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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

**'SEAMS' OF INEFFICIENCY AND JOINT INTERAGENCY TASK
FORCE (JIATF) OPERATIONS**

By

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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ABSTRACT

The Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) provides a unique organizational structure that capitalizes on the force multiplier effect realized from an entity staffed and led by personnel from multiple agencies with one common commander and mission. Though ideally suited for the detection, monitoring and interdiction of illicit transnational threats, a JIATF's efficiency and unity of effort can be hampered by certain legacy impediments placed upon them. One such impediment is identified in the National Interdiction Command and Control Plan (NICCP).

The current NICCP states “the areas of responsibility (AORs) for the JIATF will mirror those of their respective Combatant Commanders (COCOMS) as defined by the Unified Command Plan (UCP); the JIATF West AOR will mirror that of USPACOM, and the AOR of JIATF East will mirror that of USSOUTHCOM.” These two regional COCOMs share a common boundary in the eastern Pacific located at 92 degrees West longitude. This common boundary or “seam” has created an area where highly integrated planning, communication, and coordination are required to conduct the most basic of operational objectives.

This study serves three purposes. First, through real world operations in JIATF East and JIATF West, it will demonstrate the corrosive effect of the current NICCP JIATF AOR boundary on unity of effort in counterdrug operations. Second, it will illustrate why the NICCP JIATF AOR boundary must change to enhance mission efficiency and ensure unity of effort. Finally, it will present two courses of action for mitigating the current erosion in unity of effort in counterdrug operations.

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The expanding scope of global narcotics trafficking has created a situation which today adds another significant dimension to the law enforcement and public health aspects of this international problem and threatens the national security of the United States.

President Ronald Reagan, NSDD 22, 8 April 1986

INTRODUCTION

The involvement of the Department of Defense (DOD) in counterdrug operations began over twenty years ago when the Reagan Administration designated drug abuse a threat to National Security and formally declared a “war” on drugs.¹ Since this declaration, national counterdrug strategy has continued to develop and shift in response to actual world events and the ever-changing tactics utilized by transnational drug traffickers. These changes have forced DOD and the national agencies that wage this war to transform themselves to meet each new challenge. On November 13, 2001, President George W. Bush renewed this commitment stating, “Illegal narcotics trafficking constitute a serious threat to the health and well-being of individuals and to international security as a whole. The drug trade is one of the principle sources of financial support for international terrorism.”²

Although there has been a recognized link between illicit drugs and terrorism, the attacks of September 11, 2001 have served as the catalyst for refocusing our national agenda on countering the trafficking of illicit narco-terrorism operations in order to protect the homeland. This national reprioritization has led directly to the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003. The essential mission for the DHS is to protect the homeland, its borders, and territorial waters from these transnational threats.³ Given the stated mission of DHS, the question remains what instrument of national power is best suited to stem the inward flow of transnational threats beyond the borders and territorial

waters of the United States? The most immediate response is the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF).

The JIATF provides a unique organizational structure that capitalizes on the force multiplier effect realized from an entity staffed and led by personnel from multiple agencies with one common commander and mission. Though ideally suited for this new mission, the JIATF's efficiency and unity of effort can be hampered by certain legacy impediments placed upon them. One such impediment is identified in the National Interdiction Command and Control Plan (NICCP). The current NICCP states "the areas of responsibility (AORs) for the JIATF will mirror those of their respective Combatant Commanders (COCOMS) as defined by the Unified Command Plan (UCP); the JIATF West AOR will mirror that of USPACOM, and the AOR of JIATF East will mirror that of USSOUTHCOM."⁴ These two regional COCOMs share a common boundary in the eastern Pacific located at 92 degrees West longitude (**See Figure 1**). This common boundary or "seam" has created an area where highly integrated planning, communication, and coordination are required to conduct the most basic of operational objectives. This task is inherently problematic and further compounded by the nature of the transnational threats that continually cross this JIATF boundary. The current process of coordination and integration between the JIATF to work together efficiently while addressing a single threat vector or event as the trafficker crosses from one JIATF AOR to another is cumbersome and ineffective.

