

**Testimony of Gen. Peter Pace, commander-in-chief, U.S. Southern**

**Command**, Senate Armed Services Committee, March 27, 2001

Statement of General Peter Pace, United States Marine Corps

Commander in Chief, United States Southern Command

Before the Senate Armed Services Committee

March 27, 2001

## INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to present my assessment of security in Latin America and the Caribbean. I would also like to thank the Members of Congress and particularly this Committee for your outstanding support to the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) . I appreciate your interest in USSOUTHCOM's Area of Responsibility (AOR) and the support you have consistently provided to our mission with Partner Nations in this theater.

Since assuming command of USSOUTHCOM six months ago, I have traveled to 21 of the 32 countries and 3 of the separate territories in my assigned AOR, visiting many of the Andean Ridge nations several times. I have met key military and civilian leaders in the region, and I have worked to ensure Southern Command's plans and initiatives are well coordinated with the Joint Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and other U.S. government agencies. My visits to our neighboring nations have provided important insights into the region and its leaders, as well as to specific challenges and opportunities.

In this statement, I will provide the Committee our strategic assessment of the AOR, highlighting the most serious transnational threats that challenge the growth of democracy in several countries. Next, I will detail our progress in resetting the theater architecture in the post-Panama era, followed by an overview of our engagement efforts and most important requirements. I will conclude by presenting my priorities for the way ahead.

## STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

U.S. Southern Command's AOR includes all of Central and South America, the Caribbean, and surrounding waters, totaling more than 15.6 million square miles. The AOR is divided into four sub-regions: the Caribbean, Central America, Andean Ridge, and the Southern Cone. Total population in the AOR exceeds 404 million people. Twenty-five languages are spoken, and the people practice 10 different religions. The theater is a diverse region, rich in natural resources with largely untapped industrial potential. Today, the per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ranges from a low of about \$1300 to a high of \$25,000.

The United States has strong economic, cultural, and security ties to Latin America and the Caribbean. More than 39 percent of our trade is conducted within the Western Hemisphere. Furthermore, 49 cents out of every dollar spent in Latin America is spent on imported goods and services from the U.S. Latin America and the Caribbean supply more oil to the U.S. than all Middle East countries combined. In addition to our strong economic ties, we share an increasingly strong cultural bond. Today, one of every eight Americans is of Hispanic origin, and that ratio is projected to increase to one in four by 2050.

Except for Cuba, all nations in the USSOUTHCOM AOR have some form of democratically elected government and free market economy. During the past twenty years, we have seen a positive trend as nations adopted democratic principles and institutions, subordinated their military to civilian leadership, instituted the rule of law, and promoted respect for human rights. However, democracies have not matured or flourished equally in the region. Some countries are struggling to complete the full transition to democratic rule. In other countries, democracy itself is at risk as failing economies, deteriorating security, and endemic corruption undermine institutions and public support.

Although several age-old border disputes still provide ample opportunity for disagreement between neighbors, this region does not have an arms race or a "shooting" war between nations. In fact, the region spends less per capita on arms than any area of the world. Today, democracies in this AOR generally maintain open and amicable relations with each other and reject armed conflict between nations.

## THREATS

The greatest threats to democracy, regional stability, and prosperity in Latin America and the Caribbean are illegal migration, arms trafficking, crime and corruption, and illegal drug trafficking. Collectively, these transnational threats destabilize fragile democracies by corrupting public institutions, promoting criminal activity, undermining legitimate economies, and disrupting social order.

**Illegal Migration.** Illegal migration is a potential problem in our AOR. The ongoing violence in Colombia associated with fighting between illegally armed groups is expected to displace Colombian refugees across the international borders of neighboring nations. Panama and Venezuela have already reported displaced Colombian refugees inside their sovereign territory. Several countries that share porous borders with Colombia will remain vulnerable to illegal migration and incursions by armed insurgents and paramilitaries, resulting in political and social instability.

