threats to hemispheric security.

Despite these improvements, the region still faces persistent, unresolved challenges. The slowing Chinese economy and falling global commodity prices are causing economic downturns across Latin America. Violent crime, widespread poverty, and fragile institutions continue to

¹ Secretary of State John Kerry, Remarks at the 45th Annual Washington Conference of the Council of the Americas. April 21, 2015.

² Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP): 2014 *AmericasBarometer*, Vanderbilt University.

plague many nations. Pervasive corruption, inequality, chronic unemployment, deteriorating citizen safety, and limited economic opportunity drive migration, propel young men and women to join violent gangs, or set the conditions for instability and potential violent radicalization. Lack of state presence, ineffective governance, and weak rule of law provide fertile ground for the drug trade and the spread of powerful criminal networks. Public frustration with slow economic growth, social exclusion, and endemic government corruption fuels social protests and unrest. In certain countries there is a troubling trend toward authoritarianism: elected leaders that shun democratic standards, abuse human rights, muzzle the press, and suppress the opposition. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, fires, floods, and drought—as well as potential regional epidemics like the Zika virus—loom as ever-present dangers.

The good news is none of these challenges is insurmountable, but *all* warrant continued engagement. Because no nation in the region poses a direct, conventional military threat to the United States, Latin America tends to rank fairly low on force allocation priorities. This is understandable—but often requires what is, in my view, an unfortunate trade-off. Our attention to other parts of the world should not come at the expense of the significant gains made in our own hemisphere. Over the last twenty years, prudent engagement by the U.S. military has supported democratic governance and economic development, nurtured and developed professional defense forces, and encouraged greater security collaboration. Along with the State Department and other interagency partners, we have worked hard to realize a vision of the Americas where countries share responsibilities, cooperate as equals, and advance common interests and values.

Now, as criminal networks threaten the integrity of institutions and jeopardize citizen security, we must help countries build on the considerable progress achieved to date and continue working towards our shared priorities. As competitors seek to challenge our aim of being the region's security partner of choice, we must redouble our commitments and reinvigorate our partnerships. As the world works to contain the spread of violent extremism and confront challenges to a rules-based international order, we must seek new ways to strengthen our network of allies and partners. As we face an increasingly complex, interconnected security environment, we must look beyond borders and boundaries and seek not just whole-of-government, but whole-of-*hemisphere* solutions to our shared challenges. Mr. Chairman, positive and persistent U.S. engagement remains essential to advancing a Western Hemisphere that is prosperous, stable, and secure.³ With the continued support of the Congress and in full collaboration with our interagency and regional partners, U.S. Southern Command will continue working towards that goal.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Members: I am humbled and honored to be part of the great team at U.S. Southern Command, and I look forward to working with you and your staffs in the coming years. I intend to focus my efforts in four key areas: ensuring we remain the premier security partner of choice in this hemisphere; deepening our interagency collaboration to generate heightened trust; becoming the innovation platform for the Department of Defense, interagency, and international partners; and enabling the critical transregional operations and initiatives of our sister Combatant Commands and interagency partners. We will continue to pursue an era of inclusive engagement with this vital part of the world and advance our

³ The White House, *National Security Strategy*. February 2015.

“Partnership for the Americas.”

Security Environment

The security environment in Latin America and the Caribbean is characterized by complex, diverse, and non-traditional challenges to U.S. interests. The principal challenge remains *transnational criminal networks*, which are well-organized, well-financed, well-armed, and technologically advanced. These networks are efficient, adaptive, innovative, and exceptionally ruthless. They will transport *anything or anyone*—cocaine, heroin, weapons, people, even wildlife—if they believe the potential profit is greater than the potential risk. Enormous profits allow criminal networks to acquire capabilities that rival or even exceed those of the states that battle them, including high-powered rifles and machine guns, transport planes, and long-range submersibles. In response to these extraordinary circumstances, democratic governments have deployed their militaries to support overwhelmed police forces.

The overarching threat to our national security, however, is not just the range of illicit commodities that are trafficked, but instead the destabilizing operations, corruptive influence, and global reach of many of these networks,

some of which smuggle ‘special interest aliens’ (SIAs). Although the vast majority of SIAs are seeking economic opportunity, such

as some from Iran, or are refugees fleeing war, like some from Syria, there is a risk that violent extremist organizations could exploit established networks, established smuggling routes, or other regional vulnerabilities—including lax immigration and border security, corrupt government officials, or the enabling capabilities of criminal organizations—to enter and move through the region undetected.

Spotlight: Syrian SIAs in the AOR

- *In 2015, partner nation officials detained six groups of Syrians in Honduras, St. Maarten, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Paraguay.*
- *In each case, access to fraudulent or stolen documents and corrupt law enforcement officials facilitated SIA movement through numerous countries in the AOR.*

Let me talk for a moment on that last vulnerability. Whether Sunni or Shi'a extremists would wittingly collaborate with criminal groups to accomplish their goals is up for debate. Many people are quick to dismiss the possibility of these groups working together in this part of the world. They believe the absence of evidence of a relationship is evidence of its absence. Mr. Chairman, we at U.S. Southern Command can't be that certain. We know that extremist groups are ideologically-driven and want to harm the United States. We know that criminal organizations are profit-driven and will engage in illicit activities that increase their bottom line. We also know that both operate in the same dark underworld of illicit finance, fraudulent documents, and weapons trafficking and that violent extremist organizations have availed themselves of some of these criminally-provided services. What U.S. Southern Command lacks is the intelligence necessary to identify, monitor, and fully illuminate and understand these networks and the resources necessary to significantly disrupt, degrade and ideally dismantle them.

Like our counterparts in the U.S. Government and the Congress, we are also deeply concerned by the 'triple threat' posed by *foreign terrorist fighters*: they strengthen transnational terrorist groups, incite others back home to conduct attacks, and can ultimately return to launch acts of terror.⁴ ISIL's strategic communication efforts have resonated around the world, including in parts of Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 2013, we have seen a small number of individuals and their families leaving the region to join ISIL in Syria or Iraq. The appeal of violent extremist ideology to some Caribbean citizens and their subsequent travel to Iraq and Syria remains a concern; not just for us, but for our friends and partners across the region.

⁴ House Committee on Homeland Security, *Final Report of the Task Force on Combating Terrorism and the Foreign Fighter Threat*. September 2015.

As in other parts of the world, the potential return of violent extremists is a threat. These individuals could be well positioned to spread ISIL's poisonous ideology and potentially inspire or execute acts of terror against U.S. or partner nation interests. Many partner nations are unable to monitor the potential return of foreign fighters and often lack robust counterterrorism legislation and capabilities to confront this threat. There is a significant and growing consensus—which I have personally observed during conversations with security chiefs across the region—about the threat of radicalization to violence in this hemisphere; San Bernardino and Paris are clear examples and dramatic wake-up calls that radicalization can happen anywhere. We will work with our partners to enhance support to the global coalition to counter ISIL, other transregional terrorist threats, and violent extremist organizations.

As a state sponsor of terrorism, *Iran's* nefarious involvement in the Western Hemisphere also remains a matter for concern. While Iranian engagement has waned in recent years, President Rouhani recently indicated that Tehran intends to increase economic, scientific, and cultural ties with Latin America though he has made this same pledge several times since his election in 2013. Additionally, *Lebanese Hezbollah* maintains an extensive regional network of supporters and sympathizers, some of whom are involved in trade-based money laundering and other illicit activities to generate revenue, a portion of which goes to support the parent organization in the Middle East. Lebanese Hezbollah also maintains an infrastructure with the capability to conduct or support terrorist attacks. As with every aspect of our counterterrorism efforts, the U.S. Government remains vigilant against these threats, working closely with our partners to protect the southern approaches to the United States.

