

Looking to the Future

If we choose to be bound by the past, we will never move forward. And I want to particularly say this to the young people of every faith, in every country: you, more than anyone, have the ability to remake this world.

All of us share this world for but a brief moment in time. The question is whether we spend that time focused on what pushes us apart, or whether we commit ourselves to an effort—a sustained effort—to find common ground, to focus on the future we seek for our children, and to respect the dignity of all human beings.

—Barack Obama
President of the United States¹

The nations of the Americas have never been as important to each other as they are today. With exponential advances in technology and strong natural connections, our societies are bound together more closely across the entire spectrum of human contact than they have been at any other time in history. From migration and demographic changes, to a record level of commercial interaction and interdependence, to shared transnational security challenges, our countries' futures are wedded together.

During my 3 years at U.S. Southern Command, we tried to focus on the strengths of this hemisphere—the enormous diversity, beauty, and potential—while also seeking effective and cooperative solutions to the complex security challenges that traverse borders throughout the Americas, most notably crime, gangs, and drugs. At the same time, we understood that the realization of our hemisphere's long-term security, stability, and prosperity will only come through addressing the underlying conditions of poverty, inequality, and corruption that affect vast portions of the region today.

The Americas is our home—our *shared* home. There are many inhabitants sharing this residence; in fact, about 500 million people, one-half of the hemisphere's population, live in the 41 nations, territories, and protectorates of Central and South America and the Caribbean. By the year 2050, the

actual population in real numbers may grow to 768 million, approximately 10 percent of the world's population.² While each of us celebrates our uniqueness and diversity across the hemisphere, we also share tremendous linkages and natural alignments that bring us closer together with each year that passes. Simply looking at a map underscores the obvious physical connection between our nations. However, we are tied together in ways far beyond physical and sociological proximity—the accident of geography; our hemisphere is linked demographically, economically, socially, politically, culturally, linguistically, and militarily. These shared qualities and beliefs connect us and provide the basis for addressing the common challenges that affect the security and stability of all nations in the region today. These common traits also enable strong partnerships as we look to the promise of tomorrow, and serve as the foundation for the enduring relationship we will need as we face the challenges of the future together.

U.S. Southern Command is responsible for conducting military operations and promoting security cooperation in Central America, the Caribbean, and South America in order to achieve U.S. strategic objectives. Successfully accomplishing this mission enhances the security and stability in the Western Hemisphere and ensures the forward defense of the United States. Our motto is simple: *Partnership for the Americas*. These four words capture our vision and overarching strategy, objectives, and themes. This vision defines where the organization must go if we are to achieve our goals in the future. As we look forward, Southern Command seeks to continue evolving into an interagency-oriented organization striving to support security and stability in the Americas. This vision embodies our belief that the challenges we face require us to enable lasting and inclusive partnerships in order to work collectively to ensure security and enhance stability in the Americas. Our efforts are significantly influenced by our understanding of the complexities of the hemisphere and our ability to foster cooperation, with and among, willing and capable partners. As globalization trends continue, we are certain that our security will involve deeper cooperation with multinational, multiagency, and public-private partners. As our hemisphere “virtually” shrinks, each of our nations—working together—becomes more important in facing the challenges posed by this new century.

Our mission is derived from national guidance; our strategic vision and approach rely on interaction and exchange with interagency community partners and, increasingly, on those partners in the international community and private sector. We use this input from all these stakeholders to ensure partnership, cooperation, and synergy are inherent in everything we do. Our living

and evolving strategy was crafted to respond to the ever-constant mandate to meet joint military requirements while also recognizing the growing need to integrate all instruments of national capability and capacity to meet the challenges of the future throughout the hemisphere. As we move into the future, we are committed to helping build a focused, collaborative approach that will enable all of us to work together to fulfill the promise of the Americas.

The word *promise* has two different, but equally important, meanings. The first meaning is a mutual agreement between parties—an unbreakable bond. The second meaning is the potential expressed in the intent to accomplish a mission or to do something vital and important. Southern Command has been and will continue to be fully committed to meet both definitions: we *promise* to be a reliable partner throughout the hemisphere as we face tough challenges together; and we will also work with our partners to help unlock the *promise* of the future.

Partnering—military and civilian, public and private, foreign and domestic—is an essential component of the Southern Command mission. It enables all of us in the enterprise to fulfill our full range of missions while effectively supporting our friends and teammates in their own endeavors. These partnerships have been based on shared understandings and common interests and we will endeavor to build and further develop them. We must also remember, however, that while we do not—and will not—agree on every issue or every problem, we *will* work together in cooperative and supporting efforts to resolve shared problems to all our betterment. These agreements, understandings, and bonds will yield valuable insights, will enable us to prioritize and synchronize our efforts in a resource-constrained environment, and will contribute to the development of a comprehensive and synergistic strategic approach that is holistic and integrated in a cooperative manner with our partners. And throughout, to facilitate and perpetuate this environment of collaboration and teamwork, we need to better communicate not only what we are doing, but also *why* we are doing it, to audiences both internal and external. Every thought, word, and deed needs to be synchronized to convey the same message—we are all in this together, we share the same fate, and we will work together to achieve shared security and stability.

In the preceding chapters, I have described the intricacies and the dynamism of the diverse region in which we live and operate. I have highlighted the tremendous linkages that we share with Latin America and the Caribbean—important geographic, cultural, economic, and geopolitical linkages. I have outlined some difficult underlying conditions faced by the region, led by poverty and unequal wealth distribution, and

how they contribute to specific challenges such as crime, violence, and illicit trafficking of drugs, people, and weapons. In the remainder of this final chapter, I would like to share my personal opinions on where I see the future taking us—a forecast of sorts for our region: I will highlight the trends I believe our strongest linkages will take, address the main challenges we still face, and talk about actions we can take—leveraging the potential of some of Southern Command’s key initiatives already underway, and further developing and maturing them—to help us and our partners meet current and future security demands.

This is the right time for all of us, inside and outside the U.S. Government, to work together on the challenges facing this hemisphere. By doing so, we can realize the true promise of the Americas. It all begins with building and communicating real understanding, leading to a real and vibrant Partnership for the Americas.

Our governments know that the truly great challenges of our day can best be met by marshalling our complementary strengths and abilities in the service of our shared goals. Our hemisphere’s potential is enormous and our success is linked intimately to the success of our neighbors.

—Condoleezza Rice
Former U.S. Secretary of State³

The countries of the Americas are, and will increasingly be, important to daily life in the United States. Shared connections and opportunities for working even more closely include economic growth, jobs, equity, energy, citizen security, migration, democratic governance, and the rule of law. We also need to recognize and understand, however, that some of the most important issues in relations with Latin America are in many ways domestic issues for the United States, namely, immigration, drugs, energy, and trade. A steady drumbeat throughout these chapters has been the importance of maintaining a strong U.S. commitment to strengthening democratic governance, the rule of law, and respect for human dignity—and doing so through patient, nuanced, cooperative, and primarily multi-lateral processes and instruments.

We need to continue examining these unfamiliar—particularly for the military and security forces—processes and sharpen our focus and

strategic approach by investing time and resources into strengthening and, where necessary, creating new multilateral tools to support the establishment of security, democracy, and liberty in the region. But this is going to require a significant shift in thinking *away from* traditional bilateral channels of diplomatic pressure and assistance, and *toward* multilateral cooperation with likeminded partners. One of the ways to find cooperation and partners is to focus on the number of strong linkages which already exist and provide ample opportunity for collaboration, interaction, and exchange as we confront shared challenges.

