

**NAVSO FLAG-BREAKING CEREMONY  
MAYPORT, FL  
23 APRIL 04**

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THIS SPECIAL EVENT AND TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY. I ALSO WANT TO THANK ALL OF THOSE INVOLVED FOR WELCOMING USNAVSO TO JACKSONVILLE AND MAYPORT. YOU HAVE OPENED NOT ONLY YOUR ARMS, BUT YOUR HEARTS AND COMMUNITY TO THE MEN, WOMEN AND FAMILIES OF USNAVSO. MAYPORT IS A GREAT NAVAL BASE AND JACKSONVILLE IS A GREAT CITY AND A GREAT NAVY TOWN -- AND IT HAS BEEN FOR OVER 400 YEARS.

FROM 1562 TO 1580, FRENCH AND SPANISH NAVAL EXPEDITIONS FOUGHT OVER THIS AREA BECAUSE THEY RECOGNIZED IT AS A NATURAL PORT IN A STRATEGIC LOCATION – AND IT STILL IS.

MOVING NAVSO TO MAYPORT MAKES PERFECT SENSE. NAVSO IS NOW COLLOCATED WITH MANY OF THE UNITS IT WORKS WITH TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, AND THE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMAND AND CONTROL CAPABILITY WILL MAKE THEM AN EVEN MORE EFFICIENT AND CAPABLE HEADQUARTERS.

I WANT JACKSONVILLE AND MAYPORT TO KNOW THAT YOU'RE BRINGING ABOARD A GREAT UNIT. YOU CAN COUNT ON THE MEN, WOMEN, AND FAMILIES OF NAVSO TO BE GOOD NEIGHBORS. THEY'LL BE YOUR CHILDREN'S LITTLE LEAGUE COACHES. THEY'LL BE THE VOLUNTEERS AT THE SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, MOSQUES AND SYNAGOGUES. THEY'LL MAKE A TREMENDOUS AND POSITIVE IMPACT IN YOUR COMMUNITY. MORE IMPORTANTLY WHAT THEY DO PROFESSIONALLY IMPACTS NOT ONLY THIS COMMUNITY, BUT ALSO OUR COUNTRY, AND THIS ENTIRE HEMISPHERE. USNAVSO IS A SMALL HEADQUARTERS- ONLY 58 PEOPLE- BUT IT'S IMPACT IN DEFENDING AND PROTECTING OUR COUNTRY'S SECURITY INTERESTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IS HUGE.

I BELIEVE THE FUTURE SECURITY AND STABILITY OF LATIN AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN, AND THE UNITED STATES, ARE NOW -- MORE THAN EVER -- LINKED TOGETHER IN A COMMON DESTINY.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IS HOME TO OVER 400 MILLION PEOPLE WHO ARE INEXTRICABLY TIED TO US, BOTH CULTURALLY AND ECONOMICALLY. THE UNITED STATES HAS THE 5<sup>TH</sup> LARGEST SPANISH SPEAKING POPULATION IN THE WORLD. IN 2002, AMERICANS OF HISPANIC DESCENT GREW TO BE THE LARGEST AND FASTEST GROWING MINORITY

IN THE COUNTRY AND ARE HAVING A PROFOUND AND POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON OUR SOCIETY AND CULTURE.

CULTURALLY, IT JUST MAKES SENSE FOR US TO ENGAGE LATIN AMERICA. ECONOMICALLY, WE HAVE NO CHOICE. THE REGION PROVIDES OVER 32% OF OUR IMPORTED OIL, MORE THAN ALL MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES COMBINED. TWO-THIRDS OF THE TRADE THAT PASSES THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL IS ON ITS WAY TO OR COMING FROM THE UNITED STATES. BY THE YEAR 2010, TRADE WITH THE REGION'S COUNTRIES IS EXPECTED TO EXCEED THAT OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY AND JAPAN COMBINED.

I COMMUNICATE THESE FACTS TO A GREAT MANY AUDIENCES BOTH ABROAD AND HERE IN THE STATES. I CAN'T THINK OF ANY PLACE, THOUGH, WHERE THESE FACTS ARE MORE RELEVANT THAN FLORIDA. WITHIN THE UNITED STATES, FLORIDA IS THE SINGLE LARGEST TRADING PARTNER WITH LATIN AMERICA, GARNERING A 43 PERCENT SHARE OF ALL U.S. TRADE WITH THE REGION, AND SELLING THOSE COUNTRIES ALMOST 9 BILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF GOODS ANNUALLY.

SOUTHCOM'S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY – OUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE AMERICAS-- FEATURES IMPORTANT SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATION AS WELL AS THE VITAL PANAMA CANAL AND ACCESS

TO KEY STRATEGIC RESOURCES. BUT THE FORTUNATE FACT THAT THE NATIONS OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE DO NOT THREATEN EACH OTHER MILITARILY MEANS THAT MUCH OF OUR MISSION IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH DAY-TO-DAY ENGAGEMENT AND COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH PARTNER NATIONS INSTEAD OF BY CONVENTIONAL MILITARY AND NAVAL FORCE.