Apart from what I have already discussed, several other trends impact *regional stability*. In El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, many of the conditions that caused the 2014 migration

crisis of unaccompanied children—high homicide rates, chronic poverty, and lack of economic opportunity—remain the same or are worsening, leading the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to call for action to respond to the ‘looming refugee crisis’ in the region.⁵ While apprehensions on our border are down, Mexico’s apprehensions at its southern border have increased dramatically over the past three years.⁶ Sustainable development and security gains *must* continue apace if the sub-region is to address its long-standing challenges. To this end, I would like to thank the Congress for providing funding to our State Department and USAID partners as part of the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, a five-year initiative that will help State Department and USAID address the root causes of migration.

Central America is still awash in weapons and street gangs such as MS-13 and M-18, both of which originated in the United States and have close, direct, and growing ties with their U.S. counterparts. As an indication of how dire the situation is in El Salvador, its Supreme Court designated these groups as terrorists by ruling they violate the fundamental rights of the population and seek to usurp state power. Gangs are targeting the police and military with homemade grenades and car bombs and terrorizing Salvadoran citizens. According to the FBI, MS-13 is now present in 42 U.S. states, with a significant presence in Houston, Long Island, Charlotte, and Washington, DC.⁷ Mr. Chairman, the simple fact is that economic and security crises in Central America reverberate almost immediately through communities across our country.

⁵ Comments made by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres on the release of The UN Refugee Agency’s report *Children on the Run: Unaccompanied Children Leaving Central America and Mexico and the Need for International Protection*. October 28, 2015.

⁶ Customs and Border Patrol apprehended 145,316 Central American migrants (including 39,970 UACs) at the US SW Border in FY 2015. From October 2014-April 2015, Mexican officials stopped nearly 93,000 Central American migrants, far exceeding the 49,800 detained in the same period 12 months earlier.

⁷National Gang Intelligence Center Assessment, November 2015.

Further south, rising crime, violence, and deteriorating economic conditions continue to plague Venezuela. Due to speculation about the potential end of U.S. immigration policies favorable to Cubans, an increasing number of Cuban migrants are traveling overland through Central America and Mexico to cross at the U.S. Southwest border, with over 30,000 arriving via this route in fiscal year 2015—in addition to more than 4,000 that arrived via traditional maritime routes through the Florida Straits. Haiti—one of the most unstable and least developed nations in the Western Hemisphere—will be especially vulnerable as the electoral crisis drags on and the United Nations stabilization mission draws to a close.

Our Colombian partners have made heroic strides battling the FARC, but a peace accord will not spell the end of their security challenges. Even if a peace accord is signed this spring, Colombia will

Spotlight: Colombia's Counter IED Capacity
The Colombian military, with our support and that of our interagency partners like JIDA, has reduced IED incidents by 21% in 2015. Casualties from IEDs are down 38% and the "found and cleared" rate for IEDs is nearly 80%.

confront other threats, including criminal networks that will gladly recruit experienced ex-FARC members and exploit the potential power vacuum generated by the FARC's demobilization. As an example, the transnational criminal network Clan Usuga is quickly becoming a significant threat to Colombian national security. The 3,000-strong group is comprised of former paramilitaries; has agents throughout Central and South America and Spain; and is expanding into Venezuela to increase its share of the drug trade. All of these issues warrant continued active U.S. engagement to ensure our partners in Central America and the Caribbean can address sources of instability and Colombia can deliver on the promise of a hard-won peace.

We must also contend with global competitors from outside our hemisphere that are strategically and purposefully operating in the Western Hemisphere. In this part of the world, *Russia's* actions are directly connected to its broader global efforts to demonstrate that Russia is

a global power capable of challenging U.S. leadership and the established rules-based international system. Russian officials' rhetoric, high-level political visits, and military-security engagements are designed to displace the United States as the partner of choice in the region. Over the past year, Russia continued to maintain a presence in Latin America, collecting information about the region and the United States. Since mid-December 2014, Moscow has deployed an oceanographic and a hydrographic research ship to Nicaragua; an intelligence collection ship to the U.S. east coast and Caribbean; and an additional oceanographic research ship to the Caribbean. This is four naval deployments to Latin America in less than twelve months, all of which involved data or intelligence collection. Russia also reached an agreement with Nicaragua for simplified port access and logistical support, and regularly broadcasts anti-American propaganda in Ecuador, Argentina, and Venezuela via Russian state-owned RT-TV, which also broadcasts to the United States, and via online news and Sputnik Mundo, which is targeted to Latin American audiences. Russia uses this media to create doubts about U.S. intentions and criticize U.S. policies.

We need to engage proactively and deepen security cooperation with our partners in the Americas. We strongly suspect that Russia's actions in the Western Hemisphere are not driven by events in this AOR, but rather are integrated into a larger, more holistic approach. This requires an equally integrated, transregional response on our part. When it comes to transregional competitors, we are closely coordinating with fellow combatant commanders to ensure we are contributing not just in our area of responsibility but across regional boundaries to ensure competitors are unable to exploit seams between our areas of responsibility.

In contrast to Russia, *China's* primary focus in the region is on trade and investment. Still, China seeks to forge security relationships as part of its strategy to increase its influence in

the region. Military engagements tend to focus on soft-power, with offers of training in Beijing, high-level visits, donations of equipment, and naval diplomacy efforts. During May - June 2015, a Chinese Naval Hydrographic Survey Ship made port calls in Brazil and Ecuador during its circumnavigation. The Chinese Navy's 20th Naval Escort Task Force made a port call in Cuba in November as part of their goodwill cruise around the world. Additionally, the Chinese hospital ship PEACE ARK visited Peru, Grenada, and Barbados in 2015 to provide medical services to local communities, marking the vessel's second visit to the region since 2011. Chinese defense firms also continue to make inroads into the Latin American arms markets through low-cost military hardware, no-strings-attached sales and financing, and offers of co-production facilities in the region. While China's competition for regional influence does not pose a direct military threat to our interests in this hemisphere, it does reinforce the importance of ensuring China's activities abide by regional political, economic and security norms. It also underscores the importance of the United States remaining engaged in this important part of the world.

Command Priorities

To address these challenges, we work with our partners to defend the southern approaches to the United States, respond to regional contingencies, and promote security cooperation with the 31 nations and 16 areas of special sovereignty in our AOR. We focus on one no-fail mission and four priorities, which I would like to discuss today.

We continue to conduct safe, humane, legal, and transparent care and custody of the remaining detainees currently at Joint Task Force Guantánamo (JTF-GTMO). *Detention operations* are a demanding, sensitive, and often thankless mission. The medical and guard force deal with enormous stress and are subject to near-constant verbal and physical assaults by

detainees. Some of our female troops must continue to deal with the frustration of a temporary court order that prevents them from performing their assigned duties, even though they are all fully trained, immensely qualified, and embody the values of equality and diversity that our nation espouses to the world and holds dear. Despite these challenges, and as many of you have witnessed first-hand, the men and women at JTF-GTMO conduct the most humane, principled detention operations anywhere in the world, often exceeding the requirements of U.S. laws and the Geneva Convention. I thank you for your continued active support for these tremendous young men and women and invite you to continue to visit them to see for yourselves the conditions under which they labor, and the quiet professionalism with which they execute their duties.

Unlike the conduct of our troops, the condition of many JTF-GTMO facilities falls far short of acceptable standards. As the Congress knows, most of the facilities constructed to temporary standards are deteriorating rapidly due to the harsh environment, ongoing mission demands, and a chronic lack of funds for maintenance and recapitalization. Last year, rains associated with Hurricane Joaquin resulted in widespread leaks in troop housing—an unsurprising occurrence, given the dilapidated condition of these buildings. With no long-term military construction, we expect to continue addressing life, health, and safety issues in an incremental, piecemeal manner that rapidly becomes more costly than investment in new construction.