Linkages and Challenges

The majority of the countries in the Western Hemisphere are at a crossroads, having fluctuated over the past decades between authoritarian and democratic governments. The combination of endemic poverty, gangs, corruption, illicit trafficking, transnational crime, and other illegal activities has stressed the ability of several of the democratic governments of the region to fully exercise their sovereignty. In order for these countries to thrive and provide for their people, they must enjoy a stable and secure environment.

As we have discussed, there is a considerable range of important issues, all of which need to be coordinated through multiple levels in more than one agency and in more than one nation. This is a prerequisite for any project or any overarching approach to the region: each issue needs to be assessed as part of an interconnected and unified strategy. For example, the illicit narcotics issue cannot be adequately addressed in isolation from issues of migration, arms trafficking, money-laundering, and radical ideological terrorists. Our strategy has become an overarching framework based on the affirmation of common values through institutional cooperation within the hemisphere: democracy, liberty, and human rights; additionally, our strategy includes learning lessons from the past while looking to the future—perhaps even anticipating problems before they erupt with overwhelming urgency.

Economics

International commerce and trade between the United States and Latin American and Caribbean countries are strong, and experts expect this growth to continue. The total of all merchandise imported from Latin American and Caribbean countries to the United States increased 24.3 percent from 2004 to 2005, and exports from the United States to the region increased 17.6 percent during this same period.⁴ Total mercantile

trade between the United States and Latin America was \$409 billion in 2004, up from \$301 billion in 1999, and accounting for approximately 17 percent of total U.S. world trade.⁵ Economic partnerships are strong today and experts expect U.S. trade with Latin America to exceed trade with Europe and Japan by 2011.

The economies in Latin America and the Caribbean are increasingly tied with the global economy, with particularly close linkages to the United States. Now, Latin American economies are beginning to feel the negative impact of the current economic downturn in the United States and Europe. Although the duration and impact of these economic problems are difficult to predict, any global or regional slowdown or reduction in demand and prices for commodities will naturally have an adverse effect on this region. Economic data from late 2008 showed that commodity prices that had risen until mid-July 2008, had recently fallen. Wheat and corn futures were down 70 percent, oil prices dropped 55 percent, and several metals were down 50 percent.⁶

The fall in commodity prices will ease some inflationary pressures, but combined with other economic factors, it will negatively impact the region's growth and cause near- and long-term challenges for the region's leaders. Near term, they will have to cope with the economic slowdown and its inherent challenges: reduced exports, tighter access to financing, stock market devaluation, less foreign direct investment, and reduced migrant remittances. Long term, if these economies continue to falter, they will have to deal with the electorate's disappointment, and in some cases reduced overall security and stability. They will also face a challenge in fully implementing positive economic reforms that many of the region's governments have attempted to implement over the last two decades.

Although 2009 and the next few years are forecast to be more difficult economically in our region, 2010 shows promise for recovery and growth. Each country will vary in performance depending on its own situation, policies, and political leadership. Many of the larger countries in our region are well-prepared to weather this adverse economic situation due to recent economic reforms and an increased integration with the global economy, particularly the U.S. economy. Our interdependence with the region should, over time, dampen individual economic shocks, and foster sustained economic growth.

On a broader scale, globalization can be seen as "plate tectonics"—a force that *can* be interrupted, but not stopped by anything less than a true world catastrophe. Left to its own, globalization will increase due to the sheer weight of market forces. Then there is the notion that as the global

economy grows and expands, the beneficiaries will be greater in number. History, however, paints a different picture. Although poverty rates have been modestly reduced over the last 15 years—from 48 percent living in poverty in 1990 to an estimated 35 percent in 2007—with increases in population over the years, the absolute numbers of people living in poverty (living on less than 2 U.S. dollars a day) have risen slightly overall in the region. The number of people living in indigence—or extreme poverty (living on less than 1 U.S. dollar a day)—has also climbed, affecting an estimated 12.7 percent of the population.⁷

Combined with this poverty is a disproportionate wealth distribution that is second only to sub-Saharan Africa. The richest 20 percent of the Latin American population earns 57 percent of the region's income, earning 20 times that of the poorest 20 percent. By comparison, the richest 20 percent in high-income regions of the world earns only 7.7 times that of the poorest group.⁸ This inequality gap negates any positive impact of growth on poverty reduction. The cumulative effect of poverty and income inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean serves as a catalyst for insecurity and instability. Although these figures vary from country to country in the aggregate, poverty and inequality make whole regional populations vulnerable to the influence of illicit activity—such as drugs, crime, gangs, and illegal immigration. Additionally, there are extra-hemispheric factors that affect the region as well. For example, many nations buy Latin American raw material and agricultural goods and then transport them outside the hemisphere for their own use. These short-term gains fail to create the jobs needed for sustained growth and do not offer any incentive for reinvestment in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thus, in some ways, globalization will continue to be a divisive factor if it perpetuates disparities—the gap in the global standard of living between the “haves” and the “have nots.” This could lead to a backlash against the “haves,” potentially creating more anti-U.S. sentiment and anti-Westernism. As the security-related problems of globalization become more important and more prevalent, our ability to influence the global rule sets and to help contribute to the global security agenda will become attenuated. We as the different members representing the larger U.S. Government need to work with our partners to devise new, mutually beneficent, multilateral pacts on labor regulations, environmental rules, and other agreements that are important for commerce, trade, defense, and the like. We have a window of opportunity to work with our neighbors to make globalization secure.

The hemisphere shares other economic linkages in addition to trade relationships. For example, Latin America and the Caribbean are the largest

sources of legal and illegal immigrants into the United States, and these immigrants often send remittances back to their countries of origin. Inter-American Development Bank studies estimate \$45 billion in remittances flowed from the United States to Latin America in 2006. This is another sign of economic interdependency throughout the hemisphere.⁹

Technology provides both an economic and social linkage. The Internet enables a connectivity that did not exist 20 years ago, and the hemisphere has embraced this new opportunity. From 2000 to 2007, growth of Internet use in Central America was 623.9 percent; South American growth was 326.7 percent; Caribbean growth was 704.4 percent; and North American growth was 114.7 percent. Additionally, English and Spanish rank as the first and fourth top Internet languages in the world, respectively.¹⁰ Rapid communication exchanges and the growing use of the Internet are clearly contributing to increased interactions and constitute a strong linkage. However, technology can be a double-edged sword, as a growing technology gap will undoubtedly widen the poverty gap; thus, as we make advances, we need to ensure we share and exchange those advances to the betterment of our entire neighborhood.

Energy is another factor involved in the strengthening economic linkages within the hemisphere. According to the Department of Energy, three of the top four foreign energy suppliers to the United States are located within the Western Hemisphere—Canada, Mexico, and Venezuela. Further, as reported by the Coalition for Affordable and Reliable Energy, the United States will need 31 percent more petroleum and 62 percent more natural gas in the next two decades.¹¹ As the United States continues to require more petroleum and gas, Latin America will become a global energy leader with its large oil reserves and oil and gas production and supplies.