**Arms Trafficking.** The illegal trafficking of arms poses a serious threat to the national security of several nations. In our AOR, the breakup of the drug cartels in the early 1990's resulted in smaller, more adaptable Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs)

that have formed a symbiotic relationship with the insurgents and paramilitaries. These illegal and violent groups receive significant financial support from the DTOs, which they use to procure weapons. The insurgents can afford anything available on the international arms market, possibly including man-portable air defense weapons systems (the possession of which we cannot confirm).

Crime and Corruption. Local and international criminal organizations are an increasing threat to the security and stability of the region. Many nations in the AOR lack the organization and resources to effectively counter criminal activity within their borders. In some areas, criminal organizations are so pervasive that the governments cannot effectively protect their citizens.

Although money laundering, kidnapping, extortion, and bribery of government officials are common criminal activities within many Latin American and Caribbean countries, the impact is regional, as evidenced by the recent kidnapping of oil workers in Ecuador. In calendar year 2000, Colombia reported more than 3,000 kidnappings. Although criminal activity in the Caribbean has typically been less violent and characterized as local, we are seeing a proliferation of street gangs.

Drug Trafficking. The illicit drug industry is a corrosive force that threatens the stability and rule of law in the Andean Region. Partner Nation governments realize the importance of working together to develop regional approaches to counter the production and trafficking of illegal drugs. However, effective and sustainable counterdrug operations are beyond the capabilities of our Partner Nations' thinly stretched security forces. U.S. counterdrug assistance to security forces will help Colombia and other nations in the region develop more effective counterdrug capabilities while enhancing United States Government support to Partner Nation interdiction efforts.

Drug trafficking organizations have shown considerable skill in adjusting their operations in response to our counterdrug efforts. These small but efficient organizations will change the place of production, transport routes, points of transshipment, and markets when eradication or interdiction programs achieve success. Many DTOs provide financial support to the insurgents and illegal self-defense groups to secure protection from counterdrug operations conducted by the Colombia National Police (CNP) and Colombian Military (COLMIL).

We are encouraged by the success of cocaine eradication programs in Peru and Bolivia and by the initial results of Phase I of Plan Colombia. Unfortunately, reductions in Peru's and Bolivia's cultivation appear to have been offset by Colombia's increased coca cultivation in calendar year 2000. However, further assessment is required to determine the full impact of the intensive aerial eradication effort recently conducted by the Government of Colombia in the Putumayo Department.

The illicit drug industry is also a growing threat to the U.S. homeland. According to the most recent Interagency Assessment, law enforcement and security forces detected 645 MT of cocaine hydrochloride (HCl) moving toward the United States from the Source Zone during 2000. The assessment also reports that 128 MT were interdicted, leaving the possibility that an estimated 517 MT were available for domestic consumption. According to the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), nearly 17,000 Americans lost their lives last year to drug overdoses and drug related violence. In addition to this tragic loss of life, the direct and indirect costs of illegal drug use to the U.S. taxpayer exceeded \$110 billion.

## THEATER ARCHITECTURE

The United States Southern Command, located in Miami but based in Panama until 1997, is responsible for planning, coordinating, and conducting all U.S. military activities in our AOR. We promote democracy and stability by working cooperatively with host nation security forces, responding to crises- or contingencies such as the recent earthquakes in El Salvador, and supporting Partner Nation security forces and U.S. law enforcement agencies (LEAs) in reducing the flow of illegal drugs into the United States. To accomplish our mission, we have established the post-Panama theater architecture that includes our headquarters in Miami and component headquarters forward deployed in Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico has replaced Panama for forward basing headquarters in the region. United States Army South (USARSO) has completed its relocation to Fort Buchanan, where it draws heavily on the Puerto Rican Army and Air Force National Guardsmen and Reservists to accomplish its assigned missions. United States Navy South (USNAVSO) was activated last year and is collocated with Special Operations Command South (USSOCSO) at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads.