In concert with our law enforcement, intelligence community, diplomatic, and regional partners, we remain focused on *countering transnational organized crime (CTOC)*. Our Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) is at the forefront of our efforts to combat the illicit drug trade and to illuminate the networks engaged in this nefarious activity. Although receiving

only 1.5% of the total U.S. counterdrug budget, JIATF-S and its international partners disrupt *three times* the amount of cocaine seized at or within U.S. borders. While the U.S. Navy was only able to provide limited surface ships to Operation MARTILLO, increased U.S. Coast Guard

Operation MARTILLO FY 15 Disruptions	
Cocaine	192 MTs
% disrupted by partners	35%
Marijuana	62,995 lbs
Bulk cash	\$11.4 million

and U.S. Customs and Border Protection assets, as well as significant contributions by partner nations and Allies, helped disrupt 192 metric tons of cocaine in

FY2015. Operations like MARTILLO not only strike a blow to powerful criminal networks, they ultimately save U.S. lives and resources by stopping hundreds of tons of cocaine, heroin, and other drugs destined for our cities and towns.

In response to the insecurity that drove last year’s unaccompanied children crisis, we are prioritizing our capacity-building efforts in the Northern Tier of Central America. We thank the Congress for its support to our CTOC activities and for recognizing the important role security plays in addressing the sub-region’s long-standing challenges. Through equipment support, infrastructure projects, counterdrug training, and aggressive information sharing, we are

improving our partners’ maritime interdiction and border security capabilities and enhancing regional domain awareness. To

Spotlight: Support to Interagency Operations
In 2015, we supported U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Operation CITADEL, which targeted the smuggling of migrants from the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America into the United States. This operation led to the dismantlement of large-scale criminal networks and the rescue of many unaccompanied children.

complement these efforts, last year our Marine component deployed a Special-Purpose Marine, Air, Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) to help partner nations extend state presence and security in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Belize. Working alongside Honduran military and government officials, U.S. Marines built roads and a C-130 capable airfield and provided essential water services to vulnerable populations. Working in tandem with Joint Task Force-

Bravo, the SPMAGTF promises to be one of our most responsive forces; sourced mainly by Marine Reservists, it provides us with an agile, forward-deployed, rapid response capability that is without equal.

We also dedicate significant effort to remaining vigilant against the threat of violent

Spotlight: DoD Rewards Program
In 2015, the DoD Rewards Program enabled partner nation authorities to bring 135 members of terrorist organizations to justice.

extremism, and I thank the Congress for providing the dedicated resources to support this important mission. Our *counterterrorism*

(CT) efforts center on building and supporting partner nation capacity to detect and defeat terrorist threats within their borders. We are working with partners from across the region to counter extremism, recruitment, and radicalization to violence in vulnerable communities. Over the past year our Special Operations Forces (SOF) conducted multiple engagements such as subject matter expert exchanges, counterterrorism-focused exercises, and civil affairs activities. These efforts—coupled with support to U.S. Country Teams and interagency operations—ensure our nation and those of our friends remain secure. As discussed earlier, transnational organized crime and terrorist networks are intersecting layers of a global illicit economy. We will begin to explore if and how taking a counter network approach against illicit networks can improve our insight and successes in both our CTOC and CT efforts.

Whether countering transnational organized crime and terrorism, supporting disaster response operations, establishing cyber defense capabilities, or emphasizing a solid human rights foundation, *building partner capacity* is the cornerstone of everything we do. Our efforts help build and nurture committed and capable partners who can control their borders, address drivers of insecurity and instability, respond to natural and man-made disasters, and contribute to regional security—all of which help generate an extended layered defense of the U.S. homeland

and protect our interests. Although it is impossible to do justice to all the incredible work being done by our joint task forces, service components, and the National Guard's State Partnership Program, I would like to share a few highlights of our capacity-building efforts in the region.⁸

After 51 years of armed conflict, *Colombia*—a strategic ally, friend, and preeminent partner—is on the verge of ending the hemisphere's longest-running guerilla war. Thanks to its own efforts and our sustained assistance, Colombia has been transformed from a near failed state into a major regional player with significant political influence, world-class security forces, and a growing economy. The Colombian military has grown from an internal defense force to a respected exporter of counterdrug and counter IED expertise⁹ and is standing up a regional demining center of excellence. The Colombian Navy is also a regular contributor to NATO counter-piracy operations off the coast of Africa as well as counterdrug patrols in our own hemisphere with JIATF-South.

Colombia's transformation is remarkable, but it will still face an uncertain period with many new challenges even when an accord is reached. In many ways the hardest work lies ahead. For Colombia to successfully consolidate the promise of its decades-long struggle, the United States *must* remain as fully engaged a post-peace accord partner as we ever were during Colombia's struggles. U.S. Southern Command will continue to support Colombia's efforts to: take the FARC off the battlefield and out of illicit activities; successfully implement a new counternarcotics strategy and establish state presence; conduct humanitarian demining; and transform the Colombian military to adapt to an evolving security environment. On a broader

⁸ For a full overview of component activities, please see the Annex.

⁹ In 2015, USSOUTHCOM and the Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement supported military and civilian law enforcement capacity-building activities by Colombian military and law enforcement personnel. USSOUTHCOM provided assistance to the COLMIL to execute 85 military BPC activities. These activities were focused on maritime interdiction, support to law enforcement entities, security and maintenance of vessels at port, riverine training, command and control, border security, intelligence training, and human rights training

level, it is also essential that we continue providing Colombia a robust and agile assistance package that will help it successfully address the new security, developmental, and human rights challenges posed by a post-accord environment.

To enhance the *professional development* of the region’s military officers and senior enlisted leaders, U.S. Southern Command conducts or facilitates International Military Education and Training (IMET), military and defense exchanges, and security seminars. Through the Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI) and William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, we are supporting the increased professionalization of regional defense organizations. These programs help build accountable, transparent armed forces that can ensure

Spotlight: Building Cyber Defense Capacity
We are building cyber security and cyber defense capabilities with seven regional partners and working with Brazil, Peru, Colombia, and Chile as they establish dedicated cyber defense commands or capabilities.

the sustainability of U.S. security cooperation investments, increase citizen safety, and uphold universal values such

as good governance, rule of law, and respect for human rights. We are also supporting the development of a competent and professional Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) corps through close interaction during engagements, exercises, and at defense institutes like the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) and Inter-American Air Force Academy (IAAFA).

As the only Combatant Command with a dedicated human rights office, we continue to make progress engaging our partners on this foundational issue. Last year, Paraguay became the 11th partner nation to commit to implementation of the U.S. Southern Command-sponsored *Human Rights Initiative* (HRI) within its military forces. We also supported civil-military dialogues in Honduras and Guatemala and held the first-ever HRI event in Haiti. Partner nations acknowledge their responsibility to respect and protect human rights, but generally lack the

resources to build strong programs. Requests for HRI assistance far exceed our ability to support—which is why we encourage regional militaries to share their expertise with one another. During last year’s TRADEWINDS exercise, Caribbean security officials led multiple training tracks on human rights issues, advancing our goal of increased human rights integration in multinational exercises.

Like HRI, our *humanitarian assistance and humanitarian and civic assistance programs* also yield significant ‘return on engagement.’ These programs help improve our

partners’ abilities to provide essential services to their citizens, reduce human suffering, and support economic development. But they do more than

Spotlight: Partnership with NGOs Aboard the COMFORT
More than 400 volunteers from NGOs and academic institutions worked alongside U.S. military members, serving as doctors, nurses, and surgeons. USNS COMFORT also hosted the NGO Operation SMILE, which provided 279 life-changing surgeries to patients in the region.

that— they remind the world that our military’s greatest strength is more than our proven ability to project power around the globe, it is the generosity and compassion of our people. There is perhaps no better symbol of that generosity than deployments by our world class hospital ship *USNS COMFORT*. As part of CONTINUING PROMISE 2015, medical and support staff from across the U.S. military and the region worked alongside nearly 400 volunteers to treat 122,268 patients and conduct 1,255 surgeries. In an historic event during the COMFORT port call in Haiti, U.S. and Cuban medics worked side by side to treat Haiti’s poor and exchange best medical practices. CONTINUING PROMISE is without a doubt one of the U.S. military’s most impactful missions, but future COMFORT deployments are in jeopardy due to the U.S. Navy’s budget constraints.

