



**UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON**

FEBRUARY 8, 2011

Yesterday, at an event hosted by the Hinckley Institute of Politics Forum, my response to a question on U.S. defense policy inaccurately characterized Latin America as a "strategic blind spot." My statement also mistakenly characterized the challenge posed by drug cartels to Mexico as "a form of insurgency."

My comments were not, and have never been, the policy of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government toward Latin America. I did not speak on behalf of the President, National Security Advisor, Secretary of Defense or any other officials charged with establishing and articulating U.S. Policy. I regret that my inaccurate statements may have caused concerns for our partners and friends in the region, especially Mexico.

Joseph W. Westphal