To compensate for the loss of the 8,500 ft runway at Howard Air Force Base, the United States Government (USG) negotiated long-term agreements for the use of Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) at Aruba- Curacao in the Netherland Antilles, Manta in Ecuador, and Comalapa in El Salvador. These locations provide us the capability to conduct sustained CD operations throughout the Source and Transit Zones. U.S. Detection, Monitoring, and Tracking (DM&T) operations from the FOLs improve our support to Partner Nation interdiction efforts. Thanks to the support of the U.S. Congress, funding has been provided for necessary operational and safety improvements for Manta and Aruba- Curacao and for construction design at Comalapa.

The Aruba-Curacao FOL provides effective, rapid response DM&T operations in the northern Source Zone, which includes the Guajira Peninsula of Colombia and the Venezuelan border region, as well as a large part of the Transit Zone. The formal 10-year access agreement with the Kingdom of the Netherlands was signed on March 2, 2000, but awaits final parliamentary debates and ratification.

The FOL at Manta extends our Airborne Early Warning aircraft coverage deep into the Source Zone. It is the only FOL from which aircraft can reach all of Peru, Colombia, and the drug producing areas of Bolivia. In January 2001, the Ecuadorian Constitutional Court issued the favorable ruling that the November 1999 access agreement complies with the country's constitution. Construction at the Manta FOL is on schedule. We will begin operating AWACS aircraft from Manta in October of this year and all construction will be completed by June 2002.

The Government of El Salvador offered the use of the Comalapa International Airport as an FOL for U.S. aircraft in Central America. Excellent relations between the U.S. and El Salvador, strengthened by years of solid military-to-military contact, helped produce favorable negotiations on the FOL agreement. This FOL extends the reach of our DM&T aircraft into the Eastern Pacific, Western Caribbean, and all of Central America.

In addition to our headquarters in Miami and three component headquarters in Puerto Rico, USSOUTHCOM has permanently assigned headquarters in the following locations: our Air Force Component (United States Air Force South) at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona; our Marine Corps Component (United States Marine Corps Forces South) in Miami, Florida; Joint Interagency Task Force East (JIATF-E) in Key West, Florida, which plans, coordinates, and supervises the execution of our support to counterdrug operations in the Transit and Source Zones; Joint Southern Surveillance & Reconnaissance Operations Center (JSSROC), collocated with JIATF-E in Key West, which receives, fuses, and disseminates the radar common operating picture from AWACS and ground based, aerostat, and ROTH radar; and Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B) in Soto Cano, Honduras, which provides responsive helicopter support to USSOUTHCOM missions in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Most of our post-Panama theater architecture is firmly in place, and we look forward to permanently anchoring our headquarters in CONUS, accomplishing necessary improvements at the FOL in Comalapa, and completing previously approved but temporarily suspended military construction projects in Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico.

#### STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY AND STABILITY

The United States Southern Command's military-to-military engagement with host nation forces seeks to build mutual trust and understanding that will engender regional stability and shared solutions to common problems. Our approach focuses on combined operations, exercises, training and education, security assistance, and humanitarian assistance programs. While maintaining strong bilateral relationships throughout the AOR, we promote regional cooperation and transparent operations among all our regional partners.

Caribbean. The FY97 Unified Command Plan assigned responsibility for U.S. military activities in the Caribbean, a region of more than 32 million people, to USSOUTHCOM. The countries and territories in this region, as a rule, have very small security forces that need modernization and training assistance. They are receptive to regional cooperation and are well represented in the Organization of American States (OAS) and Caribbean Nation Security Council (CANSEC). During CY00, USSOUTHCOM conducted medical readiness training (MEDRETE) and New Horizon engineer exercises; assisted Partner Nation security force training and new equipment fielding; and hosted TRADEWINDS 2000, a multi-national exercise that fosters maritime and land-based forces cooperation in response to regional crises and drug trafficking. In addition, many of the countries hosted other regional events to improve Partner Nation capabilities. For example, in January 2001, Jamaica hosted a regional Disaster Preparedness Seminar that included representatives from more than twenty countries throughout the AOR.

