

**Remarks by  
General Victor Renuart  
Commander of NORAD and NORTHCOM**

**The 2008 SOUTH Confernece  
Miami, Florida  
8 October 2008**

That's a pretty good warmup, what he said, okay. Welcome to Stavridis and Renuart and Associates. I'm still in litigation, it should be Renuart and Stavridis and Associates. But we'll work through that. Kent and John thanks so much for FISSEA's gracious support and sponsorship of this event. Jim, my friend, thanks so much for inviting me to come down here and share a few thoughts with you this morning. It's really a treat to be here and great to see some familiar faces. And you guys back in the back there better drink a little more coffee. Your heads are starting to sag a little bit. I'm sure it wasn't General Spears' opening comments that set you off.

Truly, a lot of the things that Glenn talked about are critical to the core of this. Hi Joe, come on in anytime, you know, we'd like to have you [laughter from audience]. Good to see you.

Good morning. Let me try to put a couple of additional perspectives to this. Glenn was exactly correct when he said that this challenge, this problem, this scourge affects us all. Today, three and a half kids out of ten who graduate from the high schools of our country, three and a half, are qualified to wear the uniform of our nation. Three and a half. Now, some of those are eliminated for academic reasons. Some are eliminated for legal reasons. They have been involved with the law in a way that makes them ineligible. Some of them are eliminated for physical reasons. But the bottom line is our recruiting pool, if you will; our competition pool is about three and a half kids out of ten graduates. That same pool is a pool that you're hoping will grow into your future employers across industry. That same pool is the pool that you hope will become leaders in our communities. That same pool is the pool that we hope will carry our nation through not only these economic tough times but the challenges of our future. So there's a vested interest here in trying to find ways, if nothing else to grow that pool of resources, those great American minds and hearts to take our places in the future. And if we don't partner together to ensure that that element of challenge to young men and women, which is drug trafficking and the addictions and the challenges that go along with them; if we don't work hard to eliminate that in our lifetime, then that number is not going to get bigger. It's going to get smaller. So, from purely a practical perspective, it's in our vested interest.

Now the other thing is, this isn't like somebody else's people out there that we're talking about. These are our own children. These are our own coworkers. These are our own family members. And so it's again, critical to us that we address this issue in a way that is aggressive.

Some will say, as Glenn mentioned, that 'it's the demand problem, stupid'. And it is. But we've got to be as good at the supply end of the chain as we need to be at the demand end of the chain. So it's an investment issue on all parts. It's an investment issue for the future of business. It's an investment issue for the future of government. It's an investment issue for the future of our families. This topic is too important to not fill every seat in every room across our country when we discuss it.

Now I chuckled a little bit when I started to stay, you know, Stavridis and Renuart and Associates. Jim and I have been friends for a while. We are recovering addicts as a matter of fact. We both served as senior military assistants to the Secretary of Defense. So, you share the ups and downs of that job in a kind of unique way. But also in a unique way, we've had a chance to watch the tinkering of government as it takes on challenges like this. We've had a chance to look at the interaction of government agencies. We've had a chance to understand the frustrations of some who say DOD should do more; DOD should do less; DOD should pay for this; DOD shouldn't pay for that. Those other folks, whoever you all are, it's nice to see Charlie Elm here, my good friend. We partner hard with DHS and others. There is a dynamic that's occurring in our country today that is trying to come to grips with how we put the best effort, the best challenge, the best capability in place to combat this huge problem that we have. Not just in our country but in our hemisphere. And Jim and I have talked about how we partner best. And I'll talk a little bit about that later on in my comments. How we partner best to put pressure on the full chain of supply to demand.

Now, since you all are guests in my area of focus, I thought I might spend half a second talking a little bit about who we are and what we do. And I'm not near a good enough speaker. You are going to hear Jim and he will dazzle you with his ability to speak in public. I'm not near good enough to do that. So I'm going to fall back on the simple fighter pilot thing and run a short clip to give you just a sense of who we are and what we do everyday. And if technology will serve me, I think we will cue up that video. Ready to go.[start of video]

Well I want to spend a couple of minutes amplifying a little of that video with you. In there, you saw really the core of what your Department of Defense is designed to do everyday and that is as we saw on the trailer, guarding what you value most. In this hemisphere, it is ensuring that the threats that we have to our homeland are recognized, deterred, and defeated where we can. In case of the challenges we face with narco-trafficking and narco-terrorism, it is getting at the supply and the demand problem that we see. It's a global problem for sure, but it is one that has its roots in the hemisphere in which we live to a large degree. It's a combined challenge not just for two combatant commands of the Department of Defense, but for almost every agency of our government. Because whether you're involved in it in an enforcement or an intelligence or a treatment process, it effects you with your workforce. All of us have to combine together to combat them. It's a challenge also that is a stack. Today's solution against a particular element of the chain will be a new requirement for tomorrow because the drug trafficking organizations in our hemisphere and around the world are more adaptive than institutions of government. So for every success we see, we see a new challenge.