Prosperity requires basic resources. We currently are well positioned, but resources tend to be scarcest where they are free. It will be critical for the region and the world to properly price resources that once were (are) free, seek alternate energy sources, recycle, and use other methods. We are not in a “finite supply” situation mindset, yet; rather, we are in a “reuse and recycle” system, but there will still be a constant scramble for resources, which could contribute to a keen competition for energy, water, and land. In extreme cases, this could lead to an eventual conflict over them. The cost of oil and consumption trends are two macro forces that are already raising this region to new prominence levels, as indicated by the presence of China buying up as much of the available resources as possible. New economic interests are based on energy supplies and access to other resources. As we continue to curb our own dependency on the rest of the world for such

commodities, we need to remember that some key resources come from our region and conflicts will arise to ensure foreign access to them.

Social and Political

In addition to demographic and economic ties with Latin America and the Caribbean, we share social and political views rooted in a common commitment to democracy, freedom, justice, and respect for human dignity, human rights, and human values. The foundation for enabling these fundamental tenets rests upon a representative form of government. The citizens of this hemisphere believe the best form of government is a democracy that truly represents the population and is more than just action at the ballot box. The first article of the Inter-American Democratic Charter clearly articulates this belief: “The people of the Americas have the right to democracy, and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it. Democracy is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas.”¹²

Corruption, however, is a huge impediment to improved governance by obstructing adherence to the rule of law and creating insecurity, thus negating the gains of even the strongest economic ties. Various studies point out that reducing corruption could save some nations in the region billions of dollars annually. Trust in politicians and political parties is particularly low throughout the region and this distrust shows no signs of relenting. This stimulates discontent and disenchantment with the system, which can lead to confusion and rejection of “democracy.” To prevent backsliding toward authoritarian rule, democracy assistance needs to translate into real tangible improvements in the judicial systems, accountability of public institutions and leaders, and greater transparency and improvement in public services. One method to accomplish this is to leverage the positive perception of other international actors—the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and the European Union. Strong governmental institutions organized around transparent policies and processes, legitimate justice systems, and ethical leaders in all elements of the government are the components necessary to defeat corruption. The people in this region want this transparency and legitimacy—it is just up to the leaders in positions of power to make this occur. For our part, we need to listen, engage, and function as equal partners in joining hands with our neighbors. In some cases, we may need to surrender short-term benefits for long-term gains.

Today, democracy is practiced in varying degrees in almost every country in the hemisphere. We are fortunate to be united by democratic

principles, the inspiration of liberty, and the people's desire to have human rights respected by their governments. Of course, there are differences in form and style among our governments, and the democratic scorecard may differ greatly from nation to nation. While our hemisphere contains many representative governments, there are some relatively significant differences in what we each think of as democracy—elections alone do not guarantee democratic rule. However, compared to three decades ago when the form of government in the majority of the countries was not democratic, the region's similarities outweigh the differences. Nations across the region agree that in true democracies, free governments should be accountable to their people and govern effectively. We need to continue to build on and develop these similar beliefs, using them as cornerstones as we craft new institutions dedicated to the rule of law, freedom, and opportunity. Governmental institutions that eliminate corruption and protect the civil rights and freedoms of those they govern are more likely to enable future security and stability.

Culture and Language

In this hemisphere, we are fortunate to share similar main languages and interwoven cultural linkages. Although there are many different dialects, this area uses four primary languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French. While the United States is thought of as primarily an English-speaking nation, it now has the largest number of Spanish-speaking citizens in the world after Mexico. The United States and the rest of the region have significant cultural ties today and these will grow even stronger in the decades ahead, as evidenced by the previously cited United Nations report that predicts people of Hispanic heritage will comprise approximately 30 percent of the total U.S. population by 2050.

Because of the physical and the sociological proximity of the many nations of the Americas, reinforced by the growing influence of a range of Hispanic and Caribbean diaspora populations within the United States itself, we can draw on the immense and diverse sources of goodwill and shared aspirations that potentially link the many nations across the hemisphere. We are very much moving toward becoming a bicultural and bilingual nation, which will only strengthen the bonds we already share in this neighborhood.

However, we still need a greater emphasis on public diplomacy—using those shared languages to ensure our words reach the desired audience and convey the right messages. This may take a long time to have an effect, but it can start with extending the level of culture-to-culture diplomacy, including

educational exchanges and interaction between leading people in academia. In the words of Senator William Fulbright, “The essence of intercultural education is the acquisition of empathy—the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may see something we have failed to see, or may see it more accurately.”¹³ Fulbright goes on to explain that the purpose of the exchange program is to “erode the culturally rooted mistrust that sets nations against one another” because educational exchange can turn nations into people, contributing as no other form of communication can to the “humanizing of international relations.”¹⁴

Over the long term, the United States cannot capture or kill its way to victory. Where possible, what the military calls kinetic operations should be subordinate to measures aimed at promoting better governance, economic programs that spur development, and efforts to address the grievances among the discontented, from whom the terrorists recruit.

— Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense

Military

As a traditional military jurisdiction, USSOUTHCOM’s area of responsibility is notable by its current and foreseeable lack of conventional military threats; but the region’s persistent conditions of poverty, inequality, and corruption provide fertile soil in which international criminals and terrorists can recruit and flourish. Throughout this area of focus, security threats take forms that we more readily associate with crime than war. In the region’s growing gang activity, we see criminals and the disenfranchised band together in innovative ways that threaten U.S. national security. In the very capable hands of resourceful, well-trained criminals and extremists, activities such as kidnapping, counterfeiting, human trafficking, and drug trafficking concoct a dangerous blend that leave human tragedy in their wake. The growing threat from gangs is an outgrowth of underlying poverty and a lack of opportunity, and until these fundamental causes are addressed, the symptoms will continue to increase in severity. Gang activity, much like terrorism, transcends borders and affects numerous countries in the region.

Drug trafficking will also remain a hemisphere challenge. While we have made great progress in the fight against drugs, we have not yet eliminated the threat. The illicit drug industry alone accounts for nearly 20,000 deaths in the United States each year. The demand for drugs in the United States remains strong and creates incentives for illegal activities. The Andean Ridge remains far and away the leading supplier of the world's cocaine and a provider of heroin consumed in the United States. Drug traffickers are constantly developing new means of preventing interference with their illegal narcotics activities. As we modify our tactics, drug producers and traffickers find innovative methods to develop the drugs and alternative trafficking routes. The drug traffickers of yesterday have become much more lethal today, and this trend is expected to continue.

Areas with lower levels of economic investment, development, and growth provide a breeding ground for terrorism and the full range of criminal activities. Poverty, inequality, and corruption create an environment where sanctuaries for terrorist organizations can grow. Narcoterrorists like the FARC in Colombia and Sendero Luminoso in Peru are one form of active terrorism and derive their funding and power from the sale of illicit drugs. These organizations and a number of extremely violent gangs have driven up the rates of homicide and kidnappings throughout the region and do not operate within traditional nation-state boundaries—they live among and terrorize the populace, and take advantage of ungoverned and undergoverned spaces without any regard or respect for national sovereignties.

Additionally, jihadist radical groups are present in a number of these areas within the hemisphere—many in urban areas. These terrorist operations are supporting Islamic radical groups worldwide, and there is potential for terrorists to use permissive environments within the Western Hemisphere as launching points for devastating attacks. Groups in these areas raise money by both legal (religious donations, donations from local Arab businesses) and illegal means (extortion, insurance fraud, drug trafficking, weapons sales, document sales, commercial piracy) to support terrorists worldwide.