Caribbean countries conduct operations and training with the United States Coast Guard that improve their capabilities to interdict illicit drug shipments through the Transit Zone. Most countries in the Caribbean have assisted U.S. efforts to interdict the flow of illicit drugs through the central and eastern Caribbean. One of our most successful efforts is Operation Bahamas, Turks, and Caicos (OPBAT), a multi-agency international effort based in Nassau, Bahamas. The mission of OPBAT is to interdict the flow of cocaine and marijuana transiting through the Bahamas destined for the United States. OPBAT was established on July 12, 1990 by the TRIPART Agreement, a diplomatic engagement signed by the Governments of the Bahamas, the United Kingdom, and the United States. U.S. government agencies participating in OPBAT include DoS, DoD, USCG, and the U.S. Customs Service.

Another prominent counterdrug operation in this region is WEEDEATER, which is conducted in the Eastern Caribbean. DoD provides helicopters for host nation Law Enforcement Agencies and DEA to conduct marijuana eradication. The most recent WEEDEATER operation eradicated 1,013,635 marijuana plants and seedlings with an estimated Miami street value in excess of \$800 million. Total helicopter operating costs for this WEEDEATER was slightly more than \$129,000.

Central America. Four factors stimulate our engagement initiatives in this region. First, Central America, with more than 36 million people, is one of the least developed regions in our AOR. The military budgets of these nations cannot support large forces or large modernization efforts. Second, this-region is vulnerable to natural disasters, as evidenced by Hurricane Mitch a few years ago, wildfires last year in Guatemala, and the recent earthquakes in El Salvador. Third, powerful criminal organizations, often fueled by drug related activities and money, challenge democratic institutions, and in many cases, exceed the capacity of the nations' security forces to provide protection to the population. Last, governments this region are understandably sensitive to border disputes that have been ongoing for many years. Examples include the border disputes between Belize and Guatemala,

between Honduras and Nicaragua, and the maritime disagreement concerning the Gulf of Fonseca. Last summer, USSOUTHCOM helped diffuse the Fonseca disagreement by providing Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and night vision goggles to Honduran and Nicaraguan military vessels to aid them in precise navigation.

Military forces in this region range from none to very capable. Costa Rica and Panama now have only police forces, while El Salvador demonstrated a very professional and capable military force during recovery operations following the recent earthquakes. Nicaragua has a large inventory of mechanized equipment, but needs assistance in training and sustainment.

Our engagement activities in Central America mirrored our efforts in other regions. Last year, we relied heavily on our New Horizons Exercise program to provide much needed assistance to several communities in Belize, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. In total, our forces renovated 12 schools, drilled 12 water wells, and provided road and bridge improvements. We also conducted a total of 32 medical deployments that provided health and dental services to more than 95,000 people. Medical teams on these deployments provided veterinary services as well.

Peacekeeping operations and seminars are excellent vehicles to promote cooperation and interoperability between neighboring nations. This past year, we conducted several combined activities in Central America, including the Peacekeeping Operations - North (PKO-North) exercise, hosted by Honduras and attended by 20 nations. This exercise trained multinational staffs from Caribbean and Central American nations in peacekeeping operations.

Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, El Salvador, and Panama have also participated in Central Skies counterdrug operations. In support of Central Skies, the United States provides transportation support to Central American Country Teams and host nation military and counterdrug law enforcement agencies. The most recent Central Skies Operation in Costa Rica eradicated 385,563 marijuana plants with a Miami street value that exceeded \$300 million. U.S. helicopter operations costs for this iteration of Central Skies was approximately \$164,000.

