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MIGRATION CRISIS: OVERSIGHT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSED $1 BILLION REQUEST FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MIGRATION CRISIS: OVERSIGHT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSED $1 BILLION REQUEST FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2015

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 o'clock p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Jeff Duncan (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. DUNCAN. The hearing will come to order.

We will get through our opening statements and then we will begin the opening statements from the panelists, and when we get to a stopping point to go vote we will do that and we will come back and resume shortly after votes.

So thank you, guys, for being here. I want to thank the general for a briefing recently with SOUTHCOM that was very, very helpful.

And so today we meet to conduct oversight of the administration's Fiscal Year 2016 $1 billion budget request for Central America, which would roughly triple the amount of funding for the region.

According to the administration, this funding would support the U.S. strategy for engagement in Central America to promote prosperity, security, and good governance.

It would also assist the Central American governments in implementing their Alliance for Prosperity plan.

These efforts aim to address the massive influx of migrants we saw at our Southwest border last summer in which over 68,000 unaccompanied children sought admittance to the United States, 75 percent who are from the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, also known as the Northern Triangle area.

As a result of this migration crisis, U.S. engaged in media campaigns to discourage migration, conducted law enforcement operations to dismantle human smuggling networks, and created a new in-country refugee parole processing pilot program to provide a safer way for children and their parents to migrate in the United States.

Under this program, parents living in the United States do not need to be U.S. citizens or in lawful immigration status to qualify

for their child and spouse living in Central America to gain admittance to the United States.

Instead, lawful immigrants who have benefitted from the presence of executive overreach on immigration are now also allowed to unify their families through this program.

This is appalling to me, and while I agree that we need to do all in our power to prevent another migration crisis, I am baffled as to how this program would achieve its goals since it is a welcome mat for a broader border surge and does nothing to deter Central America migration to the United States since it only furthers the narrative of family reunification—it is late in the afternoon, I guess—that many Central Americans seek.

Nevertheless, I do want to commend the leadership that governments in the region have shown to address the migration crisis.

Earlier this month, I led a congressional delegation to the seventh Summit of the Americas in Panama and our delegation met with the Presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to discuss their Alliance for Prosperity plan and how it will address the root causes of migration.

It was a fruitful discussion and I told them that their plan is a good first step in the right direction. However, I also emphasized that money alone would not be sufficient to solving these problems.

Similarly, I would like to—I want to commend the actions of Mexico on increasing its immigration enforcement efforts which are critical to U.S. border security.

Last year, Mexico's ministry of interior reported that it removed over 104,000 Central American migrants and Mexican agents conducted more than 150 raids on northbound trains that previously transported 500 to 700 migrants through Mexico to the U.S. border three times a week.

This is a significant change from Mexico's past practice but I also acknowledge that much more work needs to be done. Some believe that these efforts have been successful to the point that we will not see high levels of migration this year that we saw last year.

I don't share that optimism, given the increasing numbers of Central American migrants we are seeing at Mexico's southern border on the way to the United States.

According to Mexico's National Institute of Migration, Mexico is catching the highest number of Central American migrants so far to date with numbers nearly double what they were last year compared to the same time frame.

During the first half of 2015, Mexico has apprehended almost 60,000 migrants. This month alone Mexico apprehended almost 14,000 migrants as opposed to 8,000 in April of last year.

Furthermore, according to polling by the State Department, it appears the desire to send children to the United States has actually increased in all three Northern Triangle countries since the peak of the crisis last year.

Thus, the potential for another migration crisis this year at the U.S. southern border is real and we must have a secure U.S. border and strong relationships with the regional governments.

Today, we have five witnesses from the administration here to testify to their proposed whole government approach to the $1-billion request and U.S. strategy for the region. According to the lat-

est available statistics, the U.S. has provided roughly $24 billion in 2012 dollars to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras since 1946.

Yet, the administration's U.S. strategy for Central America clearly states that current U.S. and regional efforts to address the challenges in the region have been insufficient.

So I ask, how will $1 billion more achieve different results from what we have seen so far? Will this be like Plan Colombia, which I fully support, which was originally a 6-year strategy but ended up requiring a stronger commitment and eventually almost $10 billion from Fiscal Year 2000 to 2014. And if so, is the administration strategy planning for that?

In addition, the U.S. strategy also recognizes that success of the strategy depends on Central American governments themselves. We have seen some progress on this front with several public commitments and El Salvador's adoption of an investment stability law, Guatemala's extension of the mandate of international commission against impunity in Guatemala, or CSIG, and Honduras' cooperation agreement with Transparency International to combat corruption.

However, I believe that we must see more significant political will in these countries and greater involvement of local civil society, private sector and religious organizations in the implementation and monitoring of their Alliance for Prosperity plan if they are to achieve accountability and lasting sustainable results.

For instance, all three governments could also take steps to require the completion of corruptions tests across the entire police force, share with the U.S. their concrete plans for addressing judicial reforms including completion of homicide investigations and successful prosecution of criminal offenders.

Each sign an agreement with the Transparency International to combat corruption, each agreed to work with an independent organization similar to CSIG in Guatemala to address the impunity and each show a clear prioritization of using their own funds to address the communities experiencing the highest rate of out migration to the United States.

So in conclusion, one issue I believe should be raised more often by the administration to countries that receive U.S. foreign assistance is their voting record with the United States and multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and OAS.

Specific to today's hearing, I am concerned that El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras do not vote with the United States at least 50 percent of the time in the United Nations.

If these countries were going to receive more in U.S. taxpayer dollars, shouldn't we ask that they support the United States position more frequently in multilateral organizations?

So with that, I look forward to hearing from the witnesses and I will now turn to Ranking Member Albio Sires for his opening statement.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon and thank you to our witnesses for being here today. This time last year we saw an unprecedented number of children fleeing to the U.S. from Central America, in particular, the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

The cost in violence fueled by gangs, lack of security, weakened institutions, and poverty are creating such a sense of desperation that families and young children risk their lives on this treacherous journey with the small hope that they may be able to escape their realities.

Congress must ensure that U.S. authorities manage the processing and treatment of detained children migrants as humanely and transparently as possible, respecting their human rights and legal protection—their basic human rights and legal protection.

In turn, the Northern Triangle governments must acknowledge the factors driving these mothers and children from embarking on this dangerous journey.

Over the past year, U.S., Mexico, and Northern Triangle countries have all put forth effort to deter desperate children and families from undertaking such a risk and began crafting plans to combat the root causes of migration.

Messaging campaigns have taken place to inform families of the life-threatening dangers involved in the journey and dispel any misconception regarding U.S. migration policies.

Northern Triangle countries have banded together to craft the Alliance of Prosperity, their regional approach focusing on long-term development in strengthening institution and reducing violence.

Compared to this time last year, the rate of apprehensions at the U.S.-Mexico border has dropped. However, according to many reports, including the Pew Research Center analysis, this drop counts as a result of huge increase in Mexico deportation—the increased deportation of Central American children traveling alone by 56 percent during the first 5 months of the fiscal year.

We must be careful not to consider a drop in U.S. apprehension as a drop in migration from the region. Furthermore, we must work together to make sure Mexican authorities are processing these children with the same respect for human rights that we would expect at our borders.

Reports indicate that migrants are increasingly subject to widespread incidence of extortion, kidnapping and other abuses committed by both criminal groups and Mexican police officials.

This crisis has not emerged halfway across the globe. It has unfolded at our own doorstep and underscores the need to pay attention to our own hemisphere.

The U.S. should support a regional strategy that will increase economic opportunity, strengthen the rule of law, improve the integrity and effectiveness of police and security forces, and undermine the conditions that give way to gang and family-related violence.

I call upon the region's governments to work with the United States and do their parts to find the solution to this growing humanitarian crisis, provide a safe environment for these children, and address the underpinning of what is compelling these young children to abandon their homelands and risk their lives to come across to the United States.

I look forward to hearing from our panelists on how we can address this unfortunate crisis and I thank the chairman for holding this hearing.

Mr. DUNCAN. And I will thank the gentleman. It is an unfortunate crisis but we need to remember we are also a sovereign nation and we can determine a lot of things about our border.

I would like to just turn to the former chairwoman of the full committee and the subcommittee chairman of the Middle East and North Africa for a brief opening statement.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Well, thank you so much, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Sires. Thank you for holding today's important hearing, and as you had said, Mr. Chairman, from Fiscal Year 2008 to 2014 Congress has appropriated over $800 million for the countries of Central America but that did not prevent the incredible flood of migrants who came to our border last summer.

So what is different about the President's new proposal of $1 billion? I don't believe that throwing money at the problem without a comprehensive strategy will help to fix the crisis.

I have concerns about the capacity of our Embassies in Central America to oversee this money and whether the host countries can be prepared to receive such a large influx of assistance as well. And many of us have been advocating for such a long time that the hemisphere needs to be a higher priority. But we have got to be careful about how the money is spent. The President's Central America strategy is lacking a strong security component.

Drug trafficking in the region continues to undermine political stability in the area and we cannot successfully strengthen these government institutions and root out corruption unless drug trafficking is curtailed and the security environment is improved.

We have had many successful interagency and international cooperative operations in the transit zone including Operations Martillo and Anvil. But drug interdiction efforts continue to be hampered by resource limitations.

General Kelly has been clear in that SOUTHCOM, our great facility down south, lacks the assets and ISR support to really help our neighbors in Central America to have a larger security impact.

And even when we do have assets in the region, such as JTF Bravo in Honduras, we are not allowed to use these assets for security purposes, only for humanitarian missions. That doesn't seem to make much sense, Mr. Chairman.

We should also provide more foreign military financing to help build the capacity of security in law enforcement sectors in Central America. And these are not new concepts. We have done them successfully in Colombia and in Mexico, and they are championed success stories.

So why not imitate these initiatives for all of Central America? And as we look at the $1-billion request from the administration my concern is less, Mr. Chairman, about the amount of money but where the money will be put to use and what benchmarks we will use to gauge success.

And with that, I would like to welcome to our subcommittee hearing Captain John Madril of the United States Forces Japan, Navy Reserve Headquarters Unit Commanding Officer. So we thank you, sir, for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you.

I will recognize the ranking member for a second.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Chairman, I see that Congresswoman Norma Torres has arrived. I ask unanimous consent that they be allowed to participate in this hearing after all committee members have had their opportunity to question the witnesses.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes, without objection so ordered.

The Chair will now recognize Mr. Castro from Texas for 1 minute.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you, Chairman.

And first, Chairman, let me say that I was very proud to join you and others, many from this subcommittee—Foreign Affairs Committee—who represented the United States at the Summit of the Americas. I think that you did a wonderful job and hopefully we represented our nation well down there.

I thank all of your for testimony and for being here today, and to the administration for putting forward a proposal to help the countries in the Northern Triangle do better by their children.

I think each of us convey the message to the Presidents of these countries that many of us want to be helpful but, as others on this committee have said, we also want to make sure that the money is well spent, that it improves the lives of these children, and improves society in each of the countries.

That said, I agree with my colleague, Albio Sires, that as we have asked Mexico to be better about making sure that they cut off the pipeline of children coming to the United States, there is a concern for human rights that comes up.

Many folks have been cut off from riding what is known as the Beast—the train that ultimately leads them on the path toward the United States. And so I am going to have to leave a little bit early for a meeting at the White House on trade.

But what I would like to see going back through the testimony that you all give is an understanding of how we are doing that with a respect for human rights or understanding the cost of human life because I have read several accounts now that describe the desperation and, quite frankly, the deaths of many people who have tried to get through Mexico who have been essentially shut off from riding that train and who have perished, and whether Mexico and the United States are cooperating to make sure that this is done in the most humane way possible.

And so I hope that you all can shed some light on that subject. Thank you for being here.

Mr. DUNCAN. I thank the gentleman and thank him for his participation at the summit—a valuable member of the delegation.

I remind other members that opening statements may be submitted for the record and I would like to explain the lighting system.

I am going to give each of you 5 minutes for your opening statement. When we get close to 5 minutes if you could just recognize the lighting system will go from yellow. At red that means cut it off and we will move on.

We are going to try to stay on time. Votes will be called so short of that I am going to go ahead and recognize Mr. Hamilton. I am not going to read your bios. They are provided for our members in the books.

And so, Mr. Hamilton, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MR. SCOTT HAMILTON, CENTRAL AMERICA DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Sires, members of the committee, thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, let me first of all thank you directly for your leadership in leading a delegation to Panama at the Summit of the Americas.

I think it was the delegation that met the most Presidents in 24 hours that we have ever seen and we appreciate that very, very much. And thank you, sir, for the opportunity to testify on U.S. strategy for engagement in Central America.

This strategy, in our judgement, offers a compelling way to address the severe challenges facing this region, especially the Northern Triangle part of it. It prioritizes physical security for a good reason but it also includes governance and prosperity objectives because without all three, in our judgement, we cannot succeed in a sustainable way.

It notes that security must be accompanied by what businesses call juridical security, or the rule of law. It notes the importance of vocational training and jobs, and it notes the importance of transparent and accountable government institutions.

It concludes that only in this way together will we be able to ensure that the 1.7 million people in this region between 14 and 25 who do not work and who do not study, and the 6 million of them who will enter the job market in the next 10 years will do so in their own countries trying to pursue the Honduran dream, the Guatemalan dream, and the Salvadoran dream instead of coming north.

And Mr. Chairman, your comments and those of the other members indicated you want to know why it is different today—why are we investing or proposing that we do so. I would suggest, sir, that there are four principal reasons.

The first is that political conditions in the Northern Triangle are substantially different today than they have ever been. Women and children fleeing a country send a very different message than young men fleeing for a right of passage to work.

Women and children fleeing send a message of no confidence in the society. When that happened last year, it sent political shock waves through the region and was, frankly, humiliating for a number of leaders in the Northern Triangle. It is a wake-up call to them and they understand that.

Second, those leaders are prepared to be held accountable for the first time by external entities. In Honduras, we are talking Transparency International in the Office of the High Commission of Human Rights from the United Nations.

We are talking in Guatemala the Commission against Impunity, also from the United Nations. In El Salvador, we are talking about the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Partnership for Growth.

These are strong indications for the first time that we have seen that they are prepared to be held publically accountable not just for what they say but for what they do. Going forward, that accountability is absolutely fundamental and we strongly endorse it.

Third, for the first time in a generation, countries which are not necessarily always closely aligned have come together to prepare a collective plan for the region's development.

This collective plan, the Alliance for Prosperity, is one of the most impressive we have seen in the sense that it is combined and collective and represents the commitments and the goals of all three countries together. This is unusual and worthy of noting and, frankly, we have seen in the Colombia context that when a country comes together to take ownership of its situation and does not point fingers toward the United States, we have an opportunity to make a difference and that is what we see today.

And finally, we have learned ourselves, as an Interagency, from experiences we have had in Colombia, Mexico, and Central America we know what works. We know how to scale it up and scale it out and we know what we need to invest in.

In fact, we have spent so much time together that Assistant Secretary Brownfield almost speaks with a Scottish accent, which he will demonstrate, I am sure, when he speaks.

Mr. Chairman, all investment necessarily involves calculated risk. We assess that conditions now exist for transformation.

Our task, of course, is to ensure with you that political will is sustained in the region, that civil society is engaged and supported, and that the private sector is energized and, of course, that our partners are coordinated.

Our inaction, I would suggest, invites far greater risks for the United States. The cost of investing in this region now is, frankly, going to pale in comparison with the cost of annually addressing migration surges to this country.

We very much look forward to working with you on this committee and in other committees to assess the most effective way we can assist the region and protect the security and prosperity of the United States.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hamilton follows:]

"MIGRATION CRISIS: OVERSIGHT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSED $1 BILLION REQUEST FOR CENTRAL AMERICA"

TESTIMONY OF
SCOTT HAMILTON
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF CENTRAL AMERICAN AFFAIRS
BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BEFORE
THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTTEE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
APRIL 30, 2015

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Sires, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America.

The Strategy offers a compelling way to address the severe challenges facing Central America, especially the Northern Triangle. It prioritizes physical security, but security alone will deliver only ephemeral gains. It notes security must be accompanied by vocational training and jobs, by the rule of law – or what businesses call juridical security – and by more transparent and accountable government institutions. The Strategy concludes that only in this way will we ensure that the 1.7 million young people in the Northern Triangle between 17-24 years of age who neither work nor study, or the 6 million young people entering the region's workforce in the next 10 years, seek opportunity in their own countries and do not seek to migrate north.

The President's $1 billion request is an investment not only in Central America's future, but also an investment that will benefit the United States for years to come. We propose to contribute to a credible future for a region close to home whose future is integral to our shared security and success.

Central American women and children continue to seek safety and opportunity that cannot be found in their home countries. Last summer, that message came from unaccompanied Central American children, over 10,000 in

June alone and over 50,000 over a 12 month span. The number of apprehensions of unaccompanied children at the U.S. border is lower so far this year than for the same period last year. In one year, there has been a nearly 50 percent decrease in the number of unaccompanied children apprehended at the U.S. border. In March 2015 there were 3,145 unaccompanied children apprehended on the U.S. border, whereas 7,176 were apprehended in March 2014. There are many reasons for this.

Mexico's increased enforcement of its own immigration laws, its actions against criminal organizations, including against human smuggling, as well as its efforts to share best practices on managing migration flows with Central American governments, have been significant factors in reducing the numbers apprehended at our southern border.

We believe our public messaging campaigns have helped dispel falsehoods about the benefits of child migration being disseminated by smugglers, and have reduced the number of parents choosing to send their children north.

However, conditions in these countries remain poor and the desire to migrate is still high, and our $1 billion request is an investment to end this cyclical problem.

This is an important time to assess the merits of investing in Central America, and to consider what is different this time from our previous investments. I suggest there are four major differences.

First, women and children leaving in droves and bearing the risks of travel last year reflected chilling votes of no confidence by societies' most vulnerable members. This migration spike – and forlorn televised images of those sent back – was a political wake up call to Central American leaders. It caught the attention of the region's leaders in a new and different way and has helped to engender unprecedented regional cooperation within the Northern Triangle and with Mexico.

Second, Central American leaders now are demonstrating that they understand the gravity of their domestic situations and are willing to be held publicly accountable for the commitments they make. They understand the significant relationship between sustainable economic growth and transparent, effective, and accountable government institutions. Good governance – especially in terms of juridical security and the rule of law – gives confidence to citizens and investors alike.

In this regard, the public accountability record since last year is worth highlighting. The Honduran government signed a landmark agreement with Transparency International to publicize security sector procurement information, and President Hernandez asked the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to open a human rights office in Tegucigalpa in June. The Honduran Congress just passed legislation protecting human rights defenders and journalists. In Guatemala, President Perez Molina recently requested that the UN renew for two years the International Commission to Combat Impunity in Guatemala – CICIG – an independent judicial accountability mechanism. In El Salvador, the Sanchez Ceren government is working with us through the Partnership for Growth and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, guided by a meaningful public-private dialogue that is action-oriented, and designed to create a more investment-friendly environment. The region's leaders also committed to a series of public reform commitments in a March 3 Joint Statement with Vice President Biden.

Third, the Northern Triangle countries have a plan – the Alliance for Prosperity – and are serious about collaborating with each other. This is important because we learned from Plan Colombia that national investment – be it financial resources from the government, political courage from key leaders, or private sector partnership – is much more important than any actions or resources from the donor community. President Hernandez of Honduras has pledged that 80 percent of the Plan's activities will be funded from their national budget.

In this regard, it is the job of citizens in the Northern Triangle to determine – in collaboration with their own governments – the content of the Salvadoran dream, the Guatemalan dream, and the Honduran dream. Such discussions lie at the very heart of democratic and inclusive societies. For our part, we have tools to help build and realize these dreams – so that all citizens in the region can ultimately succeed.

And fourth, we have learned from our own past experiences and are more integrated than ever before – both in Washington and in the field. The Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) has demonstrated proofs of concept but they were too small in scale to have a transformational impact and were not always linked to national policies. We are scaling up proven models, targeting the right people and the right places. Our interagency approach is committed to making a sustainable, lasting impact on the lives of the people in Central America in ways that also benefit our long-term national interests.

All investment involves calculated risk; we assess that conditions now exist for transformation, but we do not intend to brush aside or minimize risks. Political will must be sustained, civil society engaged and supported, the private sector energized, and partners coordinated.

There is far greater risk with our inaction. The cost of investing in Central America pales in comparison with the cost of addressing increases in migration to the United States. Last year alone the federal government required $1.5 billion to address the increase in arrivals of unaccompanied children. This does not include any additional costs that state or local communities may have contributed.

Absent U.S. assistance, Central America will be less able to create jobs, provide education and training, clean out corrupt government institutions, ensure safe communities, and offer viable lives for their citizens.

The U.S. government is committed to working with our Central American partners to realize change. Interagency coordination is ensuring consistency in messaging and effective joint programming. Our strategy for Central America is an executive branch blueprint for our outreach to the region – we have a shared vision of U.S. policy in Central America and of the outcomes we seek with regional partners.

We are committed to protecting and promoting the security and prosperity of the United States by investing in Central America's own plan for its prosperity, governance, and security, and will work with our U.S. Government partners and the U.S. Congress to realize gains from our investment.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, and I will now welcome back to the committee Ambassador Brownfield, who was in Colombia when Plan Colombia was being implemented. I hope you will touch on the successes of that at some point today.

Ambassador, welcome back. You are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WILLIAM R. BROWNFIELD, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. BROWNFIELD. Mr. Hamilton, a mild Texas accent is sometimes confused for a Scottish accent but they are distinct accents.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Sires, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss with you today our Central America engagement strategy.

We meet to discuss the future of Central America but we filter our thinking through our experience last summer when tens of thousands of Central American migrants and children arrived at our southwest border.

We learned then that the solution to the migration crisis is not at our border but, rather, in Central America itself and the root causes that drive migrants north.

To address those root causes, we developed a three-prong strategy—prosperity, to give Central Americans a stake in their own futures; governance, to give them confidence in their own governments; and security to protect their families in their own communities.

We do not start this exercise from scratch. Since 2009, my INL bureau has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in support and assistance through CARSI, the Central America Regional Security Initiative.

Some suggest there is little to show for this effort. I respectfully disagree. Operations Martillo and Anvil brought drug smuggling by air through Honduras down by as much as 50 percent since 2012.

Maritime drug seizures—our best measure of drug flow—fell 40 percent in Costa Rica and 60 percent in Panama. Seventy-two major traffickers now face justice in the United States. The homicide rate in Honduras dropped more than 20 percent between 2011 and 2014.

Migrant detentions at our southwest border are down as much as half from last year, thanks largely to Mexican and Central American law enforcement efforts.

I do not apologize for CARSI, Mr. Chairman. I am proud of it. But if CARSI were completely successful we would not be here today.

The President has requested $1 billion for Fiscal Year 2016 to support this strategy. The INL request is $205 million, which is 25 percent more than last year. The committee—the subcommittee has a right to ask what more would it see for this 25 percent.

First, a new bottom-up and top-down approach. Bottom-up, we will support local anti-gang, drug demand, and community policing programs that link communities with their own police.

We will also support national police, prosecutor and judicial training, and capacity building programs to reform institutions

from the top down and we will support specialized vetted units and task forces to produce immediate operational results.

Second, we offer a new programming approach that links USAID's community programs with INL's model police precincts. We call it the place-based strategy.

Jointly, we identify communities, age groups, security threats and root causes, and then design comprehensive statistics-driven programs to address them.

And third, we expand those CARSI programs with a successful track record and draw down or modify those without.

Members of the subcommittee, we knew when we started CARSI in 2009 that we were in this for the long haul. We knew we would learn from programs that worked well and from others that did not.

We knew we would accomplish only as much as regional governments' political will would survive and support. We have delivered results. Central America is a better place today and the United States is safer due to our efforts. But we surely have more to do.

I look forward to working closely with the subcommittee to get it done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to your comments and your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Brownfield follows:]

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS

Prepared Statement of:

Ambassador William R. Brownfield
Assistant Secretary of State for
International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Affairs

Hearing Before the:

House Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere

"Migration Crisis: Oversight of the Administration's Proposed $1 Billion Request for Central America"

April 30, 2015

Chairman Duncan, Ranking Member Sires, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Administration's Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America and the role of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) in supporting two key objectives of this strategy: security and governance.