In addition to the growing impact of crime, gangs, drugs, and terrorism, environmental disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, tsunamis, and drought also loom as an ever-present danger. In Latin America, because of rapid population growth, the size of the populace in cities has increased significantly since the 1980s, escalating demand for water, land, and energy. Fast-growing settlements outpace the societies' ability to provide the basic infrastructure to maintain adequate quality of life and health conditions that are essential to human development. People

in urban centers consistently endure dangerously high levels of air pollution, severe water contamination, and catastrophic mudslides resulting from rapid deforestation on the periphery.

None of these challenges falls into mission areas traditionally associated with the military; but addressing them effectively in a 21st-century way requires the application of all instruments of national power. Therefore, we have to be innovative in our approach to best leverage the inherent knowledge and capabilities present within our partner agencies. Furthermore, when you analyze the challenges we face together in the region, you quickly realize that not even one *nation*, big or small, can successfully overcome them. Illegal drug trafficking, criminal activity, gangs, human smuggling, terrorist financing and recruitment, natural disasters—none of these stops at a nation's border. These challenges require cooperative solutions and partnerships. Our unified and cooperative team must also deal with the underlying problems of unemployment, corruption, and a general lack of opportunity.

Thankfully, there is a long tradition of security cooperation, combined with very little state-on-state military conflict, in our shared home. The healthy military and security force relations throughout most of the region provide an outstanding vehicle for cooperation in diverse missions, such as peacekeeping, counternarcotics, disaster response, and humanitarian operations. As I have attempted to show through the preceding chapters, we at Southern Command have found that, hands down, the most effective and durable responses to nearly all of these challenges and threats we face in this region can best be achieved through reinforcing the capacity for our partner nations to govern justly, create and sustain lasting economic and social infrastructures, and sow the seeds for an enduring sense of hope and prosperity.

The key to the future of this great region is *understanding*—understanding each other, understanding shared challenges, and understanding the promise of security cooperation for our shared future. At Southern Command, we study the numerous and compelling linkages to the people and societies in the Americas and communicate their importance as we strive to build and strengthen relationships in the region through effective strategic communication and interagency partnering. Everything we do at Southern Command must encourage and assist in building partnerships across the region, while working with intergovernmental and public-private organizations to ensure success.

Southern Command is committed to being a good partner in a military-to-military sense. Every day, year after year, we dedicate the majority of

our resources toward building the security capabilities of partners, while working to encourage an environment of cooperation among all of the nations in the region. We conduct frequent and wide-ranging multinational exercises and international exchanges with our partners, send thousands of partner military and civilian experts to various leading academic institutions, and provide other critical security assistance to our friends in the region. All of these are done as part of strengthening regional partnerships and collective capabilities we believe are integral to U.S. national security and stability of the Western Hemisphere. These exercises focus on confronting regional threats such as maritime insecurity, terrorism, illegal migration, and illicit trafficking. At the same time, they are increasing partner nation ability to support peacekeeping, disaster relief, and humanitarian assistance.

Panamax, for example, is the world's largest multinational training exercise. More than 20 nations focus on improving the hemisphere's ability to provide air, sea, and land forces to assist the government of Panama in its excellent work of securing the Panama Canal. Another large-scale exercise we support is UNITAS, which trains participating forces to ensure maximum interoperability in future coalition operations. The 2009 iteration involved 7,000 international sailors and mariners and included Canada and Germany; it marked the 50th Anniversary, making it the longest running multinational maritime training exercise in the world.

In addition to our robust maritime programs, we are extremely excited about revamping our land engagements with a young program called "Beyond the Horizon." This program aims to maximize the impact of our land events by increasing the number of "microburst" engagements—engineer construction, small unit familiarization, subject matter exchanges, medical readiness training exercises—as well as establishing longer-term programs that integrate the efforts of other U.S. Federal agencies, host nations, and the private sector.

We will look to increase the duration and number of countries visited through Continuing Promise and other similar efforts as part of the Partnership of the Americas, which will build on the successful missions of the ships *Comfort*, *Kearsarge*, and *Boxer*. These deployments will highlight persistent engagement with innovative interagency, multinational, and public-private cooperation.

We will continue our Regional Airspace Integration (RASI) initiative with a focus on improving Central American capability to detect and monitor aircraft in the predominantly unmonitored airspace. This endeavor involves integrating the civil, military, and security air domain in the region, modernizing air traffic management, and building a multinational

common operating picture through a regional surveillance center and new surveillance radars. A complementary program to RASI is the Regional Aircraft Modernization Program (RAMP), which conducts surveys to identify gaps in the aviation capability of our partners to respond to transnational threats. Ultimately, RAMP aims to promote regional air sovereignty through increased cooperation, interoperability, and modernization of regional air security assets, with cooperating nations better prepared to perform humanitarian and air sovereignty missions.

Again, our role in the military is to work with partner nation military and security forces to ensure the requisite conditions of security are in place so stability can start to take root. We endeavor to improve the region's ability to respond to today's and tomorrow's security challenges. Perhaps the most dramatic example of building partner capacity is Colombia's mounting success against illegal armed groups. Southern Command has provided training and logistical and technical support to increase the capability of Colombia's forces, enabling a string of victories over the narcoterrorist groups. For the first time in decades, the Colombian government is providing services in all of its municipalities, and the Colombian people have a renewed confidence in their future. As Colombia "wins its peace," the entire region benefits because the narcoterrorists lose capacity to grow and transport drugs.

With each new success and triumph, momentum is built. Through a steady improvement in security, we can help create the conditions that will enable this region to counter the poverty and inequality that has gripped it for so long. The foundations for this can then perhaps be exported to other parts of the globe where similar conditions and challenges exist—for example, can overcoming the tendencies toward state failure in Haiti provide lessons learned and the promise that the situation will not worsen in Afghanistan, Somalia, and other places? If we can demonstrate a credible and effective rule of law and whole-of-society response to armed insurrection and the drug trade that fuels it in Colombia, what prospects for a similar success might there be for containing the heroin traffic and lawlessness of Central Asia?

While our programs and initiatives focus primarily on security, increasingly our approach has broadened to support stability and development efforts as part of a larger national path to true partnering and engagement in the Western Hemisphere. We pursue a host of programs in support of other lead agencies and government entities to include numerous training exercises, educational programs, technology-sharing, intelligence-sharing, security procurement assistance, humanitarian aid, and a myriad of others. In addition, Southern Command conducts a variety of

humanitarian goodwill activities that directly help those in need while providing needed training to our team. As an example of our commitment to the people of the region, our medical personnel treated almost 700,000 patients in the past 3 years, varying from routine prevention to the most serious emergency cases. A key aspect of the mission is the partnership of military personnel with other government agencies and nongovernmental organizations. Furthermore, we sponsor numerous other humanitarian projects, ranging from planned events such as the construction and/or refurbishment of wells, schools, community centers, and medical facilities to rapid response missions in the wake of disasters.

All of these efforts contribute to showing goodwill, to building relationships, and perhaps most importantly, to building understanding. Underlying these endeavors and fundamental to their success is a novel approach to partnering that combines the synergistic efforts of a diverse group of experts from U.S. and international militaries, nongovernmental organizations, and volunteers and donations from the U.S. private sector. Such diversity of humanitarian expertise enhances mission effectiveness. It also lays the foundation for relationships that could pay dividends in the event that the United States responds to a potential humanitarian crisis in the region. Finally, this integrated approach highlights the power of creative public-private partnerships to show our true interest in and deep caring for the people of the Americas.