USSOUTHCOM has a long history of providing assistance to Central American nations following natural disasters. Last April, JTF-B from Soto Cano provided emergency assessment and fire fighting assistance to help Guatemalan forces extinguish nearly 250 wildfires. In November 2000, Hurricane Keith hit the eastern coast of Belize. USSOUTHCOM provided humanitarian assistance to the Belize government in the form of emergency shelters, vehicles, disaster relief equipment, and medical supplies. In the most recent disaster in El Salvador, USSOUTHCOM provided emergency assistance that included the movement of 560 personnel and 160 tons of supplies by JTF-B helicopters. USSOUTHCOM relief and sustainment efforts following

the earthquakes will include several medical readiness training exercises, technical expertise, and humanitarian assistance supplies and equipment.

Central America is key to U.S. counterdrug efforts. El Salvador agreed to allow the U.S. to use Comalapa International Airport as an FOL for counterdrug operations. This facility supports U.S. DM&T aircraft coverage in Central America, Eastern Pacific, and Western Caribbean. El Salvador's rapid agreement to our request for ramp space is reflective of the outstanding military to military relationship that has been nurtured over the years.

Southern Cone. Harmonious relations among Southern Cone countries provide the necessary preconditions for increased defense cooperation, dialogue, and multilateral training exercises. Keeping pace with new training opportunities, Chile and Brazil have recently begun military modernization programs. In December 2000, the Chilean government made a formal decision to negotiate the possible purchase of F-16 aircraft with Lockheed Martin. Brazil has also initiated programs to modernize its Air Force and Navy. In some neighboring countries, budget constraints still limit military procurement and modernization.

Argentina and Uruguay both participate routinely in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Last year, Argentina hosted the USSOUTHCOM annual CABANAS training program, a peacekeeping exercise that included military forces of seven other nations. Argentina and Chile each hosted phases of the UNITAS exercise, the largest multinational naval exercise in this hemisphere. In addition to nations from the USSOUTHCOM AOR, UNITAS 2000 included Canada and several European nations. This exercise is one of Southern Command's most important engagement tools and contributes significantly to regional cooperation in the Southern Cone.

Andean Ridge. USSOUTHCOM operations in the Andean Ridge are the most diverse of any region. Recent activities have included humanitarian civic assistance, demining operations, training exercises, and extensive counterdrug operational support. Militaries in this region range from small and under-equipped to standing forces with considerable capabilities.

One of USSOUTHCOM's most important and visible missions during FY00 was Operation Fundamental Response in Venezuela. Following torrential flooding and mudslides that devastated Venezuela's northeastern coast, USSOUTHCOM performed life saving rescue, medical evacuation, and disaster relief operations. With Venezuela reporting estimated 30,000 dead, USSOUTHCOM provided immediate rescue assistance, ultimately saving more than 5,500 lives and delivering 673 tons of food and water. U.S. forces, largely JTF-B aviation assets, Special Operations and Reserves, produced more than 2.8 million gallons of potable water, flew more than 1,300 aircraft sorties, and distributed more than \$650,000 worth of medical supplies. Total cost of USSOUTHCOM directed support to Venezuela was \$8.25 million.



In Ecuador, USSOUTHCOM has worked closely with the U.S. Ambassador and President Noboa's administration to provide assistance to Ecuador's military, particularly in the management of national crises. We have also worked closely with military leaders to improve Ecuador's capability for detecting and interdicting illegal drug traffic. As previously noted, Manta Air Base on the northwestern coast is a linchpin in resetting our AOR architecture and extending the reach of our DM&T aircraft coverage in the Source Zone.

U.S. counterdrug support to Andean Ridge nations includes training and equipment for the riverine forces of both Peru and Colombia. The Joint Peruvian Riverine Training Center in Iquitos, Peru is the finest facility of its kind in the AOR. Peruvian and Colombian riverine units have significantly increased their capabilities during the past year.