USNAVSO HAS STEPPED UP TO THAT CHALLENGING ROLE AND MAINTAINED THAT DIFFICULT BALANCE. ADMIRAL VINCE SMITH AND HIS STAFF JUGGLE A MIND-BOGGLING ARRAY OF TASKS FROM PREPARING FOR CONTINGENCIES TO RUNNING OUR COOPERATIVE SECURITY LOCATION IN COMALAPA, EL SALVADOR TO CONDUCTING MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL EXERCISES THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

OVER THE PAST 4 YEARS, NAVAL FORCES UNDER USNAVSO HAVE SUPPORTED U.S. LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES BY STEAMING OVER 375,000 MILES ON PATROL, FLYING OVER 3,870 DETECTION AND MONITORING MISSIONS AND PARTICIPATING IN 62 SEPARATE AT-SEA ACTIONS AGAINST NARCO-TRAFFICKERS.

THEY'VE SEIZED OR DISRUPTED OVER 81 AND A HALF METRIC TONS OF COCAINE WITH A STREET VALUE OF OVER \$1.5 BILLION DOLLARS AND

SEIZED 3,000 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA WITH A STREET VALUE OF OVER \$2.8 MILLION DOLLARS.

IF YOU DON'T THINK WE HAVE A STAKE IN INTERDICTING THE ILLICIT DRUGS THAT COME INTO OUR COUNTRY, CONSIDER THAT THE FIRST-ORDER EFFECT OF ILLICIT DRUG USE IN OUR COUNTRY AMOUNTS TO 21 THOUSAND DEATHS ANNUALLY AND THE SECOND ORDER EFFECTS RESULT IN 55 THOUSAND DEATHS A YEAR.

NAVSO PLANS, ORGANIZES, AND EXECUTES STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT NAVAL EXERCISES – BRINGING THE HEMISPHERE'S NAVIES TOGETHER TO DEVELOP AND IMPROVE COMMON SKILLS, STRENGTHEN PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND CULTIVATE COOPERATION. THE LARGEST OF THESE EXERCISES – UNITAS-- IS ACTUALLY AN OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENT. UNITAS CIRCUMNAVIGATES SOUTH AMERICA EVERY YEAR AND EXECUTES COMPLEX BATTLE PROBLEMS BASED ON REAL-WORLD SCENARIOS. IN SOME COUNTRIES, UNITAS CONDUCTS MULTILATERAL AMPHIBIOUS EXERCISES AND LIVE FIRE WITH HUNDREDS OF MARINES ASHORE. AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF UNITAS IS PANAMAX, WHERE FOR THE FIRST TIME LAST YEAR, CHILE PARTICIPATED IN AN EXERCISE THAT INCLUDED DEFENSE OF THE PANAMA CANAL. PANAMAX IS ONE STEP ON A JOURNEY TO

COALITION NAVAL OPERATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AND NAVSO IS GOING TO LEAD US ON THAT JOURNEY.

NAVSO ALSO SPONSORS 13 MEDICAL READINESS TRAINING EXERCISES IN 6 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES EVERY YEAR. THE TERM “MEDICAL READINESS TRAINING EXERCISE” FALLS FAR SHORT OF DESCRIBING THE LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE OF THE DOCTOR OR CORPSMAN WHO HAS LIFTED THE BURDEN OF PAIN AND SUFFERING FROM THE PEOPLE OF A REMOTE VILLAGE HIGH IN THE ANDES OR DEEP IN THE AMAZON. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE VALUE OF THE GRATITUDE AND HEARTFELT GOOD WILL EXPRESSED BY PEOPLE WHO ARE TREATED BY A DOCTOR FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THEIR LIVES CAN NOT BE MEASURED IN DOLLARS OR MAN-HOURS.

IN ALL OF THE 30 COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTHCOM AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY THE PERMANENT U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IS SMALL— AND THE NAVAL SECTION OF THESE MILITARY GROUPS IS GENERALLY ONE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER OR COMMANDER. ON HIS SHOULDERS RESTS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BREATHE LIFE INTO AND EXECUTE THE NAVAL COMPONENT OF MY THEATER SECURITY COOPERATION STRATEGY.

IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE THEY WORK AND TO THE NAVIES OF OUR PARTNER NATIONS, THAT SAILOR IS THE U.S. NAVY AND HE IS THE UNITED STATES. THAT IS HOW USNAVSO MOVES A TON WITH AN OUNCE.

BECAUSE OF WHAT NAVSO DOES, THE ARMED FORCES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN TODAY SUPPORT DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENTS INSTEAD OF OVERTHROWING THEM LIKE THEY DID 25 YEARS AGO.

BECAUSE OF THE DEDICATION AND SKILL OF USNAVSO'S PEOPLE, THE UNITED STATES IS THE FIRST CHOICE AS A SECURITY PARTNER FOR THE NAVIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.

BECAUSE OF THE FINE WORK OF NAVSO'S UNITS, THERE ARE PERHAPS THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TODAY WHO ARE SPARED FROM THE SCOURGE OF DRUG ADDICTION, THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN WHO LOOK FORWARD TO BRIGHT FUTURES, AND THOUSANDS OF FAMILY MEMBERS SPARED THE AGONY OF LOSING A LOVED ONE TO A DRUG OVERDOSE OR DRUG RELATED CRIME.

I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT USNAVSO, FROM ITS NEW HOMEPORT, WILL CONTINUE TO BE A DECISIVE FACTOR IN THE FOUNDATION OF SECURITY OF THE AMERICAS. NAVSO WILL HELP CREATE THE ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE NATURAL AND HUMAN WEALTH

OF THE AMERICAS CAN GROW, MATURE AND BE HARVESTED. A FREE,  
SECURE, STABLE AND PROSPEROUS HEMISPHERE IS THE BEST LEGACY WE  
CAN LEAVE TO OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU AND GOD BLESS AMERICA.