The interrelated economic, political and security challenges facing Central America are well documented, and the consequences of these challenges are critical to the interests of the United States. Last summer's surge in the numbers of unaccompanied children and families from Central America to the United States was just the most dramatic example of how our national security is entwined with that of the region's. We could also cite as evidence the growth of violent transnational gangs that operate throughout Central America and across the United States, or the region's exploitation by international drug trafficking organizations that supply most of the cocaine available on our streets, or the high levels of gender-based violence that are pervasive throughout the region. As the Administration's Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America makes clear, if economic prospects remain poor, institutions remain weak, and the crime rate remains high, Central America will become a source of further instability for its neighbors, including the United States, in the form of illegal migration and even more entrenched transnational organized crime. We are already feeling some of these effects, and we need to act now to improve Central America's ability to address these challenges.

While there are sound reasons to ensure continued focus on the entire region, there is special urgency regarding the situation of the three countries of the "Northern Triangle" – El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In November 2014, the Northern Triangle presidents, along with the Inter-American Development Bank, presented their "Alliance for Prosperity" and committed to an unprecedented plan to jointly improve economic opportunity, governance, and public safety in their countries and improve the lives of all their citizens. In March, Vice President Biden met for the fourth time in eight months with these three leaders and successfully pressed them to commit to systemic reforms, with timelines, to make their plan a reality. This includes their commitments to police reform, greater transparency and effectiveness in their collection and management of government resources, addressing domestic violence and violence against women, and prison reform. This political commitment offers us an invaluable opportunity. With smart foreign assistance and sustained political engagement, we can address the underlying factors of insecurity in the region in a strategic and sustained way, and help support our Central American partners achieve better governance and

economic growth. Let me be clear. We cannot address security in a vacuum. Sustainable security depends also on the strength of government institutions and equitable economic growth, and we are working closely with our interagency partners to implement this comprehensive plan.

Falling under the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, the ongoing Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) is a key component o the U.S. implementation structure for United States citizen security assistance to the region. INL works in close partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other departments and agencies, particularly the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security and Defense, to reduce levels of crime an violence, build the capacity of law enforcement and rule of law institutions, and support prevention programs for youth and in communities at-risk of crime and violence.

The overriding goal of INL's CARSI programs in Central America is to help these governments achieve self-sustaining progress in ensuring a legal, regulatory, and operational framework for security for their citizens. With your support, we believe this comprehensive approach can play a historic role in shifting this region back onto a positive trajectory.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 we are requesting $205 million in the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account for CARSI programming; USAID is also requesting CARSI funding for its counterpart activities. This request will provide INL the resources it needs to build on successful programs in the region, improve host nation ownership and ability to assume responsibility for new programs and reforms, and expand models that have proven successful to a wider geographic area. At the same time that we are requesting additional funding from the U.S. Congress to build capacity for Central American leaders to address the region's fundamental challenges, we must be able to demonstrate results and rigorously evaluate our programs to build on what works and eliminate what does not. This process is already underway with ongoing formal and informal evaluation mechanisms, and we look forward to working closely with Congress to craft the most effective assistance package.

INL programming will focus on criminal justice sector capacity-building and reform, primarily in the Northern Triangle region, including the expansion of successful programs such as Model Police Precincts, border control, police reform, anti-gang initiatives, and vetted units.

With a view to the long-term sustainability of our efforts, we will use the new opening by partner governments to promote structural reforms to the weak institutional framework of the police, courts and prisons, which has led to longstanding problems of impunity. We are increasingly focused on supporting wider rule of law programming to help support judicial institutions and address the ongoing problems of impunity and lack of transparency. We will increase the number of Resident Legal Advisors (RLAs) in the region to focus on reducing the impunity rates for violent offenders and ensuring adequate legal frameworks are in place to efficiently and effectively prosecute criminals. Within corrections systems, INL provides technical assistance for critical reforms. We are developing regional models in Costa Rica and El Salvador to secure these locations more effectively and ensure that criminal enterprises are not run from inside prison walls, while allowing for rehabilitation and reintegration services that will lower recidivism rates. We also are in ongoing discussion with the Government of Honduras regarding a forthcoming prison reform law.

To address immediate problems, in partnership with USAID, INL is supporting a new "place-based strategy" to reduce and prevent violence in the most at-risk communities in the region. Drawing upon a proven Los Angeles model for gang and homicide reduction, INL and USAID's place-based strategy works with host nation authorities at municipal and national levels to combine community-based violence prevention programs with law enforcement interventions, targeting the most at-risk members of the most at-risk communities. In collaboration with the Government of Honduras, INL and USAID are beginning this effort in two of the most violent neighborhoods in the city of San Pedro Sula, with the goal of lowering homicide rates in the target communities. In the coming months, INL and USAID will work with local governments to identify the key places and people to target for additional place-based programming in El Salvador and Guatemala.

INL will also continue to work with host nations to expand and institutionalize one of our most successful programs in the region, the Model Police Precincts (MPPs) program. MPPs emphasize community engagement and crime prevention through the use of intelligence gathering, targeted investigations, and community involvement. In areas where INL has established MPPs in coordination with local police authorities, we have seen an average 10 percent reduction in crime rates. INL currently supports 16 MPPs in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, and we plan to work with national governments to roll out MPPs throughout the region, increasing that number to 137 by the end of 2017. In order to make these expansions sustainable, we will also work with national

legislatures and relevant ministries to establish a blueprint for adoption of relevant policies and, eventually, budget support for the MPP model.

We also plan to expand the successful Gang Resistance Education, and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program, which sends police officers into schools to teach children and young adults life skills and the ability to resist the pressures to join gangs or engage in other risky behaviors. Seeing police officers as positive role models in a safe setting helps these young children build positive relationships and lasting trust with law enforcement that will transfer into the larger community over time.

Despite laws criminalizing rape and domestic abuse in the Northern Triangle, violence against women, remains extremely high. INL is focused on addressing these issues, which contribute to the high rates of violence and homicide throughout Central America. Last year, a group of prosecutors, judges, and doctors, selected by the President of Costa Rica's Supreme Court, attended a gender based violence (GBV) training in the United States. Upon their return, the participants recommended creating a specialized unit to help victims of sexual assault, launching a national campaign to promote awareness and prevention of sexual assault and domestic violence, and called for a national congress to provide train-the-trainer workshops for 450 people to combat gender-based and domestic violence.

Through continued support for law enforcement training and vetted units, INL is focused on promoting reforms to establish new relationships between police forces and the public they serve and improving the capacity of law enforcement to combat transnational organized crime. We will expand efforts to professionalize and reform police departments through modern policing techniques, to include a focus on community policing and the use of technology such as Complaint Statistics (COMPSTAT), a U.S.-modeled analytical tool that allows police to make informed, targeted responses to crime. INL support for vetted units in the region has been crucial to the removal of transnational crime leaders and organizations and forms a solid foundation for increased cooperation between U.S. and host nation law enforcement agencies. Members of these units are often the best of the police force; officers who focus on specialized areas such as counternarcotics, violent crimes, and financial crimes. The work of these units is essential to reducing the power and influence of these sophisticated transnational criminal organizations, which are responsible for promoting much of the growth in violence and corruption of public officials in the region that undermines security and governance. Recently, these vetted units have seen notable success in taking down

large transnational criminal organizations and, in some cases, extraditing their leaders to the United States.

Chairman Duncan, Ranking Member Sires and Members of the Subcommittee, we are committed to working with our neighbors in Central America to influence significant and positive change in the region. Governance and prosperity require a secure environment in which to flourish. Likewise, security will only be sustainable in an environment where democratic institutions flourish, human rights are protected, and citizens enjoy economic opportunity. We need all three: prosperity, governance, and security, for all citizens of the Northern Triangle. While the task at hand is incredibly challenging, INL is well-positioned to grow and expand proven programs in the region, partner with the interagency, and work in alignment with host nations to effect systemic and positive change in Central America's security environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss INL's work in Central America and our role in the ambitious action strategy for the region. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Ambassador.

And the Chair will recognize Ms. Adams-Allen.

STATEMENT OF MS. PALOMA ADAMS-ALLEN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BUREAU, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Sires and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to testify today.

I am grateful for your interest in Central America and am pleased to have this opportunity to update you on your plans to address the underlying causes of the region's migration crisis.

As you know, social development and economic growth in Central America have been stymied in recent years by dramatic rise in crime and violence, particularly in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, one of the consequences being the migration of thousands of unaccompanied children to the United States last summer.

To help Central American governments create an environment in which the smallest and most vulnerable citizens can survive and thrive, we must effectively address the root causes of this migration.

As Vice President Biden said in January, the cost of investing now in a secure and prosperous Central America is modest compared with the cost of letting violence and poverty fester.

The administration's Fiscal Year 2016 budget request for Central America represents an investment now that we believe will save us money later.

To ensure their investment pays off, the administration will implement the U.S. strategy for engagement in Central America, a coordinated whole of government effort that takes a comprehensive view of the region's challenges and banks on a true partnership with the countries of the region, strong host country political will, and increased private sector investment.

It directly addresses these root causes by advancing three interrelated objectives—improved prosperity, security, and governance. With additional funding we intend to spur greater prosperity with the North Triangle countries by supporting broad-based economic growth and anti-poverty programs.

Our investments are intended to create jobs; expand the business, employment, and educational opportunities available to the groups most likely to migrate; and, ultimately, reduce poverty in their communities.

In all three countries, we will invest in clean energy programs and trade facilitation measures that promote regional integration. Cheaper, more reliable energy will improve the competitiveness of the business sector while enhancing energy security.

Reducing the time and cost to move goods across the region's borders will make it easier for private businesses to capitalize on market opportunities. Expanding economic and educational opportunities for the poor is crucial to consolidating security.

The heart of USAID's security work continues to be youth-focused crime and violence prevention programs designed to keep

youth safe, provide avenues to better education and job training, upgrade community infrastructure, and build trust between communities and police.

We have been testing these approaches, many which have proven effective in U.S. cities in the region's most dangerous communities. Last fall, a Vanderbilt University impact evaluation confirmed that these programs work.

At the 3-year mark, the final results showed a 51-percent decline in reported murders and extortion, a 25-percent reduction in reported illegal drug sales, and a 19-percent drop in reported burglaries in neighborhoods benefiting from USAID programs as compared to the control group.

With additional resources we will partner with national municipal governments to push for the reforms and investments needed to scale up and sustain successful programs. We will also implement in tandem with State INL a new place-based strategy in the region's most dangerous communities with marries our youth and community development programs with INL's programs to build trusted and accountable police. Ultimately, our success will depend on strong and effective governance in Central America.

Prosperity and security gains are only sustainable in an environment where democratic values and institutions flourish, all people have access to basic social services, impunity is reduced, and civil society and the media can play their rightful roles.

With additional resources, we will push for and help the countries implement reforms needed to enhance the effectiveness of their institutions. New programs will seek to increase their transparency and accountability by professionalizing the civil service empowering civil society to serve as watchdogs and strengthening the institutions charged with administering justice.

To foster greater local revenue generation, we will strengthen their tax administration and financial management capability. We will only be successful in this endeavor if the region's governments commit to making tough reforms. As such, we intend to calibrate our assistance in response to real reform efforts. We believe it is important to send the message at the outset of this process that resources will follow reform and not vice versa.

Mr. Chairman, we believe that the conditions in the region are ripe for us to successfully tackle poverty, insecurity, and weak governance that compels children to migrate and help our partners in Central America create the secure, peaceful, and prosperous region we all desire.

Thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Adams-Allen follows:]

Testimony of Paloma Adams-Allen
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean
U.S. Agency for International Development
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere
April 30th, 2015
"Migration Crisis: Oversight of the Administration's Proposed $1 Billion Request for Central America"

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Sires, and members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the invitation to testify today. I am grateful for the Committee's interest in Central America and I am pleased to have this opportunity to update you on our interagency strategy to address the root causes of the migration crisis in Central America.

As you know, social development and economic growth in Central America have been stymied in recent years by a dramatic rise in crime and violence—particularly in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. This insecurity is rooted in deep-seated issues of social and economic inequity, weak institutions of criminal justice, the lack of economic opportunity for vast segments of the population, and increases in gang violence and international crime. As these long-standing challenges in Central America worsened, we saw the consequences manifest at our border last year when more than fifty thousand children left their homes in Central America to make the dangerous journey unaccompanied to the United States.

That spike in the number of child migrants required an immediate response. USAID responded quickly, working with the International Organization of Migration (IOM) to upgrade reception centers in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras so they could enhance their ability to receive returned migrants and provide immediate care, child protection services, and onward assistance for returning families and children.

However, short-term efforts are not enough. This problem requires a strategic and sustained long-term effort to ensure that we don't end up dealing with an ongoing cyclical phenomenon. In order to help Central American governments create an environment in which all of their citizens are able to survive and thrive, we must work together to eliminate the underlying factors driving migration. As Vice President Biden said in January, "The cost of investing now in a secure and prosperous Central America is modest compared with the costs of letting violence and poverty fester."

The Administration's FY16 budget request for Central America represents that investment now that will save us money later. In order to ensure that our investment pays off, the Administration will implement the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, a coordinated, whole-of-government effort that takes a comprehensive view of the challenges facing the region and banks

on strong political commitment by Central American governments and increased investment by the private sector. The Strategy directly addresses the root causes of migration by advancing three interrelated objectives: prosperity, security, and governance. By advancing these three objectives in tandem, the Strategy seeks to foster a secure, economically integrated Central America that provides opportunities to all its citizens, and is governed by more accountable, transparent, and effective public institutions.

The U.S. Strategy fully aligns with the Central America-led plan—the "Alliance for Prosperity"— which was announced last November by the presidents of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. That Plan outlines the Northern Triangle governments' shared commitment to growing their economies, creating employment, and improving the life prospects of their poorest and most vulnerable citizens. It includes a clear-eyed assessment of the tasks at hand, well-considered lines of action, and specific steps that the Governments themselves will take.

There are other recent actions that have demonstrated the Central American governments' commitment to the region's success. For instance, El Salvador launched an anti-extortion task force and passed a law designed to give investors greater assurances that tax and customs regulations will not change over the course of an investment. Guatemala acknowledged human rights violations and reached a settlement with indigenous communities affected by the Chixoy dam. In December, Honduras announced it would publicize security sector procurement information, complying with its agreement with Transparency International. Honduran President, Juan Orlando Hernandez, also welcomed the establishment of a UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to observe the human-rights situation first hand. These examples and others represent significant steps forward.

Although the local ownership of the Alliance for Prosperity plan and these concrete actions demonstrate that there is indeed political will to move forward, further reforms are necessary to achieve and sustain the US and Central America's shared objectives of prosperity, security, and improved governance. We therefore intend to calibrate our assistance against the performance of the Central American governments. This approach will ensure that they continue to build their capacity and maintain the political will necessary for us to effectively implement increased investments from US taxpayers.

In addition to a deepened partnership with the Central American governments, the new Strategy is also enabling improved coordination among the US Government. The National Security Council has led an inclusive process to develop and finalize the Implementation Plan, which has prompted our collaboration and coordination with a diverse array of Agencies including, the Departments of State, Defense, Treasury, Justice, Homeland Security, and Labor; the Millennium Challenge Corporation; the US Department of Agriculture; the Overseas Private Investment Corporation; the United States Trade and Development Agency; and the Office of the United States Trade Representative. In so doing, we are able to jointly assess each agency's

comparative advantage, define lines of action, and develop consistent policy-level indicators for success.

Additional funding in FY16 will enable us to spur greater prosperity by supporting broad-based economic growth programs designed to expand business, employment and educational opportunities to the poor, and those groups most likely to migrate. This support includes improving the enabling environment to start and grow businesses; promoting investments in clean energy development; advancing trade and regional integration; improving education and vocational training; increasing small and medium enterprises' access to affordable financing and business development services; and increasing the incomes of the rural poor by connecting small-scale farmers to markets through the Feed the Future initiative.

In El Salvador, USAID will continue working at both the municipal and national levels to grow the economy. At the local level, we will work with Municipal Competitiveness Committees to establish local initiatives—particularly in the communities from which people are migrating—that promote economic development and business opportunities. At the national level, USAID will assist the Export and Investment Promotion Agency (PROESA) and the Ministry of Economy to create a more welcoming business enabling environment, encourage private investment, and improve the ability of small and medium-sized enterprises to take advantage of market opportunities. In this way, USAID will support El Salvador in its own efforts to promote economic opportunities and enhance competitiveness.

In Guatemala, our prosperity and anti-poverty programs are geographically focused in the Western Highlands where the poorest people live. The Western Highlands Integrated Program acknowledges that achieving sustainable rural development requires parallel focus on several interrelated issues: agriculture and economic development, education, healthcare, nutrition, climate change, local governance, and gender equity. Currently the Integrated Program only reaches a fraction of communities living in poverty. With additional resources, the program could reach more individuals and be expanded to many more communities in the Western Highlands.

In Honduras, USAID is prepared to build off of our successful Feed the Future projects, which have helped increase average incomes by 55% for 30,000 of the poorest families by increasing crop yields and access to markets, and promoting alternative, more productive land uses.

In all three countries, we will invest in clean energy programs and trade facilitation that promotes regional integration. Our clean energy investments will lower the high cost of and improve the poor quality of electricity in the region. Cheaper, more reliable energy will improve the competitiveness of the businesses sector while enhancing energy security by reducing the need to import oil and gas. Our work on trade facilitation will reduce the time and cost to move goods across the border, making it easier for private businesses to capitalize on market opportunities.

Economic growth should benefit everyone, and we need to work with governments to ensure that women, youth, and other marginalized populations are benefiting from increased prosperity. One successful example of targeting vulnerable populations is USAID's "A Ganar" program, which works with the private sector to provide basic math and reading instruction, life skills, vocational training, and internships to at-risk youth in Guatemala and Honduras. Programs like A Ganar are essential to preparing youth to join the formal labor force, increase their incomes, and help drive economic activity throughout the Northern Triangle countries. The success of the program is evidenced by the fact that 75% of graduates obtain employment, return to school, or start a business within one year. We will continue to support new programs across Central America to educate and prepare the region's poor, particularly youth and women, to join the twenty-first century workforce.

The heart of USAID's security work in Central America has been youth-focused crime and violence prevention. We have supported and tested a range of community-level approaches—which have been effective in US and Latin American cities—to reducing and preventing crime and violence in high-crime communities and cities in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. These include partnering with communities, civil society, governments and the private sector to develop crime prevention plans, invest in municipal crime observatories, create safe community spaces, expand after school activities, and provide job and life skills training, and build trust between police and residents.

Last fall, the results of a three-year, four country, impact evaluation, conducted by Vanderbilt University, confirmed that these community-level prevention programs work. At the three-year mark, the final results showed a 51% decline in reported murders and extortion, 25% reduction in reported illegal drug sales, and 19% decline in reported burglaries in neighborhoods benefiting from USAID-supported programs as compared to the control group of similar communities.[1] Residents also reported feeling more secure walking alone at night and they took measurably more collective action to address crime in the treatment than in the control groups.

The Vanderbilt study noted that to have greater impact, USAID's programs must be expanded to more communities and reach more people. With additional resources, we are prepared to do just that—help the governments of the Northern Triangle scale up and make sustainable budget commitments to continue what is working, particularly in the communities from which youth are migrating. The government of Honduras has already pledged $2 million of its own resources to do just that.

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[1] "Impact Evaluation of USAID's Community-Based Crime and Violence Prevention Approach in Central America: Regional Report for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama." The Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Vanderbilt University. October 2014. Available at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/carsi/Regional_Report_v12d_final_W_120814.pdf

As part of the scaling up, USAID and INL, in partnership with national governments and other key stakeholders, are marrying the US government's prevention, law enforcement, and justice support efforts in the same high-crime communities, and focusing attention on the youth most at risk of falling into lives of crime. By working in concert in the same neighborhoods we will quickly and effectively reduce youth-related crime, violence and homicides.

We know that economic growth and security are only sustainable in an environment where democratic values and institutions flourish, citizens can depend on basic social services, impunity is reduced and civil society and the media can play their rightful roles. Ultimately, the success of the Strategy depends upon strong and effective governance by the Northern Triangle countries.

With additional resources, USAID would accelerate civil service reform, address chronically low tax revenue collection, and expand justice sector reform throughout the region. Because effective governance requires a professional, merit-based civil service, USAID is helping organizations advocate for the passage of civil service laws and transparent policies governing civil service hiring and promotion. For example, in El Salvador, the Transparency and Governance program is working with civil society organizations to lobby for the passage of civil service reforms and assisting the Government of El Salvador in developing a national integrity plan with specific actions to improve transparency in use of public resources. In El Salvador, USAID is also supporting taxpayer self-service kiosks, which allow taxpayers to perform transactions themselves improving transparency and reducing the administrative burden.

USAID support to justice sector reform would include technical training to judges, lawyers and court personnel as well as technical assistance on important reforms to the juvenile justice system that would ensure rehabilitation programs and reintegration services for young offenders.

USAID intends to take advantage of this moment of significant political will in these countries to push for and help implement reforms that reduce corruption and strengthen the effectiveness, transparency, accountability of the public institutions charged with managing the region's economies and delivering services to its people.

USAID will accelerate this work by continuing to embrace a new model of development that marshals the resources, expertise, innovation, and technology of local organizations and the private sector.

For instance, for the past two years, one-third of our budget in El Salvador was programmed through local partners. In Guatemala, USAID is working hand-in-hand with the Ministry of Education to strengthen bilingual education and reading across the country. In addition, our $42 million Rural Value Chains Project is implemented exclusively and successfully by local partners AGEXPORT and ANACAFE. Working through local entities builds the capacity of these groups to advance local development and encourages local buy in and ownership.

The region's private sector is starting to see that development is good for business. USAID currently has 16 active public-private partnerships with the business community in Central

America. Over the past five years, partnerships of this kind have leveraged nearly $160 million in private sector resources to complement our own investments in development.

We know that we will only be successful if we have the commitment our partner governments, the private sector, and the citizens of this region. Fortunately, the Northern Triangle countries are demonstrating a deepening commitment to advancing their own development goals. Increased political will in the region, in combination with improved local capacity, leveraged resources, and new partnerships will allow us to help Central American governments create a peaceful, prosperous and integrated region.

The President's $1 billion request reflects our shared belief that "if the political will exists, there is no reason Central America cannot become the next great success story of the Western Hemisphere."

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you so much. I apologize. We got tickled during your comments but I want to thank the United States Army for stepping in and dispatching a pesky fly that was flying around the table down there.

Mr. Bersin for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ALAN D. BERSIN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND CHIEF DIPLOMATIC OFFICER, OFFICE OF POLICY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. BERSIN. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, in light of the opening statements of my distinguished colleagues, let me be brief and summarize.

As Barry Gordy, the founder and chief owner of Motown Records was asked to sit in a university hearing of a Ph.D. candidate's thesis and before the candidate could launch into an hour-long discussion, Mr. Gordy looked at her and said, "I just need the answer to three questions—what is your conclusion, how did you reach it, and why does it matter."

So let me try to provide brief summary answers to each of those. The causes of the migration surge of the summer of 2014 are clear. We know the push factors out of the Northern Triangle—poverty, violence, educational concerns, the need for family reunification, the role of smuggling networks.

These are not disputed by anyone. Why do we think that this time around this investment will yield a different result? The fact is that we did not address the pull factors that pulled people out of those countries, and Congress was given an opportunity to do that and declined to do so.

We ask that you accept the conclusion that we need to deal with the push factors, otherwise we should not expect a different result. The reason we can expect a different result is that, as my colleagues have indicated, there is a strength of will in Central America that has not before existed on which we can build on the successes that Ambassador Brownfield has outlined that we have seen over the last 5 to 7 years.

We have administrations there with political will, with a plan of their own developed in connection with the Inter-American Development Bank, the Alliance for Prosperity that shows a difference in the domestic context that is new and different.

Equally important, there is a strategy in the United States Government that Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Brownfield and Ms. Adams-Allen have outlined. There is a coherent strategy to address security issues and economic development concerns.

How do we know this? What is the method we use? With regard to the push factors there is no dispute. We hear this from the migrants themselves. We hear it from the general—the GAO. We hear it from the leaders of Central American countries.

