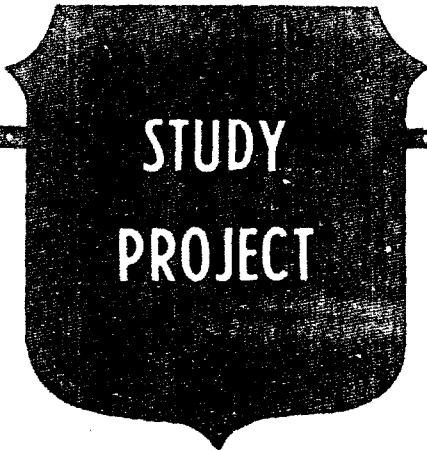


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### THE DRUG WAR: A MILITARY CURE?

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GARY R. STEIMER  
United States Army

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The drug problem in the United States has reached almost epidemic proportions. Americans have become frustrated at the lack of progress that the government and civilian law enforcement agencies have made in combatting the drug problem. This lack of progress has caused many to believe that the military may provide the solution. Counter-narcotics efforts, to include production and trafficking, are a high priority mission of the Department of Defense. However, the ability of the DoD to fight in a drug war is severely limited by the Posse Comitatus Act. Although this Act has been amended to allow the military to take a more active role in counter-narcotics missions, the military is still severely constrained from using all of its resources. Civilian and military planners must answer three basic questions before they fully commit the armed forces of the United States to fight the war on drugs: (1) Should the military be involved in the drug war?, (2) What are the possibilities and limitations of military involvement?, and (3) What is the military objective? In examining these very pertinent questions, it is also necessary to consider the role of the military as "policemen", and the impact that such a mission would have on the ability of our nation's warriors to conduct standard warfighting missions.

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THE DRUG WAR: A MILITARY CURE?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel Gary R. Steimer  
United States Army

Dr. Gabriel Marcella  
Project Advisor

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## INTRODUCTION

The drug problem in the United States has reached almost epidemic proportions. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the number of drug users in the U.S. in 1991 was approximately 12.9 million. In an effort to reduce, or at a minimum contain the drug problem, the federal government is projected to spend nearly \$11.7 billion in fiscal year 1992. Although there has been a recent trend which suggests that the use of illegal drugs has declined, the inability to rid our society of illegal drugs has frustrated Americans. Since state and local law enforcement agencies have been unable to make an appreciable dent in the reduction of drug use in our society, many Americans, to include our elected officials, believe that the military may provide the solution.

President Bush has stated that no threat does more damage to our national values and institutions than does drugs. He further stated that the national strategy must attack both the demand reduction and the international drug trade.<sup>1</sup> With the national security of our nation at stake, the military option to assist in the control of international drug trafficking appears to have some merit. Many would argue that the military should not be used as international/domestic policemen, and that the services are not organized to undertake such a mission. To make a determination as to the usefulness of the military in fighting the drug war, three questions must be answered. They are: (1) Should the military be involved in the drug war?, (2) What are the possibilities and

limitations of military involvement?, and (3) What is the military objective?

### **SHOULD THE MILITARY BE INVOLVED IN THE DRUG WAR?**

The basis for the present military role in the drug war dates to 1981 when Congress amended the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act to enable the military to participate in drug interdiction along the U.S./Mexican border. The original Act was intended to restrict Army oversight during the Reconstruction-era elections.<sup>2</sup> It still forbids military involvement in civilian law enforcement and prohibits the military from making searches, seizures and arrests. It does not however prohibit the military from supporting civilian law enforcement agencies. These support activities can include, but are not limited to, intelligence support, engineering support, training support, reconnaissance support and the provision of equipment. It is important to note that the Posse Comitatus Act does not apply to the Coast Guard or the National Guard (when under State control).