In SOUTHCOM, JIATF-South, the team that works this in Jim's organization sees this everyday. Supply moves from air, to sea, to land and back again almost as quickly as we respond. So, we have to use this thing, in this election season commonly referred to as a whole of government approach. Now we'll go through a transition of government for sure. And I don't know where you all are, you know, voting is a private thing. But I can tell you that this topic has not raised itself high enough on either candidate's radar scope yet and we have to try to help that along. We, the military, the law enforcement, the intelligence agencies of our nation, have to help move it along. Not that it should be our first priority necessarily. But it has to have a high enough priority that we continue to put the resources against it to squash demand as well as squash supply. So with all that in mind, let's run through a few thoughts and then hopefully we'll have a chance to answer some questions that might come up.

Glenn did a great job of talking about some of the statistics that we have. I think the real challenge is that this problem has destabilized democratic and friendly governments in our hemisphere for over twenty years. It undermines our own national policy, our foreign policy objectives but it undermines those of developing democracies in our hemisphere. And interestingly as you look at the history of this hemisphere, you've seen democracy progress maybe more rapidly in our hemisphere than it has anywhere else in the world. To see that turnaround and regress would be unfortunate. And in the places where we do see some of that occurring we talked about the Indian rich countries. Bolivia today is going through an internal meltdown of sorts and there is one of those supplying countries in our hemisphere. Border security is a challenge for us. The southern border is 1,900 plus miles long and the northern border the longest non-militarized border in the world, 5,500 miles long between the U.S. and Canada. These are challenges for the countries in our hemisphere to work such that we can control access to our countries yet allow the free trade that is really the hallmark of the relationships we have between our number two and number one trading partners in the world. But we have to find a way to slow the flow of illicit trade. Now, I'll talk a little bit later. It's not just drugs coming into our country. It's money going out. It's weapons going out. And we have to work all of those simultaneously. The southwest border is really the principal corridor for moving drugs into the U.S. by land and they come there in various fashions; in the maritime domain, in the air domain, and in the land domain. Trans-shipment into the northern area of New Mexico and then move across the southwest border via a variety of means. Several hundred tons of cocaine flow from South America through Central America, the Caribbean and Mexican transient zones every year. And in addition, we have an increasing challenge of high potency marijuana that hash crop that Gen. Spear had mentioned earlier coming to us from Canada from other places around the world and we are beginning to see increases in the flow of drugs especially marijuana coming in the northwest in particular. This past year, as Glenn talked about, 6.9 million people 12 and older categorized with abuse. 19.9 Americans are users. Prescription drug abuse is on the rise. Trafficking organizations Mexican, Columbia and others are becoming more violent and as Glenn said, while you should not overplay it, drug trafficking, illicit trade provides seams and gaps. And those seams and gaps can be used by those who would try to infiltrate our country for other purposes. And we have to be vigilant to that. Violence is increased along the

southwest border and we've begun to see circumstances where drug trafficking organizations are challenging our U.S. law enforcement efforts along the border. Drug trafficking organizations are becoming more sophisticated, more violent, and more efficient in their military operations. Squad and platoon and company like activities are beginning to be the norm for some of the particularly violent Mexican drug enforcement, drug trafficking organizations.

I mentioned weapons flow, the ATF and I know we have some representatives here but they are seeing increasing drug trade. I'm sorry gun trade has seen that become more involved in the southern portions of California for example. The Los Angeles ATF agents state that they think that gun trade and drug cartels are beginning to mix in with our southern California gangs. The ATF estimates 95 percent of weapons in Mexico are American made. Now there is some disputed information on that. They may be knockoffs that come from other countries. But I've looked at the captured weapons in New Mexico and they look a lot like the things that our soldiers used to carry just a few years ago. We're seeing increased numbers of heavy weapons, grenade launchers, .50 caliber machine guns and the like being moved into Mexico to support Mexican drug trafficking organizations.

So we got to get after both the drug problem as well as in the U.S. begin to support increased efforts against weapons trade going outside our borders. Not just to Mexico but in a variety of ways. A couple of the weapons caches that I observed when you begin to do the forensics on them, you find that they were part of a foreign military sales agreement years ago that have moved through three or four or five different suppliers to end up in Mexico in the hands of Mexican narco-terrorist organizations. And so, it's an international problem that we have to collaborate with and as we conduct our foreign military assistance, we have to also ensure that the support we provide, important support that we provide to our friends and partners is not misused in some fashion later on down the road.