Additionally, our annual BEYOND THE HORIZON and NEW HORIZONS humanitarian exercises help advance security, prosperity, and good governance in equal measure,

while also building the capacity of partner nations to respond to disasters without request for U.S. assistance. As part of these exercises, U.S. Air Force and Army medical teams conducted readiness training that treated over 30,000 patients in El Salvador, Panama, and Honduras. In partnership with regional militaries and civilian agencies, we constructed disaster relief warehouses, emergency operation centers, schools, clinics, and hospitals in remote or under-serviced areas. These exercises were supported by private sector and NGO partners, who provided nearly \$4 million in donations of gifts-in-kind and services for the citizens of Latin America. In these and other activities, we work closely with other U.S. agencies—including the Department of State and USAID—to support their efforts in promoting resilient democratic societies through sustainable, long-term development.

I would also like to highlight one of our most successful capacity-building efforts: the *Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI)*. In partnership with the State Department, GPOI allowed us to train and equip more than 3,500 peacekeepers (male and female) from six partner nations. These partners are currently deployed to four United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions in Africa and Haiti. The relatively small investment--\$7.6 million in FY2015—not only supported training and equipping of peacekeepers, but also enabled El Salvador to deploy an attack helicopter unit to the UN Mission in Mali; allowed Peru to deploy a heavy engineer company to the UN mission in the Central African Republic; assisted Chile’s efforts to create a regional gender integration training capability; and helped Uruguay sustain critical enabling helicopter and riverine capabilities supporting the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. All of these efforts help maintain stability in war-torn states and troubled regions, protect civilians, and deliver critical humanitarian aid. Given the multiple benefits of GPOI, I fully support continuing and expanding this important program throughout the region.

The *State Partnership Program* and our *multinational exercises* continue to build a strong Inter-American system of persistent defense cooperation. A force multiplier to our efforts, National Guard units from 19 states conducted 215 activities that developed core competencies in regional military forces, promoted the concept of citizen-soldiers as public servants, and reinforced our bilateral relationships with 28 countries. In the Caribbean, we conducted a highly successful iteration of our annual TRADEWINDS exercise, which brought together more than 750 participants from 17 different nations to work together on real-life training scenarios related to disaster response and CTOC operations.

As part of Southern Seas 2015, UNITAS—the U.S. Navy’s longest-running annual maritime exercise—brought together North American, South American, Pacific, and African maritime forces from eight countries to improve interoperability and build working relationships at sea. Last year we had the largest U.S. force participating in the exercise’s history, courtesy of the creative employment of the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON and associated air wing during her transit through the region. While these types of maritime engagements offer unparalleled opportunity to engage with our partners in areas of maritime law and policy, discussion of issues like excessive maritime claims can become derailed by the United States’ status as a non-party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Accession to the Convention gives the United States a seat at the table and thus an immeasurably stronger position from which to engage our partners on maritime security concerns.

Finally, *contingency planning and preparation*—which includes other exercises like PANAMAX, FUSED RESPONSE, FUERZAS HUMANITARIAS and INTEGRATED ADVANCE—prepares our team to respond to regional crises and enhances interoperability with our interagency and regional partners. These efforts not only improve our planning, training, and

readiness, they build invaluable relationships across agencies, departments, and governments. For example, in the event of a natural disaster in Central America, our Joint Task Force Bravo—located at Soto Cano Airbase in Honduras—will be at the forefront of our response efforts. Essentially a small aviation regiment with 18 helicopters, JTF-Bravo is our only permanently deployed contingency force in the region. The outstanding men and women of JTF-Bravo regularly conduct life-saving search and rescue missions and provide humanitarian assistance and logistical support to Honduran and regional counterdrug operations.

We train for a variety of contingencies, one of which is a mass migration event. We work closely with our interagency partners in the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, and other regional partners to monitor increased migrant flows. Last year, we conducted a mission rehearsal exercise at U.S. Naval Station Guantánamo Bay to test our ability to support a response to a humanitarian crisis in the Caribbean. As the only permanent Department of Defense base in Latin America, the U.S. Naval Station provides persistent U.S. presence and immediate access to the entire region. It serves as a forward operating base for DHS-led migrant operations and a distribution and staging area for foreign humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. If directed to execute today, resource and capacity challenges at the Naval Station would significantly impact our support to the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State operational and contingency plans. These challenges call into question our ability to provide safe care, custody, and transportation of interdicted migrants, which is especially concerning given recent increases in migrant flows.

Critical Needs and Concerns

U.S. Southern Command is committed to honoring the trust American taxpayers place in us, and we strive to make every defense dollar count. Through better business practices, we are

working to mitigate funding reductions and gain efficiencies throughout our headquarters. Our most significant challenge is under-sourcing of assets, an issue that will be compounded should sequestration return. For every additional capacity-building activity we conduct, we can further strengthen the security network that keeps our partners stable and our homeland secure. For every additional ship and air asset we are able to dedicate to the detection and monitoring mission, we can disrupt approximately 20 more metric tons of cocaine. And for every additional ISR resource we are provided, we can better illuminate threat networks in the region. Yet even with the limited resources we have, we punch well above our weight class. We are in fact, a world-class welterweight: we are fast and agile; we are well trained; and we have the strength and stamina for the long run—qualities that are essential for success against the threats and challenges in our area of responsibility.

To help mitigate shortfalls in the detection and monitoring mission, we employ creative and non-traditional approaches like adapting anti-IED technology for use in counterdrug operations in dense jungle and mountainous terrain. Looking ahead, we will continue to explore alternatives to traditional sourcing solutions, including driving innovation and experimentation into training and exercises. With a multitude of willing and welcoming partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, we have a unique experimentation training environment, perfect for expanding war gaming; testing new operational concepts, tactics, technologies and procedures; and exploring new ways to combine capabilities and improve interoperability. Additionally, we will continue to pursue opportunities to use innovative ISR platforms. I especially want to thank the Congress for the additional funding, which is helping increase our domain awareness and enhance ongoing CTOC operations.

While JIATF-South—through excellent interagency and partner nation coordination—has developed impressive air and maritime awareness of drug movements, when the networks hit terra firma we go dark. To address these blind spots, we are exploring how we might partner even more closely with the interagency and partner nations to improve synchronization and fully illuminate threat networks. We will work with our Central American partners, the Department of State, the intelligence and law enforcement communities, and U.S. Country Teams every step of the way as we improve our collective effort to degrade and disrupt the corrosive operations of criminal networks.

Finally, I thank the Congress for your continued support to U.S. Southern Command's talented men and women and their families. Unfortunately, our service members, especially our junior enlisted personnel, face a significant quality-of-life challenge: the lack of affordable housing. In almost all respects, Miami is the perfect city for our headquarters. I say 'almost' because the cost of living is one of the highest in the nation. Many of our assigned personnel cannot afford to live near the command, and government housing acquired through domestic leasing is expensive and extremely competitive. We are currently working with the Department of Army to develop our formal housing requirement, and we will work closely with the Congress as we move forward to improve the quality of life of our men and women in uniform.

Conclusion

In closing, I am sure members of this Committee will agree: nowhere is our own security more inextricably intertwined to that of our neighbors, partners, and friends than in Latin America and the Caribbean. In an increasingly chaotic and insecure world, this region can and should serve as a beacon of hope, peace, prosperity, and partnership. This is both the promise

and the potential of our shared home. It is a goal shared by our partners and one that we can achieve—but only by remaining engaged and only by working together. Day in and day out, the outstanding team at U.S. Southern Command is doing exactly that: we are building partnerships that protect our interests, defend our homeland, uphold the global common good, and advance security, good governance, and opportunity. Once again, thank you for your persistent, sustained support for your U.S. Southern Command, and I look forward to our discussion.