Although the Posse Comitatus Act restricts the military from arrest and seizure, there have been two recent cases wherein the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel has ruled that under certain circumstances, U.S. military forces overseas can legally apprehend drug lords. One case involved the apprehension of former Panamanian dictator General Manuel Noriega, and the other case involved the planned capture of Pablo Escobar, a Colombian drug

lord. It is very possible that these decisions by the Justice Department could eventually allow for complete military involvement in what are now considered to be roles solely for civilian law enforcement agencies. Bruce Zigaris, an international law expert, has made that correlation in the following statement:

"Certainly the trend is toward stretching all these restrictions on the military, especially internationally. And when you talk about the military arresting drug lords, you're definitely setting a precedent."<sup>3</sup>

As limited as the military's current role in counter-drug activities is, it is the result of the desires of the executive and legislative branches of our government. They have directed the military to support the effort and provided the funds to create the required support mechanisms. In May 1991, the Honorable Stephen M. Duncan, the Coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support affirmed that "....The Department [of Defense] will continue to devote significant resources and energy in all aspects of this [counterdrug] effort....".<sup>4</sup>

As touched upon earlier, the President has determined that combatting international drug trafficking, and reducing the flow of illegal drugs into our country is key to "the survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its values intact and its institutions and people secure."<sup>5</sup> If it has been determined that the drug war is a matter of national security, then it would follow that the use of all available resources, whether they be civilian or military, are fully warranted.



General Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has been tasked by our government to accept some degree of responsibility for combatting the threat of drugs as it relates to our national security. He made this very clear in the following statement made in February 1991:

".....a high priority national security mission for our armed forces....deal with this threat as a clear and present danger. We have accepted that mission....This mission will continue to require deployed, properly trained, and well-equipped forces for the foreseeable future."<sup>6</sup>

The importance of the military role in counter-drug activities, with respect to our national security, is clearly stated in the Fiscal Year 1994-1999 Defense Planning Guidance (DPG). The Secretary of Defense articulates that:

"The national security interests can be translated into four mutually supportive strategic goals that guide our overall defense efforts. The fourth goal is to help preclude conflict by reducing sources of regional instability and to limit violence should conflict occur. Within the broader national security policy of encouraging the spread and consolidation of democratic government and open economic systems, DoD furthers these ends through efforts to counter terrorism, drug trafficking, and other threats to internal democratic order....."<sup>7</sup>

The Defense Planning Guidance (FY 1994-1999) addresses the military's counter-drug activities in rather broad terms. It emphasizes the fact that the regional defense strategy of the U.S. rests on four essential elements, one of which is forward presence. It is through this forward presence that the Secretary of Defense believes the war on drugs can be prosecuted.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the guidance states that the Department of Defense will support other

U.S. agencies involved in counter-drug activities, and will continue to assist neighboring countries in their attempts to combat the instability brought about by illegal drugs. Although the DPG is rather general in the terms in which the DOD will be involved in the counter-drug effort, it is not too general as to prohibit the services from initiating their own planning efforts. The DPG does in fact place a focus on the role of the DOD by stating that:

"Countering drug trafficking remains a high priority. Our counter-drug programs in the region must focus on stemming the flow of drugs by attacking drug trafficking at the source, in the producing and refining countries, and along the transit routes to the U.S."<sup>9</sup>

The U.S. Army has outlined its plan to assist in the counter-drug effort in The Army Plan (TAP), FY 1994-2009. The TAP follows the guidance of the DPG in stating that the, "Military support to the national counter-drug effort will require the sustained deployment of appropriately trained and equipped members of the armed forces and improved cooperation with the Drug Law Enforcement Agencies."<sup>10</sup>

The TAP is very definitive in its guidance that all international activities will be conducted under the command of the combatant commanders, and that any U.S. support will respect the sovereignty of foreign governments. Accordingly, the TAP divides the Army's efforts into two categories. The first category pertains to the provision of assets for use by non-DoD agencies and selected foreign governments. The second category allows for the

provision of forces and equipment to combatant commanders for training, logistics, transportation, intelligence support, and limited operational commitments.<sup>11</sup> Although the TAP addresses the topic of limited operational commitments, it also states very clearly that any such activity will be consistent with the provisions of the Posse Comitatus Act and other related laws.

The objectives and programming guidance found in The Army Plan are based on several documents; the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS), Defense Guidance for Implementation of the NDCS, the Army Counter-Drug Plan (17 April 1990), and the Army Leadership Guidance. It is these documents that the Army uses as a foundation to issue planning and programming requirements to the DA Staff and Major Commands with respect to counter-drug activities and missions.

