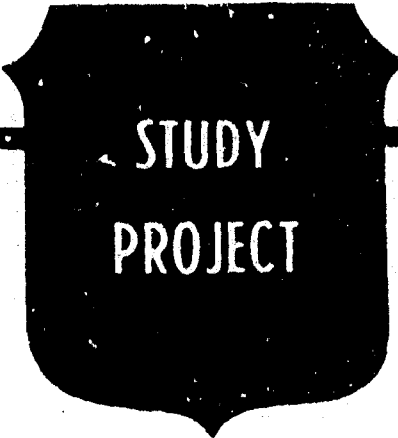


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THE MILITARY AND THE WAR ON DRUGS  
WHAT CAN BE DONE AT THE INSTALLATION LEVEL?

BY

COLONEL LANCE L. SMITH  
United States Air Force

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) The Military and the War on Drugs What Can Be Done at the Installation Level? An Individual Study		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Study Project
7. AUTHOR(s) Colonel Lance L. Smith		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Same		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
12. REPORT DATE 2 April 1990		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 23
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified
15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE		
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) With the current problems in our schools and communities involving use of illegal drugs the Department of Defense as a public resource is being asked to play a larger role in a mission that is both unfamiliar and undefined. The full scope of the part we are to play is still being determined but it is clear that the President expects full cooperation from the U.S. Armed Forces, both active and reserve. Most efforts to date involving the military have been directed toward the immediate goals of reducing the flow of drugs at the source and in transit. The level of authority and action has been primarily at the major		

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

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THE MILITARY AND THE WAR ON DRUGS  
WHAT CAN BE DONE AT THE INSTALLATION LEVEL?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

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Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013  
2 April 1990

## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lance L. Smith, COL, USAF

TITLE: The Military and the War on Drugs: What Can be Done at the Installation Level?

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 2 April 1990

PAGES: 20

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

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THE MILITARY AND THE WAR ON DRUGS.  
WHAT CAN BE DONE AT THE INSTALLATION LEVEL?

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As military involvement in the "war on drugs" continues in full swing the Department of Defense (DOD) is addressing the issue at the highest levels of the military while many actions that could be accomplished at the installation level are left undone. This may be by design, but in effect we are omitting one of the most effective tools available to fight the "battles" that will win the "war." We have in the armed forces a relatively drug free group that has already indicated an interest in public service and are ready to play a larger role. They simply need the direction and encouragement to contribute effectively.

This paper will address those areas where worthwhile contributions are possible. First, in order to understand the scope of the problem and where the small base, post, or naval station fits in, we must look at the general strategy of the government and progress to date. I will then examine how the military can help with problems confronting state and local leaders and offer recommendations for implementing a number of actions to address the problems.

U. S. NATIONAL DRUG STRATEGY AND THE MILITARY

The policy "goal of the United States is to curtail the nation's illicit use of drugs by significantly reducing both their supply and their demand."<sup>1</sup> The methods are to attack the problem during the production, transit, and consumption phases. The Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) in his

18 September 1989 newsbriefing outlined the DOD role in drug control stating that "detecting and countering the production and trafficking of illegal drugs is a high-priority national security mission of the Department of Defense."2 In his guidance letter implementing the strategy he further states that "the United States Armed Forces would assist in the attack on the supply of drugs at every phase of the flow (1) in the countries that are the sources of the drugs, (2) in transit from the source countries to the United States, and (3) in distribution in the United States."3 The military is deeply engaged in phases one and two while many opportunities remain in phase three.

The Secretary's guidance describes "the role of the armed forces in the third line of defense" to include "both actions to reduce the supply of illegal drugs and actions to reduce the demand for those drugs" by assisting "requesting law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and the National Guard with training, reconnaissance, command and control, planning, and logistics for counternarcotics operations. DOD will ensure that its administrative and command structures permit rapid and effective response to appropriate requests for counternarcotics assistance from LEAs and the National Guard."4

The network to accomplish much of this will be available as DOD has been tasked to "be prepared, with the cooperation of U.S. LEAs, to integrate expeditiously into an effective network the Federal command, control, communications and technical intelligence assets that are dedicated to the mission of interdicting illegal drugs from abroad. DOD will seek to develop and employ when appropriate the capability to exercise tactical control of Federal detection and monitoring assets actively dedicated to counternarcotics operations outside the United States and in border areas."5 With proper integration of installation assets the system can further assist to meet State and local needs.