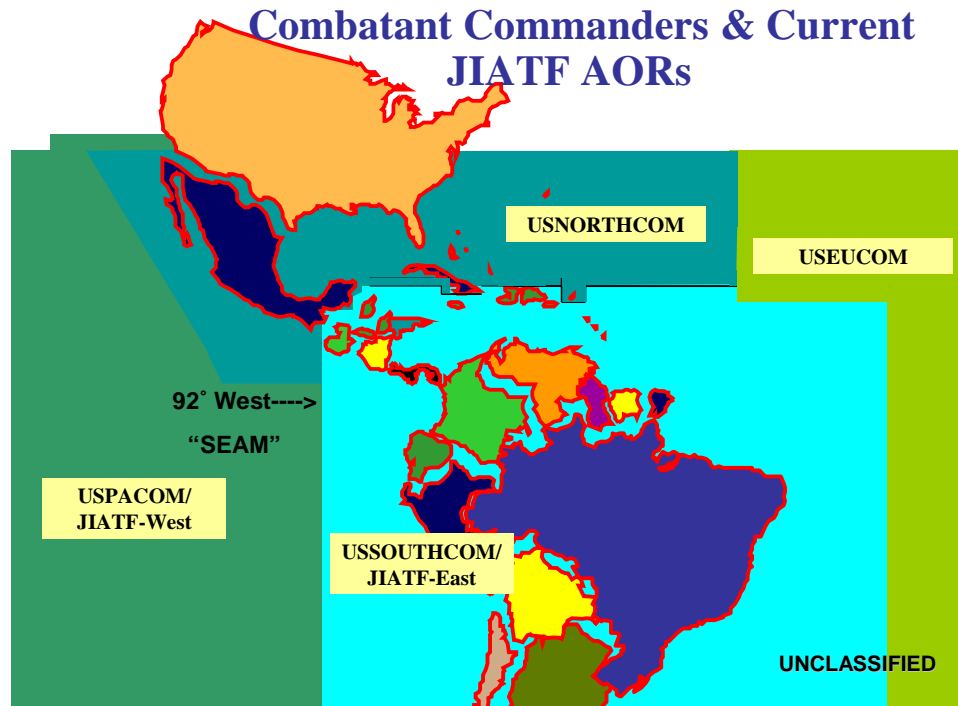


Figure 1: Current JIATF AORs⁵

This study serves three purposes. First, through real world operations in JIATF East and JIATF West, it will demonstrate the corrosive effect of the current NICCP JIATF boundary on unity of effort in counterdrug operations. Second, it will illustrate why the NICCP JIATF AOR boundary must change to enhance mission efficiency and ensure unity of effort. Finally, it will present two courses of action for mitigating the current erosion in unity of effort in counterdrug operations.

This study is limited to only those issues concerning the 92 degree West longitude seam between USSOUTHCOM and USPACOM. It does not address the potential implications posed by the formation of USNORTHCOM which was established by the 2002 UCP. Although USNORTHCOM's AOR will create additional seams effecting JIATF operations, the command is currently in the process of defining its mission subsets and will not be fully operational until sometime in late FY-04.⁶ However, the issues and courses of

action (COAs) presented within the scope of this study will continue to apply to any USNORTHCOM seams created by its establishment.

DOD COUNTERDRUG EVOLUTION

DOD has been involved in what is commonly referred to as the “war” on drugs since December 1, 1981, when Congress amended the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 by a change to Title 10 of the U.S. Code.⁷ The Posse Comitatus Act previously prohibited U.S. military forces from engaging in any civil law enforcement activities. By modifying the Act, President Reagan formally directed U.S. intelligence agencies to fully cooperate with law enforcement offices in a coordinated effort to boost the efficiency of counterdrug operations.⁸ In order to facilitate unity of effort amongst the DOD and federal agencies, Congress passed the National Narcotics Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-690), which established the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) as the primary agency for developing and implementing the National Drug Control Strategy for over thirty Federal agencies and innumerable state, local, and private authorities.⁹

Although the modification of the Posse Comitatus Act was the catalysis for DOD’s involvement in counterdrug operations, the military did not become fully committed to counterdrug operations until the implementation of the National Defense Authorization Act of 1989. This Act designated DOD as the lead agency of the Federal government for the detection and monitoring of illegal drug shipments into the United States in support of law enforcement agencies. The Act additionally tasked DOD to create an integrated command, control, communications, and intelligence network linking the Armed Forces and various civilian law enforcement agencies.¹⁰ This initial effort to create a coherent approach led to

the creation of Joint Task Forces (JTFs) to better coordinate, integrate, and synchronize DOD efforts. The first were JTF Four in Alameda, California; JTF Five in Key West, Florida; and JTF Six in El Paso, Texas.¹¹ Although the creation of JTFs was a step in the right direction, DOD leaders soon realized that without true interagency operations – especially law enforcement participation, they were merely conducting detection and monitoring without closing the cycle with interdiction and arrest. A popular refrain at the time was that without interdiction and arrest, DOD was merely providing an escort service for the drug traffickers. The national counterdrug community also agreed.¹²

In 1994, ONDCP reorganized its interdiction efforts by producing the first National Interdiction Command and Control Plan (NICCP). This plan was created to define the responsibilities of the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator (USIC) and to consolidate interagency efforts into a more cohesive command and control structure.¹³ Utilizing the previously created JTF's as a springboard, the new NICCP created three JIATFs and one Domestic Air Interdiction Coordination Center (DAICC), each responsible for the conduct and coordination of specific portions of the drug interdiction process. These organizations were designed as “national” task forces, and not department or agency task forces. The “national” concept provided for an organizational structure, which recognized the force multiplier effect that could be realized from a task force manned and led by personnel from various agencies with a drug interdiction mission.¹⁴

Each of the three JIATFs employ over thirty Federal agencies including the United States Coast Guard (USCG), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (BICE), and DOD operational assets in the conduct of interdiction operations in Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific, and South America. In

compliance with the 1979 Panama Canal Treaty and the necessity to complete the military reduction in Panama by the end of 1999, the decision was made to merge JIATF South and JIATF East into one organization. Transfer of the JIATF South mission to the merged JIATF was completed May 1, 1999.¹⁵

As noted above, JIATF South was never fully established in its own right but most of its staff was dual tasked as members of JIATF South. The USSOUTHCOM J3 also served as the director of JIATF South. The only assigned interagency staff members were also dual tasked as members of USSOUTHCOM special staff and JIATF South. As noted by Mr. Alan McKee, “when JIATF South was merged with JIATF East, only a hand-full of billets actually transferred to JIATF East as most of the DOD and all of the interagency special staff personnel transferred with the headquarters to Miami.”¹⁶ The mission area assigned to JIATF West remained the same and encompassed the Far East and the entire Pacific Ocean west of 92° West longitude.¹⁷ JIATF West has approximately one-hundred permanently assigned staff personnel representing all of the services including the USCG, BICE, and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). Currently, the DEA, BICE, and foreign Liaison Officer (LNO) positions are unfilled.¹⁸