In an effort to guide the Army in the counter-drug program, the TAP outlines five long-range planning objectives, and five associated mid-range planning objectives. Four of the objectives relate to support for the CINCs, Federal, State and Local law enforcement agencies. The final objective addresses efforts to make the Army drug free. All of the objectives equate to an increase in the Army resources to include manpower, equipment and money.

As the Army continues to increase its role in the counter-drug arena, the budget and manpower factors are on the decline. It is very possible that units involved in counter-drug support operations may have to increase their expenditure of operational

funding for counter-drug operations as opposed to standard Army missions. The TAP clearly states the Army's role with respect to counter-drug support. It does not however address the question as to the possible adverse effect this support could have on the overall readiness of the forces with respect to the standard Army missions. The indicators are that the Army's participation in counter-drug missions will increase. The extent to which this impacts on standard Army missions will have to be appraised by commanders at all levels.

To some extent The Army Plan takes into account the increase in required participation. According to the TAP:

"the U.S. faces a broad range of security challenges in various regions around the world. This diverse range of enduring, emerging and non-traditional threats will require the U.S. Army to develop new capabilities in areas such as nation assistance and counter-drug operations."<sup>12</sup>

New capabilities normally equate to an increase in force structure and resources. The adequacy of these resources in the future will be key to the effectiveness of the Army's efforts in combatting drugs.

When used in conjunction with each other, the Defense Planning Guidance and The Army Plan provide military staff with the tools they need to effectively plan and implement counter-drug support to CINCs and other Federal agencies. These documents do not however allocate additional resources.

The availability of resources is key to how effective the Army will be in providing support to the war on drugs. With a declining defense budget, and a drawing down of the force, the issue of

counter-drug mission versus standard Army mission will need to be addressed. Although there is an overlap in some areas, the missions are not always compatible. It is likely that the development of "new capabilities" will draw assets away from what have been standard missions in the past.

With the advent of the New World Order, the missions/roles of the military services are likely to change. It is very possible that these changes will result in an increased role for the Army in the counter-drug area. This increased role could very well prompt the Army to declare counter-drug operations as a "standard Army mission". If this were to happen, both the TAP and DPG would have to be changed. Additionally, there would probably be a change in the way resources are allocated and the way the force is structured.

Defense planners must continue to address the hard issues of service roles and missions, resource allocation and force structure. This must be done in the context of counter-drug missions, as well as other "standard" missions. The DPG and the TAP are catalysts for the manner in which the Army ultimately conducts its business. If it is agreed that the military's role in the counter-drug field is going to increase, then it is imperative that the authors of the DPG and the TAP plan for the future now. The war on drugs will not be easy to win and the warriors need all the head start they can get.

If one agrees with the premise that the military should have a direct involvement in the drug war, then the next logical question

to ask is what should be the possibilities and limitations of military involvement.

#### **POSSIBILITIES/LIMITATIONS OF MILITARY INVOLVEMENT**

The extent to which the military is used to assist in the reduction of international drug trafficking is somewhat dependent on the Posse Comitatus Act, and the willingness of Congress and/or the Department of Justice to grant individual or blanket exceptions allowing for a more active role of military forces.

One can not explore the possibilities and limitations of military involvement without making some assumptions. These assumptions must deal not only with the status of the Posse Comitatus Act, but also with the availability of resources. Therefore, the assumptions must be examined in both the positive and negative aspect. For example, if the assumption is made that the Posse Comitatus Act will not be waived, an analyst would come up with a different set of possibilities and limitations as opposed to an analyst who made the assumption that the Posse Comitatus Act will not be totally binding on the military. The same is true as to the assumption of the availability/non-availability of key resources.

Before looking to the possibilities and limitations of the future, it is important to understand where the military is today in relationship to their support of the drug war. With the exception of the National Guard and Coast Guard, the military is

pretty much bound to the provisions of the Posse Comitatus Act. Additionally, although Congress has increased the funding to the Department of Defense for anti-drug activities, the declining budget may change this trend in the future. Therefore, in terms of current status, the military is accountable under the Posse Comitatus Act and does not have an abundance of money with which to support the drug war.

Secretary of Defense Cheney tasked each U.S. major command to develop plans that would delineate how they could contribute to the war on drugs. These plans provided the impetus for the formation of three Joint Task Forces; one in FORSCOM, one in PACOM and one in LANTCOM. The responsibilities of these JTFs range from command and control cells, to forces that are being used to monitor and detect drug trafficking. In addition, they support numerous governmental agencies.