USSOUTHCOM has provided extensive support to the training of Colombia's Counternarcotics (CN) Brigade. The second CN Battalion graduated from training in December 2000, and the third battalion is scheduled to complete training on May 24, 2001. To provide air mobile capability to the CN Brigade, USSOUTHCOM is supporting the Department of State (DOS) led effort to field Huey II and UH-60L helicopters to the Colombian Army and to assist in training the required aircrews.

USSOUTHCOM is cooperating with the security forces of each Andean Ridge nation to build more effective counternarcotics capability. Bolivia, with perhaps fewer resources than any other country in the region, has achieved unprecedented success in eradicating illegal coca cultivation and aggressively interdicting Drug Trafficking Organizations' (DTOs') movement of precursor chemicals. We have assisted Bolivia's military training effort with mobile training teams and facility construction. We are also assisting the Bolivian Army in renovating troop barracks to establish a permanent presence in the Chapare coca-growing region.

## REQUIREMENTS

The United States Government has provided substantial support in military hardware, training, and services to Latin American and Caribbean countries. Each year, USSOUTHCOM executes engagement programs throughout this AOR, to include combined operations and training exercises, educational opportunities, mobile training teams, unit exchanges, humanitarian civic assistance, foreign military financing and sales, and counterdrug training and operations.

USSOUTHCOM's exercise program is the engine for our Theater Engagement Plan. USSOUTHCOM will conduct 17 Joint or Combined Exercises and 178 training deployments with Partner Nations this Fiscal Year. We conduct four different types of exercises and deployments. First, our Operational Exercises are based on USSOUTHCOM Contingency Plans and normally include only U.S. forces. The primary purpose of these exercises is to train the CINC's and the JTF's battlestuffs.

Foreign Military Interaction Exercises (FMI) are the core of USSOUTHCOM's engagement program. They are conducted throughout the AOR and are generally hosted by the many participating nations in the region. All of these exercises, which include UNITAS TRADEWINDS, PKO North and South, CABANAS, United Counterdrug, and Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias, are multilateral.

New Horizons (NH) are the command's civic assistance exercises that focus on engineering and medical projects. humanitarian and Civic Assistance (HCA) projects are embedded in these programs but can be conducted as stand alone deployments for training as well. USSOUTHCOM plans to conduct six NH exercises in FY01. Planned sites include the Bahamas, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Guatemala, Honduras, and Paraguay.

The fourth type of exercise is stand-alone Training Deployments. USSOUTHCOM will conduct a total of 178 stand-alone training deployments in FY01. These deployments will include Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET), Riverine Training Teams (RTT), and Counterdrug Training Support (CDTS) . Included in the training total are 66 stand- alone medical assistance deployments that predominantly support Central America and the Andean Ridge.

In a typical year, USSOUTHCOM deploys more than 12,000 service members, the majority of which are National Guardsmen and Reservists, in support of the FMI and NH exercise programs. In FY99, the U.S. Congress provided funding to expand the NH Exercise concept. Funding has remained relatively constant for 2000 and 2001. These exercises have been very successful in providing schools, water wells, road and bridge improvements, and medical outreach programs to needy communities. NH Exercises have the added benefit of providing U.S. forces with realistic training opportunities generally not available in the United States. In FY00, USSOUTHCOM completed 98 HCA projects in 19 countries; 105 construction and repair projects are planned for FY01. Scenarios for the seven FMI exercises conducted in FY00 and the six planned for this year focus on peacekeeping operations, disaster relief, and counterdrug coordination.

International Military Education and Training (IMET) and its companion program, Expanded IMET (EIMET) provide professional education opportunities to selected military and civilian candidates in our AOR on a grant basis. These programs are the backbone of our combined professionalization and military education. They provide funding for military and civilian personnel from our Partner Nations to attend professional development courses in United States military institutions. At only modest cost, these programs represent valued investments as many of the students go on to become senior leaders in their respective militaries and government agencies. In FY00, USSOUTHCOM received \$9.89 million for IMET and trained 2684 students, including 474 civilians. We invested roughly two-thirds of our IMET dollars in Professional Military Education (PME), Management, Postgraduate Courses, Mobile

Education Teams, and English Language training. The remainder paid for Technical Assistance Training throughout the AOR.