Why do we think that we would see a different result with this investment? We see a different result because we have seen it happen in Colombia, we have seen it happen in Mexico in terms of dealing with the security situation until the economic conditions and the economic investments that are there are able to take root and we begin to see the push factors diminished.

What happened in Colombia and what happened in Mexico is unique to the circumstances in those countries but the key principles of governments' will and the United States Government with an assistance strategy that holds together, I think, the determining factors.

The third question of Mr. Gordy—why does it matter. It matters because in fact this is an issue that if we do not deal with it at the site we will deal with it on our own border. If we do not deal with it in the context of the investment that has been requested, we will pay three times as much in dealing with the consequences of it without affecting at all the factors that have led to the crisis in the first place.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, that is my answer to the these questions on behalf of Secretary Johnson.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bersin follows:]

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

OF

ALAN D. BERSIN

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND
CHIEF DIPLOMATIC OFFICER
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

BEFORE

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

ON

"ROOT CAUSES OF CENTRAL AMERICAN MIGRATION"

APRIL 30, 2015

Introduction

Good morning Chairman Duncan, Ranking Member Sires, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to testify on the root causes of Central American migration to the United States. Secretary Johnson and I appreciate this Subcommittee's interest in this important issue.

Overview

As part of the President's $1 billion request the United States effort continues to support Central America via the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), which is the primary U.S. implementation structure for U.S. citizen security assistance in the region. Through CARSI, partner nations, the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), DHS, as well as other departments and agencies all work to strengthen institutions to counter the effects of organized crime and uphold the rule of law. However, the wave of unaccompanied children (UC) from Central America crossing the U.S.-Mexico border last summer presented a humanitarian dimension catapulting the United States to an immediate response to the urgent situation. Through foreign assistance to the region, the United States directs its efforts towards improving the security and economic situation in these countries. This includes addressing the causes of the migrant influx and gaining political will from these countries to meet their own political, economic, and security challenges. Through CARSI and other funding initiatives, the United States will continue to expand successful programs that will make short to medium-term sustainable impacts to reduce levels of crime and violence, build the capacity of law enforcement and rule of law institutions, and support prevention programs for youth and in communities at-risk of crime and violence.

In my discussions with government officials in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, they cite educational and employment concerns, daily threats of violence, the desire for family reunification, and the role of smuggling networks as the central causes for the increase in the number of unaccompanied children who migrated to the United States in 2014 and as part of a trend beginning in 2011.

On February 27, 2015, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report to congressional requesters on "Central America: Information on Migration of Unaccompanied Children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras." GAO was asked to review issues related to U.S. assistance to Central America addressing the rapid increase in migration of unaccompanied minors from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to the U.S. The report identifies U.S. mission-level efforts to (1) identify causes of the rapid increase in migration of unaccompanied children and (2) address the causes identified. Identical to my discussions with senior government representatives in these countries, they identified crime and violence and economic concerns as the causes primarily responsible for the recent rapid increase in migration to the United States by unaccompanied children. Examples of criminal activity that can influence migration include gang activity, drug trafficking, and the growth of criminal organizations; economic drivers include the loss of agricultural jobs and farms due to a coffee rust fungus spreading in Central America. Other causes identified included educational concerns, the desire for family reunification, the role of smuggling networks, and the perception of United States immigration policy, among others. These are challenges the region has long faced but lacked the political will and resources necessary to address.

These issues have strong implications for the national security and economic prosperity of the United States. If economic prospects remain poor and the crime rate remains high, Central

America may remain a source of instability for Mexico and ultimately the United States in the form of illegal migration and even more entrenched organized crime in the Western Hemisphere, including in the United States. To the extent that these problems constitute grounds for asylum or other international humanitarian protections, we expect people to continue to seek that protection from the United States, as we have committed to provide through both treaty and statute.

Unaccompanied Children (UC)

Over the past few years, there was a substantial increase in the number of unaccompanied children, who are some of the most vulnerable individuals who interact with our immigration system, apprehended at the U.S.-Mexican border. Similar to the way it addresses other security issues, in its response, DHS has utilized a risk-based strategy for border security.

According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the number of UC from any country apprehended at the U.S.-Mexican border climbed from more than 24,000 in fiscal year 2012 to nearly 39,000 in fiscal year 2013, and to nearly 69,000 in fiscal year 2014. Prior to fiscal year 2012, the majority of UC apprehended at the border were Mexican nationals. However, more than half of the UC apprehended at the border in fiscal year 2013, and 75 percent apprehended in fiscal year 2014 were nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. UC apprehensions for fiscal year 2015 to date have decreased compared to the same period of time last year, owing in large part to the response by DHS, as well as our interagency and international partners to prepare for the seasonal increase in UC migrants that normally begins in the winter and increases each spring.

More specifically, during the uptick in the number of UCs arriving at the U.S.-Mexican border, DHS worked closely with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to whom DHS is mandated by law to transfer custody of these children once they are identified as unaccompanied, to resolve issues related to HHS' ability to absorb the increase in UCs. This continues to be an issue that Secretary Johnson follows very closely. These efforts actually build on several years of increased and strengthened coordination between DHS and HHS. DOD also played an important role in providing temporary shelter for UCs and family units at the beginning of the increase in 2014.

On June 2, 2014, President Obama directed Secretary Johnson to establish an interagency Unified Coordination Group to ensure Federal unity of effort in responding to the influx of unaccompanied children across the Southwest border. Among other actions, and in order to achieve the unity of effort required to respond to this situation, Secretary Johnson designated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Craig Fugate as the Federal Coordinating Official to lead and coordinate the Unified Coordination Group across the Executive Branch. In this role, Administrator Fugate led and coordinated Federal response efforts to ensure that Federal agencies were unified in providing relief to the affected children.

I am pleased to report that as a result of the multi-agency effort we undertook the numbers of UCs arriving at our border are well below the numbers we during this same time period last year. Given the seasonal pattern of Central American migration to the United States, we remain vigilant to prevent or address any increase in numbers as we approach the summer months. To that end, and consistent with the overall Unity of Effort initiative Secretary Johnson announced in April 2014, DHS has embarked on a common, DHS-wide Southern Border campaign plan. DHS-wide campaign planning and the Department's establishment of three new

Joint Task Forces – East, West, and Investigations – will enable a more effective, more efficient, and more unified approach for the range of homeland security and border security efforts across our southern border and approaches.

DHS will continue to ensure the proper care of unaccompanied children when they are temporarily in DHS custody and coordinate closely with HHS, the Departments of State and Defense, the General Services Administration and other agencies, to ensure a coordinated and rapid government-wide response in the short-term and to undertake broader, longer-term reforms to address the root cause behind these recent migration trends. We will also continue to work closely with the governments of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. We must, and we will, address this situation.

One way of helping to provide a safe, legal, and orderly alternative to the dangerous journey that some children are currently taking to the United States to reunite with their parents is the establishment of the Central American Minors (CAM) Refugee/Parole Program. This program was created as part of a broader commitment to working with Central American countries to help create the economic, social, governance and citizen security conditions to address factors contributing to increases in migration to the United States. Vice President Biden announced the establishment of the program in November 2014, and the application period opened on December 1, 2014. The program provides certain qualified minors in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras with parents lawfully present in the United States the opportunity to apply for refugee status.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Engagement with Central America

In February, I traveled to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras with senior CBP and ICE officials for a series of meetings to promote regional security and economic prosperity, to work on approaches to deterring illegal migration, and to ensure that we are prepared for seasonal fluctuation or any other potential should there be another seasonal increase in the number of UC migrating to the United States this year.

Looking forward, DHS will continue to support U.S. government economic and security objectives. DHS will continue to promote information campaigns through radio, television, and print media to dissuade potential undocumented migrants from embarking on the dangerous trek north to attempt to enter the U.S. illegally. These campaigns are essential in combating the misinformation promoted by smuggling organizations. DHS will also continue its excellent bilateral partnerships with our Central American partners to further enhance the quick, efficient, and safe repatriations of children and families who are apprehended in the United States. This includes bilateral cooperation on travel document issuance, the number of permitted repatriation flights, the availability of consular interviews, and infrastructure at reception centers. ICE uses the Criminal History Information Sharing (CHIS) program as a vital international public safety tool that provides participating nations with certain egregious criminal history information in advance of an undocumented migrant's removal from the United States. DHS signed a CHIS agreement with the Government of El Salvador on May 14, 2014, Guatemala on July 9, 2014, and Honduras on August 19, 2014. CHIS data transmissions are operational in all three countries.

To promote investigative capacity-building and anti-smuggling efforts, DHS, with DOS funding, will increase the presence of the Transnational Criminal Investigative Units (TCIU), which are sponsored by ICE in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Panama. Comprised of

foreign law enforcement personnel, TCIUs facilitate information exchange, rapid bilateral investigation, and ultimately enhance the host country's ability to investigate and prosecute individuals involved in weapons trafficking and counter proliferation; money laundering and bulk cash smuggling; human smuggling and trafficking; narcotics trafficking; intellectual property rights violations and other customs fraud; child exploitation; cybercrime; and other violations within the ICE investigative purview. DHS also plans to expand border-focused vetted units, such as the Special Tactics Operations Group or *Grupo de Operaciones Especiales Tacticas* (GOET) in Honduras, to El Salvador and Guatemala in partnership with CBP. Through these vetted units, DHS provides training and capacity building to foreign counterparts, empowering them to investigate, identify, disrupt, and dismantle transnational criminal organizations that are engaging in illicit activities in the host country. Partner nation authorities in Central America, including immigration services and border police, collect biometrics in cooperation with ICE's TCIUs and through ICE's Biometric Identification Transnational Migration Alert Program (BITMAP). The host country owns the biometric data and shares the information with ICE for intelligence and screening.

DHS will also support increased passenger and cargo information sharing via programs designed to collect and verify information through U.S. databases, as well as information regarding transnational criminal organization smuggling routes. By pursuing efforts to expand the Joint Security Program (JSP) and Advanced Passenger Information Sharing (APIS) in Central America, DHS will augment the ability of host country law enforcement and migration officials to identify and respond to illicit trade and travel occurring at major transit hubs, primarily at the international commercial airports. Finally, to encourage economic development,

DHS will pursue efforts to promote trade, travel and commerce through trade facilitation, port infrastructure assistance, and information sharing.

On my recent trip to Central America, I was impressed and encouraged by the political will demonstrated by each country, which is a critical component to our success. In El Salvador, key law enforcement leaders described the need to build investigative capacity within the national police, with a particular focus on building capacity on the border. In Guatemala, the government has an agreement with the government of Mexico to add eight new border ports of entry along the Mexican border to better facilitate legitimate trade and travel. The Government of Guatemala emphasized the need to go beyond messaging and give Guatemalans a reason to stay. Their government is currently working on efforts to provide economic development for high migration source-regions through the development of training centers to provide technical education for children. In Honduras, senior officials outlined their goal to increase capacity of domestic police units, particularly in investigative capabilities, to crack down on crime and violence. The Government of Honduras also expressed a strong interest in pursuing efforts to improve airport security and migration control. These efforts are but a few examples of how the governments of Central America are taking ownership of these challenges. During the Vice President's trip to Guatemala earlier this month he also noted the important steps the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have taken to address the root causes of migration to the United States and the need for them to remain committed to meaningful action.

Conclusion

We appreciate the support Congress has provided to improve security at our borders and ports of entry. With that support, we have made great progress. There are now increased

personnel, technology, and infrastructure on our borders, more than ever before. As we work to increase border security, however, we must continue to look beyond our borders. We are actively engaging our international partners to identify and interdict threats at the earliest possible point, before they reach our borders. We are sharing more information with these partners; we are working in a joint capacity to counter transnational criminal organizations, human and drug smugglers, and those who traffic in persons; and we are building greater security and integrity into our shared systems of trade and travel. We will continue to engage with our foreign and interagency partners to extend our security beyond our borders and address threats as far from the homeland as possible.

As part of our whole-of-government approach, DHS continues to build our risk-based approach to address the challenges present in Central America. Additionally, the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are taking ownership of these challenges and addressing them head on. One important step was creating a strategic vision through the "Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle: A Road Map" which was created by the three Central American countries themselves with support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). This plan emphasizes the importance of regional economic integration through stronger transportation, communications, customs, and border linkages.

On my trip to the region last month, I personally saw the desire in each of these countries to do more to address these longstanding issues. As the Vice President stated in his op-ed in The Hill on March 10, 2015, "The challenges ahead are formidable. Solving them will take years. But Central America's leaders have now laid out a shared plan to move their region forward and taken the first steps to make it a reality. Central America can become the next great success story of the Western Hemisphere."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, for your continued support of the Department, and for your attention to this important issue. I would be pleased to answer any questions at this time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you so much.

Votes have been called so we are going to go ahead and let General Tovo have his opening statement and then we will break after that.

General, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL KENNETH E. TOVO, USA, MILITARY DEPUTY COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

General TOVO. Thank you. Chairman Duncan, Ranking Member Sires, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

Instability and insecurity in Central America are a direct threat to our national security. The criminality, violence, corruption, and weakening of institutions that accompany drug trafficking have created an atmosphere of hopelessness.

We experienced some of the impact of that with last year's migration crisis. The illicit pathways that allow the movement of drugs, people, weapons, and bulk cash can also provide opportunity to those with more nefarious intent.

Therefore, it is in our nation's interest to help our partners in the region develop the capacity to disrupt these pathways. I also believe we have an obligation to support our partners as they seek to address the root causes of insecurity and instability that threaten their nations.

After all, it is our nation's demand for drugs that at the very least has exacerbated Central America's many challenges. Combatting these challenges will not be easy. It requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach that advances security, good governance, and economic development in equal measure. This balance is critical.

Security gains will not be maintained if institutions are weak. Migration flows will not be stemmed if economic opportunity is non-existent and democracy will not flourish when the rule of law is fragile.

From the SOUTHCOM perspective, we are working closely with our partners across the U.S. Government, especially with State, INL, DEA, and the Department of Homeland Security, as well as our partners in Central America.

Our goals are to disrupt the flow of illicit trafficking, dismantle the networks, and improve border security. Our primary focus right now is on the Northern Triangle—countries that have been dealing with citizen security crises in recent years—and we have seen some remarkable progress there.

But we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that challenges like illicit trafficking, violence, and poverty are regional issues—they affect all of Central America. Many countries are understandably concerned about the balloon effect that may come with improvements in security in the Northern Triangle.

We need to make sure that the success we have in the Northern Triangle doesn't come at the expense of the rest of the Caribbean—the rest of Central America or the Caribbean.

Mr. Chairman, these challenges are significant. It will take resources, hard work, and a long-term commitment to see a Plan

Central America become a reality in the region. The good news is that we have a window of opportunity. Our Northern Triangle partners have developed their own plan to work collectively toward their shared objectives.

They are investing in their own security and economic prosperity. Organizations like the IADB and the Millennium Challenge Account Corporation are lending their support.

In short, we are seeing real political will in the region. This is perhaps the most promising sign of all. We only have to look to Colombia to see the payoffs that come from a committed partner and sustained U.S. engagement. With our support, I am optimistic we can see the same sort of turnaround in Central America.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Tovo follows:]

POSTURE STATEMENT OF

GENERAL JOHN F. KELLY, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

BEFORE THE 114TH CONGRESS

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 MARCH 2015

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Introduction

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished Members of the Committee: I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss U.S. Southern Command's efforts in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. As I finish my third and likely final year in command, I continue to be impressed by the courage and sacrifice displayed by so many countries in this part of the world. Our friends across the region are committed to winning back their streets, indeed their countries, from criminal gangs and drug traffickers, and doing so while protecting human rights. They are ready and willing to partner with the United States, and they are eager for expanded cooperation and increased learning and training opportunities with the U.S. military. But they are frustrated by what they perceive as the low prioritization of Latin America on our national security and foreign policy agendas, which is especially puzzling given the shared challenge of transnational organized crime.

The drug trade—which is exacerbated by U.S. drug consumption—has wrought devastating consequences in many of our partner nations, degrading their civilian police and justice systems, corrupting their institutions, and contributing to a breakdown in citizen safety. The tentacles of global networks involved in narcotics and arms trafficking, human smuggling, illicit finance, and other types of illegal activity reach across Latin America and the Caribbean and into the United States, yet we continue to underestimate the threat of transnational organized crime at significant and direct risk to our national security and that of our partner nations. Unless confronted by an immediate, visible, or uncomfortable crisis, our nation's tendency is to take the security of the Western Hemisphere for granted. I believe this is a mistake.

Last year, almost half a million migrants[1] from Central America and Mexico—including over 50,000 unaccompanied children (UAC) and families—were apprehended on our border, many fleeing violence, poverty, and the spreading influence of criminal networks and gangs. Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson testified that the "UAC migration serves as a warning sign that the serious and longstanding challenges in Central America are worsening."[2] In my opinion, the relative ease with which human smugglers moved tens of thousands of people to our nation's doorstep also serves as another warning sign: these smuggling routes are a potential vulnerability to our homeland. As I stated last year, terrorist organizations could seek to leverage those same smuggling routes to move operatives with intent to cause grave harm to our citizens or even bring weapons of mass destruction into the United States. Mr. Chairman, Members, addressing the root causes of insecurity and instability is not just in the region's interests, but ours as well, which is why I support President Obama's commitment to increase assistance to Central America.

These and other challenges underscore the enduring importance of U.S. Southern Command's mission to protect our southern approaches. We do not and cannot do this mission alone. Our strong partnerships with the U.S. interagency—especially with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. Coast Guard, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Departments of Treasury and State—are integral to our efforts to ensure the forward defense of the U.S. homeland. We are also fortunate to have strong, capable partners like Colombia, Chile, Brazil, El Salvador, and Panama, regional

[1] U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, *FY 14 Border Security Report.* According to the CBP, 239,229 migrants from the Northern Tier countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador were apprehended in 2014, representing a 68% increase compared to FY 13. 229,178 migrants from Mexico were apprehended, a 14% decrease.
[2] Testimony of Roberta Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, United States House of Representatives, November 18, 2014.

leaders and outstanding contributors to hemispheric and international security. Given our limited intelligence assets, interagency relationships and bilateral cooperation are critical to identifying and monitoring threats to U.S. national security and regional stability.

Finally, while I thank the Congress for mitigating some of our asset shortfalls in 2015, the specter of sequestration still hovers over everything we do. Its potential return in FY16 would jeopardize our progress; undermine our credibility and the region's trust in our commitments; and present renewed hardships for our civilian and military workforce. I have already taken painful steps to implement a mandated 20% reduction in our headquarters budget and personnel, and we have thus far managed to avoid a reduction in force while still protecting our ability to conduct our most important missions. Nevertheless, as the lowest priority Geographic Combatant Command, 'doing less with less' has a disproportionate effect on our operations, exercises, and engagement activities. Mr. Chairman, Members, the truth is we are managing to keep the pilot light of U.S. military engagement on in the region—but just barely. This presents more than just risks to our national interests; U.S. Southern Command has accepted risk for so long in this region that we now face a near-total lack of awareness of threats and the readiness to respond, should those threats reach crisis levels.

Security Environment

Transnational Organized Crime. The spread of criminal organizations continues to tear at the social, economic, and security fabric of our Central American neighbors. Powerful and well-resourced, these groups traffic in drugs—including cocaine, heroin, marijuana, counterfeit pharmaceuticals, and methamphetamine—small arms and

Spotlight: Heroin Trafficking

- *According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, there was a 37% increase in heroin initiates in the United States between 2008-2012.*
- *In 2012, 51% of all heroin analyzed by the DEA originated in South America, 45% in Mexico, and 4% from Southwest Asia.*

explosives, precursor chemicals, illegally mined gold, counterfeit goods, people, and other contraband. They engage in money laundering, bribery, intimidation, and assassinations. They threaten the very underpinnings of democracy itself: citizen safety, rule of law, and economic prosperity. And they pose a direct threat to the stability of our partners and an insidious risk to the security of our nation.

While there is growing recognition of the danger posed by transnational organized crime, it is often eclipsed by other concerns. Frankly, Mr. Chairman, I believe we are overlooking a significant security threat. Despite the heroic efforts of our law enforcement colleagues, criminal organizations are constantly adapting their methods for trafficking across our borders. While there is not yet any indication that the criminal networks involved in human and drug trafficking are interested in supporting the efforts of terrorist groups, these networks could unwittingly, or even wittingly, facilitate the movement of terrorist operatives or weapons of mass destruction toward our borders, potentially undetected and almost completely unrestricted. In addition to thousands of Central Americans fleeing poverty and violence, foreign nationals from countries like Somalia, Bangladesh, Lebanon, and Pakistan are using the region's human smuggling networks to enter the United States.[3] While many are merely seeking economic opportunity or fleeing war, a small subset could potentially be seeking to do us harm. Last year, ISIS

Spotlight: Economic Citizenship Programs

- ***Regional economic citizenship programs provide a quick path for foreign nationals to acquire citizenship.***
- ***Of concern, these "cash for passport" programs could be exploited by criminals, terrorists, or other nefarious actors to obtain freedom of movement, facilitate entry into the U.S., or launder illicitly gained funds.***

[3] Texas Department of Public Safety, *2013 Threat Assessment.*

adherents posted discussions on social media calling for the infiltration of the U.S. southern border. Thankfully, we have not yet seen evidence of this occurring, but I am deeply concerned that smuggling networks are a vulnerability that terrorists could seek to exploit.

I am also troubled by the financial and operational overlap between criminal and terrorist networks in the region. Although the extent of criminal-terrorist cooperation is unclear, what is clear is that terrorists and militant organizations easily tap into the international illicit marketplace to underwrite their activities and obtain arms and funding to conduct operations.[4] It's easy to see why: illicit trafficking is estimated to be a $650 billion industry—larger than the GDP of all but 20 countries in the world—and less than 1 percent of global illicit financial flows is currently being seized or frozen.[5] The terrorist group Lebanese Hezbollah—which has long viewed the region as a potential attack venue against Israeli or other Western targets—has supporters and sympathizers in Lebanese diaspora communities in Latin America, some of whom are involved in lucrative illicit activities like money laundering and trafficking in counterfeit goods and drugs. These clan-based criminal networks exploit corruption and lax law enforcement in places like the Tri-Border Area of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina and the Colon Free Trade Zone in Panama and generate revenue, an unknown amount of which is transferred to Lebanese Hezbollah. Unfortunately, our limited intelligence capabilities make it difficult to fully

Spotlight: Narco-terrorist profits

Colombian defense officials estimate the narco-terrorist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) earn an excess of $3.5 billion in drug revenue, with several more billion in proceeds from illegal mining and extortion.

[4] According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, twenty-two of the fifty-nine Department of State designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations are linked to the global drug trade.
[5] United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Estimating Illicit Financial Flows Resulting from Drug Trafficking and Other Transnational Crimes*. Geneva, 2011.

assess the amount of terrorist financing generated in Latin America, or understand the scope of possible criminal-terrorist collaboration.

Iranian Influence and Islamic Extremist Organizations. Over the last 15 years Iran has periodically sought closer ties with regional governments, albeit with mixed results. Iranian legislators visited Cuba, Ecuador, and Nicaragua to advocate for increased economic and diplomatic cooperation. Iran's outreach is predicated on circumventing sanctions and countering U.S. influence. Additionally, Iran has established more than 80 'cultural centers' in a region with an extremely small Muslim population. The purported purpose of these centers is to improve Iran's image, promote Shi'a Islam, and increase Iran's political influence in the region. As the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, Iran's involvement in the region and these cultural centers is a matter for concern, and its diplomatic, economic, and political engagement is closely monitored.

Sunni extremists, while small in number, are actively involved in the radicalization of converts and other Muslims in the region and also provide financial and logistical support to designated terrorist organizations within and outside Latin America. Partner nation officials throughout the region have expressed concern over the increasing number of suspected Islamic extremists from the hemisphere who are traveling to Syria to participate in jihad. Some take part in military and weapons training before departing; last year 19 Trinidadian Muslims were detained in Venezuela for conducting training with high-powered weapons. When these foreign fighters return, they will possess operational experience, ties to global extremists, and possible intent to harm Western interests—and they will reside in a region rife with smuggling routes that lead directly and easily into the United States.