JIATF East has approximately five-hundred permanently assigned staff billets that encompass over twenty-five agencies and foreign LNOs from eleven countries. JIATF East is unique in that it has interagency personnel embedded within the staff in key positions of leadership who solely work for the Director. For example, the Deputy J3 is BICE, the Deputy J2 is DEA, and the Chief of JIATF East's Joint Operations Center (JOC) rotates between DOD, BICE and USCG. JIATF East also has dedicated interagency staff personnel assigned as LNO's to represent their respective agency issues and concerns.¹⁹ This quick

comparison of JIATF East and West will help shape the problem set addressed later in the study. Other essential coordinating elements of our national counterdrug effort include DOD's Joint Task Force-Six (JTF-6) and the multi-agency Operation Alliance. JTF-6 coordinates military support to federal, state, and local law enforcement counterdrug efforts along the U.S./Mexico border. The latter integrates the efforts of many agencies working to prevent the flow of illegal drugs across that border.²⁰

NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The national objectives for the war on drugs are ultimately issued from the National Security Strategy (NSS). The objectives of the NSS are to enhance America's economic prosperity and promote democracy and human rights abroad.²¹ Furthermore, the NSS specifically states the national objectives related to illicit drug trafficking to be: 1) Shield America's border from drug trafficking; and 2) Break the drug trafficker's sources of supply.²²

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The JIATF mission is based on the NSS objectives with concentration on the illegal flow of drugs from the source nation, transit zone, and arrival nation of the transnational drug shipment. Although imperfect, JIATFs "represent the U.S. Government's best hope that it could defy operational lines of demarcation and agency stove pipes and blend capabilities of various agencies and military services into one synergistic whole."²³ "JIATFs with the capabilities offered by their unique regional focus are responsible for [but not limited too] the following missions: 1) Plan and conduct flexible operations to detect, monitor, sort, and

coordinate handoff of suspect drug targets to U.S. or host/participating national lead enforcement agencies; 2) Collect, fuse, and disseminate counterdrug information from all participating agencies to forces for tactical action within their areas of responsibility; and 3) At the request of U.S. Ambassadors or an appropriate U.S. Leading Enforcement Agency (LEA), coordinate support to participating nations.”²⁴

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Doctrinal guidance for DOD support to counter narcotics operations falls under Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). MOOTW principals are an extension of current warfighting doctrine. Two of the primary underlying principals of war and MOOTW are unity of command and unity of effort. In MOOTW, unity of command is more difficult to attain because command arrangements are often loosely defined and not involve the same level of command authority as within the military. JIATFs were created to attain both unity of command and unity of effort by melding together the resources of all participating agencies for execution of the counterdrug strategy under one single unified commander.²⁵ Although this establishes “who” is in command, “JIATF commanders are faced with multiple challenges when establishing unity of effort among disparate units.”²⁶ Moreover, “operational commanders must seek an atmosphere of cooperation, trust and understanding to achieve objectives by unity of effort.”²⁷ Unity of effort fundamentally means that in every operation, all agencies are directed to a common purpose at all levels. In order to achieve a common purpose at all levels, JIATF commanders must effectively communicate and coordinate mission objectives to all the supporting agencies under his jurisdiction.

The current NICCP states “the AORs for the JIATFs will mirror those of their respective COCOMs as defined by the UCP; the JIATF West AOR will mirror that of USPACOM, and the AOR of JIATF East will mirror that of USSOUTHCOM.”²⁸ These two regional COCOMs share a common boundary in the eastern Pacific located at 92 degrees West longitude (See Figure 2). This common boundary or “seam” has created an area where highly integrated communication and coordination is problematic and confusion and inefficiency inherently occur. The current process of coordination and integration of JIATFs to efficiently work together while detection and monitoring assets cross from one JIATF AOR to another is cumbersome and perpetuates inefficiency and redundancy.

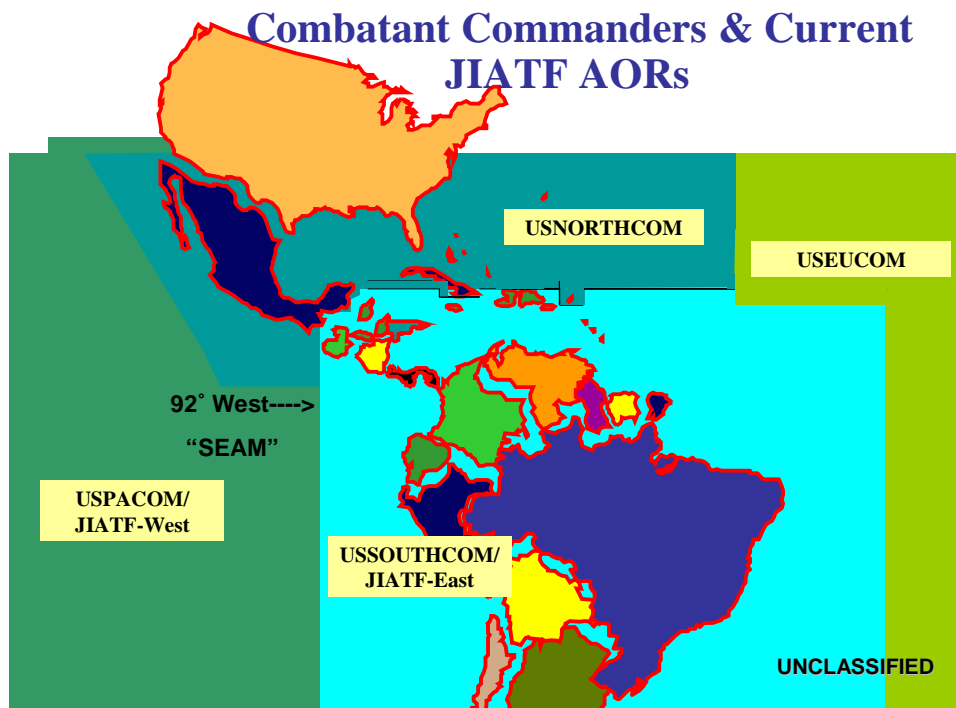


Figure 2: Current JIATF AORs²⁹

The establishment of the JIATF AORs has had little effect on unity of effort in previous years. This was because JIATF East’s AOR encompassed the entire Atlantic Ocean (including the Caribbean) and the AOR boundary lines never presented a problem. However,