In addition, to further support the national drug strategy the SECDEF directed the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) to work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support, and the DOD Comptroller to "execute the following actions: Air and Maritime Source Country Surveillance Systems Study; Expanded Training, Including Use of Mobile Training Teams, Details to Drug Law Enforcement Agencies; Training of Drug Law Enforcement Personnel; Assistance in National Guard Efforts; Training in Rehabilitation-oriented Training Camp Establishment and Operation, Overflow Prison Services, Canine Support; Regional Logistical Support Offices; and Review of Rules of Engagement."6

#### LIMITATIONS AND PROVISIONS UNDER CURRENT LAW

The Posse Comitatus Act was enacted into law in 1878 to preclude excessive use of the Army to enforce civil laws during the Reconstruction Period.<sup>7</sup> Congress clarified the act in 1981 to allow DOD the authority to use its men and equipment in support of LEAs at all levels. Congress again expanded the law in 1988 and assigned DOD as the lead agency in "monitoring and detecting aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs into the United States, and in integrating the nation's C3I assets into an effective network."<sup>8</sup> In 1989 the military's role was further enhanced to allow arrest of drug traffickers outside the United States.<sup>9</sup>

While several restrictions on use of active duty military have been lifted the most significant ones remain. The Armed Forces, with the exception of the Coast Guard, have no arrest authority inside the United States and remain restricted from the use of force except in a national emergency or under threat to life. DOD has neither requested nor been given authority to deviate from these restrictions and wishes to avoid any appearance of being a law enforcement agency. There can be little doubt,

however, that as the pressure to win the war on drugs continues, the military will be called upon to use its vast resources in an ever increasing role. If we wish to control how these resources will be used we need to begin now to develop an effective plan to direct the necessary assets toward the drug war on the terms most favorable to maintaining our proper place in society while "providing for the defense of the United States" as intended by Title 10 of the U.S. Code. (United States Code, Title 10, Section 8062, Armed Forces)

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3. Richard B. Cheney, Department of Defense Guidance for Implementation of the President's National Drug Control Strategy, 18 September 1989, p. 1.

4. Ibid., p. 4.

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## CHAPTER II

### WHERE ARE WE WITH THE WAR ON DRUGS?

Nationally the war on drugs is meeting with mixed success. While the war is waged in the headlines with arrests in Columbia and Mexico and major drug busts occur weekly inside our borders, the availability of drugs has not declined nor has the price risen substantially. Ingenuity and imagination on the part of drug smugglers and dealers continue to challenge law enforcement agencies. Complete elimination at the source appears to be an unattainable objective as the problem simply moves to areas of the world where the risk is lower.

Interdiction in transit is both expensive and difficult. The most successful interdiction program can hope to achieve is increased risk to the smugglers and therefore increased cost to doing business. This is no small contribution for if the risk gets too high and/or too expensive the effect would be to reduce use of that mode of transportation, i.e. general aviation, as an effective means of smuggling. This generally forces more drugs along other preestablished routes where LEAs can concentrate their efforts and hopefully be more effective, thus further increasing expenses for the suppliers. The combination of these factors, if successful, should result in a higher price and reduced demand.<sup>2</sup> The lack of a price increase indicates that either we are not accomplishing a great deal with current interdiction efforts or there are acceptable substitutes such as "ice" being produced within our borders therefore unaffected by interdiction programs.<sup>3</sup> This is not meant to suggest that we eliminate the interdiction strategy. It is critical to reduce supply to give demand reduction programs a chance to succeed.

We appear to be making some progress reducing demand in many sectors of society while regressing in others. Casual drug use has dropped off and use by high school students, if polls are to be believed, is

declining. 4 Current school programs to decrease demand are most effective in those segments of the population where education is considered important and are having minimal impact where it is not. Thus drug problems in the inner city are not showing expected decreases. Programs to help the so called "underclass" and lower to lower-middle classes seem to have success only in those areas that have strong support and involvement from the local community. Stories of angry citizens going into the streets to take their cities back are becoming more and more common. Similarly school programs demanded and supported by parents aimed at reaching young and particularly vulnerable, high risk, students are meeting with apparent success. As an educated and involved member of society, looked up to by many in these target groups, the military member can play a significant role.

Few of the actions in the national drug strategy have been tasked below the major command level and almost nothing is being filtered down to the base or unit except when tasked directly to support with aircraft and/or personnel. Much more can be done with little or no cost and minimal impact on readiness.

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2. Peter Reuter, Gordon Crawford, and Jonathan Cave, Sealing the Borders: The Effects of Increased Military Participation in Drug Interdiction, p. 20.

3. Ibid.

4. Deborah Mesce, "Drugs: Use Continued to Decline in 1989, Survey Finds," The Patriot-News (Harrisburg), 14 February 1990, p. A9.

