

# Foreword

Since its creation in 1963, United States Southern Command has been led by 30 senior officers representing all four of the armed forces. None has undertaken his leadership responsibilities with the cultural sensitivity and creativity demonstrated by Admiral Jim Stavridis during his tenure in command.

Breaking with tradition, Admiral Stavridis discarded the customary military model as he organized the Southern Command Headquarters. In its place he created an organization designed not to subdue adversaries, but instead to build durable and enduring partnerships with friends. His observation that it is the business of Southern Command to launch “ideas not missiles” into the command’s area of responsibility gained strategic resonance throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America, and at the highest levels in Washington, DC.

Pursuing his vision for the Americas with limited resources, Admiral Stavridis made the most of every ship, airplane, Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine, and Coastguardsman committed to the region, employing each on constructive missions designed to create goodwill and mutual respect.

Perhaps Jim Stavridis’ most enduring contribution to Southern Command is the newly constructed headquarters complex in Miami. The new building, which finally creates a permanent lodgment for the command in the city that the Admiral correctly describes as the “Gateway to the Americas,” is a testimonial to his persistence, persuasiveness, and credibility within the Department of Defense and the U. S. Congress. More than a building, the new headquarters is tacit recognition of the importance of the command and acknowledgment that Miami is the single right location for the institution that, as much or more than any other, expresses our commitment to peace and stability in this hemisphere.

Admirals and Generals leave their marks on the organizations they command in different ways. Some solve the problems of the day; others set courses that will influence events and relationships for decades. Clearly, Admiral Stavridis is in the latter category. He has set wheels in motion that will transform our American culture to a culture of the Americas.

This thoughtful book should be required reading for those who recognize that the security of the United States, and indeed our destiny, are inextricably intertwined with those of our neighbors to the south.

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