due to successful JIATF East operations in the Caribbean, there has been a shift in transnational drug traffic shipments from the Western and Central Caribbean to the Eastern Pacific. During the mid 1990's, the Caribbean theater of operations accounted for approximately 70 percent of south-to-north transnational drug trafficking shipments while the Eastern Pacific accounted for only 30 percent. Since early 2001, there has been almost a complete reversal in the numbers of illicit transnational drug shipments between these areas. The Eastern Pacific Theater now accounts for approximately 60 percent of the south-to-north flow of drugs destined for the continental United States.³⁰ This shift has placed the 92 degrees West longitude COCOM boundary directly in the path of the majority of illicit transnational drug shipments. Therefore, the NICCP delineation of the JIATF boundaries has inadvertently created a “seam” that has negatively affected both interagency efficiency and unity of effort. This seam has created substantial and unnecessary friction points between the two National Task Forces in the following areas:

Unity of Command and Unity of Effort. There are two JIATFs that have different portions of the same target set of each specific counterdrug shipment. As the respective JIATF conducts detection and monitoring of the south-to-north flow of drugs, every target must be handed-off individually as it crosses the JIATF AOR boundary. This handoff requires painstaking communication, coordination, and prior planning which inherently erodes unity of command and unity of effort against a single, continuous transnational target.

Asset Apportionment. The NICCP is an overarching document that is not proscriptive to what the respective interagency force providers 'will provide' but rather, it 'requests' DOD and Federal agencies that provide the detection and monitoring assets to merely ‘support’ the JIATFs. This process requires the interagency force providers to choose which JIATF they

will support. Thus, the potential pool of scarce detection and monitoring assets are divided between two JIATFs creating a situation where neither JIATF can concentrate or mass its assets effectively. More importantly, this creates a situation where there is routinely a mismatch of assets. For example, on any given day one JIATF may have ships without planes while the other may have planes without ships. It is impossible to fully plan, coordinate, and synchronize the detection and monitoring resources with such a vast and dynamic problem set.³¹ It is important to note that JIATFs, by design and charter, may only take tactical control of assigned or apportioned assets. Parent agencies maintain operational control of their respective assets operating within the JIATF AORs.³²

Force Providers. As the force providers (DOD, BICE, USCG, British, and other partner nations) prepare to plan and execute their respective detection and monitoring missions in the Eastern Pacific, they must assimilate and coordinate separate requirements between both JIATFs. Issues that must be addressed by each force provider are two separate communication infrastructures, logistics systems, cryptologic keying materials, call signs, frequencies, and training requirements that each JIATF require.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). As each JIATF is unique and very different in composition and capability, the SOP's that govern their operations are equally as specialized and unique. Learning two separate SOPs is problematic in that each detection and monitoring asset must train and execute two separate SOPs while conducting a single mission. In addition, as the transnational drug trafficker crosses the JIATF boundaries, the UCP COCOM SOPs change as well further adding to the dynamic of the problem. This places an unreasonable burden on the vast majority of force providers from partner nations.

Command and Control (C2). Because there are two JIATFs that “own” each end of a common threat vector, there are two command and control infrastructures in the Eastern Pacific providing coverage for the same geographical area. This creates redundant watch centers, communications systems, targeting priorities, and a condition where employment of resources is not fully optimized. As the drug trafficker approaches the JIATF boundary, tactical assets are routinely given instructions that are in conflict with one another. While one JIATF has positive Tactical Control (TACON) over an asset and is issuing instructions, the other JIATF is simultaneously giving similar instructions to the asset such as: “when you are handed off to us, you will...” The tactical assets are often placed in impossible positions and forced to choose which JIATF controller to listen to and which to ignore.³³

Intelligence. While intelligence is the key driving force in counterdrug operations the current boundary between the JIATFs create continuous incongruent intelligence support to JIATFs and the tactical forces in the field. At the national and international level, each intelligence center must communicate data to two separate JIATFs each having different intelligence needs for a particular target set. This unnecessarily doubles the workload placed on intelligence assets because everything is done in duplicate. In addition, there are two separate intelligence pictures being communicated to the tactical assets in the field. This requires the tactical assets to individually deconflict and evaluate what information is being sent and to take appropriate actions based on their own evaluations.

At the operational level, intelligence information is processed by each JIATF and the resulting target evaluation made by each is often vastly different. Each JIATF assigns different levels of priority to targets based on the assets it has available for detection, monitoring, and interdiction. To compound matters, the disparity in JIATF staffing does not

help the situation. For example, JIATF East has assigned representatives from every national and many international intelligence agencies who are involved in counterdrug intelligence, while JIATF West has none.