Chinese Outreach. As in other regions around the world, China has growing influence in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 2005, it has provided financing to the region in excess of $100 billion.[6] Chinese investment is concentrated in commodities, manufacturing, telecommunications, and construction sectors, including a $40 billion investment in a Nicaraguan 'alternative' to the Panama Canal by a Chinese company.[7] In my view, just as we have 'pivoted' to the Pacific, China has pivoted to the Western Hemisphere. It views good relations with the region as useful for two reasons: to gain access to natural resources and to increase its global influence. China continues to increase its cooperation with regional organizations such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and leverages its position in BRICS[8] to advance its interests regionally. Of note, Beijing recently hosted a two-day China-CELAC Forum to discuss opportunities for increasing bilateral partnerships. Although cultural differences often preclude close cooperation, Chinese engagement with regional militaries is gradually expanding, especially with Cuba and Venezuela. This outreach, while not a threat to U.S. interests at this time, does underscore the importance of continued engagement by the U.S. military to maintain our valued security partnerships.

Increased Russian Presence. In contrast, Russian activities in the region are more concerning. Periodically since 2008, Russia has pursued an increased presence in Latin America through propaganda, military arms and equipment sales, counterdrug agreements, and trade. Under President Putin, however, we have seen a clear return to Cold War-tactics. As part of its

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[6] Amos Irwin and Kevin Gallagher. *Chinese Finance to Latin America Tops $100 Billion Since 2005*. Inter-American Dialogue, April 2, 2014.
[7] R. Evan Ellis. *The Rise of China in the Americas*. Security and Defense Studies Review. Volume 16, 2014.
[8] Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

global strategy, Russia is using power projection in an attempt to erode U.S. leadership and challenge U.S. influence in the Western Hemisphere. Last year and again this year, a Russian intelligence ship docked in Havana multiple times while conducting operations in the Gulf of Mexico and along the east coast of the United States. Russia has courted Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua to gain access to air bases and ports for resupply of Russian naval assets and strategic bombers operating in the Western Hemisphere. Russian media also announced Russia would begin sending long-range strategic bombers to patrol the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, in an effort to "monitor foreign powers' military activities and maritime communications."[9] While these actions do not pose an immediate threat, Russia's activities in the hemisphere are concerning and underscore the importance of remaining engaged with our partners.

Regional Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Influence. The United States also faces challenges from regional bodies like CELAC, which deliberately exclude the United States and seek to limit our role in the hemisphere. Other regional organizations such as the Central America Integration System (SICA), however, offer the United States opportunity for engagement. Just this past year, we hosted SICA leaders and asked the Colombian Minister of Defense to share his perspective on Colombia's success and lessons learned over the past decades. Additionally, ALBA[10] nations like Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia restrict defense ties with the United States and have sought in some cases to eliminate the U.S. military presence from their countries. As one example, in 2014 the Ecuadorian government directed that the U.S. Embassy close its security cooperation office, further restricting defense cooperation between our countries. Despite such complex and evolving regional dynamics and within our current

[9] Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, November 12, 2014.
[10] ALBA (in its Spanish acronym) stands for the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America

resource constraints, U.S. Southern Command is ready and willing to partner with *all* regional militaries on issues like respect for human rights, disaster response, and illicit trafficking.

Implications of Venezuelan Instability. Mr. Chairman, Members, our efforts to enhance regional stability are directly connected to our ability to engage. Since 2003, the Venezuelan government has reduced its traditionally close military and defense ties with the United States, and in the course of the past ten years we have witnessed a dramatic decline in the country's democratic institutions. Venezuela now faces significant economic, social, and political instability due to rampant violent crime and poverty, runaway inflation, serious shortages of food, medicine, and electricity. Human rights abuses by security forces and the government's continued mismanagement of the country are contributing to an environment of uncertainty, and large segments of the population say the country is on the wrong track. Additionally, falling oil prices and deteriorating economic conditions could lead the Venezuelan government to cut social welfare programs and its foreign oil subsidy program, PetroCaribe. Further cuts to social welfare programs and continued shortages—which seem unavoidable—could likely lead to increased tensions and violent protests, encouraging President Maduro and his party to engage in additional repressive measures against protestors and the opposition. Cuts to PetroCaribe deliveries to its member nations could trigger regional economic downturns, which could elevate the risk of increased migration, especially in the Caribbean.

Spotlight: Venezuela's Deteriorating Citizen Security

- *According to respected NGO Observatorio Venezolana de Violencia (OVV), Venezuela is the second most violent country in the world.*
- *Venezuela's homicide rate is now 82 per 100,000; in 1998, the rate was 19 per 100,000.*

Command Priorities

The U.S. military plays an important role in addressing these and other challenges to our hemisphere's security and stability. Despite significant resource constraints, U.S. Southern Command remains postured to contribute to a whole-of-government approach to advancing U.S. interests in the region. This important work is carried out by our command's most valuable assets: our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and civilian employees. Last year was an active one for U.S. Southern Command, and I am proud of our contributions to the security of Latin America and the Caribbean. Looking to the year ahead, we hope to build on our past achievements and deepen our security partnerships, as we continue safeguarding the southern approaches to the United States.

Detention Operations. As we begin the thirteenth year of detention operations at Guantanamo, we continue to provide dignified, humane, and lawful care and treatment of detainees. In fact, the only people *not* treated humanely or having their human rights protected are the guards, especially our female and minority ones, who find themselves in a challenging environment where they regularly confront verbal and physical abuse and 'splashings' by many detainees. Mr. Chairman, Members, our guard and medical force is doing a superb job, and our nation should be extremely proud of these young military professionals. They execute a difficult, no-fail mission with honor, integrity, and the utmost professionalism, all within a pressure cooker of unrelenting public scrutiny and fabricated accusations of inhumane treatment and abuse. It is worth reiterating that everything they do—including supporting ongoing transfers, enteral feeding, military commissions, and periodic review boards—is done entirely at the direction of our military chain of command, in execution of U.S. national policy. Like all our men and women in uniform, these young Service members are second to none, and I thank the

Congress for sharing that sentiment and for its continued support to our troops stationed at Guantanamo.

We also greatly appreciate congressional support to construct a new dining facility and medical clinic at Naval Station Guantanamo, which will address the health and safety concerns posed by the current facilities. As our service members perform our directed detention mission in an honorable and professional manner, the facilities in which they reside have long exceeded their useful life. Each year we struggle to maintain, repair, or replace obsolete or sub-standard facilities. It is difficult and expensive to mitigate life, health, and safety issues in an incremental, piecemeal manner. Our troops deserve better.

Finally, it is important to note that the strategic importance of U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay is independent of the presence of the Joint Task Force. Its airfield and port facilities are indispensable to the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and State's operational and contingency plans. The Naval Station plays a crucial role in the interception and repatriation of migrants and serves as a critical distribution and staging area for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. As the only permanent U.S. military base in Latin America and the Caribbean, its location provides persistent U.S. presence and immediate access to the region, as well as supporting a layered defense to secure the air and maritime approaches to the United States.

Countering Transnational Organized Crime. Our efforts to counter transnational organized crime focus on two complementary missions: defending the southern approaches of the United States and supporting partner nation efforts, in coordination with our U.S. interagency partners, to stem the flow of illicit trafficking. In both missions, we rely heavily on support from

the DHS, especially the U.S. Coast Guard. Secretary Jeh Johnson and the heroic men and women at DHS deserve enormous recognition working cooperatively across the interagency to help us safeguard our nation's southern approaches. Secretary Johnson and I both share the conviction that homeland defense does not begin at the 'one yard line' of our Southwest border, but instead extends forward, throughout the hemisphere, to keep threats far from our nation's shores. Along with DHS, we work with the FBI, DEA, and the Departments of State and the Treasury to do exactly that.

Spotlight: Counter Threat Finance

- ***In collaboration with the Department of the Treasury, U.S. Southern Command maps illicit networks, conducts all-source intelligence analysis and production, and works with U.S. and regional partners to support targeted financial measures and U.S. law enforcement efforts.***

While these partnerships are superb at the tactical level, I am frustrated by the lack of a comprehensive U.S. government effort to counter the TOC threat. Nearly four years after the release of the President's *National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime,* interagency CTOC activities in the region—especially in Central America—remain poorly coordinated and minimally funded. Fortunately, there is growing recognition that the magnitude, scope, and complexity of this threat demand an integrated counternetwork approach. I thank the Congress for recognizing this threat and expanding section 1004 authorities to include CTOC operations, and I fully support efforts to improve interagency coordination on this critical national security issue.

I am hopeful that the new *Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America* will broaden our approach to achieving lasting security in Central America and help reinvigorate our partnerships with the sub-region. As I have often said, we cannot shoot our way out of the CTOC challenge. It will truly take a whole-of-government effort, because Central America's prosperity, governance, and security are intrinsically connected. Economic growth is only

sustainable in an environment where democratic values and institutions flourish, citizens feel secure in their communities, impunity is reduced, and civil society and the media can play their rightful roles. President Obama requested $1 billion in the FY2016 budget for the Department of State and USAID to implement the new Strategy. As Vice President Biden rightly points out, the cost of investing now to address Central America's challenges is modest compared with the costs of letting festering violence, poverty, and insecurity become full-blown crises.[11] I fully support the President's efforts to prioritize Central America at this crucial time, and urge Congress to support the President's budget request.

In another positive development, we are seeing significant improvements in regional cooperation. Although we receive a tiny fraction of the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets we need, our ongoing Operation MARTILLO continues to yield tactical successes thanks to increased contributions by our partner nations and our continued coordination with DEA. The Coast Guard Commandant shares my view that transnational organized crime poses a significant threat to our hemisphere, and he has committed a 50% increase in cutters equipped with ability to land a helicopter , plus a commensurate plus-up in maritime patrol aircraft hours. While the Commandant is doing everything he can to support us, the Coast Guard faces its own limitations, and this increase only translates to an additional two to three cutters, far below the 16 flight-deck equipped vessels required to conduct our detection and monitoring mission. This support, however, comes at a critical juncture for the counterdrug

Spotlight: Operation MARTILLO

Orchestrated by the Joint Interagency Task Force South, and coordinated with our interagency partners, MARTILLO has resulted in the disruption of over 400 metric tons of cocaine over the past four years, denying drug traffickers $8 billion in potential revenue.

[11] Vice President Joseph Biden, "A Plan for Central America." January 29, 2015.

mission, as the U.S. Navy decommissions its frigates and deploys its new Littoral Combat Ships to the Pacific. I would like to go on record here today before the Congress in strong support of the Coast Guard and DHS' efforts to recapitalize their fleet of cutters, some of which are in their fifth decade of service. The Coast Guard and U.S. Southern Command need these replacement cutters as soon as possible to continue the important work of securing our southern approaches.

Additionally, I believe we have a window of opportunity in Central America to capitalize on the region's growing political will to combat criminal networks. Last year the presidents of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador developed a coordinated plan to address their countries' endemic challenges. These leaders recognize the magnitude of the tasks ahead and are prepared to address them, but they need our support. They are frustrated, however by conditions on U.S. security assistance—some of which are not even related to military-to-military engagements—and our cumbersome Foreign Military Sales procurement processes, which delay or even hinder cooperation efforts. Unfortunately, these conditions are often placed on governments that most need our help, providing an opening for other actors to successfully conduct outreach to the region. Unlike the United States, some countries place no emphasis on promoting human rights, anti-corruption measures, fair labor practices, and environmental protection as part of their offers of security assistance.

Our president has recognized the importance of supporting our Central American partners, making the region one of his top foreign policy priorities. We are now seeing real progress being made by the three 'Northern Triangle' countries. While there are many good examples, the situation is especially encouraging in Honduras, where the government is working hard to combat the drug trade, re-establish governance in remote areas, and take meaningful action to protect human rights. In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice, and for the

first time in the country's history, the Government of Honduras extradited seven Honduran nationals wanted to face drug trafficking charges in the United States. The Honduran government also deserves recognition for the establishment of a special investigative unit to combat impunity in Bajo Aguán and to improve citizen security. According to government figures, the 2014 homicide rate dropped to 66.4 per 100,000, a nearly 25% reduction in only two years. Although some groups expressed concerns over the use of the Honduran military in a domestic security role, the government of Honduras has developed a comprehensive strategy to phase out the use of its Military Police of Public Order (PMOP); has increasingly investigated and brought charges against high-level officials involved in corruption; and is making efforts to swiftly arrest those security forces implicated in human rights abuse. At the request of the Honduran president, the United Nations will open an office of the UN High Commission on Human Rights. Of note, human rights groups have acknowledged to me that Honduras is making real progress in this area.

This is a historical first step, and it simply would not have happened without our superb Ambassador to Tegucigalpa, Ambassador Jim Nealon, who provided help and advice not only to the Government of Honduras, but to the entire U.S. interagency. This is reflective of the close and continuous working relationship all Combatant Commanders have with their respective ambassadors throughout their Area of Operations. It is a team effort, and as a team we are hobbled in our interaction with foreign governments when there is no U.S. Ambassador in the seat, and frankly, the individual foreign partners take offense and are confused regarding U.S. interests in their country and the region. I know there are many reasons why there are often long gaps in coverage, but the fact is the lack of an ambassador handicaps the advancement of U.S. interests. This time last year, we did not have Ambassadors in Colombia, Peru, and Argentina.

I am grateful for Congressional action to remedy the lack of Embassy leadership in these countries, and I am hopeful that Ambassador-Designate Mr. Stafford Fitzgerald Haney will be confirmed as Ambassador for Costa Rica without delay.

Finally, I would like to close this section by sharing a few examples of how our counterdrug efforts, conducted in coordination with DEA, are contributing to the region's overall security. In Guatemala, we provided infrastructure support and over $17 million in equipment and training to the country's two interagency task forces along Guatemala's northern and southern borders. In concert with U.S. Northern Command, we also work with Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize to support Mexico's Southern Border Strategy. In Honduras, we helped create a 'maritime shield' to deflect drug trafficking off the country's northeastern coast and are supporting the Honduran government's citizen security efforts. In the Caribbean, we are prioritizing infrastructure projects designed to improve regional interdiction capabilities; last year we completed construction on new training facilities in the Dominican Republic and an operations center for the Regional Security System. To enhance our partners' efforts to counter increased drug trafficking in the Caribbean, we provide counterdrug training and support the Technical Assistance Field Teams, comprised of Coast Guard and DoD personnel who provide mentoring and technical assistance to 13 Caribbean nations. This support encourages our partners to be more self-reliant in the maintenance and upkeep of their assets, making them more dependable and capable allies in the CTOC fight. Further south, we are supporting the Peruvian military's increasingly successful efforts to improve their maritime interdiction capability, strengthen their collaboration with Colombia, and combat the scourge of narcoterrorism that has plagued their country for decades.

Counterterrorism. In 2014, we continued our work with the interagency, U.S. Embassy Country Teams, and our partner nations to counter Islamic extremism, recruitment, and radicalization efforts that support terrorism activities. Working closely with the interagency and partner nations, we also began monitoring the possible return of foreign fighter extremists participating in jihad in Syria. Over the past year our Special Operations Forces (SOF) conducted multiple engagements such as subject matter expert and intelligence exchanges, counterterrorism-focused exercises, and key leader engagements in countries throughout the region. Our Department of Defense Rewards Program yielded successes and offers a model for a low-cost, small footprint approach to counterterrorism. In 2014, this program enabled partner nation authorities to bring 33 members of terrorist organizations to justice. These, and other counterterrorism cooperation efforts, ensure our partners are able to mitigate terrorist threats before they can destabilize a country or reach the U.S. homeland.

Building Partner Nation Capacity. Our engagement—through our humanitarian and civic assistance programs, defense institution building efforts like the Defense Institution Reform Initiative, and the U.S. Southern Command-sponsored Human Rights Initiative—helps partner nations strengthen governance and development, professionalize their militaries and security forces, and increase their ability to conduct peacekeeping, stability, and disaster relief operations. Our military components are at the forefront of these engagement efforts and perform superb work in strengthening our security partnerships. While we engage on

Spotlight: USS AMERICA Visits the Americas

- *In 2014, the USS AMERICA, the Navy's newest class of amphibious assault ship, conducted a 10-week transit of South America while en route to her home port.*
- *USS AMERICA embarked Expeditionary Strike Group THREE (ESG 3) and a Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF), which conducted numerous engagement activities during port calls in Colombia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru.*
- *This transit offered a clear example of U.S. Navy-Marine Corps integration and set the standard for future new ship transits in the region.*

a variety of different issues, I would like to highlight a few of our capacity-building efforts that are making a significant difference in the region.[12]

Support to Colombia. Colombia is a terrific example of how sustained U.S. support can help a partner nation gain control of their security situation, strengthen government institutions, eradicate corruption, and bolster their economy. Colombia's turnaround is nothing short of phenomenal, and it stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States as together we work to improve regional stability. Mr. Chairman, Members, as you know, the United States has a special relationship with only a handful of countries throughout the world. These relationships are with countries that we rely on to act as regional stabilizers, countries that we look to for international leadership, countries that we consider our strongest friends and most steadfast allies. Colombia unquestionably plays that role in Latin America. Through the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security, Colombia provides vital assistance to its Central American and Mexican counterparts in the fight against criminal networks. I want to note that every aspect of U.S. collaboration under this Plan, including activities conducted by U.S. Southern Command, is facilitated through U.S. security assistance and governed by the same U.S. laws and regulations—especially those requiring the human rights vetting of units—governing my own personnel.

Spotlight: Building Colombia's Counter-IED Capacity

- ***U.S. Southern Command and the Joint IED Defeat Organization work with the Colombian military to counter IED threats.***
- ***Though it remains the #3 country in the world for IED incidents, Colombian casualties from IEDs were down 20% in 2014.***

I fully support the government of Colombia's efforts to ensure that justice and accountability are integral parts of the peace process. We must sustain U.S. support throughout

[12] A complete list of activities by our military components can be found in the Annex.

this process and during the post-conflict phase as our closest partner works to end a decades-long insurgency. As I have told my Colombian colleagues, the last 50 years were easy compared to what the next five hold in store. Our goal is to ensure Colombia can sustain U.S.-funded programs, and to that end we work with the Defense Institution Reform Initiative to improve the Colombian Ministry of National Defense's strategic planning capabilities. As testament to the enduring strength of our relationship, Colombia wants to partner with the United States for planning and implementation of their Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process. We are exploring options to provide verification, advice, and monitoring of these efforts.

Exercise Program. Bilateral and multilateral exercises with partner nations improve staff planning and operations, promote interoperability, and support national security objectives. While the technical skills our partners learn during these exercises are important, the personal relationships that are made are invaluable, binding participating countries together as equal partners and true friends. In 2014, our four operational exercises included INTEGRATED ADVANCE, which exercises our response to various regional contingencies, and FUSED RESPONSE, designed to improve the training, readiness, and capability of Belizean, Brazilian, Canadian, and U.S. special operations forces. We also held four multilateral exercises, including TRADEWINDS, which aims to improve the capability of Caribbean nations to counter transnational organized crime and respond to a natural disaster; PANAMAX, which focuses on the defense of the Panama Canal by a 17-nation multinational force; and FUERZAS ALIADAS HUMANITARIAS, which brings together 11 partner nations and regional humanitarian organizations to improve coordination on disaster response.

Humanitarian and Civic Assistance. As a complement to our multinational exercises, our humanitarian and civic assistance program help demonstrates the United States' enduring commitment to the citizens of Latin America. There are no better symbols of this commitment than our humanitarian exercises and the USNS COMFORT, which returns to the region to conduct humanitarian missions in 11 countries as part of CONTINUING PROMISE 2015.

Spotlight: 2014 Beyond the Horizons and New Horizons Exercises

- ***Working alongside partner nation personnel, U.S. military forces provided free medical and dental services to more than 42,000 patients in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Belize.***
- ***U.S. forces also constructed 16 new classrooms, a hospital addition, and two healthcare clinics in remotely located communities.***

Our humanitarian mission also helps strengthen governance and partner nation response capacities. In coordination with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in 2014 we funded the construction of 172 humanitarian projects in the region, building disaster relief warehouses, emergency operations centers, and emergency shelters. This infrastructure helps increase partner nation capacity to respond to a regional disaster, often without U.S. assistance. Last year, the Government of Haiti successfully responded to flooding in Nord using emergency response facilities constructed under this program. This is a major step and a sign of continued progress in Haiti; in the past, such an event would have required U.S. or outside assistance.

Public-Private Cooperation. U.S. Southern Command remains at the forefront of public-private cooperation, a force multiplier in our exercises, operations, and engagement activities. In 2014, our collaboration with non-governmental and private sector entities yielded over $10 million in service and gifts-in-kind—such as school furniture and medical equipment—to partner nations in conjunction with our annual exercises. Early this year we held a forum that brought together U.S. and partner nation government officials and private sector leaders to brainstorm

ways to improve security and economic investment in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The forum featured lessons learned from Colombia and Mexico on the importance of security to economic development and identifying near-term activities to improve the security situation and, by extension, the investment climate in these three countries. To quote Paul Brinkley, who wrote one of the most impressive books I have read on the subject, the greatest element of our national power is our "private-sector economic dynamism."[13] I am hopeful American businesses will help advance our President's goal of a stable, prosperous, and secure Central America.

Promoting Respect for Human Rights. Mr. Chairman, Members, human rights are fundamental to our capacity-building efforts in the region. During my time as Commander of U.S. Southern Command, I have aggressively worked to promote genuine and concrete respect for human rights throughout Latin America. One of my greatest tools in this mission is actually something pretty simple, and doesn't cost the taxpayer one penny: open and frank dialogue with both our closest partners and our fiercest critics. Every conversation I have—whether with a president, with a minister, with a chief of defense or his subordinates, with U.S. or regional media outlets, or human rights representatives from Washington to Montevideo—begins and ends with a straightforward discussion on human rights.

I am proud to state that I incorporate meetings and engagements specifically focused on human rights into nearly every one of my numerous trips to the region. I do this because I have long recognized the vital role human rights organizations play in supporting democracy and open societies, strengthening the rule of law, and ensuring that government officials are accountable to their citizens. As I have said before, the U.S. military doesn't just talk about human rights, we

[13] Paul Brinkley, *War Front to Store Front: Americans Rebuilding Trust and Hope in Nations Under Fire*. New York: 2014.

do human rights. We teach it. We enforce it. We live it. The protection of human rights is embedded in our doctrine, our training, and our education, and above all, in our moral code. It is the source of our great strength as a military power, and it is also our best defense against losing legitimacy in the hearts and minds of the people we have taken an oath to protect.

Mr. Chairman, I believe without question that improvement in human rights most often comes when countries have the opportunity to work directly with Americans. Human rights improvements in this region have largely come as a direct result of close and continuous dialogue and engagement by the United States government. Additionally, because of partner nation interaction with brave and dedicated U.S. law enforcement personnel like the FBI, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the U.S. Coast Guard and particularly DEA, we have seen a concrete and I believe long-term positive effect on the professionalism of law enforcement institutions in the region. It is what our partners learn in our military and law enforcement training, by the example we show and the attitudes they absorb from us—when they attend our courses, exercises, and in senior officer conferences and seminars, but most powerfully by simply working shoulder-to-shoulder with young American professionals that do human rights, do their duties entirely without thought of corruption, who do not preach while they wave their fingers in the faces of their counterparts, but treat them like equal partners in activities that are in the national security interests of both their nations—that are, together, making a difference.

For our part, U.S. Southern Command's commitment to promoting respect for human rights can be seen in many activities we carry out with our partners in the region, and I am proud to lead the only Combatant Command with a dedicated Human Rights Office. This office also has a long history of providing support and expertise to our partner nation militaries in

strengthening their human rights programs and improving their human rights performance. In 2014, U.S. Southern Command sponsored a series of civil-military dialogues in Guatemala and Honduras, two countries facing a ruthless onslaught of transnational criminal activity. These dialogues brought together influential human rights NGOs and key military leaders to discuss shared concerns, including the deployment of military forces in citizen safety missions. I thank the Congress for recognizing the enduring value of this mission, and we deeply appreciate the flexibility to soon provide human rights training to units that might not have been previously eligible to receive it.