With declining military budgets, most countries in the USSOUTHCOM AOR request military equipment through the Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program or Section 506 Emergency Drawdown Authority. Few countries are able to purchase new equipment in large quantities through the Foreign Military Sales Program. Although we have been very successful in assisting Partner Nations through EDA and Drawdown, transport costs and sustainment of the received equipment fall to the requesting country. Absent host nation funding and the availability of Foreign Military Financing (FMF), we have not been able to help these nations build the maintenance programs to sustain the equipment. At its peak in 1991, the FMF program for Latin America was \$220 million. Last year, the Caribbean received \$3 million, while Latin America received only \$450k.

#### Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence (C4I)

As we reset our theater physical architecture in the post-Panama era, we are also enhancing our C4I architecture for fixed and mobile operations throughout the AOR. Because most of the countries in this theater are still maturing their C4 infrastructure, satellite communications are vitally important to our deployed forces, especially in time of crises. However, satellite communications are currently limited by available bandwidth.

We have initiated several programs to increase our C4I effectiveness throughout a very large AOR. Programs like the Cooperating Nations Information Exchange (CNIES) and the Counternarcotics Command and Management System (CNCMS) have helped optimize satellite bandwidth. We have also initiated the Theater Signal Support Program, which is focused on streamlining and enhancing C4 operational and maintenance support that was degraded by our exit from Panama.

#### Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance

Our top readiness priorities for this AOR remain Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR). Although OSD and the Joint Staff have helped us a great deal in this area, we still have unresourced requirements in national, theater, and tactical collection and processing for Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), Human Intelligence (HUMINT), and Imagery Intelligence (IMINT).

IMINT, SIGINT, HUMINT and measurement and signals intelligence (MASINT) provide commanders at all echelons indications and warnings (I&W), situational awareness, battle damage assessments (BDA), and crop cultivation estimates. However, the current suite of national sensors and platforms meets only part of our requirement for a comprehensive intelligence and counterdrug picture in this AOR. USSOUTHCOM needs greater redundancy in ISR assets to mitigate risk during crises. Specifically,

we need additional airborne quick-reaction ISR capability and the focus of a tactical military intelligence unit dedicated to this AOR. Funding support for planned and existing MASINT capabilities, plus an effective MASINT architecture, will significantly enhance the conduct of future operations.

The USSOUTHCOM AOR is a mixture of legacy and twenty-first century technology systems. While we are making progress in transitioning to more sophisticated and more reliable systems, we still need significant support for three important activities: wide area surveillance for maritime and ground detection and monitoring; theater air surveillance, tracking, and sorting; and force protection against asymmetric threats. First, a real-time integrated wide area surveillance capability is required to track and monitor maritime and ground targets of interest, particularly in support of counterdrug operations in this theater. This system should be compatible with both manned and unmanned ISR platforms. Second, the theater air surveillance system will provide air space detection, sorting, monitoring, and management that will promote regional cooperation in support of theater engagement strategies. Third, asymmetric warfare challenges our best force protection measures and strategies. Sophisticated surveillance systems are needed to enhance force protection for our limited number of forward-deployed personnel in high threat areas.

Our ability to execute effective operations is often hampered by restrictions on sharing data with our Partner Nations. We need to streamline sharing procedures that are currently used for time sensitive counterdrug information. Like other unified commands, we are developing information-sharing networks that will allow us to combat the drug trafficking problem more efficiently. The South American Net (SURNET), the Caribbean Information Sharing Network (CISN), and the Cooperating Nations Information Exchange System (CNIES) are all ongoing initiatives that enable us to share certain types of counterdrug information expeditiously.