We talked a lot about the Mexican drug trafficking challenge. It is a strategic threat to the government of Mexico. President Calderon has been courageous in his effort. He has formed a team of military and civilian leaders who are trying extremely hard to shed the reputation of corruption and to put leaders of character into positions of leadership in those key law enforcement and military organizations. But it is the number one threat to the strategic interest of Mexico. They're in the fight of their life. They need the U.S. support. They've asked for it and we are cooperating with Mexico in ways that are really unprecedented.

This year alone, since the first of January, Mexico has had over 4,000 drug-related deaths. Murders, brutal murders in many cases and that number is rising. We're not even fully through the year. The homeland security mission that we have is affected by that same kind of violence. Our teams work in support of our law enforcement partners along the southwest border. Joint Task Force North is our principal supporting element down there. Much like Admiral Nimmich's team that is JIATF-South, our JTF North is DOD's representative in an interagency effort to stop, quell, to slow the flow of narcotics

across the border. And we're increasingly seeing collaboration from our Mexican military. And their capacity is still growing. They need the assistance and support of our government and fortunately they are getting that in this administration. And as I say, as we transition into the next administration, it will be important for us to keep that focus, that emphasis there and to keep it progressing.

Sadly, this all comes at a cost to us and we've seen now seven federal law enforcement officers killed in the performance of duty along the border. Agent Luis Aguilar is a great example just this year attempting to slow a vehicle suspected of evading security agents and crossing into our territory. He was run down by a suspect driving a Humvee and killed, sadly. That along with a number of instances where we have had CBP and border patrol folks fired on from across the border continues to concern us. All of this is occurring in the, in a region that we believe is our home area. It's an area that ought to be secure and yet the levels of violence you see across the border in Mexico have increased daily.

When I was a young aviator going through flight school in Laredo, you know as a young lieutenant, you don't make a lot of money. And so my wife and I would routinely go across the Nuevo, Laredo to have dinner and enjoy an evening listening to music and strolling the streets of Nuevo, Laredo. It's not a good time to do that today. In fact, all along our border military commanders have restricted travel across the border for their military members and families because of the threat of not so much specifically targeting Americans but rather being captured and caught in this process. Being kidnapped and held for ransom. All of those threats are there and alive and so it's sad when our friends south of the border are held hostage to a large degree because of this violence. And we are kept from experiencing great cultural exchange that I grew up with as a young officer in our armed forces.

So these are and many others are challenges that we have to address in the future and as I said, this can't be done unilaterally. It has to be a collaborative effort. It has to be an interagency effort. It has to be whole government approach. That's hard. Our institutions tend to all be like oil and water. We separate and coagulate in our little world and we tend not to touch borders. We tend not to want to give up so called sovereignty of our institutions. And that is such a narrow naive approach. We have got to create an interagency effort that allows us to get at this problem from supply through the demand.

There are some things that are going on that are pretty good though. And I want to touch on a few of those. One of the areas that Jim and his team work on everyday is the maritime approaches to our country. How do we develop the intelligence on and then interdict the flow of the drug traffic into the country? And you'll see through the course of the program a whole variety of innovative efforts that are underway to get better intelligence, to get better visibility, to share common operating pictures and then to stop those traffickers in their tracks.

We too are interested in the maritime domain. Especially we will talk a little bit about the air domain as well later on. But for us the maritime domain is our Achilles' heel; nineteen great, significant ports, 389 ports of entry. That's not to include all the rivers and waterways that we are fortunate enough to have around our nation that we enjoy and gain access to. But they are all avenues of approach that we have to pay attention to.

We are working hard with our friends in the Coast Guard and with the Merchant Marines who create a ship-rider program that allows us to monitor flow of traffic not only in and out of our major ports but also in the great lakes. I think this has helped us build confidence with our friends in Canada and it's given us the window on the world in portions of our maritime approaches that we have not had in the past. We're sharing operational intelligence in a way that is unprecedented. And I was pleased to have Charlie and his team out with us a couple of months ago to talk about ways that we can continue to expand intelligence sharing, not only between our agencies but to draw in the partners internationally to help them share in that intelligence. CBP is standing up four substantial intelligence centers. We're participating in that. EPIC is the El Paso Intel Center down in El Paso, Texas. Fifteen agencies, DOD being one of those all looking at ways to improve the information that our law enforcement partners gain access to and can take action on. We're trying to expand our Mexican participation there. And slowly but surely we're beginning to see the Mexicans reach out to us in a variety of ways. We will have military liaisons as well as civil law enforcement liaisons from the Mexican government in our headquarters and in our joint task forces.