Annex: 2015 Joint Task Force and Component Accomplishments

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

- **Joint Interagency Task Force South** contributed to the disruption of 192 metric tons of cocaine in FY2015, worth nearly \$3.9 billion wholesale. This represents 76 percent of all documented U.S. cocaine removals that were likely directed towards the U.S. market. JIATF-S employs an integrated defense forward capability for the ongoing efforts at the U.S. Southwest Border and for U.S. operations in the Western Hemisphere using tactical control (TACON) ship days, TACON flight hours, and by monitoring illicit air activity using Forces Surveillance Support Center relocatable over-the-horizon radar.
- **Operation MARTILLO:** The vast majority of JIATF-South successes came as a result of JIATF-South leadership and coordination of Operation (OP) MARTILLO, the multi-lateral effects-based operation designed to deny the Central American littoral routes to illicit traffickers. Begun on January 15, 2012, OP MARTILLO results to date include the disruption of 595 metric tons of cocaine, the seizure of \$25.8 million in bulk cash, and the seizure of 1486 detainees and 478 vessels and aircraft. OP MARTILLO has had the desired effect of increasing partner nation participation in U.S. efforts to disrupt illicit trafficking and counter transnational organized crime.
- **Operational Results and Impact:** In the air domain, over the past year, JIATF-South documented a 53 percent decrease in illicit air tracks destined for Central America (primarily Honduras). Decisions made by some of our partner nations to establish lethal air interdiction policies have impeded JIATF-South's efforts to share illicit air track information with those partner nations. Ultimately, air trafficking continues to be a declining percentage (3%) of overall cocaine flows. In the maritime domain, during the same period, JIATF-South documented a 20% increase in the overall volume of cocaine departing the source zone in South America. Eastern Pacific flow currently accounts for more than 68% of documented cocaine movement. It is assessed the increase in Eastern Pacific cocaine movement is at least partially caused by trafficker adaptation to focused law enforcement pressure in the Western Caribbean. JIATF-South is currently developing strategies to better apply requisite pressure against each threat vector, so as to curtail transit options available to traffickers. The increase in documented flow is partially due to increased law enforcement reporting and contributions from partner nations to augment collective situational awareness. JIATF-South identified several transatlantic maritime cases in FY15 and established a liaison officer at the Maritime Analysis Operations Center-Narcotics in Lisbon, Portugal to facilitate the targeting of these cases by European law enforcement agencies. JIATF-South Counter Threat Finance team targeted \$30.5 million in bulk cash and closely worked with DEA Lima, Peru on several investigations. JIATF-South Container Cell supported investigations resulting in 7 MTs of cocaine seized in commercial shipping containers and continues to develop relationships to increase situational awareness of global movements of cocaine via commercial shipping.

- **Supporting Defense of the Homeland:** The establishment of three Department of Homeland Security Joint Task Forces, JTF-East, JTF-West, and JTF-Investigations in 2015 has the potential to greatly enhance the interagency effort to defend the southern approaches. JIATF-South has been integrally involved with and fully supports the development of these organizations so that efforts to counter illicit trafficking will be synchronized to produce the greatest combined effect. Since its inception in September 2012, OP UNIFIED RESOLVE, the counter illicit trafficking operation supporting Puerto Rico, has substantially improved and formalized interoperability between JIATF-South, Coast Guard District 7, Coast Guard Sector San Juan, and the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch in our shared Counter Illicit Trafficking operations. Under the new DHS JTF construct OP UNIFIED RESOLVE will be coordinated by Joint Task Force-East.
- **Role of Partner Nations:** In FY 2015, 50 percent of JIATF-South disruptions were marked by partner nation participation. The role of our Latin American partners should not be understated. Of the 250 illicit trafficking events disrupted by JIATF-South in FY 2015, 88 of these (35 percent) would not have been successful without the support of our international partners. Many Central American partners have greatly increased their ability to respond to illicit trafficking cases cued by JIATF-South including Guatemala, Panama, and Costa Rica who collectively responded to twice the number of events in FY15 compared to FY14. The success of JIATF-South continues to draw support as several additional nations have expressed interest in joining the international effort to counter illicit trafficking. The contributions of ships and aircraft to the Transit Zone effort by the U.K., France, the Netherlands, and Canada continue to be significant and needed.
- **Innovation and Transition to Counter Network Operations:** Recognizing the holistic nature of the threats and challenges to the U.S. from TCOs in the Western Hemisphere, JIATF-South's planning process is orienting the command and its focus towards countering the organizations responsible for undermining the stability and security of the region. With their authorities firmly planted in the detection and monitoring (D&M) of illicit trafficking, JIATF-South will employ several initiatives to focus their core mission set on illuminating illicit networks for disruption. Network focused D&M will rely on Tactical Development Analysis, Threat Finance Information, and Container Cell intelligence to develop awareness and increase effectiveness in a fiscally austere environment. Additionally, JIATF-South is leveraging interagency partnerships to develop the ability to detect and monitor illicit trafficking activity, using the cyber domain.

**Joint Task Force Guantánamo (JTF-GTMO)
Guantánamo 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. High Value Detainees (HVDs) and non-HVDs 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 2015. All detainees were provided the opportunity to meet with ICRC delegates and medical personnel during these visits. Additionally, detainees are granted access to legal representation. For non-High Value Detainees, during FY 2015 JTF-GTMO scheduled 385 habeas meetings (259 were completed) and 222 commissions meetings (141 completed). With respect to High Value Detainees, JTF-GTMO scheduled 43 habeas meetings (29 completed) and 1,781 commissions meetings (894 completed). Committed to transparency, JTF-GTMO hosted 75 media representatives from 40 domestic and international news organizations and answered hundreds of media queries during the past year. Similarly, JTF-GTMO also hosted 166 Distinguished Visitor visits totaling more than 1100 personnel, including seven Congressional Delegations, 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 2015, JTF-GTMO supported 3 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 4 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 7 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.
 - In the “9/11 Five” military commission, the judge’s 7 January 2015 interim order bars female guards from touching (absent exigent circumstances) the 9/11 Five detainee-accused during movements to and from attorney-client meetings and commission hearings. This order remains in effect until the judge hears evidence and argument and makes a final ruling. The cancellation of several commissions sessions in 2015 prevented the resolution of this issue. The practical effect of the judge’s order is that it prohibits female guards from participating in commissions-related movements of the 9/11 Five detainee-accused. Male guards therefore complete extra duties that female guards may not perform. The judge’s order resulted in fifteen (15) Equal Opportunity (EO) complaints because a portion of the guard force cannot perform their assigned duties based on gender. The EO complaints are unresolved.
- **Infrastructure:** Sustainment costs continue to rise due to the many facilities at JTF-GTMO that are past their designated lifecycle. Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization (SRM) costs have steadily increased the last four years (\$19M, \$20M, \$21M, \$24M). Eight military construction (MILCON) projects, valued at \$231M, were planned for FY15-18 to address infrastructure concerns. Six of those projects, valued at \$207M, or 90% of the total Military Construction (MILCON) budget were cancelled in January 2015.

- **Detainee Movement Operations:** JTF-GTMO conducted 12 Detainee Movement Operations during Fiscal Year 2015 which transferred 35 detainees to 10 different countries.