Building our partners' military and security force capabilities, as well as their capacity to sustain and develop these capabilities on their own, is our primary purpose as we focus on security cooperation. We need to continue the great efforts described in the preceding pages, but we also need to ensure we are doing more than just creating activity and establishing presence. There is a high level of determination and professional camaraderie and a growing sense of teamwork among the military and security forces in this region. I have personally borne witness to the building regional consensus that recognizes threats like illicit trafficking, terrorism, and organized crime are not just one nation's problems, nor are they isolated to one particular facet of a larger issue. For example, there are not just "source nation" issues and "transit nation" issues in the flow of illicit narcotics—rather, they are all subsets of larger, overarching transnational and region-wide issues. Therefore, neither one government entity within a single nation, nor any one solitary nation by itself, is the proper solution. We cannot use just military capabilities and authorities to effectively address these threats; nor can they be addressed exclusively through law enforcement or other government agencies individually.

These dangerous threats and challenges look to exploit natural, political, and institutional seams of authority, operation, and capability throughout all levels of government. Thus, countering these types of obstacles to security, stability, and prosperity in the Americas requires strong and enduring partnerships across the whole of government, and across the whole of many governments, working together in cooperation and synergy. To accomplish this, we will need to expand our thinking and our interagency and international cooperation. Our challenge, therefore, is *intellectual* as well as *institutional*, and I truly feel we can learn a great deal from the professional military and security forces in this region.

Our collective success in this pursuit will not be measured merely by the number of countries who participate, or the number of ships, aircraft, and people who show up for the exercise; that is a good start but, going forward, success will be determined by a measurable increase in the level of performance and capability of each unit or country from year to year, exercise to exercise, conference to conference. Thus, the purpose is to truly generate and build the requisite capabilities to provide security for each partner's populace, and then to develop the capacity so that this will be self-sustaining and advanced within each partner nation as we face the growing number of shared transnational challenges to the security of the Americas.

Many people have assumed that because the House of Representatives the Senate and the President have declared for collective security, the job is done. But the establishing of order and the making of peace does not consist merely of a solemn declaration of a well-drafted constitution.

The making of peace is a continuing process that must go on from day to day, from year to year, so long as our civilization shall last. Our participation in this process is not just the signing of a charter with a big red seal. It is a daily task, a positive participation in all the details and decisions which together constitute a living and growing policy.

—J. William Fulbright
Senate Address, March 28, 1945

Looking Ahead

The dawn of the 21st century presents the U.S. Southern Command with an unprecedented opportunity to define and shape new means and capabilities that will achieve U.S. national security objectives in an age of adaptive, nontraditional, and transnational threats, challenges, and opportunities. As the smallest, most nimble geographic combatant command, charged with responsibility for an area characterized by unconventional military missions, USSOUTHCOM *today* is well equipped to develop a new, interagency model for addressing and confronting these challenges. Having developed a culture of bold and continuous innovation, USSOUTHCOM *tomorrow* will lead U.S. defense and security transformation by setting standards for effective joint, interagency, and multinational partnering solutions.

We live in a dangerous age. Driven by unprecedented technological advancement, globalization will continue to simultaneously disenfranchise and empower radical actors who will attempt to coerce representative governments through criminal and terrorist tactics. Defeating crime, gangs, illicit narcotics, and terrorism is a significant challenge for the United States because established national security tools—centered on military-backed diplomacy—are largely ineffective against this asymmetric threat. Preventing crime, defeating terrorists, and eradicating the sources from which new generations of threats sprout requires a multifaceted approach that reduces existing resources and capabilities while simultaneously improving the underlying conditions of poverty, inequality, corruption, and ignorance that otherwise create and breed future criminals, gangsters, traffickers, and terrorists. Currently, no single arm of the U.S. Government has the ability or authority to coordinate the multiple entities required to execute an effective international campaign. Local, state, and Federal security officials struggle to envision new roles and responsibilities for organizations designed to address the challenges of a different era.

We must never allow the appearance of a somewhat peaceful regional environment to fool us—threats and challenges to our national security as well as to the region as a whole do exist, lurking in our blind spots. This is not the future of “conflict” as the U.S. military has historically envisioned it, or for which we find ourselves adequately organized, trained, or equipped. At times, we find ourselves without adequate legal concepts or authorities, sufficient funding mechanisms, or mission statements. At others, we find ourselves performing missions clearly outside the skill sets to which we traditionally train, but which strategic and operational situations dictate as necessary. As those chartered to employ lethal force in defense of the Nation, we in the DOD must accept “conflict” and all the nuanced challenges to

security as it exists today and redefine ourselves for the challenges at hand even though they may not match our self-conceptions as warriors.

As we chart our way into the next decade of this century, we will hold steady to our course of persistent engagement, partnership-building, enabling understanding, and positive strategic messaging—all propelled by our interagency-support approach. I believe our efforts are making a difference in the hemisphere and for the security of the United States. I truly feel that our superb Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coastguardsmen—Active, Reserve, and Guard—as well as our talented civilians are daily living up to the trust the American people have placed in them. They are all volunteers to serve their country, and I am honored and blessed to serve with them every day. Our people are our greatest strength, and I thank them and their families for their tireless efforts and selfless service to this Nation.

From everything that has gone before, we have the basis for imagining how the future might look for global security. The combatant commands we have today appropriately seek to maintain a vital regional perspective on security issues. However, enabling truly joint and interagency activities in the future will require additional modalities and authorities to provide effective synchronization across the spectrum of U.S. Government agencies' resources. We need vastly better integration across the entire government of the United States, and we need better coalition integration.

Imagine all the actors who wield the instruments of national power—what many call “the interagency”—clumped together in the form of a huge, amorphous iceberg. Science tells us that a typical iceberg has only 1/8 of its actual size showing above water. In Latin America, the military is that tip of the iceberg. The vast majority of the “force” that will be brought to bear in this pursuit is comprised of doctors, lawyers, businessmen, financiers, construction workers, and educators—not soldiers or policemen. To further progress, we need to institute a new process and paradigm that will bring all instruments of national power to bear in meeting current and future regional challenges. This unfolding 21st century presents our entire national security structure in general, and U.S. Southern Command in particular, with an unprecedented opportunity to define and shape new means and capabilities that will best achieve U.S. national security objectives in an era of transnational and unconventional threats. We find ourselves at the dawn of new thinking about how we might overcome the inertia and restructure ourselves—to morph in ways that will serve our own interests as well as those of our partner nations to the south.

For our part, as included in this continued evolution, we “test drove” a new model. Southern Command was perfectly suited as a test case: we could easily transition over a relatively short period to a more integrated posture that expanded our strong interagency perspective and capacity. To accomplish this, we needed an operating picture with persistent, accurate visibility of all U.S. Government and nongovernment activities ongoing throughout our region. Broadening the aperture in such a way required not only a cultural mind shift among assigned military personnel, but also inclusion of new partners. Relationships are important, and such partnerships must be forged by building levels of trust in the ability of all to work together along traditionally unfamiliar, culturally distinct, but strategically important lines outside the Department of Defense.

Specifically, here is what we initially envisioned and continue to foresee for Southern Command and any other like-minded, interagency-oriented security organization.

Interagency Cooperation

We envisioned a true interagency team, with senior representatives from each key agency and cabinet actually holding command positions throughout the organization. Instead of historic J-coded directorates suited solely for military operations, we have organized directorates reflecting the kinds of missions we want to undertake in the 21st century, namely, *Partnering*, *Stability*, and *Security and Intelligence*. More will follow as our priorities and skill sets adapt and transform.