With Mexico, we have to make long-term investment. The Merida Initiative is a great start. It's a multiyear program that will help us provide training and equipment to support the law enforcement operations and provide technical assistance to our partners. Congress did us a great favor this year in approving 400 million for Mexico, another 65 million for Central America, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. In '09, we'll see another good chunk of investment about 550 million there to go to Mexico as well as the Caribbean and Central America. These kinds of efforts demonstrate a U.S. commitment. They strengthen the resolve of the governments. And they allow for us to provide the kind of training that would help make those efforts successful. We're funding things like nonintrusive inspection, ion scanners, canine units, communications technologies, training- military training, drug enforcement training, helicopter support, community action programs all will come from that Merida Initiative. That needs to continue. This is not a one time investment that allows you to solve the problem. It's the beginning of an enduring effort that I think will have the opportunity to make a big difference.

We've got to also find more innovative ways to interdict the access to our country. I talked about the maritime and SOUTHCOM knows the challenge of semi-submersibles better than anybody in the world. It's a simple technology to some degree but a difficult problem to solve because it's not a visible capability. It is something that can be hidden and masked and they are continuing to work that. In fact, last week or the week before picked up another semi-submersible off the west coast of Mexico.

For me, certainly the maritime is important as well. But also tunnels are an interesting dilemma for us. Right now there are 80 tunnels that we have discovered; 79 along the southwest border and one in the U.S. Canadian border. They're being used by traffickers to move goods into the country to avoid the increased border security measures that we've deployed. And these things are sophisticated. They are not just simple, you know, dig out from under the Stalag and we escape. But rather they are equipped with power, and water, and if you will, care and feed amenities so that they can move large volumes of people and trade through those tunnels. How do we find them? What kinds of technologies are out there that will allow us to improve our ability to detect likely locations of tunnels and actual tunnels? Interestingly we have been able to adapt some of technologies that we put in place in Afghanistan to help find caves in Afghanistan and tunnels in Afghanistan. But we've got to do better with that.

We've got to continue to improve our ability to understand what lives and breaths and works in the maritime domain. AIS is a wonderful tool that we use for visibility on ships around the world, but it limits us to a size of ship that's still pretty substantial. If you're under 300 hundred tons, you don't have file port intentions. And as we have seen throughout the approaches to our country fast boats, small boats, semi-submersibles certainly don't fit into that category. So we've got to improve our ability to sort the friendlies to find the threats in the maritime domain.

We've got to partner with the nations where some of these ships are departing. We've got to partner with industry to ensure that the container industry cannot be used as an easy access point into our nation. And I know that effort is ongoing and working well. I've had a chance to visit seven of our major ports and watched their screening process and their sensor process. And whether it's screening for nuclear or screening chemical or screening for drugs our friends and partners in border and customs are working hard to improve that fence, if you will, that keeps illicit trade from entering our country.

We've got to improve the national drug control strategy. It's a good product. It's a great start. But we've got to make it more directive. We've got to create an environment where actually somebody is in charge and everybody supports. We've got to create the environment where the interagency doesn't turn in circles trying to make a decision and we get nothing. We've got to create a directive policy and strategy that actually puts effort against these challenges that we've talked about.

In the longer term, we've got to continue the funding. And the fiscal year '09 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill goes along that way pretty well. We're going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to help improve border security technology, fund additional border patrol agents, to transfer agents to the places they're needed most, to train new, to find better technologies, and to help our friends in the Coast Guard to increase the size of their response fleet whether it's small or medium boats to be out there and about and being present. All of these are good things but hundreds of millions of dollars is a pretty small number, frankly. It's got to be billions of dollars.

Now, it's tough for a DOD guy to stand up here and say we've got to give everybody else money. But this is a problem for the nation and if we don't solve it, it's our children that are held at risk. And so we've got to commit additional dollars. We've got to partner better with the way we do things. We're involved in a number of joint capabilities and technology demonstrations where we are partnering with the Department of Homeland Security, for example, to increase maritime domain awareness, to increase our ability to project the flow of illicit trade and traffic, and then to commit forces against that, whether they be U.S. military, the Coast Guard from the Department Homeland Security or law enforcement.