Spotlight: 2014 Human Rights Officers Workshop

- *The 2014 Workshop brought together military, government, and civil society representatives from 14 countries in the hemisphere to discuss the duty of military and security forces in protecting human rights.*

Planning for Contingencies. Finally, planning and preparing for crisis and contingency response are essential elements of U.S. Southern Command's mission. Contingency planning and preparation, including exercises like PANAMAX, FUSED RESPONSE, and INTEGRATED ADVANCE, prepares our organization to respond to various scenarios such as an attack on critical infrastructure, Caribbean mass migration, humanitarian crises, natural disasters, or the evacuation of U.S. citizens in the region. We work closely with the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and other interagency and regional partners to monitor events like the increase in Haitian and Cuban migrant flows, the potential spread of infectious diseases like Ebola, and the devastating drought in Central America, all of which could trigger a crisis event. While we stand ready to support U.S.

Spotlight: Partnering to Promote Ebola Preparedness

- *In coordination with the Pan American Health Organizations, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Defense Institute for Medical Operations, U.S. Southern Command is providing Ebola preparedness assessments, training, and equipment for partner nations*
- *We are also working with Ministries of Defense in the region to develop protocols for peacekeepers deploying to Ebola-affected regions in West Africa.*

government response efforts should the need arise, mandated budget and workforce reductions limit our ability to rapidly respond to any significant contingency without substantial headquarters augmentation.

Critical Needs and Concerns

Budget Cuts. U.S. Southern Command is grappling with the cumulative effect of the various budget cuts enacted over the past few years. Force allocation cuts by the Services—including troops, ships, planes, Coast Guard cutters, and ISR platforms—are having the greatest impact on our operations, exercises, and security cooperation activities. I fully expect reductions to affect all aspects of our operations and engagements with our partner nations, including capacity-building activities, multinational exercises, information operations, interagency support, and our ability to respond to crises or contingencies.

We are already feeling the impact at our headquarters, where we have implemented a 13% reduction in civilian billets and an 11% reduction in military ones. As an economy of force Combatant Command, these cuts have a disproportionate effect on our daily operations. During last year's capstone exercise PANAMAX, it became clear that resource constraints and manpower reductions are compromising our training and readiness. Fortunately, these limitations were revealed in an exercise scenario and not during a real-world contingency, and we are taking steps to mitigate some of these shortfalls. To that end, we are instituting a Strategic Human Capital Management Plan and have realigned personnel to support our most critical missions. We are also improving our business practices to gain greater efficiencies in our management of mission requirements and application of resources. I want to stress, however,

that if sequestration returns in FY16, our ability to support national security objectives, including conducting many of our essential missions, will be significantly undermined.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Shortfalls. We deeply appreciate Congressional assistance to mitigating some of our chronic ISR shortfalls. Thanks to the support of Congress, we have increased maritime patrol capacity in support of counterdrug operations in the region. We are also thankful to the Congress for recognizing the urgency of the challenges we face in the region and the importance of adequately sourcing our missions. I continue to be concerned, however, by the long-term consequences of our limited awareness and lack of insight into security challenges in the region. The longer these shortfalls persist, the more difficult it is to track and monitor potential threats to our nation's security, including the growing influence of extra-regional actors, the overlap between criminal and terrorist networks, and signs of potential regional instability. While we recognize that global defense priorities must be adequately sourced, limited tactical ISR allocation and national technical focus is impairing virtually every one of our assigned missions and exposing the southern approaches to the United States to significant risk. Sequestration will compound this challenge; when it comes to sourcing, we are already the lowest priority Geographic Combatant Command, and sequestration will likely eviscerate our already limited ISR capacity.

To mitigate some of these shortfalls, we have successfully employed non-traditional assets in support of our Title 10 detection and monitoring obligations. The Air Force's JSTARS is especially important, providing a detailed maritime surveillance capability that is unsurpassed and increasing the efficiency of wide area surveillance and long-range maritime patrol aircraft. A single JSTARS sortie can cover the same search area as 10 maritime patrol aircraft sorties. The use of these types of assets is a 'win-win' for U.S. Southern Command and the Services; we

receive much-needed assets while the Services receive pre-deployment training opportunities in a 'target-rich' environment.

Military Construction. In support of our nationally-directed contingency response mission, we are also seeking $28 million in funding to construct basic horizontal infrastructure that would be needed to operate migrant camps at Guantanamo in the event of a maritime mass migration. These projects would include the shaping of terrain and installation of drainage and utilities infrastructure. Without this funding, we will not be able to quickly house the required number of migrants without compromising United Nations' standards and placing severe constraints on current operations at the Naval Station. I look forward to working with the Congress to find a solution to these and other requirements.

Quality of Life and Military Housing. Mr. Chairman, the men and women assigned to U.S. Southern Command are at a huge financial and benefits disadvantage, working and living in one of the most expensive cities in the world and receiving little in the way of adequate compensation. Access to commissary and PX facilities are an integral part of the benefits package guaranteed by law, yet we lack both at our installation. Our assigned personnel receive minimal Cost of Living Allowances for South Florida, even though non-housing expenditures like car insurance are high.[14] This is particularly hard on our junior enlisted personnel. An E-3 receives a mere $29 for a monthly Cost of Living Allowance, while an E-9 receives $44; neither amount covers monthly tolls on South Florida's roads.

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[14] According to the Economic Policy Institute, it takes nearly three times the federal poverty line to cover basic living expenses in Miami.

Given current housing allowances, many of our families cannot afford to live near the Command, and government housing acquired through domestic leasing is both expensive and extremely competitive. The housing situation will become even more challenging for our officer-grade personnel, who will see, on average, approximately 9% reduction in their BAH. I would like to go on record and note that I have serious concerns over the validity of the process used to calculate BAH for our assigned troops. A permanent military housing solution in Doral would allow us to bring our service members and their families into a secure and affordable community close to our facility. We are working with U.S. Army Installation Management Command to find a long-term housing solution for our Service members and their families.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude my testimony with a note of warning and a sign of hope. Two decades ago, U.S. policy makers and the defense and intelligence communities failed to anticipate the collapse of the Soviet Union or the rise of international terrorism. Today, another challenge is in plain sight: transnational organized crime threatens not only our own security, but the stability and prosperity of our Latin American neighbors. As the Congress knows, the United States and our partners worked hard to ensure the Western Hemisphere is a beacon of freedom, democracy, and peace. In the face of the corrosive spread of criminal networks and other threats, we must work even harder to ensure it remains that way.

The good news is we know how to win this fight. Colombia taught us that the key to defeating insurgents is the same as defeating criminal networks: a strong, accountable government that protects its citizens, upholds the rule of law, and expands economic opportunity for all. It taught us that countering illicit trafficking and countering terrorism often go hand in hand. It taught us that U.S. interagency cooperation, coupled with a committed partner, can help

bring a country back from the brink—and for a fraction of the cost of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. And above all, Colombia taught us that sustained engagement by the United States can make a real and lasting difference. We have learned these lessons. Now is the time to apply them to the region as a whole. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Annex: 2014 Component Accomplishments

U.S. Army South (ARSOUTH)
Headquarters: San Antonio, Texas

- **Security Cooperation:** ARSOUTH conducted 174 security cooperation events with 18 countries in U.S. Southern Command's (USSOUTHCOM's) area of responsibility. These events included: Army-to-Army Staff Talks with key countries, Foreign Liaison Officers assigned to ARSOUTH, Conference of American Armies activities, professional development exchanges on multiple topics, Army commander and distinguished visitor program, and Joint/Combined/Multinational Exercises and Operations. These events represent engagements aimed at building partner nation capabilities with other militaries in the region.
- **Countering Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC):** ARSOUTH conducted numerous CTOC training sessions with the El Salvador Army Intelligence Battalion, the two new Guatemalan Interagency Task Forces (IATF), and two Honduran Brigades associated with border security. These efforts have greatly improved the individual country's capability to disrupt TOC operations and has set the stage for the next training phase in FY15.
- **Intelligence Security Cooperation:** In addition to the El Salvador effort, the ARSOUTH Intelligence Team conducted engagement activities enabling military intelligence capacity building in support of countering transnational threats in Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Chile, and Peru.
- **Counter Terrorism:** ARSOUTH conducted 20 Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs) in ten countries that included over 750 host nation soldiers. The engagements included: Medical, Search and Rescue, Logistics, Force Protection, and Communications.
- **Civil Military Relations:** ARSOUTH conducted Civil Military Relations Professional Development Exchanges in Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, improving the ability of these countries to conduct inter-organizational coordination during humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations, and to counter transnational criminal organizations. These exchanges provide a forum for bilateral executive-level information.
- **Humanitarian Assistance Program (HAP):** HAP conducts activities to build partner nation capacity in providing essential services to its civilian population including: responding to disaster and other crises; reinforcing security; and sustaining stability in a host nation or region. ARSOUTH, USSOUTHCOM's HAP construction program manager, completed 19 projects in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Peru, and initiated the planning for nine new construction projects in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Peru.
- **Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI):** GPOI is a U.S. government-funded security assistance program to enhance international capacity to effectively conduct United Nations and regional peace support operations. ARSOUTH, as USSOUTHCOM's GPOI construction program manager, completed four projects in Guatemala, Paraguay and Peru, with four ongoing construction projects in El Salvador and Guatemala.
- **Reintegration:** ARSOUTH executed a Reintegration operation for the surviving crew members of aircraft BAT 02 following their crash in Colombia, a Post Isolation Support

Activity in support of the FBI for an American Citizen held hostage by the FARC in Colombia, and for a repatriated POW from Afghanistan.

- **Conference of the American Armies (CAA):** The Conference of American Armies (20 member nations, 5 observer nations and two International Military Organizations) strengthens relationships and improves interoperability in peacekeeping and disaster relief operations through the creation and implementation of practical initiatives approved by the commanders of the member Armies. ARSOUTH delegations represented the U.S. Army Chief of Staff at the Transfer Ceremony to Colombia, a 1st Communications Exercise and a Specialized Conference on IEDs in Colombia, a Geospatial Terrain data base Ad-Hoc Committee in Peru, and a Disaster Relief Field Training Exercise in Argentina.
- **Beyond the Horizon (BTH):** The Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Field Training Exercise, BTH Dominican Republic (APR-JUN 14), consisted of five engineer projects, two general medical and one dental exercises (MEDRETEs and DENTRETE), treating over 12,917 patients. 1,468 U.S. troops participated in the exercise and the Dominican military provided 107 personnel. BTH Guatemala (MAR-JUL 14) consisted of five engineer projects, and three general MEDRETEs, treating over 21,000 residents. 1,242 U.S. troops participated and the Guatemalan military provided over 120 personnel.
- **Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias (FAHUM):** The Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Command Post Exercise was hosted by El Salvador to build Partner Nation capacity to respond to a major disaster and strengthen military/security force collaboration and cooperation in the region. Participants included 300 from El Salvador, 66 U.S. and 33 from other Partner Nations.
- **PANAMAX 2014:** This year's Joint/Combined operational exercise focused on the defense of the Panama Canal designated ARSOUTH as HQ, Multi-National Forces-South with a total of 380 participants (65 participants coming from 17 Partner Nations). ARSOUTH also hosted the CFLCC with Brazil as the lead country which included 91 participants with 61 of them coming from 12 partner nations (PNs). In addition, ARSOUTH participated in a bilateral exercise with the Government of Panama called PANAMAX – Alpha. Forty U.S. personnel worked with the Panamanians coordinating U.S. forces assistance during a simulated national disaster.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (COMUSNAVSO)
Headquarters: Mayport, Florida

- U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/ U.S. FOURTH Fleet (USNAVSO/FOURTHFLT) employs maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations in order to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships that foster regional security in the USSOUTHCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR).
- **"AMERICA visits The Americas" 2014:** USS AMERICA, lead ship of a new class of amphibious ships for the U.S. Navy, completed an historic transit of the USSOUTHCOM AOR. AMERICA conducted Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) events and completed basic maritime operations while circumnavigating South America. "AMERICA Visits the Americas" served as our best Key Leader Engagement (KLE) opportunity in years, as AMERICA conducted TSC port visits to Cartagena, Colombia; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Valparaiso, Chile; and Callao, Peru. AMERICA also flew out distinguished visitors from

Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and El Salvador to visit the U.S. Navy's newest ship while she sailed in the vicinity of those three Partner Nations.

- **Southern Partnership Station (SPS):** SPS is a series of Navy/Marine Corps engagements focused on TSC, specifically Building Partner Capacity (BPC), through Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs) with partner nation militaries and civilian security forces. SPS engagements include Community Relations Projects that focus on our partnerships, shared interests, and shared values. 2014 SPS Deployments:

  - **SPS Joint High Speed Vessel 2014 (SPS JHSV 14)**: USNS SPEARHEAD, lead ship of a new class of ships for the U.S. Navy, built partner capacity while conducting TSC engagements through the use of Adaptive Force Packages (AFPs) ashore in Belize, Guatemala, Colombia, and Honduras. At sea, SPEARHEAD conducted Detection and Monitoring (D&M) Operations at sea in support of Operation MARTILLO. The success of the Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, NCIS Agents, and Civilian Mariners making up the SPEARHEAD Team set a firm foundation for future JHSV and AFP deployments to the USSOUTHCOM AOR. Detailed planning is in progress for SPS JHSV-15.

  - **SPS Oceanographic 2014 (SPS OCEANO 14):** In support of USSOUTHCOM's priority Oceanographic, Hydrographic, and Bathymetric requirements, there were multiple engagements with Partner Nation counterparts. With the support of the Naval Oceanographic Office, survey ship USNS PATHFINDER conducted hydrographic surveys in the Western Caribbean, shore-based Fleet Survey Teams conducted hydrographic surveys in coastal waters of Peru and Honduras, and a Light Detection and Ranging aircraft and crew conducted hydrographic surveys in the coastal waters of Honduras. All SPS OCEANO surveys are conducted with the assistance of Partner Nation personnel and equipment, and the hydrographic survey and environmental assessment data is shared to enable safe and effective maritime navigation.

- **Operation MARTILLO:** Seven frigates, JHSV USNS SPEARHEAD, four fixed-wing Maritime Patrol aircraft and two Scientific Development Squadron ONE detachments deployed to support Operation MARTILLO, conducting D&M Operations under the tactical control of Joint Interagency Task Force South, targeting illicit trafficking routes in the waters off Central America.
- **PANAMAX 2014:** Colombia served as Combined Forces Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC) for the annual PANAMAX Exercise, which exercises defense of the approaches to the Panama Canal. The Colombian Navy led a multinational staff of more than 300 military and civilian personnel from 15 Partner Nations (including the U.S.), all based at USNAVSO/FOURTHFLT Headquarters in Mayport. Now in its 12th year, PANAMAX is designed to train U.S. and partner nation personnel in the execution of stability operations under the auspices of United Nations' Security Council resolutions; provide interoperability training for the participating multinational staffs; and build participating nation capability to plan and execute complex multinational operations.
- **UNITAS 2014:** UNITAS, Latin for "Unity", is the longest-running multinational maritime exercise in the world. Peru hosted the 55th iteration, featuring 14 Partner Nations (including

the U.S.), 20 ships, patrol boats, two submarines, seven helicopters, four maritime patrol aircraft, 10 fixed-wing tactical aircraft, and several thousand Sailors. The two-week exercise consisted of a multi-threat, multi-day scenario where participants operated as a multinational force working under a United Nations Security Council Resolution.

- **SIFOREX 2014:** "Silent Forces Exercise," or SIFOREX, is a biennial exercise hosted by Peru that focuses on Anti-Submarine Warfare proficiency against diesel submarines. U.S. participation included USS INGRAHAM, P-8 Poseidon and P-3 Orion Aircraft, and Commander Destroyer Squadron 40 Staff. For the first time, Naval Forces from Brazil and Colombia joined Peru and the U.S. for SIFOREX.

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

- **Security Cooperation:** Air Forces Southern (AFSOUTH) led 41 security cooperation events in 11 USSOUTHCOM Partner Nations. Engagements focused on communications, aircraft operations and maintenance, ISR, air patrol operations, NVG, aerial port, maintenance, space, cyber, mishap investigation, command and control, space capabilities, close air support, legal, public affairs, flight medicine capabilities, and a Contingency Airfield Pavements Evaluation. The 571st Mobility Support Advisory Squadron completed 17 air adviser events to Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Chile, and El Salvador, training 241 partner nation military members.
- **Legal:** The AFSOUTH Staff Judge Advocate promoted Law of Armed Conflict adherence and Human Rights Law in 12 legal engagement activities with Colombia, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, and the Dominican Republic.
- **NEW HORIZONS 2014 (Belize):** AFSOUTH trained 444 US military personnel in joint/combined/interagency environments, in addition to 8 Canadian medical personnel, 25 Belize Defense Force (BDF) engineers, and over 40 BDF personnel. Personnel built five classrooms, which will accommodate 390 additional students, and one hospital addition. US and Canadian medical personnel treated over 19,000 patients during five medical, surgical, & dental events. SMEEs covered maternal & child health, public health, and biomedical equipment topics. Veterinarian services provided 500+ animal vaccinations.
- **ISR Missions:** AFSOUTH provided command and control for ISR missions in support of USSOUTHCOM priorities. AFSOUTH executed 897 ISR missions and 5,004 flight hours, resulting in over 27,841 images and nearly 13,497 minutes of video. This information assisted in numerous drug trafficking seizures in the SOUTHCOM AOR by the United States and its Partner nations in FY14. AFSOUTH is assisting critical partner nations in CD/CNT efforts and is currently working to enable Air Force operational and ISR capability in both Guatemala and Honduras. AFSOUTH continues to assist both Colombia and Peru in maintaining the strategic initiative against illegally-armed combatants who previously threatened the very existence of those nations.
- **Airlift Missions:** AFSOUTH executed 80 theater airlift missions, moving more than 3,900 passengers and 280 tons of cargo throughout USSOUTHCOM's area of responsibility.
- **Medical Deployments:** AFSOUTH International Health Specialists had 25 global health engagements with partner nations, including aerospace physiology programs in safety, human factors, and hypobaric chambers; also focusing on standards for aeromedical

evacuation/patient movement/critical care air transport teams. The AFSOUTH Command Surgeon's directorate hosted nine priority nations for an Aerospace Medicine Symposium.

Marine Corps Forces South (MARFORSOUTH)
Headquarters: Doral, Florida

- **Theater Security Cooperation**: In 2014, MARFORSOUTH completed over 88 Security Cooperation events in 27 countries. This resulted in over 750 Partner Nation Marine Corps and Defense Force personnel trained. While continuing to foster long-term relationships based on mutual respect and common values, MARFORSOUTH conducted a variety of key leader engagements throughout the USSOUTHCOM area of responsibility that reinforced our commitment to partner nation leadership. To meet shared security objectives in combatting transnational organized crime, MARFORSOUTH delivered tailor-made training to our partners by establishing persistent presence security cooperation teams in Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. This was often hand-in-hand with our Colombian Marine Corps partners through the U.S./Colombia Action Plan.
- **Special purpose Marine Air/Ground Task Force – South (SPMAGTF-S)**: Demonstrating the strength of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Team, MARFORSOUTH embarked a SPMAGTF aboard the USS AMERICA during its transit through the USSOUTHCOM area of responsibility. This transit featured MV-22 Ospreys that conducted basic maritime operations at sea and supported strategic-level diplomatic engagements in Colombia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and El Salvador. Marines, alongside the U.S. Navy, partnered with other Nation's Sailors and Marines in a variety of theater security cooperation events that included passage-at-sea exercises, SMEEs, tours for partner nation military and civilian personnel, community relations projects, and sporting events.
- **SPS-JHSV 14 – Marine Detachment (MARDET)**: In support of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. Fourth Fleet's SPS-JHSV, MARFORSOUTH deployed 45 Marines and Sailors to Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras to provide training in small-unit tactics, and support with engineering, civil affairs, and information operations activities. The MARDET enhanced the SPS-JHSV mission by building partner capacity in riverine infantry integration for 100 partner nation forces, conducting 14 humanitarian assistance and military construction projects and 175 civil-military engagements, and promoting a nation-wide civilian reporting system in Belize.
- **TRADEWINDS Phase II Ground**: The Dominican Republic hosted this JCS-directed exercise for over 250 participants, spanning 15 countries. In partnership with the Dominican Republic Marine Corps and the Canadian Army, U.S. Marines provided logistics, casualty evacuation and medical support while leading classroom instruction and field training. Exercise participants collaborated on countering illicit traffic activity, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, small arms weapons handling, basic infantry skills, civil affairs, human rights and law enforcement tactics, techniques and procedures.
- **Partnership of the Americas (POA):** MARFORSOUTH, in conjunction with USNAVSO and regional (PNs), conducted a multinational exercise incorporating amphibious ships from Mexico and Chile and eight other partner nation naval infantries. A combined task force executed a simulated humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operation, successfully demonstrating interoperability and security cooperation while focusing on amphibious staff

planning, training and equipping for future peace support operations and humanitarian assistance missions.

- **Security Augmentation Force (SAF)**: The SAF is MARFORSOUTH's designated company of Marines that reinforces Diplomatic Missions in the AOR, as required. In close coordination with Department of State, the SAF is postured in CONUS should an Ambassador decide that the local guard force is unwilling, unable, or insufficient to provide security to his mission. While there are currently no high threat posts in the AOR, the potential for a natural disaster or popular unrest are likely for many Embassy locations. MARFORSOUTH deploys its Marine Liaison Element to visit each Embassy, solidifies plans of action with the Country Team, and captures relevant information that will enable SAF in rapidly responding to crisis.

Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH)
Headquarters: Homestead, Florida

- **Building Partner Capacity:** In 2014, SOCSOUTH maintained small elements in Belize, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Guyana, Panama, and Peru working with key units to improve ground and maritime interdiction, civil affairs, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), and intelligence capacities. SOCSOUTH used episodic engagements – including 36 Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) events – with multiple Central American, South American, and Caribbean partners to develop U.S. forces' skills and expand partner nation capacity. In Honduras, SOCSOUTH teams and Colombian counterparts helped train over 200 Honduran National Police officers for the new Tigres special response unit as part of expanded U.S. support to Honduran authorities as they confront sources of insecurity in urban and remote rural areas. In the Andean Ridge, SOCSOUTH continued to partner with Colombia and Peru to confront narco-terrorist insurgencies whose illicit trafficking operations extend throughout the hemisphere.
- **Civil Affairs:** In 2014, 14 civil affairs teams and civil-military support elements engaged nine partner nations to reduce the vulnerability of key populations influenced by transnational organized crime or violent extremism. The teams assisted with counter-recruitment programs and, in many cases, supported partner nations in building civil affairs capacities.
- **Military Information Support Operations:** SOCSOUTH maintained military information support teams in six key partner nations supporting Colombia's Demobilization and Counter-Recruitment Programs, Guatemalan Interagency Task Forces, Panamanian security services' outreach programs in the Darien border region, the DoD Rewards Program, U.S. Government Anti-Trafficking in Persons efforts, and expanded active tip lines to under-governed spaces. These activities supported a broad range of efforts against transnational organized criminal and violent extremist organizations.
- **Intelligence Analytical Support to US Country Teams:** SOCSOUTH provides intelligence and counter-threat financing support to U.S. Country Teams focusing on terrorism, human smuggling networks, and transnational organized crime. In Belize, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras, SOCSOUTH helped develop host nation capabilities

and country team support through a number of subject matter exchanges, and mentored them in institutionalizing intelligence pipelines.

- **Building Intellectual Capital:** SOCSOUTH, in conjunction with the Colombian Joint Staff College, conducted five Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program-funded seminars in Bogota, Colombia during 2014. Approximately 70 subject-matter expert presenters from the U.S., Colombia, and other nations collaborated with over 700 participants from 18 Western Hemisphere and NATO countries
- **FUERZAS COMANDO 2014:** FUERZAS COMANDO is a USSOUTHCOM-sponsored, SOCSOUTH-executed multinational exercise encompassing a Special Operations skills competition and a Senior Leader Seminar designed to foster relations and improve cooperation throughout the theater. The 2014 edition of FUERZAS COMANDO was held at Fort Tolemaida, Colombia with 17 Partner Nations participating. Colombia placed first overall, the U.S. placed second, and third place went to El Salvador.
- **FUSED RESPONSE 2014:** SOCSOUTH executes an annual CJCS-directed exercise to validate time sensitive crisis action planning, as well as training, readiness, interoperability and capability of Special Operations Forces in support of regional crises and contingencies. FUSED RESPONSE 2014 was a Joint and Combined exercise held in Belize in conjunction with the Belize Defence Force and featured guest observers from Brazil and Canada to foster stronger relationships and greater interoperability with these fellow Western Hemisphere nations. Involving SOCSOUTH staff and personnel from each of its components, the exercise focused on improving the capabilities of the participant forces and increasing their capacity to confront common threats such as illicit traffic, organized crime, and terrorism.