Target Sets. As a National Task Force, each JIATF is assigned to a regional COCOM for command, control, and tasking. Each combatant commander has its own target priorities and security cooperation objectives. These are often in conflict as each JIATF conducts independent operations. USSOUTHCOM's primary focus is on Colombia while USPACOM's focus is on Mexico. Thus, the tactical employment of the resources will be in consonance with the respective JIATF targeting priorities. JIATF East is focused on Colombia, therefore; it plans and employs its tactical assets to best address the departure of drugs from South America. Conversely, JIATF West is focused on Mexico and supports the Mexican counterdrug effort and concentrates on the arrival of drug shipments. It is worthwhile to note that the current national counterdrug guidance places the highest priorities on the growing and production areas in Colombia and the littoral areas on the west and north coast of Colombia. Mexico is the nation's fourth priority.³⁴

Partner Nations and Country Teams. The seam between the two JIATFs is near the territorial waters of several Central American countries. When these countries attempt to conduct combined counterdrug operations, their respective AORs will often cross the JIATF boundaries. Thus when planning an operation, the U.S. Country teams and the partner nations must coordinate with both JIATFs. Again, there are two separate and unique SOP's to contend with, two communications structures, two sets of targeting priorities, two intelligence pictures, two sets of frequencies, and two sets of command and control structures

that must be confronted. This coordination is complex and usually far beyond the capabilities of the smaller partner nations and U.S. Country Teams.³⁵

The implications of two JIATFs assigned to two regional COCOMs addressing the same transnational threats that continually cross common UCP boundaries are felt by each of the respective unified commands. To illustrate, in February of 2001, JIATF East, along with the forces of Guatemala, kicked off operation MAYAN JAGUAR (See Figure 3).

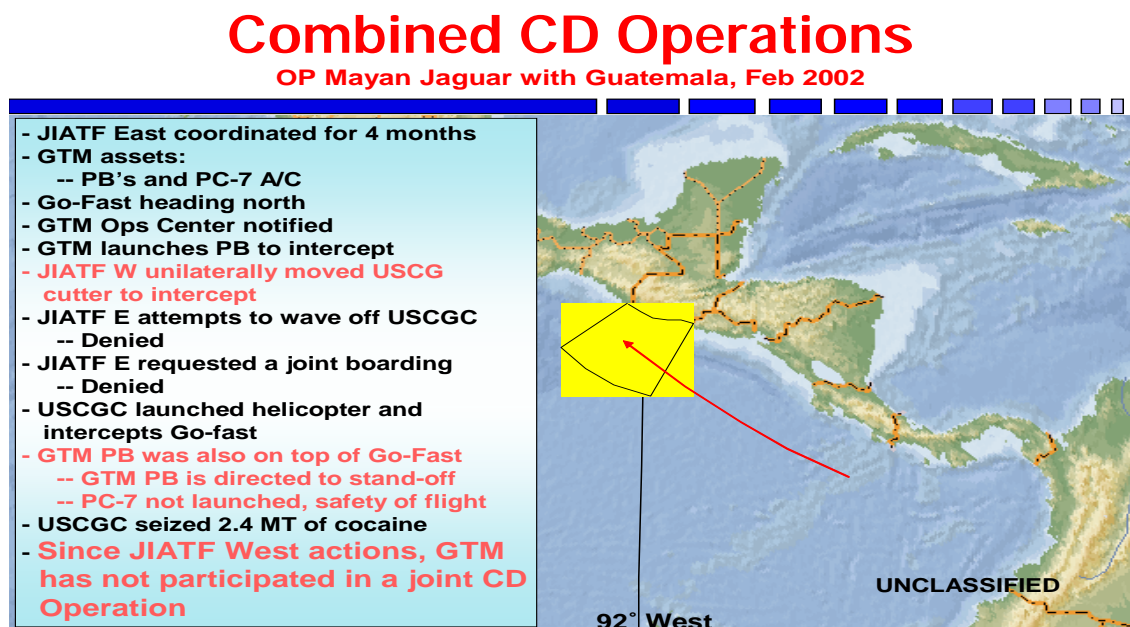


Figure 3: Operation Mayan Jaguar³⁶

This operation required seven months of intense coordination and planning with the Guatemalans. The operation had many objectives which included the establishment of an operations center in Guatemala, to assume command and control of Guatemalan forces, conduct detection and monitoring operations against drug traffickers, and to establish effective endgame should a suspected drug trafficking event take place. The drug traffickers obliged and a “go fast” was detected heading south-to-north in the MAYAN JAGUAR operating area. JIATF East notified the Guatemalans - as well as JIATF West. The

Guatemalan's vectored their craft to intercept, at the same time JIATF West vectored their craft to intercept as the target was about to cross the JIATF boundaries. JIATF East requested the JIATF West ship to disengage and allow the Guatemalan's to intercept the target. JIATF West did not comply and proceeded with the intercept. As the target crossed the JIATF AOR boundary, the JIATF West vessel intercepted first. JIATF East requested a joint boarding, JIATF West denied the request and effectively eliminating the Guatemalans role in the operation.

The end result - while JIATF West seized 2.4 metric tons of cocaine, the Guatemalans were quite angry over the incident and questioned the U.S. ability to keep to their agreements. Although the operation was a tactical success, it was a political failure and resulted in the Guatemalans withdrawing from joint counterdrug operations for the foreseeable future. In addition, USSOUTHCOM's Theater Security Cooperation efforts with Guatemala suffered as a direct result of this operation. As an anecdotal point, approximately 50 percent of all the drug trafficking events within the last year crossed the MAYAN JAGUAR operational area in the Eastern Pacific.³⁷ The net result is that the action of one JIATF had a direct and lasting impact within another JIATF's AOR. By their very nature, every transnational drug shipment in the Eastern Pacific will cross the JIATF seam and the potential continues for more confusion and missed interdiction opportunities.

COURSE OF ACTION (COA)

Doctrinal guidance for DOD's support to counterdrug operations is delineated in Joint Pubs 3-0, 3-07.4, 3-08 Volume I and II, and 3-16. The underlying theme of combined and interagency doctrine is the ability of the combatant commanders to solve unique problems by

looking beyond a military point of view. The current boundary between JIATFs East and West is a legacy problem as the seam was established when transnational drug traffickers were not operating in great numbers in the Eastern Pacific. Those that operated in the Eastern Pacific traveled up the littoral rather than the deep-water transits exhibited today.