We've got to find a way to be better virtual partners if not better real partners. Today we have a great joint task force, the Joint Interagency Anti-Terrorism Task Force South, Key West. We got JTF North and El Paso. CBP has their air and maritime operations center in San Diego. I talked about some other intelligence fusion centers that are coming online. But as in everyone you create a new organization, you create a new seam. How do you bridge those seams? How do we make this virtually transparent so that information that Joe Nimmich sees is the same information that I see, is the same information that Mike Kustonic sees in his air maritime operations center. We've got to find a way to pull those together more and more everyday. Go back to the Renuart and Stavridis and Associates. We're working together to sensitize for example the Mexicans that SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM both have a role to play. Mexico, in addition to having the challenges that it has, is also generating great regional economic and political leadership. It wants to be more involved south as well as north. It has the capability to improve and affect the economy south as well as north. So, we've begun an initiative to include each other as we talk to Mexico in a variety of topics. Mexicans are increasingly open to it and increasingly eager to engage. They've committed. They already have a liaison in JIATF-South and we have them at NORTHCOM. But we want to continue to expand that. So, we'll continue to partner as two military commands but that's just a small piece of this. We need the help of industry and we need the help of other agencies to make this work.

Well, I've ranted well beyond what my appointed time was, but I'd like to just maybe close by asking for your assistance in a couple of areas. Technology is not the whole solution. But many of you represent technologies that are a huge part of the solution. You can argue whether you like fencing or how big and strong you want border security to be. But the reality is, a fence won't work unless it's part of an overall process. Sensors won't work unless they're part of a real presence. Intel doesn't work unless you can apply something against that information. So we need the assistance of industry to help with innovative ways to apply technology to the problem of security of our borders, of detection of traffickers. We need the partnership of the intelligence community to take the information gained from that technology and turn it into something that is actionable. And then we need a partnership between the military and law enforcement agencies to move information to law enforcement and create the opportunity for them to conduct their legal role in defense of our nation.

We've talked about things like maritime domain awareness. We're actively participating there. We've talked about technologies like tunnel detection. Certainly we are sponsoring and actively participating there. But you in industry have smart minds out there who are looking for new and innovative ways to apply their knowledge to the future. And we're sometimes so captured by our vision that we don't think out into the future the way that you can. So it's really important for those of you that are involved in industry to continue to sponsor and develop the kinds of advanced applications that will have great use for us in countering this challenge that we have.

At the same time, our friends in the interagency have to continue to well I'll just say not be defensive. We're defensive. Everyone is defensive a little bit of their own turf. We've got to figure out how to be more collaborative. When I took command at NORTHCOM a year and a half ago or a little more than that, I asked to see the mission statement. And it talked about, you know, deterring and defending, and detecting and all those things that you know when you're in the military you kind of get used to writing down. And I asked two things. First I said, well how do we do what it is we got to deter, because you know, we have a Mother Nature part of our job too that we don't necessarily control. I said how about if we asked ourselves to anticipate a threat. And so we added a word into our mission statement and that's to "anticipate". And when you start to apply that across the spectrum of your operation, you begin to see that it has application not just to Mother Nature but to support the law enforcement, to intelligence analysis of terrorist organizations, and a whole variety of opportunities begin to open up, if you focused on thinking before an event occurs. So we've worked hard on that anticipation role to allow us to be positioned to better support our partners.

The other challenge that I passed to the staff was that if we're going to be successful at supporting and anticipating those threats, we've got to be more collaborative with the partners that we play with. And so we've tried to expand our interagency presence and be more inclusive in the way we collaborate. We took the words "command and control" out of our lexicon. And we replaced them with collaboration and communication, and coordination and integration. And if you approach the problem that way, none of those include a turf battle. None of those include institutional friction. They all include how do we work together to solve a problem. So we've changed the culture a little bit in our world at NORTHCOM. Almost all of our missions involve people who aren't in our military chain of command. They involve organizations who we have to pull in and be part of a community but you don't command or control. So we're changing the way we think about this. And this is something I think we have to do within our, among or interagency partners. We currently have 45 federal organizations that live in our headquarters each day; about 90 individuals from the intelligence agencies, to the analytical community, to the law enforcement community, to the weather community. You name it, TSA, FAA, all live in our headquarters each day. We'll continue to grow that but for us, like for Jim, the interagency is vital to what we do. The partnership of the other elements of government is critical; and a partnership of our international partners is critical. So, we will continue to evolve that collaborative effort and I encourage those of you who represent other departments of government to join us on that journey.

So, I've talked too long. Sorry about that. I tried not to repeat too much of what Glenn said. Hopefully I didn't. And maybe I gave a little bit of an insight of how two commands are partnering in a way that I think is innovative to attack this problem. So what I'd like to do is I think I have a minute or two. I don't know. How am I doing on time, over? I have twenty minutes? Let me hold off there and throw the floor open to questions for you. Please don't hold anything back. I'll pick on anybody.