Joint Task Force Guantanamo (JTF-GTMO)
Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

- **Safe and Humane Custody and Control:** JTF-GTMO conducted safe, humane, legal, and transparent custody and control of detainees, including those convicted by military commission. Detainees maintained family contact via mail, telephone calls and, in areas which support this service, videophone conferences coordinated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). High quality care, to include routine and urgent medical care, was provided to detainees on a 24-hour basis. General surgical care, dental care, preventative medicine, optometry and mental health services were provided, or arranged, as was targeted specialty care on a recurring basis.
- **Legal and Transparent Operations:** Assessments of detention conditions by the ICRC continued with four visits in 2014. The ICRC verifies compliance with international standards associated with law of war detention (as specified in the Geneva Conventions and other international conventions) and provides confidential advice for suggested improvements to the United States via the Joint Task Force Commander and U.S. Southern Command. Additionally, detainees are granted access to legal representation, and received more than 847 Military Commissions and 273 Habeas attorney visits in fiscal year 2014. Committed to transparency, JTF-GTMO hosted 100 media representatives from 73 domestic and international news organizations and answered hundreds of media queries during the past year. Similarly, JTF-GTMO also hosted numerous Distinguished Visitor visits, including

U.S. Senators, Representatives, Service Chiefs and senior DoD, DHS, DOJ and DoS policy makers.

- **Military Commissions:** Support for the Military Commissions process is a priority of JTF-GTMO. These proceedings are open to observation by the media, victim family members, non-governmental organizations and other visitors. In fiscal year 2014, JTF-GTMO supported 14 days of hearings which addressed pre-trial motions in the case of *U.S. v. Mohammad, et al.,* the five individuals accused of coordinating the September 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S. (referred to in the press as "the 9/11 Five") and 16 days of hearings to address pre-trial motions in the case of *U.S. v. Al Nashiri,* the alleged USS COLE bomber. Additionally, the Court arraigned and conducted two days of hearings to address pre-trial motions in the case of *U.S. v. Al Iraqi,* an alleged Al Qaeda commander charged with law of war offenses.

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

- **In FY 2014, Joint Interagency Task Force South** contributed to the disruption of 158 metric tons of cocaine worth nearly $3.2 billion wholesale. This represents 76 percent of the estimated cocaine flow directed towards the U.S. market. JIATF-S executed an integrated defense forward strategy that complimented the ongoing efforts at the U.S. Southwest Border. JIATF-S exercised tactical control (TACON) of U.S. and allied ships and Maritime Patrol Aircraft, along with the Forces Surveillance Support Center's re-locatable over-the-horizon radar (ROTHR) to detect, monitor and support interdiction of illicit traffic.
- **Operation (OP) MARTILLO** led to the majority of JIATF-S interdictions. Begun in January, 2012, OP MARTILLO has resulted in the disruption of 400 metric tons of cocaine, and the seizure of $14.4 million in bulk cash and 325 vessels and aircraft. This multi-national operation is intended to deny the Central American littoral routes to illicit traffickers. Approaching its third anniversary, OP MARTILLO is achieving its desired effects of decreased trafficking in the Western Caribbean and Eastern Pacific littorals. This has driven increased activity in the Eastern Pacific non-littoral route, which, as a result of longer distances, provides additional time for U.S., allied and Partner Nation forces to respond once an illicit trafficking event is detected.
- **Operational Results and Impact:** The bilateral Air Bridge Denial Program with Colombia contributed to a significant reduction in illicit air traffic. JIATF-S documented a 68 percent decrease in illicit air tracks from South America to Central America (primarily Honduras) and detected only two flights into Haiti. In the maritime domain, JIATF-S assessed reductions of 73 percent and 42 percent, respectively, in activity along the Western Caribbean littoral and non-littoral trafficking vectors. JIATF-S also documented a significant decrease in trafficking via "go fast" boats using the littoral routes, which is consistent with the intent of OP MARTILLO. Eastern Pacific trafficking showed similar trends, with a 48% decrease in the littorals and a 38% increase in the non-littorals, including a recent increase in the use of routes south of the Galapagos.
- **Operation UNIFIED RESOLVE**, the counter illicit trafficking operation supporting Puerto Rico, has improved interoperability between JIATF-S, Coast Guard District 7, Coast Guard Sector San Juan, and the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Air and Marine's

Caribbean Air and Marine Branch in Counter-Illicit Trafficking operations. Real-time information sharing improved OP UNIFIED RESOLVE effectiveness against movements of cocaine to Puerto Rico from the primary Hispaniola vector. This collaborative effort enhanced the effective sharing of resources in today's austere operating environment and resulted in interdiction of 15,342 kg of cocaine destined for Puerto Rico in FY14.

- **Role of Partner Nations:** Fifty six percent of JIATF-S disruptions happened as a result of Latin American partner nation participation. Additionally, 75 of the 204 (37 percent) illicit trafficking events disrupted by JIATF-S were a direct result of the participation of our international allies. The maritime contributions by the U.K., France, the Netherlands, and Canada continued to be significant and will be critical to future operations as U.S. Navy resources continue to be limited.
- **Counter-Transnational Organized Crime/Counter Network Operations:** While focused on its primary mission of detection and monitoring of illicit traffic, JIATFS established counter network and counter threat finance analysis cells to assist law enforcement agencies in dismantling the Transnational Criminal Organizations responsible for the production and shipment of narcotics and for undermining the stability and security of the region.

Joint Task Force-Bravo
Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras

- **Joint Task Force-Bravo Summary:** Joint Task Force-Bravo (JTF-Bravo) is a forward-based, expeditionary joint task force operating in the USSOUTHCOM AOR. Stationed at the Honduran Soto Cano Air Base, JTF-Bravo manages the only strategic, all-weather day/night C-5 Galaxy-capable airfield in Central America. The JTF, in cooperation with our partner nations, executes operations and enables multilateral exercises in support of the USSOUTHCOM priorities of countering transnational organized crime (CTOC), humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR), and building partner capacity (BPC) to promote regional cooperation and security in Central America. JTF-Bravo supports the USSOUTHCOM Commander's objectives in Honduras by executing assigned tasks within OPERATION ESCUDO UNIDO.
- **CTOC Operations:** At the request of the Government of Belize, JTF-Bravo provided aerial reconnaissance and air movement support for Belizean Defense Forces during two separate operations to eradicate 110,000 marijuana plants, 2000 lbs of processed marijuana and 35 lbs of seeds; destroying over 56 million dollars of profits. JTF-Bravo also participated in detection and monitoring operations off the Northeastern coast of Honduras to develop and train Fuerzas Especial Naval (FEN) boat crews, familiarizing them with communication and reporting fundamentals, illicit drug trafficking tactics, and vessel interception techniques. Finally, JTF-Bravo supported the Honduran Army's destruction of 10 illicit airfields in the Gracias a Dios Department by transporting almost 400 troops and 8,500 pounds of demolitions to damage airfields used by drug trafficking organizations.
- **HA/DR Response Operations:** At the request of the President of Honduras, and directed by USSOUTHCOM, JTF-Bravo delivered over 37,000 lbs of immediate lifesaving rations to isolated locations in GaD, which were devastated by severe flooding and heavy winds associated with Tropical Storm Hanna. JTF-Bravo executed 10 medical readiness training exercises, four mobile surgical team exercises, and weekly medical training missions in local

municipalities to improve expeditionary readiness and simultaneously provide medical care to CENTAM countries. Over the past year, the JTF treated 15,886 medical patients, 2,407 dental patients, and 779 surgical patients. JTF-Bravo routinely integrates its SOUTHCOM Situational Assessment Team (S-SAT) with regional partners to participate in natural disaster exercises. The JTF deployed its small response package to El Salvador as a part of Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias 2014 (FA-HUM 14), validating tactics, techniques, and procedures for response to natural disasters in the region.

- **BPC and Supporting Partner Nations:** JTF-Bravo conducted numerous BPC and PN supporting events. This included: deploying a Downed Aircraft Recovery Team (DART) to Guatemala to assist in recovering the wreckage from a helicopter crash on 20 August 2014; providing subject matter expertise leading to revision of the Guatemalan aviation safety and standards program; and facilitating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Government of Honduras (GoH) repatriation of 85 Honduran families from the U.S. to locations throughout Honduras, by providing limited airfield support to DHS contracted aircraft. Additionally, JTF-Bravo firefighters conducted expertise exchanges with fire departments from Central America. The exchanges reinforced firefighting tactics, techniques, and procedures, enhancing the partner nation's ability to respond and control fire emergencies. The JTF also hosted 54 firefighters from the El Salvador Port Authority at Soto Cano Air Base to conduct annual firefighting certification. Finally, JTF-Bravo coordinated and hosted a Pediatric Disaster Management Course at Soto Cano Airbase, as well as the first ever Advanced Trauma Life Support course in Honduras. Both courses certified Honduran instructors in the respective specialty areas and helped improve Honduran medical capacity.

Mr. DUNCAN. General, thank you, and let me just take the opportunity on behalf of the committee to thank you for your service to the United States military in defense of our great nation.

We are going to pause and recess until after votes. I ask the committee members to come back 10 minutes after the beginning of the last vote. That will give us 10 minutes to vote and come on across after the last vote.

So with that, we will stand in recess.

[Recess.]

Mr. DUNCAN. We will go ahead and reconvene the hearing and I appreciate y'all's patience as we worked through votes. We do have some other members coming but I am going to recognize myself first for some opening questions.

First off, I am glad we are getting out ahead of this. In anticipation of a repeat from last year at some level I am glad we are having this hearing now so that we can start addressing some of the issues and I think that opening statements were great and provided a lot of information to us.

One thing that concerns me is how the unaccompanied children tax the resources not only of the Federal Government with manpower that has to be used to secure the border or deal with the number of children and watching over those but also the Federal resources, but at the state level.

We are seeing state resources being taxed as well in Texas and the border states. And even right now we are talking about relocation of some of these children to interior states like South Carolina and others. And so you are going to end up seeing those states recognize the taxing of their resources.

When I was in Panama at the Summit of the Americas, I had a chance meeting with President Obama after the opening ceremony, and at that meeting he and I had a chance to talk and one of the things that we talked about was the fact that I am probably one on my side of the aisle that support the financial assistance request of $1 billion.

But I told him and I said, Mr. President, there has got to be accountability, and he agreed. He said, absolutely there has to be accountability. And I think what we were both talking about when we talk about accountability is making sure the money gets to where the rubber meets the road—that it is not taken off in some amount at the top and with the governments there—that it is actually getting to where it is going to be the most—do the most good.

And that is why I think, Ambassador, that the Plan Colombia model is a great one when we talk judicial assistance and rule of law and addressing confidence in the population in those countries with their judicial system and that, you know, they are not going to have to pay a bribe to get out of jail, that there is actually going to be rule of law enforcement. I think that is so important. So I think accountability is important.

What I would like to address first off is potential vulnerabilities with what we are seeing as the Central America-4 Border Control Agreement originally signed in 2006, but implemented between Guatemala and Honduras just recently.

So open borders—open borders between those countries and what that may mean for law enforcement—and so I am going to address

my first question to General Tovo about—I get open border and the free flow of goods and commerce and people among those countries, but I think it creates some impediments to law enforcement and I want to see how we are—how we are thinking about those impediments if you have got those open borders for illicit drugs and smuggling of all kinds and what that may or may not do to our law enforcement and to our national security.

So if you could address that and then I may come over to another gentleman. But General?

General TOVO. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Certainly, the more open borders the risk is that you can ease the flow for all, not just trade and commerce. One of the things that we have been doing in conjunction with others on the team here, particularly with the Guatemalans and Hondurans, is getting them together in what we call IATF's—Interagency Task Force—on either side of that border to get them to cooperate more closely on intel sharing, procedures and that is coming along.

It is part of the recent agreement between the two Presidents that they would have a shared mechanism. So IATF Chorti in Guatemala and then a similar JTF across the border in Honduras are now doing cooperative security work to open the border, yet control the border.

And so I think while we are at the nascent stages of that, I think that is a good sign that they recognize the potential vulnerability, they are taking steps to control the border in a proper manner, and then, of course, we are supporting their efforts through advice and assistance.

Mr. DUNCAN. So do you think that potential enemies such as ISIS would try to exploit any of that open border across the whole Latin America, Central America region to some degree?

General TOVO. Chairman, I can't speak specifically to ISIS. You know, at this point I don't think we have any information that says that they specifically want to exploit these pathways.

But it is our position at SOUTHCOM that, given the pathways that exist—the illicit pathways that move people, drugs, money, guns, et cetera, in multiple directions that it is certainly a vulnerability that we ought to figure out how address and that we are addressing.

That is part of what we do with our partners is help them develop their capacity to monitor and improve their ability to maintain domain awareness and then disrupt the networks with appropriate capabilities.

Mr. DUNCAN. Right. Okay. While I have got you, a different topic. Mr. Bersin, I am coming to you in just a second. But General, the 250 Marines that are going to be stationed that I have read about, are they going to be under SOCOM's control?

General TOVO. Under SOUTHCOM.

Mr. DUNCAN. In SOUTHCOM?

General TOVO. They are under the command and control of our Marine component MARFORSOUTH and they will working closely with JTF Bravo in Honduras.

Mr. DUNCAN. How are they going to be used?

General TOVO. Well, they have got several different elements. The ground element is going to be providing training to our part-

ners in the region, things such as rivering operations, marksmanship, small unit training. The air element will provide general support and then the logistics element will be doing a series of humanitarian assistance projects—working with our partners to repair schools and other facilities.

Mr. DUNCAN. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Bersin, let us go back to the open border issue and the question is what efforts DHS has taken to mitigate any exploitation of Central America's loose border security measures and so I would love to hear your take on that.

Mr. BERSIN. Mr. Chairman, the way in which we used to look at borders in the past were strictly the lines on the map, the lines that separate one country from another and the notion was that you do inspections at the line where the sovereignty shifts.

I think what we understand about borders today, and we apply in a lot of our actions and we expect the Central Americans to do the same in the context of the Guatemalan and Honduran agreement, is to secure the flows of goods and people that are going back and forth.

And it is not so much the inspection point at the sovereignty line but it is the ability to exchange information and, in a layered security fashion, to be able to intercept high-risk or malefactors who are crossing.

So this is not about a free pass but it is about recognizing that the Maya Chorti, of example, has a zone from 20 miles south of the sovereignty line, 20 miles north into Guatemala and the idea is to exchange information and coordinate, and with the work that DHS is doing with the support of INL in Honduras, for example, with the Goetz Group which is training border patrol agents, in effect—our border patrol agents training Guatemalan border—Honduran border patrol agents, we expect to be doing the same in Guatemala, and we think that this notion of securing the flow of people and the flow of goods in a layered security is going to be as effective as having an incomplete inspection point right at the line of sovereignty.

Mr. DUNCAN. Right, and I appreciate those efforts. I don't mean to come across as negative for what Honduras and Guatemala are doing. I am exactly opposite of that. I appreciate them working together in a bilateral agreement to facilitate trade and all that.

I think that will benefit both countries. Just to follow up, though, Mexico has increased their border security on that Guatemalan border. Are you all involved in that and how do you see that? I think it is effective, from what I have read. How do you see it?

Mr. BERSIN. So in effect then, just to carry the point further on the Guatemalan-Honduran border using Mexico as an example, actually Mexico's efforts on its southern border—Guatemala's northern border—involves giving a pass to Central Americans to go up into the—into Mexico for a certain period of time under a border crossing card arrangement. Where there is a line drawn and the checkpoint and the security is that the Isthmus of Tehuantepec—there are other checkpoints—but at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the narrow part of Mexico, is where people are not being permitted to go further north.

We have been working very closely with our Mexican colleagues in a whole variety of methods with regard to our southern border—Mexico's northern border. Many of those techniques in terms of technology, in terms of layered security, in terms of training and capacity building actually have been adopted by the Mexicans in their efforts that have, I think, shown great results on the Guatemalan border.

Mr. DUNCAN. Right, and I think it has been effective. I want to applaud the Mexicans for recognizing that and stepping it up. I think the layered approach of Guatemala on their side, Mexico on their side to stop it before it ever gets to that Texas-U.S. borders is very vital.

I want to ask the State Department will any of the billion dollars for Central America be targeted to addressing this issue and preventing exploitation of the loose border security measures by bad actors?

Mr. HAMILTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are collaborating very closely in the interagency on exactly those questions. We spent about—about 18 months ago we started talking about this subject and we determined with DHS, with INL, with Justice, with others, how we might seek to address border security and also achieve the goals that we set for ourselves. And with Mr. Bersin and his team, we are working very closely to try to identify exactly what those programs will be. So it is very much an integral part of what we are doing.

Mr. DUNCAN. All right. I appreciate that.

You know, last year at the peak we witnessed a Guatemalan-Mexican river crossing. People were paying 80 cents to hop on a pallet on top of inner tubes and be paddled across into Mexico and there were Guatemalan police that were right there.

I mean, the videos were very, very clear, and it was less than $1. It was a very nominal fee. You saw people exploiting that situation to make money but the porousness of that was very alarming to folks in my district. And so I hope we—I hope we see a very active effort on behalf of—on the part of Guatemalans and Hondurans and El Salvadorans and Mexico, which I think we are seeing.

So I am over my time but we are going to come back for a second round. I am going to recognize the ranking member.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, I have been on this committee now 9 years and I have always been an advocate for this region of the world ever since I was not even a congressman.

But, you know, it is very frustrating to me when people come before this committee and they tell me how well things are working and what improvement we are making in this part of the Western Hemisphere.

You know, from my view, you know, I look at Venezuela as a mess. Brazil is embroiled in probably the biggest corruption scandal of history. You have Bolivia, who is acting like a rogue nation, and you have Ecuador. Then you have, obviously, Nicaragua now—Ortega wants to perpetuate himself. He has found capitalism now.

You know, I look at—we were in Argentina, the former chairman and I. I mean, I just don't see, you know, this improvement, and I look at Guatemala, El Salvador and I see where they have their

society problems with these children, and to me they look at these children going to America as a pressure releasing valve that they have within their own country.

And I really don't know what their full commitment is to really stop this. You know, the Presidents ask for $1 billion. We are never going to get $1 billion. That is just a figure that they threw out there. We will get some, you know—you know, an amount that we will get.

But where are we headed with some of this stuff? I mean, Ambassador, I know you have been before me half a dozen times and you are always going to say the same thing. But go ahead, say it again.

Mr. BROWNFIELD. I would never, ever argue or disagree with the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey. May I—may I—may I start by agreeing with you and actually laying out my own personal experience?

Mr. SIRES. I guess I am frustrated. That is my——

Mr. BROWNFIELD. I am with you, and let me share that frustration at the start and then give you some more positive stuff at the end.

I am one of the most kind of experienced Latin America hands, I guess, that has ever had the job that I currently hold as assistant secretary for INL.

I came in actually committed big time to plussing up what we were doing because when I arrived in this job less than 25 percent of my entire budget was focussed on Latin America.

That was a function of Iraq and Afghanistan but it was also a function of concentration elsewhere. To my intense frustration, I spent much of my first 2 years shutting down INL sections.

I shut down the INL section in Bolivia. I shut down the INL section in Ecuador. I shut down small INL programs in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Venezuela we had shut down even before I got to the job, for rather obvious reasons.

I was quite frustrated. I was then and I am now. In South America I have exactly two INL sections in place—Peru and Colombia.

So I start with the same frustration you had, which is to say due to circumstances that, in my opinion, were beyond any of our controls, we did not have these programs.

Central America I did say to you, and I said it somewhat defensively but I do say it again, CARSI has not solved all these problems but I do emphatically assert that both Paloma from the USAID side and me from the INL side have spent 5 years putting infrastructure in place.

We have got people on the ground now that can actually do these programs, learning lessons between stupid programs that obviously did not work and programs that did work, and figuring how we can go from here.

And finally, reminding everyone—and you hear it from me every time I come and appear before this committee—we have got to think long term. This is not a problem—a problem that has been created over decades is not going to be solved in a matter of days.

But let me go back to the chairman's question. For example, border stuff—what are we doing on border stuff? First, don't forget that on the other side of Central America is Mexico.

This year I am going to put $90 million of INL programs into the Mexican southern border. Now, is this going to have an impact on Central America? Of course, it is going to have an impact on Central America for all the reasons that Mr. Bersin just laid out.

Second, we are supporting these joint interagency task forces, police and military, that are to work the borders themselves. They are tied into the open border concept, Ranking Member and Mr. Chairman, the theory being if you open the border basically for the regular crossing points people will no longer—who are doing legitimate business will no longer avoid the highways because they will move more rapidly along the regular places and the criminals will be the ones who are trying to cross at the non-authorized crossing points for which you have the Joint Interagency Task Forces to identify and grab them.

Will it work? I guess I would say it cannot possibly work any worse than we have had for the last 5 years. Sorry, Dr. Sires, I got carried away.

Mr. SIRES. Well, thank you for making me a doctor. I didn't realize that. You know, I think part of all this refocus on the Western Hemisphere—last year was a wake-up call but also, I think, China is scaring a lot of people in this country with the influence that they are having in all these countries. So all of a sudden we have to refocus on the Western Hemisphere. And I am looking for signs that there really is a commitment by these countries that they are going to do what they need to do to stop this flow of people coming over because, really, at the end of this those children are the ones that suffer.

I mean, they are abused. They get taken advantage of and, you know, just from the humanitarian point of view somebody has got to make a real commitment.

If we are going to give them money—and I would like to see some money go there—but I also like to see transparency. You know, I think those days where we just gave them money and forgot about it are over.

So Mr. Hamilton, can you talk a little bit about that?

Mr. HAMILTON. Certainly. Thank you, Mr. Sires.

Two things I would say about. First, last summer when the unaccompanied children started to arrive, the countries took it very seriously. Their public commitment was matched by their actions and the numbers slowed down significantly.

They also took the very difficult political decisions for them to take back flights of women and children in addition to the, in the last fiscal year, over 100,000 young men who were deported from the United States to those three countries.

So this was a challenging time for them but they did it. They did what we asked, and they did it for their own reasons because those kids belong in those countries and they understand that.

In November, following up on that type of decision, they worked with the Inter-American Development Bank to create a plan that essentially said to the rest of us we own this problem—it is our problem and we want to address it with your assistance. That, again, is new and worthy of attention and respect.

And third, in March of this year they came up with an elaboration of the plan which is very, very programmatic and very

strong clear detailed goals and commitments that they have entered into.

Now, what are those commitments that they have achieved so far? In Honduras, where we have seen significant action, they have invited in Transparency International, and those of you who know that entity know that it is not an entity easily bullied by politicians.

It is independent, it is credible and very serious and they are going to be auditing the countries' government departments. That is something that is creative and new and worthy, I think, of attention and respect.

They increased their tax revenues by 21 percent in the past year in part by being more efficient and trying to invest in their own society, knowing very well that that is the only way they can make genuine progress.

They negotiated a new agreement with International Monetary Fund in order to get their budget house in order so they can do this over the long term as well—again, quite serious.

Only a few days ago, they passed a new law to protect human rights defenders and journalists, something that has been a continuing concern in Honduras for some time. And as Secretary Bersin said, they have inaugurated the two task forces on the border that we consider to be very serious and effective.

So in general, Honduras has done a lot. They even invited in the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights—again, an organization that is independent in every respect and will help them achieve progress in that area, too.

Guatemala's decision a few days ago to renew the mandate of the Commission Against Impunity was absolutely fundamental to that country's future.

Without an independent investigative body like that, without the ability to investigate, indict, arrest, and hopefully allow the system to convict bad actors, the country simply cannot progress.

And only a week ago they indicted 22 members of the tax administration who had committed fraud, one of whom is a fugitive—the personal secretary of the Vice President, in fact. Again, a very serious effort by the CSIG entity to move forward on correcting impunity in that country.