**Joint Task Force-Bravo (JTF-B)
Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras**

- Joint Task Force-Bravo is a forward-based expeditionary joint task force operating as U.S. Southern Command's lead forward element in the Central American (CENTAM) region. The Joint Task Force integrates and synchronizes efforts, provides assets and capabilities to enable others to operate, and executes operations in support of the CCDR's priorities of Countering Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC), Humanitarian Assistance / Disaster Relief, Building Partner Nation Security Capacity, and Contingency planning/support to promote regional cooperation and enhance security throughout Central America. JTF-Bravo performs the following missions:
- Facilitates integration of Partner Nation and U.S. Government agencies to develop a common understanding of Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCO) and enables operations to counter identified TCO networks.
- Conducts combined operations with military and law enforcement elements from the U.S. and Partner Nations to disrupt and deter organized crime networks in Central America.
- Consistently refines and evolves a common understanding of the environment and its efforts to enable partners to counter threats to both the CENTAM region and the American Homeland
- Provides a running estimate of the environment to both synchronize and integrate operations to achieve the right, overall effects against Criminal Transnational Organizations / Illicit Facilitation Networks.
- Supports efforts dedicated to Building Partner Capacity by providing subject matter expertise and capabilities throughout CENTAM in areas ranging from medical support to the local population and fire-fighting capabilities, to logistical support to partner nation militaries.
- Serves as U.S. Southern Command's first responder for natural disasters and humanitarian events within CENTAM.
- Is prepared to provide SOUTHCOM a no-notice command and control node throughout CENTAM in a natural disaster scenario.
- Manages the only all-weather day/night C-5 Galaxy-capable airfield in CENTAM, supporting ongoing operations and maintaining readiness to facilitate humanitarian assistance and disaster relief throughout CENTAM.
- JTF-B's operations enable DoD, DoS, IA, and PN efforts throughout CENTAM. Over the past year, JTF-B provided air movement support to the Honduran military for twelve iterations of Operation CARAVANA during 2015 (moving 3,525 pax and 135,500 pounds of equipment), allowing them to position forces into isolated regions of eastern Honduras and posturing them to effectively deter Illicit Facilitation Networks. JTF-B also conducted 25 medical missions during 2015. These missions provided vital care to underserved communities within Central America, increasing the local population's faith in government, providing HN medical training, and fostering goodwill across

the region. In addition, JTF-B also assisted the Government of Belize in drug eradication efforts and supported U.S. Law Enforcement and military units in training the Belizean Defense Forces – providing time and space as the Belize forces continue to develop capacity.

- Finally, JTF-B conducted or directly supported a number of vital Contingency Operations, such as a high visibility mission to repatriate Central American citizens back to their home countries, supported 15 MEDEVAC missions in 2015 - including a Honduran Soldier seriously injured in a drug interdiction off the shore of Gracias a Dios, Honduras, a Search and Rescue mission of a missing American off the coast of Roatan, Honduras, as well as in the search effort for survivors of a capsized ferry off the coast of Nicaragua. JTF-B's continuing activities demonstrate U.S. commitment to CENTAM, posturing our Nation as the partner of choice and a force that will serve the people of Central America for years to come.

**U.S. Army South (ARSOUTH)
Headquarters: FT Sam Houston, Texas**

- **Security Cooperation:** ARSOUTH conducted 164 security cooperation events with 23 countries in U.S. Southern Command's area of responsibility. These events represent both engagements and building Partner Nation capabilities with other militaries in the region.
- **Countering Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC):** ARSOUTH, with the support of the Texas Army National Guard, 72nd IBCT, conducted CTOC tactical training in Guatemala and Honduras. They also conducted information training in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The four Mission Essential tasks trained were: Border Control Operations, Command Post Activities, Information Support to Operations, and Sustainment Operations. These training efforts contributed to the capacity-building efforts of our Partner Nations, enabling selected elements of their security forces to better focus on basic border control and security operations. U.S. Army South has supported 60 operations in the SOUTHCOM AOR, contributing to the arrest of 71 individuals including 14 HVT's, and seizure of 12.5 metric tons of cocaine and \$12.3 million. These operations have contributed to the disruption of TCO networks especially in Honduras and Guatemala.
- **Information Security Cooperation:** In addition to the CTOC training effort, ARSOUTH conducted Information engagements as a part of the Distinguished Visitor Program, Bilateral Staff Talks, and all regional Professional Development Exchanges, enabling military information capacity building in support of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia, Chile and Peru.
- **Counter Terrorism:** ARSOUTH conducted 10 Subject Matter Expert Exchanges in six countries that included over 750 host nation soldiers. The engagements included: Medical, Search and Rescue, Logistics, Maintenance and Communications.
- **Civil-Military Relations:** ARSOUTH conducted Civil-Military Relations Professional Development Exchanges in Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, improving the ability of these countries to conduct inter-organizational coordination during humanitarian assistance / disaster relief operations and in countering transnational criminal organizations. These exchanges demonstrate the synergy and

value of interagency collaboration and provide an effective forum for executive-level information-sharing, both bilaterally and regionally.

- **Humanitarian Assistance Program (HAP):** HAP focuses on activities which help build partner nation capacity to provide essential services to their populace, with particular emphasis on response to disasters and other crises, reinforcing citizen security, and sustaining stability in a particular country or throughout the region. ARSOUTH, as USSOUTHCOM's Executive Agent for the construction facet of HAP, completed 21 projects in 2015, and also initiated the planning for 22 future construction projects across the AOR.
- **Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI):** GPOI is a security assistance program to enhance international capacity to conduct United Nations and regional peace support operations. ARSOUTH, as USSOUTHCOM's GPOI construction executive agent, executed 14 projects in Central and South America and initiated the planning for three future projects (El Salvador and Uruguay).
- **Conference of the American Armies (CAA):** The CAA (20 member Armies, 5 observer Armies 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 Army Commanders. Army South organized and led delegations representing the U.S. Army Chief of Staff at conferences on IEDs, Disaster Response, Interagency Operations and CAA Procedures in Colombia, Mexico, Brazil and Chile.
- **Exercise Beyond the Horizon (BTH):** Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Field Training Exercises were conducted in El Salvador and Panama. BTH El Salvador yielded six engineer projects and three general Medical Readiness Training Exercises (MEDRETEs), treating a total of 24,627 patients. In the El Salvador effort, over 1,760 U.S. troops participated, and the host nation provided 163 security, engineering and medical personnel. BTH Panama included an Ophthalmology specialty MEDRETE which removed 250 cataracts from pre-screened patients, while a general MEDRETE treated 4,760 local patients. Forty eight U.S. troops participated in these efforts, while the Panamanian Ministry of Health and the Panamanian National Police provided over 60 personnel for this bilateral collaborative initiative.
- **Exercise Fuerzas Aliadas – Humanitarias (FA-HUM):** This year's Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief Table Top Exercise (TTX) was hosted by Honduras, to build Partner Nation capacity to respond to a major disaster and strengthen military/security force collaboration and cooperation in the region. The TTX exercised the coordination, response and integration of Honduras' SINAGER (National Risk Management System) members and other International Cooperation members. It greatly improved their ability to respond to an adverse event, activating SINAGER and national, regional, and international emergency protocols.
- **Exercise PANAMAX 2015:** This year's Joint/Combined operational exercise focused on the defense of the Panama Canal and designated ARSOUTH as HQ, Multi-National Forces-South. The Crisis Action Planning Phase had 127 participants - 82 U.S. and 45 Partner Nation personnel from 9 countries. ARSOUTH also hosted the CFLCC with Colombia as the lead country which included 62 personnel from 15 Partner Nations and 29 U.S. personnel. In addition, ARSOUTH participated in a bilateral exercise with the Government of Panama (PANAMAX–Alpha) where 20 U.S. personnel

worked with the Panamanians coordinating U.S. forces assistance during simulated security operations.

- **Exercise Integrated Advance 2015:** For 2015 Integrated Advance is a Command Post (CPX) and Field Training Exercise (FTX) focused in the Caribbean and designed to conduct combined security, peacekeeping and selected maritime operations. This Joint operational exercise focused on the interagency planning required for a U.S. response to a Caribbean Mass Migration. ARSOUTH formed the core of the JTF-MIGOPS with 127 personnel (including 52 from other military services and government agencies).