We experience continuing shortages of intelligence personnel, especially qualified linguists and other SIGINT experts. A fully manned and functioning regional SIGINT Operating Center at Medina, Texas, is essential to support our AOR operations. We also face many difficulties in our efforts to maintain a robust tasking, processing, exploitation, and dissemination architecture (TPED) . Due to persistent C4I shortfalls, these issues are expected to continue in the near term.

### Counterdrug Operations

Congress appropriated significant funding last year to support President Pastrana's Plan Colombia. During the past several months, USSOUTHCOM has worked with the U.S. Interagency to develop the plan and begin executing the support package. This program is on track and is increasing Partner Nation counterdrug capabilities. Although most of the supplemental funding was directed to Colombia, neighboring nations also received assistance.

USSOUTHCOM is using the funds designated for military purposes to improve Partner Nation Capabilities in counterdrug operations. We are lead for execution of DoD support and provide assistance to DoS as needed on military related programs. We have coordinated the intended use of the funding in the U.S. Interagency process to ensure our actions complement other agencies' activities and comply with Congressional law and OSD directives. U.S. assistance to Plan Colombia will significantly improve the COLMIL capability to successfully support eradication and interdiction operations. Although \$180 million was also distributed in the aid package to Colombia's neighbors, several of these neighboring nations will need additional assistance in the form of both military and non-military programs to effectively challenge the illicit drug industry within their own borders. We also anticipate that nations in this region, particularly Colombia, will likely need international assistance to sustain these programs in the long term.

#### Force Protection

Force protection is Job #1. We are committed to providing the best possible protection measures to our forces in this theater. Since the terrorist attack on the USS Cole, we have conducted a comprehensive review of our force protection requirements and have focused our efforts on improving policies and procedures for deterring, disrupting, and mitigating terrorist attacks.

Each of my Component Commanders has formed "Red Teams" to assess his force protection posture on a continuous basis. Throughout the AOR, we have intensified ongoing efforts to identify potential threats and the corresponding force protection measures to mitigate risk to these threats. We are also looking specifically for seams in our force protection posture that could be exploited. We have implemented a suite of preventive measures, such as limiting travel to known or suspected high-risk areas, to minimize exposure of DoD personnel.

We have used the Combating Terrorism Readiness Initiative Fund to resource emergent and unforeseen high priority requirements. However, we still require better access to enhanced national signals collection and processing, organic airborne reconnaissance capability, a military intelligence unit permanently assigned to this theater, and expanded human intelligence collection. Our Components continue to work with host nation security forces, to include establishing U.S. controlled security zones when necessary, to ensure protection of our deployed aircraft, vessels, and personnel. Component Commanders tailor threat conditions and Random Antiterrorism Measures based on their assessment of the threat for assigned and in-transit units.

The USS Cole Commission recommendations address the diversity of threats that could potentially target U.S. personnel and interests in the USSOUTHCOM AOR. We continue to make good progress in hardening our headquarters, bases, and Forward Operating Locations. Where we are unable to mitigate threats through physical or

structural enhancements, we are addressing the risk with procedural modifications for our personnel.

## STRATEGY

Our vision for this theater has not changed. These nations can become a "community of stable, democratic, and prosperous nations served by professional, modern, and interoperable security forces that embrace democratic principles and human rights, that are subordinate to civil authority, and are capable and supportive of multilateral responses to regional challenges."

Five objectives guide our engagement and security activities in this AOR:

- o Promote and support stable democracies
- o Promote and support respect for human rights and adherence to the rule of law.
- o Assist Partner Nations to modernize and train their security forces
- o Sustain and strengthen multilateral security cooperation
- o Cooperate with regional forces to detect, monitor, and reduce the transit of illegal drugs

## CONCLUSION

Thanks to the hard work and vision of many U.S. Government agencies, we have been able to assist our neighbors, some gravely threatened by insurgencies, narcotics, and other transnational threats. Because of this Committee's efforts and the strong bipartisan support in Congress for programs key to this hemisphere, we are making a positive difference in helping to strengthen democracy, promote prosperity, and foster regional security in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you.