Guatemala also has extradited to the United States over ten major criminals in the past year, Honduras over seven—taking, again, very seriously their obligation.

In El Salvador, they have launched an anti-extortion task force designed to crack down on gangs who are intimidating young small-business owners. They also passed a law to ensure that legal stability of investments.

So a number of things have happened in the past 12 months that represent, in our judgment collectively, a serious effort to address these impunity and accountability issues that you quite properly raise and we will absolutely intend to ensure that they follow through on those and many other commitments that they have made.

Mr. SIRES. Is Salvador the biggest recipient of money from us with the Millennium Challenge money and everything?

Mr. HAMILTON. I think if you add the Millennium Challenge account it is very close. But Guatemala also receives significant Feed the Future assistance from USAID. But I think Paloma might know more than I do about that.

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Am I on? Yes.

Yes, Guatemala receives significant assistance from us for their food security and agricultural development efforts in the western——

Mr. SIRES. And they have been receiving this money prior to the children coming across?

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Yes. They have been for about 3 years now and we are seeing——

Mr. SIRES. And El Salvador also?

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN [continuing]. We are seeing great results with it.

Mr. SIRES. We are seeing great results? I mean——

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Yes, we are seeing the results in the western highlands in linking farmers to markets, moving people out of extreme poverty, getting nutrition intervention to youth under five. These are the big pieces that we have seen in the western highlands of Guatemala.

We would like to and are working with the government to expand those investments through their Pacto Hambre—their national food security plan.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes, I thank the gentleman.

I want to go now to the chairman of the Asia Pacific Subcommittee, former chairman of this committee, someone who followed this issue, worked very diligently on it last year and I commend him for that—Mr. Salmon from Arizona.

Mr. SALMON. Well, thank you, and first of all, Mr. Chairman, thanks for holding this incredibly important hearing.

I am very apologetic that I wasn't here for the testimony, but I am chairing an Asia Pacific Subcommittee on Bangladesh on an upper floor and somebody is relieving me because this issue is so important to me.

I wanted to come and be able to ask some questions. I do want to make a couple of observations both about the hearing and the subcommittee.

First observation is I have a really hard time masking my affinity for Ambassador Brownfield. I wish there were 1,000 like you. I think that this country would be in a lot better shape.

Mr. BROWNFIELD. My wife disagrees intensely with that statement, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SALMON. I might be able to talk her into something. And then my other observation is that if every subcommittee in this Congress had a ranking member like Mr. Sires, who is so darn cooperative to work for and just cares about doing the right thing, we would solve a lot of problems in this country. And I really appreciate—I really—you are just a gem to work with and mean that.

Mr. DUNCAN. I second that, by the way.

Mr. SALMON. Yes. So my question would be to Mr. Bersin, and because I spoke so fondly of one of your members doesn't mean I

don't like the rest of you. I just really have such a strong affinity for Ambassador Brownfield and I think he knows that.

But to date, Mr. Bersin, how many individuals, both adults and children, have been brought to the U.S. under the new in-country refugee/parole processing program? That is my first question. How are they arriving in the U.S. is my second question.

Third, once in the U.S., how many of the program participants are minors and how many are adults? And if you don't have any of those answers you can get them to me. I would really appreciate it.

Fourth, how many of the—well, why don't you start with that because I have some other questions I would like to follow on with that.

Mr. BERSIN. After observing that I am in accord with your assessment of Brownfield—to know him is to love him—I will——

Mr. SALMON. You just rose in my estimation so that is good.

Mr. BERSIN [continuing]. To answer your question, which is that in fact none to date have been admitted to the United States because the applications—approximately 500 have been received, but the interviews with regard to in-country processing of refugees status has not begun.

Mr. SALMON. Okay. Then my—so we really don't have any that have qualified under the terms of this new—or this arrangement, this agreement?

Mr. BERSIN. To date, that is correct, sir.

Mr. SALMON. How—but they are actually coming to the States, we are understanding. How are they getting here?

Mr. BERSIN. There is a—there is a—as you know, there is a refugee admissions process that covers the entire world——

Mr. SALMON. Right.

Mr. BERSIN [continuing]. And there are protocols that pertain to how refugees are brought to the United States after it has been ascertained that they are refugees.

Mr. SALMON. Right.

Mr. BERSIN. That has not yet applied in the Central American context.

Mr. SALMON. What do we know about the applicants? Or do we have any information?

Mr. BERSIN. I know, sir, there are 500 of them. I have not looked at any of the files.

Mr. SALMON. You don't know a breakdown yet of whether they are adults or children?

Mr. BERSIN. That is—I will get—if you leave the record open we will supply that.

Mr. SALMON. That would be very helpful, and how many have, you know, applied for parole status. Here is my next question. Out of that 500 that we know of, how many of the individuals who applied on behalf of their relative for refugee or parolee status are in the U.S. on a deferred action?

That would be my next question. Can an applicant here in the U.S. petition to bring in a parent or another relative under the program? Let us say that they are granted asylum status or parolee status.

Can they apply then for chain migration? Can they bring a parent? Can they bring another relative, and if—do we know whether they have done that yet? Do you know anything about that?

Mr. BERSIN. So with regard to the latter case, I can state, consistent with previous responses, that it has not yet begun. Therefore, you would not have those results.

With regard to the two questions on legal eligibility, we will provide that. I, myself, am not an expert on the refugee——

Mr. SALMON. Okay. I would just like to know if they are here under deferred status whether they can then be the sponsor or whether—yes.

Mr. BERSIN. I understand the inquiry.

Mr. SALMON. Okay. And then are any of those who are applying on behalf of the relative in the U.S. under deferred action as put in place by the President's November 2014 action—that is my other question.

One other question that I have is more in regards to I witnessed what you talked about. I was with General Kelly about a year ago on the Guatemala-Mexican border. I personally witnessed those people coming over on those barges or rafts or whatever you want to call them.

I saw it happening. I saw the law enforcement people turning the other way, not doing anything about it, and I would note that one of my perceptions about this whole diminishment this year—the numbers have gone dramatically down of those who have come to the border, surrendered themselves, both unaccompanied minors as well as accompanied minors—but I think a lot of that is in part to Mexico's stepped up participation. They are interdicting either at the Mexican border or in Mexico.

And, I mean, it is not that we are catching these people. At least, that is my understanding, because many of them are surrendering. It is not like we are apprehending them. They get to the border and they surrender themselves and so I don't know that we have really stepped up anything, have we?

Mr. BERSIN. So, first, with regard to the situation and all of us—many of us have seen the situation on the Mexican-Guatemalan border on the river—let me—if I can put that in context.

Until 2 years ago, there was absolutely nothing going on on the U.S.-Guatemalan border. Zero. So what you are seeing is actually not so much—there are cases where people are crossing with the intention of going to the United States. But actually most of the activity there is the intercommunity border economic activity that goes back and forth. The difference is that that is not where Guatemalans or Hondurans or Salvadorans are being stopped anyway by the Mexicans. They are being stopped further up——

Mr. SALMON. Right.

Mr. BERSIN [continuing]. Into Mexico.

Mr. SALMON. Into Mexico.

Mr. BERSIN. And what we see in terms of the ziplines and tubes is actually a intra——

Mr. SALMON. Commerce.

Mr. BERSIN. It is a commerce. It is a commercial relationship that has existed for decades and decades. But that isn't what is

leading to the change you notice, which is the enforcement effort ten miles, 20 miles and then 50 miles——

Mr. SALMON. By the Mexico—yes.

Mr. BERSIN [continuing]. By Mexico and there is significant activity going on.

Mr. SALMON. They are doing an amazing job. I think they have really stepped it up. As to, you know, what we are doing on our borders I think that when they come and they claim credible fear or whatever, you know, the line de jour is that they are then brought into the country and taken through the process.

So I don't know that we are doing anything to thwart it. I know we did some public service announcements and things like that in country about how difficult the journey is and how dangerous it is and those kinds of things.

But, ultimately, one of my hopes and desires was that, you know, we would get them back in country as quickly as possible to show that that $5,000 or $8,000 they paid to the coyotes was wasted money and that you do it again it is going to be wasted money.

Mr. BERSIN. Congressman, again, you know, with all due respect, that was the point of the request for the appropriations to deal with the pull factors. Until we have an enforcement mechanism and an immigration court that is properly resourced here, we will not see the turnaround that you suggest.

When there is the ability to do so, we are actually returning people in short order. But as you note, when you claim asylum there is a process which our country has recognized and I think we should be proud that it does recognize it.

But we don't have the ability to actually conduct that process with the—with the speed and rapidity that a properly resourced immigration court would permit us to do.

Mr. SALMON. The asylum statues are valid. I mean, they are—I think asylum is a worthy policy for legitimate folks that qualify for asylum.

I think there are a lot of people that are maybe not so honest about why they are really crossing the border, and they have figured out that by claiming that your chances are a lot better.

But with the Mexican minors we had a lot more flexibility in the past than we do with Central American kids because of legislation, and our hope was to try to streamline that process through a series of questioning that maybe some of these adjudication processes might be averted. And is that happening or can it not?

Mr. BERSIN. So with regard to the Guatemalan, Honduran, Salvadoran councils, on those cases where we can get cooperation, get travel documents——

Mr. SALMON. Where they will voluntarily deport, they can still do that?

Mr. BERSIN [continuing]. That is actually—yes, yes, and we are getting significant cooperation from the Northern Triangle countries with their in U.S. country-based personnel.

But again, sir, the problem is we respect the asylum process as you do and—but there is not adequate machinery to make this function in a way that gets rapid hearings which would permit them a disposition of the case, one way or the other, and then a

return to the country of origin for those who don't qualify for asylum.

The problem is that decision is not being made in real time.

Mr. SALMON. I just—my final comment, Mr. Chairman, but we passed a bill—we in the House passed a bill last summer that would have addressed this and would have sped up the asylum process and would have provided judges and courts, and Senate never took it up.

Mr. DUNCAN. It is time to pass it again and I thank the gentleman for his efforts on this. And perception is reality.

We talked about the rafts and people being across, but the fact is people in New Jersey and people in South Carolina saw that newscast or saw that YouTube video or whatever it was—saw the Guatemalan law enforcement standing right there, saw the interview with the people that were actually trying to migrate to this country weren't just normal commerce across that river, and they believe that is the reality there—that law enforcement is looking the other way.

Guatemala can change that perception and ultimately change the reality in the minds of the American people, who are looking at the request for an extra billion dollars to be spent. And so we have got to change that perception in order to justify that expenditure to our constituents.

So with that, I will yield to the gentlelady from California, Ms. Torres, who has joined our committee for the day. Thank you.

Ms. TORRES. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and also to the rest of the committee members for giving me an opportunity to participate.

I absolutely agree that we must do everything that we can to stabilize Central America. I think it is a critical partner for the Americas and for our country.

I do want to commend you, Mr. Hamilton, your comments and what you said earlier regarding the outreach that has been made to the Northern Triangle countries about the difficulties and the dangers of travelling to the U.S.

I was—had the opportunity to travel to El Salvador and Honduras recently. Spoke to civil society groups and many, many, many youth groups.

What they said was that they got the message that it is very dangerous and that the effort for the U.S. to provide that community outreach to them about the dangers that they are facing walking 1,000 miles to the U.S. is real.

I wonder if you know anything about the—what appear to me that it was somewhat a coordinated effort of two for one smugglers.

That was what they were offering last year, and I recognize that it was a political year—an election year. But the fact that, you know, they were sort of going out there and pushing people to come to the U.S. seems almost surreal to me.

I want to ask three specific questions. I know I have limited time. Number one, you said that the Northern Triangle countries are prepared and want to see change. I saw—I saw that in El Salvador. They are working with civil society groups. I did not quite see that in Honduras.

I wonder will this money, this aid—will it include technical assistance to ensure that there is transparency on how this money is going to be spent, that my community is going to be able to go on some website and be able to see where our tax dollars are going, who is receiving them and how are they being—are they being effectively directed to where it is needed.

The other thing is what are your views on establishing CSIG-like commissions in El Salvador and in Honduras and how much of or what percentage of law enforcement funding will be directed to support institutional reforms?

We heard it over and over and over again in these two countries—corruption within the ranks of the police department, corruption within the ranks of the military. They are not trustworthy organizations.

The community can't go to them to report a crime. Oftentimes, they are victims of these two organizations. And, frankly, they are starving their police forces. You have to look at their wages and their salaries and you have to bring them to par with the rest of the Central American communities.

And lastly, it alarms me that 500 people have requested an asylum and we have not been able to process those applications.

I would like to see, you know, what process do we have, or should we be investing some of this money in ensuring that these three countries have some type of victim assistance programs and relocation within their countries?

Mr. HAMILTON. Thank you, Congressman Torres. Excellent questions, and we agree, of course, completely with you that criminal smuggling networks should not be allowed to determine the immigration policy of the United States, and we were very active in seeking to make sure that did not happen last year and will not happen in the future.

With respect to your question on transparency and accountability, we could not agree more. If we do not ensure accountability and transparency and, frankly, crack down on impunity, we will never succeed in the region.

We know that. The strategy is designed exactly around those principal factors. We are trying to ensure that all of the principal government institutions—the tax system, the justice sector, the public procurement departments—are transparent and accountable in every way.

The governments themselves have committed to do that and, as I mentioned earlier, have brought in external actors to assess and to monitor themselves. That is, frankly, quite unusual and suggests to us that they are serious.

They can't hide from those institutions. They can perhaps pull the wool over people's eyes in past administrations by doing it themselves, but outside actors are unlikely to allow that to happen. So we are quite confident they are serious and we intend to move forward on that.

We have a very, very serious monitoring and evaluation program built into what we propose here, three different levels. One is a political level—the political requests or asks that we will make of those governments and they have publically committed to any

March 3rd statement or jointly authored with the Vice President of the United States.

Second, there is a programmatic evaluation effort, which will be U.S. programs—how we seek to achieve certain goals and how we measure benchmarks along the way.

And third will be national level trajectory benchmarks—how, with a lag over time, do we see success. Those benchmarks will be shared and discussed with the Members of Congress on a regular basis because that is the only way we can move forward together—by being open and transparent and honest about this process.

With respect to CSIG in Guatemala, we are very strong supporters of it, as you know. We would very much welcome consideration by other countries of a similar entity in their societies.

CSIG succeeds because it is independent. It is not susceptible to manipulation by anyone, and to the extent that Guatemala can help persuade Salvador and Honduras that these are valuable interventions we would very much support them in doing so.

Institutional reforms in the police and military are critical. Ambassador Brownfield will talk about that in more detail. But fundamentally, we agree completely with you that police forces have been under resourced and misused for a long period of time and all three governments are committed to changing those processes.

In Honduras, in particular, they propose to train and hire 6,000 new police officers in the next 3 years precisely in order to create a credible police force that people do not fear, and that can then replace the current military police who are patrolling the streets in the absence of a credible national police force. So we very strongly agree with you on all of those factors.

Mr. BROWNFIELD. And Congresswoman, let me flesh out in detail a little bit in terms of police institutional reform in terms of how we are trying to attack this problems set.

Because you are, obviously, absolutely correct—that until the law enforcement institutions are in fact reformed, purified, improved they will never be able to perform the function that we are—that we are asking as their commitment to this Central America strategy.

As I said during my opening statement, we have a bottom-up and a top-down approach. Bottom-up, in a sense, means linking the communities with their local law enforcement. But that is not reform per se. Top-down is exactly that and that is what we can do to professionalize and reform the law enforcement community.

In no particular order, we are supporting, and in fact providing, a great deal of assistance monitoring and participation into police academies and police training in each of the three Northern Triangle countries, in addition to a regional police academy that we are operating and working in Panama for the entire region.

Second, we are establishing—trying to establish, encouraging them to establish with us an IAD—internal affairs division or inspector general sort of office or function in each of the police communities.

In other words, duh, somebody who will police the police. Until you have that, you know that you will not be able to control the problem within the institution.

Third, we are working with the three governments in terms of establishing and passing the legislation—the statutory basis that allows the removal of individuals legally for abusive or corrupt behavior.

Fourth, we are working in what in Mexico we have come to call los controles de confianza, which is to say the system, the structure, by which you can vet and remove, at least if not from the entire institution from individual units, those people who for whatever reason are found to have been penetrated or corrupted.

And finally, as our requirement from each of the three governments, we will insist that they themselves meet salary—minimum salary requirements.

You know as well as I do that a big part of the problem is if a police officer is paid so little that he or she cannot support his or her family, that police officer will supplement the income in other ways and that becomes part of the problem.

Ms. TORRES. Can I—can I ask a follow-up on that? Can you go more into detail as to what are those requirements, and does that include background checks on the current officers that are there?

Mr. BROWNFIELD. That is where we are headed. But I am going to break this out into—briefly, Mr. Chairman, into a couple of different areas.

One is for specific units, what we call the vetted units that are designed to do specific functions. They are intensely vetted and when I say background checks I mean not only do they—is there an assessment of where they are from and what has been their track record while in the police, but also they are then polygraphed on a systematic basis and asked, quite frankly and bluntly, have you engage in activity that is corrupt or illegal and the polygraph will produce an outcome.

Obviously, that is a time-intensive approach that cannot be applied to the entire police force and, quite frankly, in many countries part of the statutory or legal problem you cannot compel a police officer to submit to a polygraph.

You can say you may not join this particular unit if you do not agree to a polygraph—you will not receive the salary stipend and the additional equipment. That you can do but you cannot necessarily compel them to do polygraphing.

So on a more nationwide and national basis, the principle of vetting, which has been worked through, by the way, both in the Plan Colombia experience in Colombia and the—and the Merida Initiative experience in Mexico is to have an office and professionals who will do basic vetting—where did the human come from, talk to the community in terms of what he or she has done in the past, go through the actual personnel and official records of those individuals after they have joined the police force, and, to the extent that there is something there that does not work, you have the extreme option to separate them from the police force.

A less extreme option: Move them into other areas in the police that do not necessarily make them as attractive to those who wish to purchase their services because they are not in an area where they can influence. In other words, put them in some place where they are not in direct engagement with the community.

Mr. DUNCAN. I thank the gentlelady. Her time is expired. And the Chair will now recognize the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Yoho, for 5 minutes.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, panelists, for being here.

Lieutenant General Tovo, I appreciate the service to your country and everything you guys are doing in the Southern Command.

I know people personally that are in the Coast Guard in the south Florida area and I hear stories of what they go through and I commend you for what you guys are doing.

And I hear a resounding theme over and over again from everybody that has been up there—talking about the corruption in countries in Central and South America, and I think sometimes we can maybe even look at our own Government—not to point fingers at anybody without pointing at us.

Saying that, with so much corruption in Latin American governments and the police forces, what is your recommendation in working effectively through the corruption in order to get the results we want? Because what I am hearing from you, Ambassador Brownfield, is that we need to ask for a minimum pay for the police officers in their country.

But I am looking here in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that we have given—not we, the American taxpayers, has given the equivalent of $23.6 billion—$23.6 billion and we have to tell them how much to pay their police officer?

What in the heck have we been doing since 1946, and why do not the governments of those countries want the desire to fix that problem? And again, I shared this story—my mom wanted me to play the piano. I didn't want to play the piano and I sat down there to take lessons, and I still don't know how to play the piano.

At what point and what do you do to make them want to do that or we walk away and get stronger on our border security? And I want to talk to all of you about border security.

I would just like to hear what else do we need to do to get the message across that we are not playing?

Mr. BROWNFIELD. Let me start with that, Congressman.

Mr. YOHO. And I apologize for my tone. I am generally calm.

Mr. BROWNFIELD. Not to worry. There is nothing that excites me more than an appropriately warm conversation. First, I would suggest to you that we are—as I have said a couple of times before, we are dealing with an issue that is now embedded in culture, society and——

Mr. YOHO. Exactly.

Mr. BROWNFIELD [continuing]. Communities for decades. We are not talking about a problem that started last year or the year before last. We are talking about a situation that has endured probably for more than 100 years.

Mr. YOHO. Let me interject here, because since 1971 when the infamous War on Drugs was announced by President Nixon we have spent about $2 trillion, again, of the American taxpayers' money. I want results. You know, I want—go ahead.

Mr. BROWNFIELD. And I will—I will suggest to you two quick thoughts and then I will let other jump into this as well. You are absolutely correct that if we cannot get something as fundamental

agreed to by governments such as paying a basic salary that is sufficient so that the individual member of the police does not need to go into corruption and accept bribes in order to survive, then we should not be walking down this road for enhanced expenditures.

Mr. YOHO. I agree.

Mr. BROWNFIELD. But what I believe this means is this is one of the—I won't even call it an ask—one of the requirements that we will impose before we would expect you all, the United States Congress, to respond positively to a substantially enhanced or increased support for Central America.

That is a given. And by the way, I have heard this from several other people as well. It is an absolutely fair point.

That said, ladies and gentlemen, may I suggest to you as well that we are dealing with the following situation. We have a world that we want to get to and we call can define that. Call it nirvana, call it whatever you wish. We know, roughly, what we want in Central America.

We have the world that we currently live in, which is today's world on the 30th of April, 2015. Our challenge—mine from the executive branch, yours from the legislative branch—is to figure what we can do, what programs, what resources, what policies, what strategies that will deal with the world in which we currently are that will move us into the direction of the world that we want.

Because if you are telling me we should not do any of this until we have reached that more perfect world, I am afraid you are condemning us to get nothing accomplished.

Mr. YOHO. Well, you know, saying that I am going to revert to a story my daughter told me when she wanted to go jogging. She was 10 years old and I wanted to jog with her. We got up at 6 o'clock—well, she got up at 6 o'clock and I didn't.

And after about 5 days of she had to come and wake me up she went out on her own one day. And I said, Katie, how come you didn't wake me up. She said, Dad, if you really wanted to jog you would have been ready.

And I think it is the same thing—that philosophy—and I would like for us to be who we are as a country to go to those countries and say, if you really want our help you will do these things.

And then I don't know at what point you walk away and, certainly, we don't want to walk away and leave a vacuum because when you leave a vacuum somebody will fill that.

I want to switch over to the Southern Command. With our—the announcement of the policy change December 2014 with our policies toward Cuba, have you seen a ramp-up of illegal immigration in the Caribbean Basin when we said we were going to relax our Cuban policy?

General TOVO. Congressman, I would prefer to hand that one over to Secretary Bersin. I think they track the actual numbers, I believe, on——

Mr. YOHO. All right. That will be fine. And again, I wanted to ask you, I know you guys need more cutters and fast response boats, right?

General TOVO. We could certainly put more resources——

Mr. YOHO. About 17 of them, I think, was what I read.

Mr. BERSIN. You are referring to assets of the Coast Guard in the Caribbean?

Mr. YOHO. Right, but I want to know about the increase in immigration—illegal immigration in the Caribbean Basin since President Obama and this administration relaxed—the narrative of relaxing policies to Cuba.

Mr. BERSIN. With respect to migration from Cuba, we have seen an increase. I am not in a position but will supply the actual number in terms of Cuban migrants leaving Cuba on their way to Ecuador and to places in South America.

What we have seen in terms of the Caribbean itself is, since we have the same policy in effect, we will return those that are encountered at sea and, as you know, not do so with those who make it to land.

I cannot give you the specific number that have been encountered since December but we will——

Mr. YOHO. I will help you out here, because I checked, and the increase is 265 percent from December 2014 to the middle of March, and that was tracked through the U.S. Coast Guard and the people I talked to up here.

Mr. BERSIN. The absolute number would also be of help, Congressman, in that respect, because I recognize two and a half times is great but the number, as you know, had fallen to historically low numbers in the preceding years. So I think it would be helpful to get the——

Mr. YOHO. But we saw an uptick is from what I saw. Let me move on. Do I have more time, Mr. Chairman? Yes.

Mr. Bersin, I read a report that said—stated America is known around the world as a country with a global immigration policy of unenforcement. Do you feel this is accurate?

Mr. BERSIN. No, sir.

Mr. YOHO. All right. The report went on to say that if you get to the Southwest border or any border you get in, and if you get in you might get picked up but they are not going to deport you and that you can—the narrative is that you get—that you may get a work permit, you will get free education, free food, and we are seeing that with the people I have talked to.

Mr. BERSIN. No, sir. If you apply for asylum and you are given asylum, then you get those benefits. But you do not walk up to the border and have the right to enter legally and work in the United States. No, sir.