Nearly all participants in the interagency process recognize that coordination problems exist, and many have first hand experience of the difficulties that arise when these problems are not addressed and resolved properly. Many participants have learned important lessons over the past several years and developed new and innovative techniques to improve interagency coordination and accountability during these operations. However, these innovations and improvements have fallen short of correcting the problem currently faced by JIATF East and West. Without a robust review and rigorous analysis to determine the actual efficiencies, associated costs, and benefits derived from any change in current operations the benefits can only be estimated. However, the following two COAs are based on the research thus far conducted:

COA #1: Leave the current NICCP JIATF requirement to mirror the UCP COCOM boundaries the same. The analysis previously presented clearly points out the disadvantages of leaving the NICCP JIATF seam in place. Maintaining the “status-quo” and leaving the seam would only continue to foster those inefficiencies and erosion of unity of effort previously identified. Although better coordination and cooperation between the two JIATFs can somewhat improve the situation, the problem has become far too complex for both staffs to effectively deconflict each and every transnational drug event. Shortages in equipment and personnel on both staffs only further compound the problem. Although JIATFs provide a unique National Task Force organizational structure which recognizes a force multiplier

effect, that effect alone cannot overcome the realities of real world demands for detection, monitoring, and interdiction assets. The best approach to maximize the efficiency of each JIATF and attain economy of force is to eliminate redundant functions and streamline operations to the maximum extent possible.

Although the analysis presented clearly illustrates the benefits of changing the NICCP JIATF seam, there seems to be a resistance to implement the change amongst senior DOD and Federal agency leaders. By leaving the seam in place, some commanders have “perceived” benefits they receive from this COA. These benefits are based on the premise that by maintaining the “business as usual” mentality, commanders will incur no change in their mission, manning levels, billet structure, asset apportionment, and risk associated with change. Historically, the Navy has been culturally resistant to change when that change involves risk of failure. As noted by Captain Dennis Flaherty, “it is said that change is inherently the mother of all risk. Senior naval leadership have it bred into them that the ‘zero defects’ mentality is still part of naval command culture. Most senior commanders are not willing to voluntarily take those risks necessary to ferment change if their careers may suffer in the process. This unwillingness to assume risk can prevent us from being victorious in the asymmetric environment that we find ourselves in the 21st century.”³⁸ If senior leadership allow themselves to be culturally paralyzed from this zero defect mentality, the fear of failure in a highly competitive environment will hinder the implementation of new and creative COAs on the asymmetric threat facing us today.

COA #2: Change the NICCP to establish a JIATF East JOA that maintains the current UCP COCOM AOR boundaries, but expands the western JIATF East AOR boundary to 120 degrees West longitude. Operational Control (OPCON) of all DOD assets would

remain under USSOUTHCOM, while JIATF East retains TACON of all assigned and apportioned assets operating within the JOA. The expansion of the western boundary to 120 degrees West longitude would provide for “seamless” coverage along the entire South American, Mexican, and Southwestern coast of the U.S. In addition, the proposed boundary will place the western JOA boundary well outside the range of most drug trafficking assets. Although the new western JOA boundary will more than double (to 1,300 nautical miles) in distance from the coast of South America, it will still remain within the range of current JIATF East detection and monitoring assets. The new boundary will encompass all current south-to-north Eastern Pacific illicit trafficking routes originating from South America (See **Figure 4**). Although the new western JOA boundary will encompass all current illicit trafficking routes, it should be continually reevaluated and if necessary changed to reflect any future shift in illicit trafficking tactics.