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (USNAVSO) 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).
- **CONTINUING PROMISE 2015 (CP 15):** U.S. Navy Hospital Ship USNS COMFORT completed her longest and most successful CP in history, conducting mission stops in 11 partner nations (Belize, Guatemala, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, Colombia, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Haiti) from April through September 2015. The CP-15 medical team treated 122,268 patients, including 1,255 surgeries conducted aboard the COMFORT, along with 279 surgeries conducted by the non-government organization “Operation Smile” aboard the COMFORT. The CP-15 also featured 1,285 subject matter expert exchanges, 94 engineering projects, and 85 community relations events. Almost 400 members of non-government organizations deployed as part of the CP team, which included approximately \$5.24 million dollars in donations to the 11 partner nations. CP-15 sent a strong message of U.S. commitment and partnership with the people of the Caribbean, Central and South America, and directly impacted more people in our partner nations than any other U.S. Navy mission.
- **SOUTHERN SEAS 2015 (SS 15):** Task Force 49 (TF 49), led by Commander Carrier Strike Group Nine, deployed to the USSOUTHCOM AOR, sailing around South America from the end of September through mid-December 2015. TF-49 participated in both UNITAS Pacific, hosted by Chile, and UNITAS Atlantic, hosted by Brazil. This was the largest and most capable U.S. force to participate in UNITAS in the more than 50-year history of the multi-national maritime exercise. UNITAS is the longest-running naval exercise in the world. USS GEORGE WASHINGTON also conducted multi-day bilateral exercises with the Japan Self-Defense Force, the Peruvian Navy, the Chilean Air Force, and the Brazilian Navy as well as receiving distinguished visitors from Panama, Colombia, Uruguay, Argentina, and Paraguay.
- **SOUTHERN PARTNERSHIP STATION (SPS):** SPS is a series of Navy/Marine Corps engagements focused on Theater Security Cooperation (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. 2015 SPS Deployments:

- **SPS Joint High Speed Vessel 2015 (SPS JHSV 15):** USNS SPEARHEAD built partner capacity while conducting TSC engagements through the use of Adaptive Force Packages (AFPs) ashore in Belize, Guatemala, Colombia, and Honduras. The Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, NCIS Agents, and Civilian Mariners making up the SPEARHEAD Team built upon the firm foundation of the JHSV 14 deployment, and the persistent annual presence of SPEARHEAD and the AFPs in the USSOUTHCOM AOR are reaping rewards of partnership and interoperability.
- **SPS Oceanographic 2015 (SPS OCEANO 15):** 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, Honduras, and Jamaica, 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 support USSOUTHCOM's Oceanographic, Hydrographic, and Bathymetric Program and the Chief of Naval Operations Global Maritime Partnership Initiative. All hydrographic survey and environmental assessment data is shared to enable safe and effective maritime navigation and access to the littoral for naval and joint forces.
- **Operation MARTILLO:** Two frigates, one destroyer, one coastal patrol ship, JHSV SPEARHEAD, four fixed-wing maritime patrol aircraft squadrons, and one scientific development squadron detachment 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.
- **USS COLUMBUS:** The Los Angeles-class fast attack submarine deployed to the USSOUTHCOM AOR. COLUMBUS visited U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and made two Panama Canal transits.
- **PANAMAX 2015:** Chile served as Combined Forces Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC) for the annual PANAMAX Exercise, which exercises defense of the approaches to the Panama Canal. Chile led a multinational staff of more than 50 military and civilian personnel from 16 Partner Nations (including the U.S.), all based at USNAVSO/FOURTHFLT Headquarters in Mayport. In this year's PANAMAX, the CFMCC staff worked through the Navy Planning Process to produce a Concept of Operations (CONOP) with notional forces, for presentation to the Combined Joint Task Force led by U.S. Army South. Now in its 13th year, PANAMAX focuses on ensuring the defense of the Panama Canal, increasing multinational force interoperability while supporting the training requirements of all participating nations' civil and military services.

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

- **Security Cooperation:** Twelfth Air Force (Air Forces Southern) (hereafter AFSOUTH) led 50 security cooperation events in 11 USSOUTHCOM partner nations. Engagements focused on countering transnational organized crime, communications, aircraft operations and maintenance, ISR, space, cyberspace security, safety, command and control, space capabilities, aerospace medicine, air evacuation, expeditionary medicine, information sharing, mobility, Future Engagement Talks, logistics, aircrew search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The 571st Mobility Support Advisory Squadron completed 19 air advisor events in Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Curacao, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, and Peru, training 417 partner nation military members.
- **Legal:** The AFSOUTH Staff Judge Advocate promoted Law of Armed Conflict adherence and Human Rights Law in 9 legal engagement activities with Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, and Trinidad & Tobago.
- **Airlift Missions:** AFSOUTH executed 85 theater airlift missions, moving more than 4,267 passengers and 406 tons of cargo throughout USSOUTHCOM's area of responsibility.
- **System of Cooperation among the American Air Forces (SICOFAA):** SICOFAA 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 20 SICOFAA member Air Forces and the 5 observer Air Forces. USAF Chief of Staff and the 12 AF (AFSOUTH) Commander participated in the annual American Air Chiefs Summit (CONJEFAMER) in Mexico City in June 2015. Delegates from USAF and AFSOUTH participated in five SICOFAA committee meetings and the CONJEFAMER planning conference.
- **Medical Support:** AFSOUTH provided medical planning and oversight of detainee movement operations and forward operating location missions; delivered operational health expertise and steady-state planning for contingency and real world operations across USSOUTHCOM AOR; supplied counterdrug operations medical guidance and planning support; and coordinated USAF medical engagements for New Horizons and Beyond the Horizon exercises. Surgeon General provided Crisis Action Team support for PANAMAX and Integrated Advance. AFSOUTH International Health Specialists conducted 15 Theater Security Cooperation global health engagements with partner nations addressing flight medicine, air evacuation, force health protection, and expeditionary medicine advancing regional collaboration across the aerospace medicine enterprise.
- **NEW HORIZONS 2015 (Honduras):** AFSOUTH trained 120 US military personnel in this joint exercise. Engineering personnel constructed one new 1400 square foot school and drilled two water wells supporting 3,000 Honduran citizens. During the exercise, deployed medical personnel not only provided care for US members, but also volunteered their medical capabilities to the local hospital emergency room by treating 678 Honduran civilians and providing over 100 surgery consults. Additionally, deployed communications support personnel wired the local hospital offices

for internet capability. International Health Specialists conducted a 12 day infectious disease assessment for the local Ministry of Health and provided a final report with recommendations to improve local health conditions.

- **ISR:** AFSOUTH provided command and control for ISR missions in support of USSOUTHCOM priorities. AFSOUTH executed 939 ISR missions and 5,423 flight hours, resulting in over 4,544 images and nearly 9,235 minutes of video. This information assisted in numerous drug trafficking seizures in the SOUTHCOM AOR by the United States and its partner nations in FY15. AFSOUTH continues to assist critical partner nations in counter-drug/counter-narcotics trafficking efforts and is currently working to enable Air Force operational and ISR capability in both Guatemala and Honduras. AFSOUTH assists both Colombia and Peru in maintaining the strategic initiative against illegally-armed combatants who previously threatened the very existence of those nations.