The Three Pillars of Democracy—Diplomacy, Development, and Defense

We need to continue to recognize that the real thrust of 21st-century national security in this region is not vested in war, but in intelligent management of the conditions of peace in a volatile era. While remaining fully ready for combat operations, diplomacy dominates so much of what we do, and development is a mandatory requisite feature of true, long-term stability and prosperity. We need much greater engagement with the State Department and USAID throughout the enterprise. We should undertake no task without first considering the valuable synergy generated when these and other entities work together—throughout the process—as a team. The importance of this notion has been exemplified by establishing a 3-star equivalent, post-Ambassador Deputy to the command, and having another post-Ambassador as the commander’s primary economic advisor.

Public-Private Linkages

Much of the power of the United States to create successful partnerships in our region is found in the private sector. For example, Microsoft creates tremendous, positive impact in the region. Nearly 850,000 people work in Microsoft-related jobs—roughly half of the information technology market in Latin America and the Caribbean. Between 2003 and 2007, Microsoft awarded over \$27 million in grants and software to help more than 30 million people in 19 countries in our region. Moreover, in May 2007 Microsoft announced a partnership with Inter-American Development Bank to form a new Latin American Collaborative Research Federation that will create a “virtual research institute.” Since then, Microsoft has committed \$930,000 to finance the first 3 years of the project, enabling scientists at research institutions throughout Latin America to seek collaborative solutions to socioeconomic problems in areas such as agriculture, education, health care, alternative energy, and the environment. Innovative ideas like this come from industry all the time. At Southern Command, we must find ways to work with nongovernmental organizations, private charitable entities, international organizations, and the private sector—to become *the* partner of choice for those who wish to benefit in the region. We should look for ways to integrate this endeavor into key staff nodes.

High-Speed Staff Process

Using new methods of connection and a flattened organization that links the staff to move at mandatory speed in the era of the 24-hour news cycle has also been a prerequisite for success. Stovepiped, hierarchic, redundant, and serial processes that characterized the organization in the past have begun to make way for collaborative, integrated, matrixed, and parallel decisionmaking in our new structure. Key enterprise-wide functions (e.g., planning, resources, and assessment) have been led by functional directorates responsible to prevent gaps and seams while ensuring unity of effort toward the overall strategic objective. Eliminating duplicative and excessive multi-level reviews has started making the whole enterprise more lean, more flexible, and more adaptive to the changing environment. A matrixed process has shown it can lend itself to a healthy competition of ideas on major issues among directorates; at the same time, a vigorous dedication to teaming along the way has helped to prevent such “creative friction” from bogging down decisionmaking. The whole organization is striving to be mission-focused, informed and guided throughout by strategic communication, as well as integrated by function. As we continue to learn and improve, this new way

of doing business will more fully incorporate the political, military, economic, humanitarian, ecological, and diplomatic dimensions of regional operations into a single, coherent strategy.

Strategic Communication Focus

Strategic communication is the ultimate team sport—it must be done as part of a joint, interagency, and commercial system. It does no good whatsoever to have a perfect strategic communication plan that is ultimately contradicted by other U.S. Government agencies, as is often the case, unfortunately. Each plan must be vetted properly and become a combined effort. It should take into account what private industry is doing in a given country or region so that inherent contradictions between public and private institutions do not undermine the entire effort. It must be crafted in a sensible, collaborative, collegial way and done in an appropriate voice.

We must instill communication assessment and processes into our culture, developing programs, plans, policy, information, and themes to support the U.S. Government's overall strategic objectives. To this end, Southern Command has worked tirelessly to integrate communications efforts horizontally across the enterprise to link information and communication issues with broader policies, plans, and actions. We need to continue to emphasize that this type of assessment and strategic thinking needs to be considered at the front end of planning, not conducted as an afterthought. We need to continue to focus on synchronizing words and actions, ensuring deed mirrors thought, and doing so across and among all elements of national power. The way we tell our story needs to be viewed as a vital extension of national policy. The narrative matters deeply.

Additionally, at least for strategic communication that goes beyond the shores of the United States (a safe assumption for virtually everything we do in this arena), the international community must be considered and often consulted. In other words, the impact on individual countries and international organizations should be considered, and—if possible—they should be part of the plan. In particular, international organizations have resources that can be used in execution and even in planning. Similarly, little success can be achieved in a foreign land without the cooperation of the host nation and regional organizations. Often, they can contribute to strategic messaging and should be consulted for their expertise and their understanding. While there will undoubtedly be exceptions to this approach, such consultations and cooperation can frequently pay enormous dividends.

Ultimately, we in the business of national security must work together to arrive at a shared understanding of what constitutes strategic communication in an international context. This is an effort that must involve practitioners at the Department of Defense, Department of State, and indeed at all Cabinet organizations and national agencies engaged in international strategic communication on behalf of the United States. It is also an effort that can be informed by those in private industry who work in this milieu.

Sustained Engagement

As discussed throughout this piece, the capability to forge willing and capable partnerships throughout the region and to create a sense of goodwill toward the United States is essential to achieving the mission. In order to do this, we need sustained engagement. We plan to conduct deployments similar to the USNS *Comfort*, USS *Kearsarge* and *Boxer*, and HSV *Swift* on a regular basis. We need military and civilian, public and private exercises and initiatives throughout the region, with more microbursts of assistance, as well as long-term initiatives integrated across the Federal Government. In short, we need coordinated, whole-of-government, persistent, and continual efforts that meld with the efforts of the international community and the private sector.

In order to strengthen and/or gain partners, first we need to earn and maintain their trust. This will require a unified approach with consistent, effective, and flexible engagement. It will require innovative and earnest information-sharing across the board. It will require innovative ways to make our various exercises, programs, and partnerships more inclusive and more effective in reinforcing our connection to the peoples of the region. Finally, it must be more than just episodic visits stemming from political or public relations goals—it will require a simple and clear long-term commitment of time, resources, and presence that is designed to generate a lasting connection and develop a true capability and capacity for security cooperation within each of our partners.

As our partners build capability and capacity, we need to assist them in being able to deny transnational threats from using their sovereign territory. We need to help them be able to “see” these threats, whether on land, in the air, on the sea, or in cyberspace. This involves the appropriate awareness systems—coastal radars and air surveillance radars, for example—as well as physical assets such as patrol boats and aircraft with crew trained and proficient to operate and maintain them. It will also require the ability to share information with the United States and with adjacent neighbors in order to build a common operating picture in a regional sense.

We also need these partners to be able to help conduct peacekeeping operations. Already, we see many nations in the region contributing to international peacekeeping in places such as Haiti. By developing a regional capability, we will reduce the demand for U.S. forces to perform peacekeeping missions, while also increasing the legitimacy of peacekeeping forces by diversifying international representation.

Combined/International Contacts

While planning and transforming our new organization, we have sought to strengthen the bonds of mutual interest and cooperation with our partner nations in the region. Through a long history of training, communication, exercises, and liaison, we have built sturdy relationships that are now ready for expansion into a new realm of partnering arrangements. We have military liaison officers with partner nations now, but we might be even more effective in accomplishing our mission by offering liaison positions for civilian bureaucrats and diplomats from agencies and cabinet bureaus from all the nations and territories throughout the region. Such partnerships will better nurture common values and emphasize shared interests in expanding economic opportunity, promoting peaceful resolution of conflict, enhancing scientific collaboration, fighting diseases and crime that respect no border, and protecting the environment.