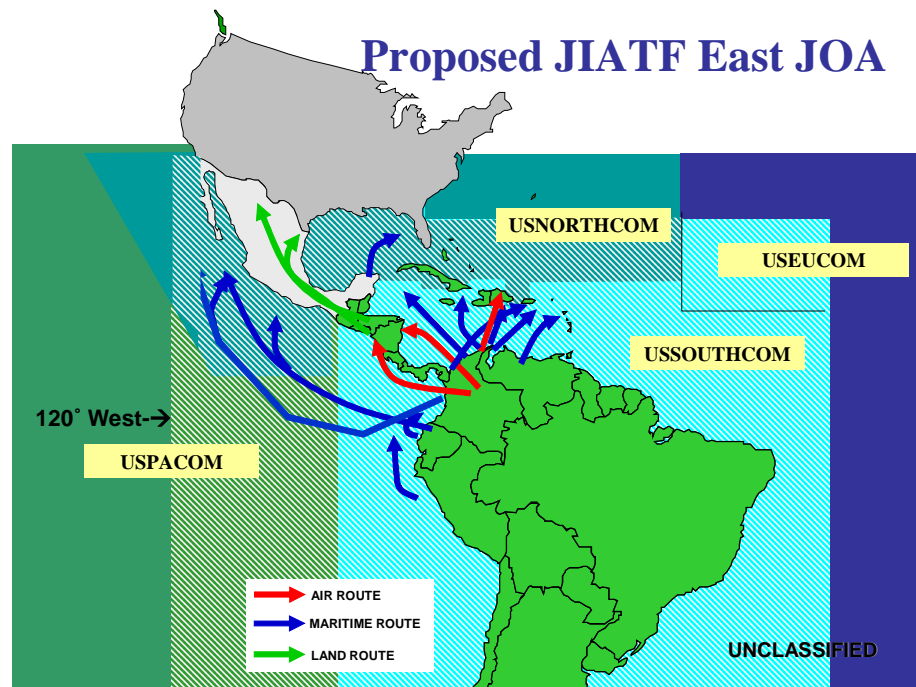


Figure 4: Proposed JIATF East JOA³⁹

Justification for this course of action can be found in current doctrine, which states “when significant operations overlap the boundaries of two combatant commanders, a JTF will be formed and assigned an appropriate JOA.”⁴⁰ The boundaries of the JIATFs should no more be tied to the UCP than that of the USCG, BICE, DEA, Allies or partner nations. The JIATF East JOA boundaries will maximize and facilitate unity of command and unity of effort, not hamper them. Although JOAs are normally established by the regional combatant commander, the JIATF East JOA proposed would be established by the ONDCP through the NICCP. It should also be noted that while this study focused on the impact of NICCP UCP boundaries, there are other Departmental agencies and allied forces that also have boundaries which cross the routes of transnational drug traffickers. For example, the USCG has divided the Caribbean between USCG District 7 and 8. Allied forces (the French, Dutch and British) that provide resources under the direct TACON of the JIATF's also have boundaries that transnational drug trafficker cross (**See Figure 5**). The establishment of a JIATF East JOA will eliminate all DOD and force provider seams during counterdrug operations within the JOA and facilitate seamless support by JIATF East.

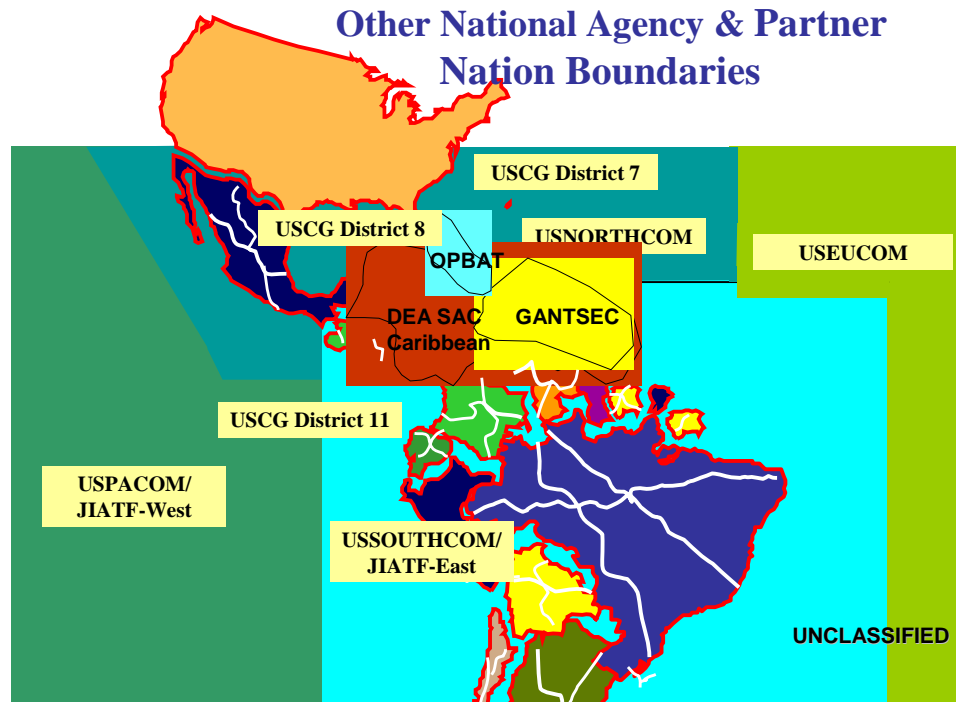


Figure 5: Other Agency Boundaries⁴¹

There are many additional advantages for the establishment of a JOA under the TACON of JIATF East. A single JIATF responsible for the entire Eastern Pacific south-to-north threat axis best serves National counterdrug interests. A single JIATF operating in the JOA would provide for the most efficient utilization of detection and monitoring assets. For the first time, a single JIATF would provide seamless support to its force providers from the source nation, transit zone, and ultimately to the arrival nation. This would greatly enhance the JIATF's ability to focus its efforts on targets of high probability and enhance the likelihood of successful endgame with LEAs and partner nations. Furthermore, a single JIATF operating along the entire threat axis would maximize economy of force by allowing the JIATF to effectively leverage its scarce detection and monitoring assets in a manner best suited to achieve national objectives.

The establishment of the JIATF East JOA would also reduce inefficiency and redundancy by eliminating the requirement for two separate SOPs, communication plans, intelligence centers, C2 centers, and watch standers. The consolidation and economies of scale realized by this process can help alleviate critical manpower shortages by the reassignment of these personnel. Counterdrug intelligence collection, fusion, and dissemination would also improve by eliminating the need to produce two separate intelligence pictures for the same target set. U.S. country teams can better plan, coordinate, and execute counterdrug exercises and real world operations to promote trust and cooperation between the JIATF and partner nations. The JIATF East JOA will also provide a single mechanism for coordinating with the DHS and its components to maximize interoperability between the two forces. Finally, this COA will allow JIATF West to refocus its detection and monitoring efforts to the East Asian heroin west-to-east transnational threats.

Although the advantages of this COA have been presented, there are several disadvantages in pursuing this COA. First, DOD will need to implement new policies and procedures for the operational control of assets when they cross UCP COCOM boundaries. Second, JIATF East must be diligent in keeping the respective COCOM aware of interagency operations within their AORs. Finally, the establishment of the JIATF East JOA may expose JIATF West to possible elimination due to the shift of personnel and equipment from JIATF West to JIATF East.