## CHAPTER III

### PROBLEMS CONFRONTING STATE AND LOCAL LEADERS

Problems vary by State and location but most are evident in some form or another to every city in the U S - only the intensity is different. Funding limitations are a fact of life and therefore finite resources assumed. Any effort on the part of the military to relieve state or local authorities from a duty or responsibility or from having to purchase expensive equipment should free either people or resources to accomplish other law enforcement activities. There are three major problem areas where the military can play a role and remain within the limits and intent of the law: manpower, equipment, and education. 1

#### MANPOWER

The biggest shortfall authorities have is the lack of manpower available to fight the war on drugs and still accomplish normal law enforcement duties. From the Coast Guard or Customs Department's lack of resources to keep suspected drug facilities under surveillance to the Sheriff's Departments' inability to dedicate qualified personnel to drug enforcement programs, the problem confronts every aspect of the battle. 2

The shortage of qualified personnel means that all available resources end up responding to street crime with little effort applied to intelligence gathering, analysis or strategy development. 3 Most anti drug strategies in smaller localities are strictly reactive with no effort directed toward finding cause or possible solutions. This method of handling the problem is inefficient and manpower intensive. Successful anti-drug strategies aim at solving social problems that the street cop is ill prepared for and unlikely to support. Local police forces recognize this shortcoming and are ready to act should the resources be freed up or made available. Dedicating just one or two positions for trained experts

to concentrate on the drug problem could have a major impact and if effective relieve overall manpower requirements. Broader military involvement can help and will be addressed in the next chapter.

### EQUIPMENT

Another significant shortfall in the average law enforcement agency is the lack of adequate command and control equipment dedicated to anti drug efforts. 4 Most radio and telephone systems are already overloaded with the demands of every day law enforcement. Even if they had the equipment few cities or towns have the networks to share drug related data or the expertise to compile and analyze such data. Computers are only now gaining acceptance in smaller municipalities and the training to use them to full potential is expensive and lacking. Fully aware of these shortcomings, many drug traffickers are finding their way to these cities.

It was two years before local authorities in York, Pennsylvania realized their city had become a major east coast drug center. 5 Local citizens were astonished but all the signs were there for some time.

When localities suspect activities that require surveillance they seldom have the manpower, equipment, or time to dedicate. Few police departments have helicopters or airplanes and even if they did the type surveillance required would be too costly.

### EDUCATION

Schools and adult communities are often woefully lacking in facts and statistics surrounding drug use. When local officials request assistance from the State or Federal government the response is often not timely or adequate. Everyone is overtaxed and undermanned in this area. Schools lack trained instructors to teach such courses and the police have little time to dedicate. Small businesses don't know how to establish

effective drug testing programs or where to go for information  
misinformation abounds 6

Many of these difficulties appear insurmountable without significant assistance in manpower, money, and/or equipment. The military has little flexibility in providing financial support, but our manpower and equipment are high quality, numerous, and available if we just shift priorities slightly. We can assist by providing people, communications, surveillance, analysis and advice.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Rand Corporation, The Military in the War on Drugs: A Research and Analysis Concept (Draft Proposal), p. 16.
2. U.S. General Accounting Office, Drug Control Issues Surrounding Increased Use of the Military in Drug Interdiction, p. 22.
3. Ibid., p. 24.
4. Ibid., p. 25.
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6. Michael S. Gazzaniga, "The Federal Drugstore," National Review, 5 February 1990, p. 39.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT CAN BE DONE AT THE INSTALLATION LEVEL?

We must get involved in our local communities. This is where the drug war will be won or lost. More arrests are made, more drugs recovered, and more real impact made in the cities and towns across America than can ever be achieved by attacking drugs at the source or in transit.<sup>1</sup> If we focus more effort here, surely we can have an impact. Even limited success will provide a better environment for us to live in and raise our children. Obvious collateral benefits will result as well: improved relations between the unit and local community; greater esteem for military members; and ultimately improvements in morale, reenlistments, and recruiting.

In no way do we wish to replace local authorities in the enforcement of domestic criminal laws. Rather the idea is to maximize support of law enforcement agencies by providing assistance that is useful in improving efficiency and in turn freeing people to conduct the war more effectively.

Combat readiness must remain the military's number one priority. However, the ability to fight a conventional war on the plains of Germany is competing for training priority with those skills required to engage in low to mid intensity conflict. Such skills are much more aligned with activities found in the fight against drugs. Therefore the lessons and training derived from engaging the drug lords are more transferable and thus detract less from military readiness than heretofore.<sup>2</sup> In fact there may be much we can learn by engaging this "war" with more enthusiasm and support at the base level.