Other support includes the use of the military to train federal drug enforcement agents, the loan and/or operation of sophisticated military equipment to civilian law enforcement agencies, the use of aircraft and ships to monitor and report on international drug traffickers, the providing of intelligence information and the assignment of liaison officers to many federal agencies. This list is not all inclusive of the military support to the drug war, but the support is limited in that no active military forces can engage in a direct interdiction role.<sup>13</sup>

As we look to the future, the question as to whether or not the military can be effective in the drug war with the limitations

imposed by the Posse Comitatus Act need to be addressed. For the future scenarios it may prove to be beneficial to make the assumption that the provisions of the Posse Comitatus Act will be waived when dealing with international drug traffickers (OCONUS). If it is agreed that the drug war represents a form of low intensity conflict, then current support mechanisms may not be adequate to attack the enemy.

Michael H. Abbott, an aviation battalion commander who supported a counter-drug operation in Bolivia, states very clearly that if the U.S. is serious about the drug war they must go beyond the current support roles. He supports the need for a security assistance program that goes beyond just supporting law enforcement agencies, and is not run by the State Department alone. He further states that:

"If the US government considers the war on drugs to be more than just political rhetoric--and that's a big if--it must make major efforts to decrease demand through education and to decrease supply through interdiction and eradication. It should use its diplomatic powers to negotiate....  
...and security assistance programs to counter drug trafficking in the three major producing countries in this hemisphere."<sup>14</sup>

If the restrictions placed on the military are lifted, and adequate resources are made available, the whole context of military possibilities would change. It could be conjectured that we, the nation, are waging a war on drugs with our hands tied behind our back. To some, this may sound very reminiscent of the Vietnam Conflict.



The drug war that we are currently involved in did not happen overnight. It has been with us for many generations, and still goes unresolved. If one agrees that it is vital to our national security, then one would also agree that laws should be amended and resources made available to attack the problem. Why should we deal with this low intensity conflict any differently than we did with the conflicts in Panama or Grenada? Could the underlying reason be that the government does not want to get our nation involved in a low intensity conflict which may not be resolvable in the "short term"? Is it very possible that our nation has become so accustomed to wars/conflicts of short duration that the commitment to a long-term conflict is unthinkable?

It is not possible to plan a single military strategy for the future unless the ground rules for future military involvement are stated quickly and clearly. As mentioned earlier, the ground rules have already been changed on two occasions (Panama and Colombia). This can send mixed signals to a staff that is responsible for developing a military strategy. The result could be an "empty strategy" with numerous contingency plans sitting on the shelf.

The possibilities and limitations of military forces in the drug war today are known and well documented. The bottom line is that the active military is restricted to a support role. If the rules change (Posse Comitatus), and the resources are made available, the possibilities and the courses of action to the military greatly increase. Under a new set of operating conditions

the possibilities are only limited by the imagination and vision of our national leaders, both civilian and military. If the military is given an expanded role in interdiction, to include operational support, then a determination will have to be made as to the actual military objective.

#### **SHOULD WARRIORS BE POLICEMEN?**

One can not find total agreement, either within the military or civilian establishments, as to whether or not the military should be involved in the counter-narcotics effort. Even the current limited use of military force is rejected by some military and civilian leaders. Although the debaters can justify their positions, either pro or con, the entire issue comes down to one basic question: Should warriors be policemen?

The majority of the American population would not consider the use of military force overseas to abate the drug problem as a "police action". However, that same use of force within the continental United States would most definitely be seen as a "police action" by most Americans. Therefore, to address the issue of warriors as policemen, it is helpful to examine the issue from the perspective of two different areas of operation.

One area of operation would be any territory outside of the United States, and the second area of operation would include only the United States. It is logical to make this differentiation since the majority of drugs being used in the United States are

imported. That equates to two distinct problems; each associated with a different area of operation. The OCONUS problem is one of crop eradication and interdiction of drug trafficking, hopefully before it reaches the United States. The CONUS problem is one of protecting the borders from incoming drugs, controlling the use (demand) of drugs within the United States, and arresting those who violate the laws.