Mr. YOHO. With the President's policy—his policy of the executive amnesty, I will reserve my question and will submit it to you. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DUNCAN. I thank the gentleman. I now recognize the other gentleman from Florida, Mr. DeSantis.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been bouncing around in different hearings so I apologize for not being able to hear your answers to the previous questions.

I was—earlier this week I attended a summit down in Miami with representatives from Latin American countries, people who are also serving in those parliaments and congresses, and we were discussing the Middle East and unifying in support of Israel's secu-

rity and with the situation that is going on there and the discussion, obviously, turned toward the role of Iran.

Of course, in the Middle East they are pursuing a nuclear weapon. They are fomenting jihad in the Gaza Strip. They are fomenting jihad in Yemen, Iraq, in Damascus, and whether they pursue the nuclear weapon it is, obviously, a critical issue.

But we discuss the extent to which Iran is seeking influence in Latin America and I think this is something that is a concern to, I know, the chairman and, certainly, to me.

So General, what can you say about Iran's influence in Latin America?

General TOVO. In an open forum, Congressman, I think we can say that the Iranians have some number of cultural centers——

Mr. DESANTIS. General, is your microphone on?

General TOVO. It indicates that it is on. We can say at this level of classification that the Iranians have some level of cultural centers. They have seen an increase over the last decade in number of Embassies and outreach.

As far as their level of political or diplomatic influence, I defer to the State Department to evaluate, and as far as their intentions in what I would call network development, I think we would have to do that in a classified setting.

Mr. DESANTIS. Okay. And the same question, again, what you can say, if anything, in an open forum about Sunni Islamists in the Western Hemisphere—in Latin America.

General TOVO. I think we can, in this forum, safely say we have seen—you have probably seen reported in open source that some number of personnel from this region have gone to fight jihad—have been radicalized largely through Internet and other means much like we have seen out of our own country and out of Western Europe.

It is certainly not near the numbers that we have seen out of other parts of the world, certainly out of Europe and North Africa.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank God. So, I—and I have—I know you have discussed this in closed forums that I have been at and I appreciate that.

But I—and we obviously want to respect that, what is open source. I think it is important to educate the American people on that because I know a lot of people are concerned.

The child exploitation issue, and this may be for the State Department—last year, when they had the border crisis, I mean, you had a situation where minors were being sent with these human smugglers, with the drug cartels.

You had a situation where many of them were being abused, and it was just a really awful situation that some of these kids were put through, that I know there was a lot of concern that the incentives that they were seeing out of our own Government was that hey, as long as you are under 18 if you get here you are never going to be sent back.

And, obviously, I think, to see that policy outcome where you have people being—paying these criminal groups to smuggle people in that, clearly, is not something that we wanted to do. So what is the status of the cartels and the smugglers right now and, you know, have we seen a significant decline from last summer?

Mr. HAMILTON. Thank you, Congressman. Of course, we completely agree that the level of sexual and gender violence in the region itself is appalling and needs to change.

The level of sexual violence on the dangerous journey was equally appalling. In fact, we had numerous stories of young girls using birth control in order to get through the journey, knowing very well or anticipating what they might face on the way. Those stories were shocking to every normal person.

The criminal networks had, obviously, misled a vast number of children that they would be allowed to stay in this country, and that is something that they did repeatedly and successfully for a short period of time.

It was our determination that criminal networks do not control U.S. immigration policy that led us to crack down in the way that we did. The messages that we went were not just about dangerous journeys which, frankly, the people in the region know very well, as their precautions would suggest.

But, frankly, they were being misled by people who were just wanting to steal their money. This is a process that involves legal immigration and only legal emigration. So we are very, very aware of this.

The strategy that we are imposing includes significant elements that are designed to protect women and children in the region both in their own countries and in any other—any other way.

The desire that we have is that people in those countries build for themselves what they consider to be the Salvadoran dream or the Guatemalan dream or the Honduran dream and not seek to take advantage of their impression of the American dream, and I think USAID and other entities have specific programs that address gender and sexual violence against girls which, again, is a critical issue.

Mr. DESANTIS. Great. Yes. No, look, I think that this is something that is really heartbreaking when you really start to study it and, you know, some of these poor kids are just put through terrible, terrible circumstances and I think that we have to be foursquare our policy 100 percent—has got to disincentivize anyone from putting themselves in that position but, obviously, also be very hard about people who would—who would take advantage of them.

I mean, some of these groups are just the worst of the worst. So I thank you for that and I yield back.

Mr. DUNCAN. I want to thank the gentleman for bringing up the Iranian threat in the Western Hemisphere, something that I have been following.

We did have a classified briefing last week, wasn't it, General? And I apologize that you weren't able to make that. I would ask the committee to try to facilitate maybe something in a little more intimate setting than what we had, even if General Kelly can't come to brief some of the members, because I think the threat is worth it.

I am going to skip myself for just a minute. The ranking member has a meeting in his office so I am going to recognize him for a last question.

Mr. SIRES. I just want to thank you for being here and I also want to thank the former chairman for his kind words, and the current chairman. It is a pleasure to work with people like I have on my right and my left. Thank you very much.

Mr. DUNCAN. I thank the gentleman—a great ranking member and I am glad for the working relationship we have.

Just want to get into another round, and if the members want to stay—the gentleman from Florida, if you want to change out I am going to come back around if you would like to continue. I apologize for cutting you off.

But I will recognize myself for another round of questions and I will direct this to the State Department. What we saw out of Plan Colombia was the original time frame and then an extension of that, because it was working, right?

How many years of elevated levels of U.S. assistance will be necessary to sufficiently improve the socioeconomic and security conditions in Central America?

Mr. HAMILTON. Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. DUNCAN. Look into your crystal ball and tell—no.

Mr. HAMILTON. A terrific question. This situation did not arise overnight, clearly—two decades or even longer to fester in the way that it has and we need to understand that, too.

The Alliance for Prosperity plan that the Northern Triangle has developed has a 5-year horizon and a $20-billion price tag which—70 to 80 percent of which they intend to invest themselves either directly or through the private sector.

So they have a 5-year horizon. That, frankly, may be slightly optimistic.

I understand that in our strategy process we are looking at, I anticipate, a 3-year plan to try to help them and leverage U.S. assistance to achieve the results we are all seeking.

You are quite right. Plan Colombia started in a certain way and expanded. It was heavily focused on security, for obvious reasons, in that country.

But it, clearly, also included economic development assistance pretty much immediately after the FARC had been cleared out of areas.

The FARC had often been cleared out but come back again and local people were very unclear as to who they should support our ally with because the state was never present. It was only when the state came in behind the military with doctors and clinics and teachers and presence of the state——

Mr. DUNCAN. But it was broader than just the FARC. It was the cartels and drug trafficking and all of that, pushing everything to the border, dropping down their percentages of drug production and what not.

Mr. HAMILTON. That is right. One of Colombia's tremendous advantages was they already had a tremendously deep institutional quality.

They had politicians, attorney general's office, Congress, Supreme Court—all of which were very mature, very democratic and very well organized. Those are things that Central America does not currently have and need to be built in order for them to take advantage of the types of things that we are talking about.

So there are some similarities with Plan Colombia but some significant differences. You have functionally state weakness in the Northern Triangle that Colombia did not suffer from.

Colombia also had a very much larger economy, able to invest much more much more quickly and a large territory where the economy could continue even while the war was being fought with the cartels and with the FARC.

So they have many more advantages and, frankly, as well united political leadership over two consecutive terms of President Uribe.

In the Northern Triangle, it is much harder because each of those countries has a divided legislature and it is harder to cobble together agreement to move forward. But they are doing a much, much better job than they have ever done.

Mr. DUNCAN. But wouldn't you agree they have got a geographical advantage because the countries are a lot smaller?

Mr. HAMILTON. They do. El Salvador and Honduras are—well, Salvador is small. Honduras is quite large and Guatemala is very large as well. They also have a lot of——

Mr. DUNCAN. I guess compared to Colombia, I guess. Yes.

Mr. HAMILTON. Yes, absolutely yes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Okay.

Mr. BROWNFIELD. Mr. Chairman, may I? Because I have probably delivered 20 speeches.

Mr. DUNCAN. And I am coming to you with the next question. Go ahead.

Mr. BROWNFIELD. I will wait patiently because I do have some Plan Colombia observations which, in fact, would be applicable, I believe, to Central America. But let us see if——

Mr. DUNCAN. I am coming right now. So I would like you to answer that, Mr. Ambassador, but I would also like you to answer what would be the likely outcome if Congress failed to appropriate this money for the region?

If we didn't give them $1 billion, what—so incorporate in your comments what would the likely outcome be?

Mr. BROWNFIELD. In fact, let me—it is a smooth conclusion to what I want to suggest to you. You and I have both been involved in Colombia—in Plan Colombia for a number of years, in my case since 1999.

Some quick lessons learned—one was you are going to have to adjust along the way. As you correctly noted, we started out in Plan Colombia as a 5-year plan and we basically stretched it out for about 12 to 14 years before we declared that we were done.

Second, sequencing—as Scott has mentioned, we started security heavy with the expectation that we would eventually move from security into economic development. We did, although it ended up taking longer to do it than we had originally thought.

Third, political will and buy-in by the host government—as Scott points out, we got either three or six or seven governments that we need to work with in Central America, more complicated than just one in Colombia.

Third, fourth—fourth, holistic, meaning you are trying to address all of the issues, not just security, and you are trying to bring in all the parts of the United States Government to work the issue.

Sixth, connections to the United States—if we cannot convince the American people that there is a direct impact on them in terms of what is happening in this country, you, the representatives of the American people and the controllers of the purse strings, are not going to move the money down there.

Monitoring and evaluation—as you have correctly noted, we have to be able to report on what is actually happening in these programs and in these countries.

Finally, end gage and shut down—you almost never have a good plan. You know you are going to say we are going to end it when we have accomplished the mission. That doesn't work.

At some point—at the 5-year mark, the 7-year mark, the 10-year mark, you have to be in a position to say to you, the members of this committee, here is when we are going to conclude this exercise and go to some sort of sustainable program.

Now, what is the impact? If, previously in Colombia, now in Central America, we don't, in a sense, perform these programs, implement these programs, and implement this strategy—we kind of have seen the impact.

I would argue that is what we were watching last July, August, September on our Southwest border. But you will see others as well. The cartels that do not just move drugs—they also move people, firearms, counterfeit goods and basically anything that will produce income—will have a better base from which they can operate.

We will see more gang activity in Central America that is tied, literally and directly, to gangs in the United States of America. The truth of the matter is what the impact is is a very easy argument for me to make.

The question that you legitimately ask is so how much—how much is the right amount of money, what are the commitments we have received from these governments in advance and can I give you a reasonable time line in which you are going to see the results. That is what we are correctly discussing today and will continue, I suspect, for months to come.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you for that.

The last thing I will say, and I will go to the new ranking member, but in response to something Mr. Yoho said, when I was in Panama we met with President Varela and he said that they have an issue of police officers who are making $300 a month.

It is very difficult to stop the corruption when that same officer could either look the other way and be involved in taking a bribe or whatever of an extraordinary amount of money to be able to provide for his family and what not. That is a dynamic that we can't overcome.

I don't think we can provide enough money to pay those officers. I don't know that the countries can. It is a—those officers have to come to the mind-set that they are doing what is right for their country and ultimately for their family and their children by ending this corruption and not taking the bribe to provide financially but understanding a broader picture that they are improving their country for all Hondurans or all Guatemalans by not taking that bribe and actually enforcing the rule of law and providing stability and that is a cultural mind-set.

And I hope that the programs that we are talking about are programs that will do that. I also heard that understanding from President Hernandez and that understanding from President Molina.

So at the top that understanding is there. It has got to get down to the police officers and it has got to get down to the judges. Because we see it in Mexico as well.

When we visit with the foreign ministers there and we visit with the civil society there, bribery and other things, and understanding that you are not going to have to pay a bribe to get out of jail—that the judge is actually going to look at the facts of the case and make a decision to either rule you guilty or innocent and get you out of jail in a timely manner.

So, you know, it is much broader than just money, and I said that to the President at the trilateral meeting with the Northern Triangle countries. So we need to continue that.

I want to applaud you for this hearing and the information you provided. This isn't the last one we are going to have, unfortunately. I will turn to Ms. Torres.

Ms. TORRES. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and just a quick comment on this salary issue because it is—I think it is such an important issue that we need to address to professionalize these police departments.

Just quick math—in El Salvador, it is $5 million investment to bring them to that $600 median income level. I don't think that is, you know, a big, big number and what we could get out of that is so important.

While we were in El Salvador and Honduras, we had an opportunity to visit with the Ambassadors there in El Salvador. She is wonderful. You know, she—I don't think we could have chosen a better person. She is in the trenches visiting and talking to civil society, to community groups, and I was—I was very happy to hear about the work that she is doing there.

But from your perspective, are they prepared—do they have the personnel that it will take to ensure that we are able to process these resources and that we are able to follow the money?

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Thank you, Congresswoman, for that question and statement. We believe that we are prepared. We are not looking necessarily to put additional funding through any governments and so we will be working with the partners that we currently have who are delivering the kinds of results that we need and building up our stable of partners in the region.

It is really a matter of scaling out the numbers of partners that we have and we have the mechanisms in place and the systems in place to do that. So we believe we have the capacity to absorb this and to do that well.

Ms. TORRES. So does that mean scaling up current programs that have proven to be successful?

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Yes. We would start with current programs that have proven to be successful in the security realm, in the governance realm and in the prosperity realm, and in the interim design new programs.

But we know the partners out there who would run those kinds of programs. So we believe we have enough partners to run current programs and to scale those but also to manage our new programs.

Ms. TORRES. Okay. So the Embassies are staffed to that level?

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. We are staffing up our missions as USAID to do that—to be required to do that.

Ms. TORRES. Going back to a question I asked earlier, I don't know if I heard the answer to it, and do—are there resources to help victims of crime, to help them relocate victims of crime within these three countries?

I am talking about shelters that are secured. So if a victim of domestic violence or a child victim of, you know, sexual abuse is needing to have—to be protected from their abusers, where do they—right now, I don't know where they go and right now they can't go to their government and say, you know, this is a crime that I am reporting—can you help me relocate to another place where I am safe other than the U.S.?

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Currently, USAID does support centers specifically for women and children in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. We can get you details on how many and how many victims we believe they reach.

Ms. TORRES. I would like to have some information on that because we heard just the opposite in these two countries.

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Will do.

Mr. DUNCAN. I thank the gentlelady. I will turn to Mr. Yoho from Florida.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And just for Ms. Torres and you, Mr. Chairman, you were talking about the money and you said $5 million in El Salvador would solve that problem.

Think of the money we have spent—$2 trillion since '71, $23 billion in equivalence that we have spent. I mean, that would pay a lot of military and law enforcement, and that may be a better way to solve this problem.

I want to direct this question to Mr. Hamilton. Since this hearing is on the billion-dollar request proposed for Central America, where is that $1 billion coming from? What pot of money is that coming from? Do you know?

Mr. HAMILTON. About half of the funding request is for development assistance and economic support.

Mr. YOHO. No. But where is it coming from? Is it coming out of USAID or maybe one of the Embassies is getting shorted or—do you know where the money is coming from that the President requested? Is it allocated? I mean, has it been authorized?

Mr. DUNCAN. That is a great question. We haven't appropriated the money yet and if the—I would say—I think that is a great question for State. Where is this money coming from?

Mr. YOHO. I would like if we can get them to submit where—because it says here are there Embassies or USAID missions in the regions that will experience budget cuts so that the money can be redirected to fund the $1-billion extra increase.

Mr. BROWNFIELD. I think I can answer that question for you.

Mr. YOHO. Yes, sir.

Mr. BROWNFIELD. It is—it is the President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2016. It has gone up to the United States Congress. The breakout is roughly the way Mr. Hamilton was describing it. The INCL money, which would be that which would be—we would reallocate it or appropriate it to INL that is $205 million. I believe there is some FMF, which is—which is foreign military funds and assistance. But the overwhelming majority and I believe it is somewhere in the vicinity of $600 million, would be ESF and development assistance. It is not taken from anywhere. At the end of the day, it will be the United States Congress' determination, a plus up or not plus up.

Mr. DUNCAN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. YOHO. Yes, sir.

Mr. DUNCAN. I guess what he is asking are any programs—existing programs now going to suffer——

Mr. YOHO. Right. That is what——

Mr. DUNCAN [continuing]. From a shifting of resources or is this going to be a new appropriation where status quo for all the existing programs an additional amount of money.

Mr. YOHO. That is kind of—is somebody going to be shorted in the end and if you don't have time to—you know, if you have to check into that, that is fine.

I want to kind of redirect to Lieutenant General Tovo. To what extent was the Department of Defense involved in developing the new Central America strategy?

General TOVO. The initial strategy we were provided input through the OSD and then since that time we have been very actively involved in the sub-IPC process ongoing that really has focused on how do we execute—how do we, you know, kind of take the broad strategy that has been developed and get into the programmatics. So we have been involved in all of the various meetings and conferences.

Mr. YOHO. Okay.

General TOVO. And then down on—additionally, of course, we are down with our partners helping them develop and implement their strategies and so we, you know, I think are involved kind of both sides of this process.

Mr. YOHO. Okay. Thank you. And that $1 billion—the extra request is from the administration, how much of that is marked for the Department of Defense?

You know, I read a report and I think you guys are short 17 rapid response boats plus you are looking at decommissioning the 50-year-old boats from the Navy. I don't know if that is a wise investment.

General TOVO. Congressman, at this point my understanding of the $1-billion proposal is that that is primarily going to State for the programs as discussed with the idea that we have already got money going against—sufficient money going against the security line of effort, and that most of the money would go into governance and prosperity lines of effort.

But I think I will turn it back to State. They have got the—I think that Mr. Hamilton is on the money.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. HAMILTON. Yes, sir. There is a significant amount going to foreign military finance and IMET programs, which we consider to be especially effective in ensuring the integrity and professionalization of the regional militaries and that is very much part of—DoD manages that, of course, on behalf of the State Department. The strategy also includes the very significant plus-up on security lines of action which are consistent with a lot of the things that General Tovo and SOUTHCOM have been doing.

In addition, it includes the governance and prosperity angles that, in our judgement, sustain the security gains and, again, very consistent with General Kelly's recent posture statement on the importance of those factors in ensuring that any gains we make are sustainable over time. We talk a lot to business men and women as well and we ask them what do you need.

Their answer to us is, we can buy physical security—we do that all the time. It is a cost of doing business for us. What we cannot buy is the rule of law and juridical security and that is what we implore you to try to ensure.

Mr. YOHO. And that is what I think we really need to work on because we can throw as much money at this problem as you want, but if we don't get to the basic problem we are treating symptoms when we need to get to the underlying diagnosis and cause of that.

Mr. Chairman, I had one quick—one other question. With the problem we have in our country with drug use, do we need to refocus attention on our drug laws, maybe decriminalizing some things and look at reducing the threat or the penalty on these things? Say, marijuana, for one—it keeps coming up in meetings I go to. People say if you decriminalize it it gets rid of the foreign trade of marijuana coming into our country. And I am certainly not advocating that. I am looking to gather information.

And the other thing—instead of having the War on Drugs, refocus on the war on gangs, both the domestic and foreign, in this country, and maybe it is time for an Eliot Ness moment from the old days and put more emphasis on running these people out of this country, and if you are going to do that you are not doing it here in our country. Just thoughts? If I have time, sir. Anybody want to weigh in on that?

Mr. BROWNFIELD. Would the chairman like to have a response? I don't see anyone else leaping for the microphone at this particular point in time.

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I would remind you that we all have kind of the international or outward looking responsibility.

We are not those that are responsible for domestic law and domestic policy. So therefore, in a sense, we don't have a right to give you a formal position on domestic drug law modifications.

That said, I will offer you 36½ years of experience in this business in terms of the argument that legalization somehow is going to solve this problem. And not to use too diplomatic an expression, I think that is just so much horse manure to suggest that one single step is going to make the entire problem go away.

That has not been our experience overseas. That has not been our experience here. It is quite clear that in this country as well as in the entire world there is a debate, a discussion going on in

terms of how we should modify, adjust, change our drug control policies and strategies.

That is fine. I think everyone on this side of the table agrees with that. But we should perhaps avoid these simplistic suggestions that if we just arrest everyone who uses it—that is one extreme—or legalize the entire process—that is the other extreme—that will solve the problem.

The solution must be found somewhere in between those two extremes and I would like to think that at some point in time we will move in the direction of those solutions. Internationally, we have a U.N. General Assembly special session scheduled for April of next year where the entire world is going to address these issues.

We have laid out our own position which leaves open possibilities to discuss public health as an issue, criminal justice reform as an issue, legitimate issues to discuss, but perhaps veering away from the more simple solutions to this problem.

Mr. YOHO. Well, I know there is not a simple solution but I think a redirection of where we are going. And have you seen an increase of drugs into the Caribbean from, say, South America, of all types?

Mr. BROWNFIELD. Yes, but with the following caveat. First, dating it and I would date it from about 2007, 2008, Congress, and second, the direction in which the stuff is moving, and this is to a certain extent a little noticed but fairly important point.

The product that is moving from South America is decreasingly coming to the United States of America. Cocaine consumption in the United States of America since 2007 has dropped nearly 50—that is 5–0 percent.

So what we are seeing in terms of increased movement through the Caribbean is actually movement that is headed east and it is on its way to new markets either directly in western Europe or via western Africa on its way to western Europe.

Now, this isn't particularly good news for the Caribbean. They are still victims of criminal drug trafficking through the region. But it actually is not bad news for us.

Mr. DUNCAN. And I agree with you. The gentleman's time has expired. We heard that when we were in Peru. We heard that when we were in Colombia. The gentleman from Florida was on the CODEL Royce with us where we heard some of that as well.

I want to remind the gentleman from Florida some of the things we heard in Mexico and Colombia and Peru about the rule of law and the need for getting that graft and corruption and bribery issue out and why civil society down in Mexico is so important.

So we have put the witnesses through an extraordinary amount of time today due to votes and all that.

Mr. YOHO. We did. Thank you.

Mr. DUNCAN. I want to thank you guys for—and ladies for being here. This is probably the first of several hearings we are going to have on this issue because we anticipate, as we heard today, an increase in unaccompanied children.

This problem isn't going away overnight. I agree with Ambassador Brownfield that this is a long-term issue—that it needs a decade-old mind-set on Members of Congress but also those on the ground that are working on this. So I agree with you on that as well.

I want to thank, again, the general for your service to the country and our staff—committee staff—will be in touch with SOUTHCOM about the classified briefing maybe. But I am going to get commitments from members to be there. I am not going to waste your time.

I am going to make sure that they have a commitment to come because the briefing is so important because it is something that I have been following, as you know, for a very long time.

So I want to thank the panelists, all of you, and with that we will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:43 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Record

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere
Jeff Duncan (R-SC), Chairman

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held by the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Thursday, April 30, 2015

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

SUBJECT: Migration Crisis: Oversight of the Administration's Proposed $1 Billion Request for Central America

WITNESSES:

Mr. Scott Hamilton
Central America Director
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
U.S. Department of State

The Honorable William R. Brownfield
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
U.S. Department of State

Ms. Paloma Adams-Allen
Deputy Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
U.S. Agency for International Development

The Honorable Alan D. Bersin
Assistant Secretary and Chief Diplomatic Officer
Office of Policy
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Lieutenant General Kenneth E. Tovo, USA
Military Deputy Commander
U.S. Southern Command
U.S. Department of Defense

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *Western Hemisphere* HEARING

Day *Thursday* Date *April 30, 2015* Room *Rayburn 2172*

Starting Time *2:00 p.m.* Ending Time *4:33 p.m*

Recesses *1* (*2:37* to *3:44*) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Jeff Duncan

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☑
Executive (closed) Session ☐
Televised ☑

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☑
Stenographic Record ☑

TITLE OF HEARING:

"Migration Crisis: Oversight of the Administration's Proposed $1 Billion Request for Central America"

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Reps. Duncan, Ros-Lehtinen, Salmon, DeSantis, Sires, Castro

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

Torres

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☑ **No** ☐
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *4:33 p.m.*

Mark A. Walker
Subcommittee Staff Director