### PEOPLE

The initial stage in producing a workable program is to educate the installation populace. They must know what the program is and how they



can participate. They must be trained in what to look for, what to do and not do, and who to contact. None of this information is readily available to the average military member today. Too often people see things they want to report but either don't know who to tell or don't know whether or not their observations are useful. Overtaxed police either cannot take the information or can't do anything about it.

The training program for individuals should encourage civic action and describe in detail those things characteristic of drug related actions, individuals with jobs but no regular schedule, a great deal of cash on hand, expensive trappings that are out of place or don't seem to fit the person, numerous visitors at varying hours of different economic status, etc. Also included in the program should be methods of identifying means of transportation such as boats with numerous antennas and marinas suspected of high concentrations of drug traffickers for installations near the water or intercoastal waterway.<sup>3</sup> Any features that police would normally use to identify drug smugglers or dealers and information needed for follow-up could be taught.

Pilots would receive training in what marijuana fields, laboratories, and other drug processing facilities look like from the air. Normal flight profiles, type planes, and flying characteristics should be covered, as well as, known drop zones and possible landing fields. Similarly large boats being met by small boats in open seas or isolated areas would be suspect and reported.<sup>4</sup>

Once fully educated, the U.S. Armed Forces would constitute an unusually well trained and enthusiastic reservoir of people to assist the local community. There is reason to believe that they would be in very high demand if made available. The military has led the way in drug testing and drug education for years and have many talented members in offices as the Staff Judge Advocates, Social Actions, Security Police and

hospital who are willing and able to pass the lessons they have learned to anyone who will listen. Whether a business wishing to implement drug testing or schools desiring a qualified and experienced speaker, the military has the resources and expertise to help.

### C3I

Command, control, communications, and intelligence may be the most difficult part to get a handle on. The network suggested by many would center on a National Drug Intelligence Center under the National Command Authority. Each element of the C3I net would be tied into this center to compile data, develop trends, and supply information to LEAs all over the world. Unit command posts may or may not be included depending on the final proposal from DOD. Initially it is unlikely that any level below State would be included. It is also unlikely that local problems and considerations would be of sufficient interest to such a center that counties or cities would benefit. For these reasons the military needs to set up within the national system a subsystem that handles these needs and at the same time supports the national data base.

Such a system would include all military command posts with each assigned a sector such that the entire United States is covered. Associated installations would be assigned responsibilities to collect, analyze, and transmit information to local, State, and Federal agencies as appropriate. Most of this could be done with the addition of very little equipment or manpower to the existing C3 system.

Each sector would have a dedicated 24 hour drug WATS line to the command post where calls could be recorded and checklist information taken. There is no reason that this number should be advertised or identified as military - it would simply be a drug reporting hot line to collect data. The calls would be taken, data collected, and information

passed to Intel for analysis. Information of a timely nature would be passed to appropriate authorities or the call transferred directly.

Airborne sightings pose a somewhat different problem, as there is currently no single radio frequency to report drug related sightings. Optimally a network using Have Quick radios would be available nationwide using procedures similar to those used in war. Otherwise we could use standard procedures for flight reports and intelligence debriefing during and after the sortie. The difficulty in taking action on something as fleeting as another aircraft in flight or even on the ground may not warrant attempts at real time reporting. The information, however, once reported, trended, and analyzed could prove valuable for future monitoring.

Requests for information by outside agencies would be handled differently. The entry level of the request and approval required would depend on the type assistance and the position of the requester. A request from DEA should go through DOD and be tasked to the appropriate unit through normal tasking channels. Local LEA requests would be approved at the unit level or passed to higher headquarters depending on the nature of the assistance required. But all requests should be handled as closely as possible to the way we would process similar requests in wartime. The best of all worlds would be to exercise the joint command and control net. For example, if Customs wanted a particular marina monitored they could make the request through a Joint Task Force headquarters and in turn the appropriate DOD agency would be tasked through the command and control network. In this case, if Customs wanted a marina in South Carolina monitored because it suspected the appearance of a "mother ship" off the coast the tasking might go through 9th Air Force via the air tasking net to Myrtle Beach AFB. Myrtle Beach in turn would task its fighter squadrons to fly departure or arrival tracks over

the area. Intelligence would provide appropriate information on what to look for and what to report, reviewing ship recognition techniques and reporting procedures during pilot prebriefs. If the situation warranted unusual sightings could be reported real time to Intel and the information passed to Customs for action. Subsequent sorties could be scheduled or diverted to update information as necessary. Once an operation was underway pilots could talk directly to agents by radio if desired.