Besides the ability to fuse information and efforts across the command, we also need to create an environment where the various U.S. Government agency representatives are willing and authorized to integrate into our efforts. We need to create a whole-of-government program where integrated planning and career exchanges are the norm. It should be a positive career step for someone from the military to fill an exchange in one of the other Federal agencies, and the converse should be equally true. By working together and building a regional focus point for policy implementation, we should be able to reduce redundancy, gain resource efficiencies, and ultimately better ensure our security and that of our partners.

Continued globalization and the diffusion of high technology have made it certain that the United States cannot ensure its forward defense by itself. Working alone, we cannot stop drug traffickers from penetrating our borders; nor can we locate and neutralize terrorist threats abroad without capable partners willing to cooperate with us. Sustained engagement will go a long way toward building willingness, but we also need to identify capability shortfalls with these partners

and flexibly expend resources to build overall regional security capability and capacity. Just as important, we need to be able to rapidly address capability shortfalls with key partners to meet emerging transnational threats.

It is as much by the force of ideas as the force of arms that we will secure our future. And the principal idea is this—that people of different faiths, cultures and creeds can live together peacefully.

—Tony Blair
Former UK Prime Minister

Barricades of ideas are worth more than barricades of stones. There is no prow that can cut through a cloudbank of ideas. A powerful idea, waved before the world at the proper time, can stop a squadron of iron-clad ships, like the mystical flag of the Last Judgment.

—José Martí¹⁵

Seizing the Moment and Gaining Consensus

In short, all of our efforts, combined with the tremendous involvement of other Federal agencies and the huge contribution of the U.S. private sector, all show that we are engaging a great deal and on many levels with our friends and partners in Latin America and the Caribbean—and it will only get better. As our focus in Southern Command and other Federal agencies shifts from a somewhat unilateral viewpoint to an integrated, multiagency, public-private cooperative approach, we will better show how the United States has cared, and always will care, about this incredibly worthy region and its diverse and vibrant people. But we cannot rest on the laurels of our valiant efforts this far—there will always be a need for new programs, new ideas, and new understanding. Right now is the perfect time for all of us, inside and outside of the U.S. Government, to collaborate on the challenges and opportunities we face together in the Americas.

Meeting today's and tomorrow's challenges required organizational change for Southern Command—and that change is continual. Further, this change needs to be much more than mere cosmetic surgery: it needs to be real change that matches the unique threats and opportunities of

the 21st century. We recently completed the first real phase in transforming the entire command into a leading interagency security organization, with interagency, multinational, and private sector partnering as core organizing concepts. Given the worrisome security trends in this hemisphere, the transformation of Southern Command into a more capable and comprehensive security organization has been a critical step in a needed transformation of the greater U.S. security apparatus.

We have implemented this model at Southern Command within a rather short span of time, drawing upon immense cooperation from other agencies, Congress, and senior leadership within our Department. Doing so has become a useful experiment in creating new organizations to meet 21st-century security challenges. Perhaps over time, the model will form the basis for change at other national security organizations, much like U.S. Africa Command. Clearly, we should at least consider rethinking the fundamental structure and approach of joint, combined, interagency, and even international security organizations, ensure we integrate and coordinate with commercial and nongovernmental entities, and then seek to leverage lessons learned for the future. We are moving in this direction now, but much remains to be done.

Only through building new, capable relationships inside and outside government, on both the domestic and international fronts, will we be able to match our strategic outlook to effective unified action. Only through a robust commitment to partnering will we be able to gain and maintain the critical regional friendships we need for the security of our hemisphere. Through this partnering, continued dialogue, and sustained and persistent engagement and exchange, we ultimately will develop the ability to understand the region, know what transpires, and know how to act or interact with our partners. Modern information systems, extensive language capability, and cultural training and study are the tools necessary for this command to achieve this understanding.

The importance of Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States cannot be overstated. It merits frequent high-level visits to see firsthand the tremendous linkages and challenges we share and to demonstrate U.S. interest and commitment to our partners in Latin America and the Caribbean. We can assist in this endeavor through raising awareness of the strategic importance of this region with Members of Congress, key interagency community decision- and policymakers, and the United States public in order to garner the support needed to achieve strategic objectives and convey the proper messages. We truly *are* all in this together—collectively, the nations of the Americas are better poised

to meet head-on whatever the future holds in order to bring about a stable, prosperous, and secure future in this special part of the world that we share.

Power derives from strength and will. Strength comes from the transformation of resources into capabilities. Will infuses objectives with resolve. Strategy marshals capabilities and brings them to bear with precision. Statecraft seeks through strategy to magnify the mass, relevance, impact and irresistibility of power. . . . The practitioners of these arts are the paladins of statecraft.

—Chas W. Freeman¹⁶

Final Thoughts

The transnational nature of threats and opportunities will continue to draw the nations of our hemisphere together. In the process of striving to forge ever stronger bonds through security cooperation and stability-building endeavors, other areas like diplomacy, commerce, development, and communication will undoubtedly benefit as well. Commerce, commodities, information, and ideas now travel across borders on air, maritime, space, and cyberspace highways, bringing unprecedented benefits to previously isolated individuals and communities. This same connectivity that brings and promises progress, however, also enables threats in multiple nefarious forms to move, hide, adapt, and sustain themselves with greater ease than ever before.

We are engaged in a set of ideological conflicts—and we are not good at these. They do not play to our traditional strengths or exist in our “sweet spot” or “wheelhouse” of skill sets. To prevail against these conflicts and overcome these challenges, we have got to get better at partnering, supporting, communicating, listening, and helping, when asked—there will be no greater friend. However, we are first and foremost a combatant command and we still maintain our traditional military core competencies. When our enduring vital national interests are threatened, we need to make very clear to all who wish to do us harm, that there can be no greater enemy.

The coming decade will see fundamental changes in how we base and employ forces—both traditional military forces as well as the increasingly joint and combined military/civilian teams; it will also require new methods for how we weave the thread of military power alongside the diplomatic, informational, and economic threads to form a more complete fabric of interaction with our partner nations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Southern Command is optimally positioned, structured, and manned to be at the forefront of these changes, synchronizing our actions, programs, and messages with the other agencies of the U.S. Government, as well as with those of the other inhabitants of our shared home. We will continue to ensure the forward defense of the United States, establish regional partnerships, and help enhance regional hemispheric security and stability so that the United States and partner nations may extend the benefits of secure democracies and economic prosperity to all the citizens of the Americas.

During my 3 years at the helm of U.S. Southern Command, I have been extremely fortunate to work closely with and learn from civilian government and military leaders, as well as with our partners to the south to improve the security and stability of the Americas. Together we have sought multinational, “whole-of-government” and in some cases “whole-of-society” approaches to create a secure and stable environment that set the conditions for long-term prosperity for the Americas.

This region continues to play a critical role in the continued security and prosperity of the United States. Despite some challenges, I believe that through the sharing of ideas, economic interdependence, cultural understanding, and harnessing innovation and our existing strong ties and bonds of friendship to build an integrated approach to partnering, U.S. Southern Command will continue to be a welcomed military partner of choice in this hemisphere—we will certainly work hard to help make this vision a reality. There are many opportunities to improve hemispheric security cooperation ahead and we are committed to pursuing multinational, multiagency, and public-private partnerships to confront the challenges and embrace the opportunities of the Americas. We dedicate the majority of our resources to building the security capabilities of our partners while encouraging an environment of cooperation among the nations in the region. The mutual benefits of these partnering efforts are profound.