Marine Corps Forces South (MARFORSOUTH)

Headquarters: Doral, Florida

- **Theater Security Cooperation:** In 2015, MARFORSOUTH completed more than 120 Security Cooperation events in 21 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, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This was training often conducted hand-in-hand with our Colombian Marine Corps partners through the U.S./Colombia Action Plan.
- **SPMAGTF-SC-15:** From June to November 2015, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South deployed Special-Purpose Marine, Air, Ground Task Force-SOUTHCOM (SPMAGTF-SC) to Central America. Leveraging a force one-tenth the size of those in CENTCOM and AFRICOM, SPMAGTF-SC temporarily deployed to one of the most austere locations in Honduras to provide support to partner nation militaries and populations living in extreme poverty and at the highest risk for involvement in illicit activities. Using SPMAGTF-organic aircraft and engineering support, Marines and Sailors throughout Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Belize focused on building and maintaining partnership capacity through shared values, challenges, and responsibility. The Marines built three schools, improved a partner nation military airfield, and provided essential water services to those in need. This force was instrumental in bringing together the national level government of Honduras with remote populations mostly segregated by terrain, expanding governance and visibility on key issues in the region.
- **SPS-JHSV 15 – Marine Detachment (MARDET):** MARFORSOUTH deployed 35 Marines and Sailors to Guatemala and Honduras in support of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. Fourth Fleet's Southern Partnership Station (SPS) initiative. The MARDET provided engineer support to

the SPS mission and met emergent requirements under OPERATION ESCUDO UNIDO. This is the first iteration of SPS that included a USMC Deputy Mission Commander, who was an integral part of the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command's C2 structure for the mission. 32 of the engineers supported airfield construction at Mocoron in Gracias a Dios, as well as humanitarian construction assistance and water purification projects in the area.

- **TRADEWINDS Phase II (Ground):** In June 2015, MARFORSOUTH, in partnership with the Belize Defence Force, Canada, and 17 other partner nations from the Caribbean Region, executed Exercise Tradewinds 2015 Phase II (Ground), a combined Field Training Exercise (FTX) in Belize, in order to enhance combined Counter Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC) operations capability and promote interoperability and multinational relationships throughout the theater. There were over 400 participants in the Belize-hosted, MARFORSOUTH-led ground portion of the exercise that accomplished the capacity building exercise through five distinct exercise tracks in a Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE). The tracks included nine days of interoperability training in command and control, jungle tactics, military support to law enforcement, instinctive shooting, and riverine skills. Of note, Tradewinds 2015 facilitated the positive increase of mil-to-mil relationships between Mexico and Belize that resulted in training and cooperation that was exclusive of the exercise and enhances the border security of both nations.
- **MLAC-15:** In August 2015 U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South executed the Marine Leaders of the Americas Conference in Cartagena, Colombia to increase professional exchanges and strengthen relations among naval infantry forces within the Western Hemisphere. This sixth iteration was co-hosted by Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command on behalf of the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South and the Infanteria de Marina de Colombia. This event provided the Commandant of the Marine Corps with an opportunity to meet and engage senior Marine Corps and naval infantry leaders from 15 partner nations.
- **UNITAS AMPHIBIOUS 2015:** From 14-25 November 2015, approximately 1,000 representatives from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and the United States participated in UNITAS Amphibious 2015, a combined Field Training Exercise in the vicinity of the Ilha do Governador and Ilha da Marambaia, Brazil, in order to enhance interoperability in Amphibious Operations, and Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) missions. The U.S.-sponsored exercise, UA 2015, develops and sustains relationships- which improve the capacity of our PN security forces to achieve common desired regional goals. This annual exercise fosters friendly cooperation and understanding among all participating forces.
- **Security Augmentation Force (SAF):** The SAF is MARFORSOUTH's designated company of Marines that reinforces Diplomatic Missions in the AOR, as required in support of 'New Normal' requirements. 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 is possible for some 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:** SOCSOUTH elements worked with Partner Nation units in Belize, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Guyana, Panama, and Peru to improve their capacity to conduct ground and maritime interdiction, broaden and reinforce their civil affairs programs, engage in Military Information Support Operations (MISO), and develop their intelligence capacities. Through active engagement, SOCSOUTH helped Partner Nations develop self-sustaining capabilities to better protect themselves, contribute to regional security and stability, and collaborate with U.S. and other forces.
 - SOCSOUTH used episodic engagements-including 26 Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) events--with multiple Central American, South American, and Caribbean partners to develop U.S. forces' skills and enhance Partner Nation interoperability.
 - In Brazil, SOCSOUTH JCETs allowed U.S. and Brazilian counter-terrorism forces to share best practices for operating in a range of complex environments and assisted the Brazilians' capacity building efforts in preparation for the upcoming Olympic Games.
 - In Colombia and Peru, SOCSOUTH continued to partner with these Andean Ridge nations as they confronted narco-terrorist insurgencies and global illicit trafficking networks. Colombia's enhanced capacity is a significant supporting element of that nation's ongoing peace process.
 - In Honduras, SOCSOUTH teams and Colombian counterparts continued to help train National Police officers of the 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 Belize, El Salvador, and Guatemala, SOCSOUTH teams engaged the Partner Nation in cooperative activities to reinforce their Naval Special Forces maritime interdiction capabilities. Guatemalan and Salvadoran Naval Special Forces conducted seven major maritime interdiction operations in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South's (JIATF-S) multinational collaborative efforts against regional illicit traffickers.
- **Civil Affairs:** In 2015, 14 civil affairs teams and civil-military support elements engaged eight Partner Nations as they worked to enhance civil-military relations, reduce the vulnerability of key populations impacted by transnational organized crime or violent extremism, and improve/extend governance in underserved regions.
- **Military Information Support Operations:** SOCSOUTH maintained military information support teams in six 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 global DoD Rewards Program, and U.S. Government Anti-Trafficking in Persons efforts. These activities supported a broad range of efforts against transnational organized criminal and violent extremist organizations.

- **Intelligence Analytical Support to U.S. Country Teams:** SOCSOUTH provided support to U.S. Country Teams efforts focused on terrorism, human smuggling networks, and transnational organized crime.
 - SOCSOUTH helped develop host nation capabilities and country team support through a number of subject matter exchanges.
 - SOCSOUTH supported multiple U.S. Country Team and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) collaborations with Partner Nations, with emphasis on countering Special Interest Aliens involved in cross-border criminal activities.
- **Building Intellectual Capital:** SOCSOUTH, in conjunction with the Colombian Joint Staff College, conducted six Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP)-funded seminars in Bogota, Colombia during 2015. Subject-matter expert presenters from the U.S., Colombia, and other nations collaborated with hundreds of participants from 18 Western Hemisphere and NATO countries. Late in the year, SOCSOUTH worked with Partner Nation defense and security institutions in El Salvador to build a complementary regional CTFP series in that country.
- **FUERZAS COMANDO 2015:** FUERZAS COMANDO is a USSOUTHCOM-sponsored, SOCSOUTH-executed multinational exercise featuring a Special Operations skills competition and a Senior Leader Seminar designed to promote military-to-military relationships, increased interoperability, and improved regional security. Approximately 700 military, law enforcement, and civilian personnel took part. The 2015 skills competition was held in Poptun, Guatemala and included participation by 18 Partner Nations and the United States. In the city of Antigua, distinguished representatives from each nation discussed approaches to combating terrorism, organized crime, and illicit trafficking at the Senior Leader Seminar.
- **FUSED RESPONSE 2015:** 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 2015 was a Joint and Combined exercise held across several locations in Honduras. U.S. military and civilian personnel and aircraft operated with their Honduran counterparts to refine rapid crisis response procedures and learn from each other's best practices.
- **PANAMAX 2015:** In this annual USSOUTHCOM-sponsored, 19-nation exercise, regional forces support the Government of Panama as it protects safe passage through the Panama Canal, ensures its neutrality, and preserves its national sovereignty. SOCSOUTH took part as a member of the multinational Special Operations team led by Brazil.
- **GATOR AIDE 2015:** Exercise GATOR AIDE is a Personnel Recovery exercise designed to validate USSOUTHCOM's non-conventional assisted recovery capabilities. SOCSOUTH worked with U.S. interagency partners to enhance each other's readiness to prepare for, plan, and conduct specialized search and rescue operations throughout the region.