The critical element in such a system is the intelligence shop. Intelligence would be the focal point for receiving all reports, analyzing them, and transmitting findings to appropriate agencies. The unit intelligence office would be tied into the national data base and would take all information from that source and with more timely data from command post reports and local area LEAs develop trends for further surveillance, increased emphasis, or general interest.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Jeanne Kirkpatrick, "Other Side Winning: Failure to Attack Consumption Dooms US Drug Policy," Sunday Patriot-News(Harrisburg), 18 March 1990, p. B11.

2. Richard T. Jeffreys, LTC, Missions for Air Force Special Operations Forces in Support of the War on Illegal Drugs, p. 41

3. U.S. General Accounting Office, Drug Control: Issues Surrounding Increased Use of the Military in Drug Interdiction, p. 23.

4. Ibid.

5. Center for Low Intensity Conflict, Illicit Drugs and National Security: An Executive Summary of the Threat and a Rational Response, (briefing presented to author in January 1990).

## CHAPTER V

### EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES

It is natural in any such action to attempt to measure DOD's contribution to the drug war by comparing time spent directly supporting such efforts with the number of busts or amount of illegal drugs recovered.<sup>1</sup> This can easily be accomplished for aircrews by logging actual time on computer reports filled out by each pilot after flight. The danger is that excessive time will be logged with very limited results, i.e. every aircraft flying over the marina could legitimately log a portion of its flight as drug related but unless a major drug bust is made the time spent will severely dilute the apparent effectiveness of overall DOD support. For that reason, only dedicated aircraft support to LEAs should be logged; other associated time should simply be included as enroute time. Use of vehicles, boats, satellites, radars and other equipment should be handled similarly.

For Command Post, Intelligence, Training and other support agencies time dedicated would have to be estimated and reported upon request. The same dangers are present here as with flight time in that the effort will be difficult to correlate directly with measurable results. The overall benefits will have to be evaluated by their impact on the community not on the grams of cocaine discovered.

### ENDNOTES

1. U. S. General Accounting Office, Drug Control: Issues Surrounding Increased Use of the Military in Drug Interdiction, p. 26.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The military clearly has a role to play in the war on drugs at the base, unit, and station level. Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies will never have the resources to go it alone. While the military has an apparent respite from the dangers of an East-West conflict we can contribute without putting the nation at great risk. DOD is on board and increasing participation every day but there is still more that can be done at military installations across the nation.

Taking the fight to these levels clearly has risks. The possibility remains that over involvement could result in less combat training and lowered readiness. Even more significant may be the danger of over reliance by LEAs on the military for help in areas that have heretofore been considered beyond our jurisdiction. Extracting ourselves from a major role in local and state affairs could be a major obstacle should the world situation require a return to the intense conventional training required during periods of tension. With a common sense approach, however, and due consideration for the fact that we cannot avoid this war we need to engage with every asset available and win it quickly. With careful thought and planning we have an opportunity to contribute significantly to a national problem of major proportions while providing our people with substantial training at the lower end of the spectrum of conflict. We can use the situation to our best advantage by developing an acquisition and training strategy that will be effective in the war on drugs and at the same time be translated to efficiency on the battlefield. A cooperative approach can pay significant dividends.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Major Commanders direct subordinate units to emphasize drug related activities as a "high-priority national security mission" in accordance with SECDEF guidance.
  - Allocate mission and training sorties accordingly
  - Support LEAs when possible within intent of guidance
2. Major Commanders require subordinate units to develop or include in existing drug abuse programs information and procedures for military members to recognize and report drug related activity
3. Installation commanders encourage military members to take part in local activities to decrease drug demand.
  - Experts speak at civic functions, schools, service organizations, etc.
  - Offer advice to business organizations on drug testing and other anti drug programs
4. DOD establish the requirement for an integrated C3I network that will support both national, state, and local needs.
  - Develop integrated system using existing command posts to cover U.S.
  - Tie in directly to local LEAs
  - Ensure two way data flow between agencies at all levels
5. Install nationwide telephone system for reporting drug related activities.
  - Within each command post divided by sector
  - Advertise number regionally by sector
6. Establish Intelligence units as focal point.
  - Emphasis on data collection and analysis
  - Correlate information to develop trends rather than transmit raw data
  - Primary link with LEAs at all levels

8 Organize "War on Drugs" functions under operational chain of command

- Put Director for Operations, G3, or equivalent in charge at installation level

- Establish procedures to resemble combat structure as near as possible

- Maximize opportunities to develop and enhance combat skills

9 Fully man affected organizations to accomplish the mission

- Increase authorizations for appropriate intelligence and C3I units at all levels

- Use draw down manpower to fill to 100%



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