An area for future study to alleviate these disadvantages would be the establishment of a Western Hemispheric JIATF (JIATF-WHEM). By merging JIATF East and JIATF West, one JIATF commander, dual hatted to two regional COCOMs (USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM) can operate seamlessly across UCP boundaries. Although this offers the

best long-term solution to the problem, its implementation is impractical until the mission subsets of USNORTHCOM have been clearly defined. However, the establishment of JIATF-WHEM would provide for the epitome of “seamless” narco-terrorism operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

CONCLUSION

In a time when our military is shrinking and illicit transnational operations threaten our homeland; our national leaders must use every instrument of national power to defeat this peril. The JIATF process is best suited for this mission by bringing all the tools of national power together to combat this evolving threat. JIATFs provide our nation’s best hope in defying operational lines of separation and blending the unique capabilities of various agencies and military services into one synergistic whole. Though ideally suited for this new mission, a JIATFs efficiency and unity of effort can be hampered by any legacy impediments placed upon them. As this study has illustrated, the NICCP boundary has engendered operational inefficiencies and eroded unity of effort. Our national leaders must not allow political, cultural or bureaucratic rice bowls to dictate how to solve this problem. The establishment of a JOA is doctrinally the correct solution in this situation and the best course of action for the JIATFs to achieve national objectives. The proposed JIATF East JOA will provide seamless interagency operations for the entire Eastern Pacific region and significantly reduce inefficiency and maximize unity of effort.

NOTES

¹ Kenneth M. O'Connor "Strategic Analysis of the War on Drugs," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army War College, April 1991), 2.

² U.S. President, Joint Statement with President Vladimir Putin, 13 November 2001.

³ David Hughes, "Homeland Security Dept.: So Many Details, So Little Time," Aviation Week & Space Technology 157, no.23 (December 2002): 71.

⁴ U.S. Interdiction Coordinator, National Interdiction Command and Control Plan (Washington, D.C.: May 1, 1999), 3.

⁵ Illustration artwork provided by Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), 25 April 2003.

⁶ Major John Vallidor, USNORTHCOM (J5), interview by author, Newport, RI., 29 April 2003.

⁷ Thomas W. Crouch, *An Annotated Bibliography on Military involvement in Counterdrug Operations, 1980-1990*. (Langley Air Force Base, VA: Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict, 1991), 3.

⁸ Stephen L. Guse, "The Military and The Drug War: Operational Art at an Impasse?," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, June 1997), 2-3.

⁹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Interagency Cooperation During Joint Operations (Joint Pub 3-08 Vol II) (Washington, D.C.: October 9, 1996), E-2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, E-3.

¹¹ William W. Mendel and Murl D. Munger, Strategic Planning and the Drug Threat (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army War College, August 1997), 31.

¹² During the period of 1988-2000, the author participated in numerous counterdrug operations in the Caribbean, South America, and the Eastern Pacific. The prior noted statement in the body of the text is based on the author's experience as an E-2C pilot with more than 1000 hours of flight time devoted to counterdrug operations.

¹³ Joint Interagency Task Force East, Facts Statement, 1 SEP 2000; available from <http://www.jiatfe.southcom.mil/index.html?cgFact>; Internet; accessed 17 March 2003.

¹⁴ Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), interview by author, Newport, RI, 18 April 2003.

¹⁵ Joint Interagency Task Force East, Facts Statement, 1 SEP 2000; available from <http://www.jiatfe.southcom.mil/index.html?cgFact>; Internet; accessed 17 March 2003.

¹⁶ Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), interview by author, Newport, RI., 18 April 2003.

¹⁷ Commander Russell Holland, JIATF West (J5), interview by author, Newport, RI., 18 April 2003.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), interview by author, Newport, RI., 18 April 2003.

²⁰ U.S. Interdiction Coordinator, National Interdiction Command and Control Plan (Washington, D.C.: May 1, 1999), 4-8.

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- ²¹ U.S. President, A National Security Strategy for the New Century, 5 January 2000; available from <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc-futr.htm#visions>; Internet; accessed 29 April 2003.
- ²² U.S. President, A National Security Strategy for a Global Age, December 2000; available from http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nss/nss_dec2000_contents.htm; Internet; accessed 29 April 2003.
- ²³ James Kitfield, "Busted On the High Seas," National Journal 34, no. 38 (September 2002): 2698-2704.
- ²⁴ Joint Interagency Task Force East, Mission Statement, 1 SEP 2000; available from <http://www.jiatfe.org/cg/missionNew.htm>; Internet; accessed 17 March 2003.
- ²⁵ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Interagency Cooperation During Joint Operations (Joint Pub 3-08 Vol II) (Washington, D.C.: October 9, 1996), E-3.
- ²⁶ Reinaldo Rivera, "The Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) Conundrum: Cooperation among Competitors, is harmony achievable through trust and understanding?," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, February 2003), 6-7.
- ²⁷ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations (Joint Pub 3-0) (Washington, D.C.: September 10, 2001), V-4
- ²⁸ U.S. Interdiction Coordinator, National Interdiction Command and Control Plan (Washington, D.C.: May 1, 1999), 3.
- ²⁹ Illustration artwork provided by Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), 25 April 2003.
- ³⁰ Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), interview by author, Newport, RI., 25 April 2003.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² U.S. Interdiction Coordinator, National Interdiction Command and Control Plan (Washington, D.C.: May 1, 1999), 4-8.
- ³³ Commander Russell Holland, JIATF West (J5), interview by author, Newport, RI., 25 April 2003.
- ³⁴ Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), interview by author, Newport, RI., 25 April 2003.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Illustration provided by Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), 25 April 2003.
- ³⁷ Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), interview by author, Newport, RI., 25 April 2003.
- ³⁸ Captain Dennis Flaherty, Director, Operational Risk Management (N09K), interview by author, Newport, RI., 25 April 2003.
- ³⁹ Illustration artwork provided by Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), 25 April 2003.
- ⁴⁰ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF). (Joint Pub 0-2) (Washington, D.C.: July 10, 2001), V-1.
- ⁴¹ Illustration artwork provided by Alan McKee, JIATF East (J5), 25 April 2003.

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