Southern Command will continue to improve on its model of interagency, international, and public-private support, facilitated by the forthcoming completion of the command’s new state-of-the-art headquarters building. The new facility will enable still deeper partnerships

U.S. Navy (Mass Communication Specialist, 2nd Class Regina L. Brown)



Rear Admiral Joseph D. Kernan (center) salutes Admiral Stavridis during the Fourth Fleet reestablishment ceremony held at Naval Station Mayport on July 12, 2008. Rear Admiral James W. Stevenson, Jr., relinquished command.

with academic, business, and civil-society leaders as we seek innovative and proactive solutions to the complex challenges we face in the Americas. I'm proud of what we've done, our valiant efforts thus far—but much more work remains.

Thanks to the support of Congress, joint service teammates, inter-agency community partners, international friends, and allies and our growing relationship with the private sector and NGOs, the future appears promising for Southern Command and the pursuit of our mission in the region. We will continue to conduct numerous multinational exercises, exchanges, and humanitarian events. We will eagerly build on lessons learned from previous years and will be relentless in further integrating joint, multinational, interagency, and public-private efforts into as many of our actions as possible. We will continue to track along our command heading: understanding the linkages the United States shares with the region; working together with partners to overcome shared challenges; and

fulfilling the promise of a secure, cooperating, and prospering hemisphere through innovative and effective strategic initiatives.

As I conclude my watch and my time with you in these pages, I would like to leave you with some personal reflections. First, what I will remember:

- Seeing the look on the faces of Marc Gonsalves, Keith Stansell, and Tom Howes as they came off the aircraft into freedom, after 5–1/2 years in captivity at the hands of narcoterrorist FARC thugs.
- Visiting an eye clinic in Panama supported by one of Southern Command's health engagement outreach activities, and watching a 5-year-old boy put on his first pair of glasses, and finally being able to see and saying to his mother, "Mami, veo el mundo"—Mom, I see the world.
- Watching our partners take down a semi-submersible submarine, part of stopping 700-plus tons of cocaine from coming into the USA.
- Seeing a two-star Admiral, Joe Kernan, the first commander of the U.S. Fourth Fleet, carrying bags of rice ashore in Port au Prince from USS *Kearsarge* after hurricanes ripped through Haiti in the summer of 2008.
- Walking through the ruins of Machu Picchu and thinking about all the history and culture of this region, and the importance of the indigenous societies.
- Eating *feijoada* in Rio with my Brazilian friends like Admiral Moura Neto.
- Riding to a seafood restaurant in Cartagena with General Padilla and Admiral Barrera, talking with them about how to help our Colombian friends.
- Working with the Coast Guard—Thad Allen and Dave Kunkle and Rob Parker—learning what interagency cooperation is really all about.
- Briefing Secretary Gates on our plan to reorganize the command on an interagency path and winning his approval.
- Watching the new headquarters rise up in the field across from our current location.
- Pinning a third star on Glenn Spears as a Deputy and welcoming Ambassador Paul Trivelli as our first civilian Deputy.
- Smoking cigars with Dominicans and discussing the finer points of Dominican, Honduran, and Nicaraguan cigars.

- Learning Spanish and Portuguese, and reading for the first time Gabriel García Márquez in his native tongue.
- Watching the helicopters of Joint Task Force Bravo bringing victims of landslides out of danger.
- Sitting in Secretary Gates's office as he told me my next assignment and realizing suddenly that all of this would come to an end for me—the sadness of that coupled with the excitement of a new challenge.

Now, what I have learned:

- That in this part of the world, true and lasting security is so seldom delivered by the barrel of a gun.
- That here, thankfully, we are not launching Tomahawk missiles, we are launching ideas.
- That everything we do must be international, interagency, and public-private. All must be undergirded by strategic communications.
- That, above all, we must innovate.
- That our opponents are smart. They innovate. They wake up each morning seeking to come up with a new idea. We need to match that.
- That 21st-century security is brain-on-brain warfare. We cannot spend our way to success—we must outthink our opponents.
- That we must move faster, always faster—the only thing we cannot accelerate is the speed of trust.
- That, as with any relationship, trust must be built over time—one step, one exchange, one exercise at a time.

It is this trust, I firmly believe, along with transparency, friendship, and perpetual cooperation that will, in due course, deliver on the promise of the security, stability, and ultimately, prosperity we all desire. So we must take great care in building it up and do what must be done to avoid tearing it down.

Only history will judge whether or not our deeds and actions, as well as our partnerships, will bear good fruit in this region. Our approach at U.S. Southern Command has been simple: international, interagency, public-private. This approach has been woven together throughout by strategic communication. It is my humble opinion that only through a sustained and dedicated commitment to this course of action can we truly

chart a path that delivers us to our ultimate destination: the realization of the promise of the Partnership of and for the Americas.

Finally, I would like to close with a word about the superb U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coastguardsmen—Active, Reserve, and Guard—and civilians who serve in the region. They are volunteers and patriots, and I am proud and lucky to serve with them every day. Our greatest strength is our people, and I ask that we always remember their own and their families' sacrifices in service of our great nation.

For all those brave men and women struggling for a better life, there is—and must be—no stronger ally or advocate than the United States of America. Let us never forget that our nation remains a beacon of light for those in dark places. And that our responsibilities to the world—to freedom, to liberty, to the oppressed everywhere—are not a burden on the people or the soul of this nation. They are, rather, a blessing.

—Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense

Notes

¹ Barack Obama, "A New Beginning," Remarks at Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt, June 4, 2009. Available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09/>.

² *World Population in 2030* (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, 2005), 33.

³ Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks at Pathways to Prosperity Plenary Session," Panama City, Panama, December 10, 2008.

⁴ Trade Stats Express—National Trade Data, Office of Trade and Industry Information, Manufacturing and Services, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2005, December 18, 2006, available at: <<http://tse.export.gov/NTDCChartDisplay.aspx?UniqueURL=h1fog255vklrl55zk5jlhqf-2006-12-18-16-29-57>>.

⁵ Stephen Johnson, *The Heritage Foundation, Candidates Briefing Book Issues 2006, Latin America*, December 8, 2006. Available at: <<http://www.heritage.org/Research/features/issues/issuearea/LatinAmerica.cfm>>.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Social Panorama of Latin America 2007." Available at: <<http://www.eclac.cl/publicaciones/default.asp?idioma=IN>>.

⁸ The World Bank, 2008 *World Development Indicators*, April 2008.

⁹ Inter-American Development Bank, Press Release, Migrant Remittances, October 18, 2006, December 7, 2006. Available at: <<http://www.iadb.org/NEWS/articledetail.cfm?Language=En2&artType+PR&artid=3348>>.

¹⁰ Internet World States, "Usage and Population Statistics," September 18, 2006. Available at: <<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>>.

¹¹ Coalition for Affordable and Reliable Energy, "Energy—The Lifeblood of America's Economy," December 10, 2006. Available at: <<http://www.careenergy.com/energy-facts-statistics.asp>>.

¹² Organization of American States, "Inter-American Democratic Charter," September 11, 2001, at: <http://www.oas.org/OASpage/eng/Documents/Democratic_Charter.htm>.

¹³ J. William Fulbright, *The Price of Empire* (New York: Pantheon Press, 1989), 47.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁵ José Martí, Cuban author and leader of the Cuban independence movement. This was from 'Nuestra América' (Our America), in *La Revista Ilustrada de Nueva York*, first published on January 1, 1891.

¹⁶ Chas W. Freeman, Jr., *Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 3.