The OCONUS operations may appear to some to be less of a threat to the use of American military forces in a "police role". With few exceptions would the military enter into the internal affairs of another country without the formal approval or request of that country. To do so would violate the country's sovereignty, which would in effect be an act of war. Since the role of the military overseas is to assist the host nations in controlling their narcotics problems, it would not be prudent for the United States to act in such a manner. Therefore, most overseas counter-narcotic operations are conducted in coordination with the host country's military forces and civilian law enforcement agencies. This allows the American forces to conduct the appropriate military actions (reconnaissance, surveillance, security, airlift, etc.), leaving the host nation with the responsibility to make the appropriate arrests and seizures.

The United States and the host nation would have to make the political determination as to whether or not the role of the American forces would be expanded to include the use of deadly force when conducting such operations. If the determination were

made to allow for the use of deadly force, the rules of engagement would have to be clear and unambiguous. If the host nation so desired, they may even authorize the U.S. forces to make arrests and seizures. The ultimate use of U.S. military force in a foreign nation would occur if the host nation declared a war on drugs within their country and invited the U.S. to assist them in an unrestricted manner. If this were to happen, the question of search, arrest and seizure would be a moot point, since the armed forces would be acting in a true military capacity abiding by the laws of land warfare.

If the military was successful at reducing the influx of narcotics into this nation, one would not believe that most Americans would complain that the military was being used in a police role overseas. The real concern for most policy makers is the effect of using the military as policemen within the United States. When one examines the effects of using the military to fight the drug war in the U.S. a different set of problems arise. The implications of using the military forces as policemen directly impact upon our society, to include the military establishment.

With the coming of the New World Order, the role of the military is subject to change. We have already seen the military being used in non-traditional roles such as hurricane relief efforts, humanitarian assistance efforts, fighting forest fires, and to some extent performing police-type functions in riot-torn cities within the United States. Not one of these areas were listed by our elected leaders as being critical to our national security. As

mentioned earlier, the drug problem is considered to be critical to the national security of the U.S.. This alone gives credence to those arguing that the nation's military forces should be used to fight the war on drugs, whether it be in the continental United States or overseas.

An article by Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., an Air Force officer, described a scenario in which the military forces of the United States overthrew their own government by staging a successful military coup in the year 2012. Although most Americans would find this scenario out of the realm of possibility, the author does make some very interesting comments relating to the use of military forces in non-traditional roles. In his fictional based account of the coup, Dunlap reminds his readers that:

"People need to understand that the armed forces exist to support and defend government, not to be the government. Faced with intractable national problems on one hand, and an energetic and capable military on the other, it can be all too seductive to start viewing the military as a cost-effective solution. We made a terrible mistake when we allowed the armed forces to be diverted from their original purpose."<sup>15</sup>

When taken in Dunlap's context of the military's role of defending the government, one could argue that arrest and seizure of U.S. citizens and their property would be in the best interests of the government. The crucial aspect of operating in this manner is that the government would have to task the military to take on these "police-type functions"; the military can not defacto assume this role. If tasked by the government to assume a new role that

would allow the military to make arrests and seizures, the question as to the legality of the actions would no longer be pertinent. What would then become pertinent is the effect that such a decision would have on the military with relationship to it being capable of successfully accomplishing its other missions.

Many would argue that assigning the military these non-traditional roles would adversely effect the military's primary mission of preparing for, and conducting military actions in support of our national interests. Harry Summers, a retired Army Colonel and military analyst, believes "that when the militaries lose sight of their purpose, catastrophe results."<sup>16</sup> Opponents of using the military in these non-traditional roles would suggest that these roles lead to a decline in training standards associated with warfighting, therefore eroding their ability and capability to fight. Others would argue that the assignment of these counter-narcotic missions to the military would eventually strip them of their "warfighting spirit", rendering them incapable of prosecuting a war when called upon.

The expected reduction in training time, and the decline in training standards that many experts believe would occur if the military was to be assigned the counter-narcotics role, may prove not to be a problem. Many of the activities associated with counter-narcotic operations are already encompassed within the current roles of the military. Slight modifications may have to be made for operations conducted in the United States, but it would not be expected that the military would have to overhaul its

training program or to alter the manner in which they conduct training. Counter-narcotic operations would require both small unit and large unit operations, to include joint and combined operations. The operations would be planned to make maximum use of military capabilities as they currently exist. One could argue that the assignment of the counter-narcotics mission to the military may bring with it an increase in budgetary funding, that could actually result in an increase in the resources available for training.

Military and civilian leaders must carefully consider the effect on the warfighting spirit of the military, and the very purpose of the military, before assigning them the counter-narcotics mission, especially within the United States. The military is made up of dedicated professionals who are prepared to give up their very life for that which their country deems is just. If the military is divided on the issue of the counter-narcotics mission, and the use of military as policemen, the whole cohesiveness of the military could be in jeopardy. Those in the service of their country today did not join with the expectations that they would have to do battle with citizens of the United States. Pointing an M-16 rifle or an M-1 tank at American citizens, with the intent to inflict bodily harm, may not be an easy task for most servicemembers. Their warfighting spirit may further be weakened by the likelihood that there could also be a very high casualty rate among innocent bystanders. How would a soldier react to conducting counter-narcotic operations in his

hometown realizing that his family may be the innocent victims of such operations?

The strength of the American military has been a deterrent to war throughout the world. This strength is based on highly trained and motivated individuals, superior weapons technology, and the ability to use massive firepower when required. The elected officials of our nation should not make a "quick-fix decision" when deciding on the usefulness of the military as policemen in counter-narcotic operations. A statement made by Richard J. Barnet, in The New Yorker, may provide a foundation from which the debate can start. He states that:

"The line between police action and military operation is real. Police derive their power from their acceptance as 'officers of the law'; legitimate authority, not firepower, is the essential element."<sup>17</sup>

Although there are many similarities between the military and officers of the law, there are also many differences which are critical to understanding the complexity of this issue. If it is agreed that aspects of law do in fact separate the military from the civilian police, then the decision makers must fully comprehend the conflict that may exist. These differences are articulated extremely well by Major General George S. Prugh and General William C. Westmoreland in an article in the Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy. In their article, they compare and contrast the law and the armed forces. They say that:

"There is a natural conflict between law and armed force. One is essentially a restriction upon the exercise of power while the other is essentially the effective use of power. One places great store



in how a goal is achieved, while the other focuses primarily on the fact of mission accomplishment. One seeks elimination of violence while the other employs violence on a broad scale. One uses sovereign power to minimize disruption and instability, while the other uses sovereign power to create both conditions elsewhere, with the intent of bringing peace through the imposition of the sovereign's will upon an opponent. But there are similarities as well. Both deal with matters deemed to be vital to the state. Thus both seek the preservation of the state and its society-but by quite contrary means and methods."<sup>18</sup>

Finally, the decision makers must be acutely aware that the men and women of the armed services are only prepared to lose their life, or take the life of another, for a cause that they believe to be just. If many believe the role or mission is not just, the effectiveness of the military team is lost, not to mention the long-term impact on the military as an institution. The decision to use the military as policemen in counter-narcotic operations will not be an easy one to make. Before making such a decision, it is incumbent upon our leaders to set politics aside and make that decision which is right for America. A decision, whether it be pro or con, will have a long-term impact on the American society.

#### **THE MILITARY OBJECTIVE?**

The mission of the military today with regards to the drug war is relatively broad, but still maintains some degree of clarity. The Defense Authorization Bill has made the Department of Defense the lead agency for air and maritime detection and monitoring. Although a very complex mission, the military has the

capability and knowledge to turn the mission guidance into "action on the ground". The importance of this mission to Congress is revealed when one looks at the current trend in DOD budget allocation. In 1988 the DOD spent approximately \$200 million on drug interdiction activities. In 1991 the DOD anticipated spending \$1.2 billion on drug control activities, with most of that sum programmed for the detection and monitoring phase of interdiction.<sup>19</sup>

If the trend continues to give the active military a more expanded role in the drug war (ie: operational), then the question of what the objective is becomes clouded. First of all, should we continue to use the terminology "drug war"? In our last five military encounters Congress never declared a war. The engagements were either conflicts or operations. War is a term that usually connotes a "winner" and a "loser", and always requires the use of violence. It is questionable whether or not Congress wants to interject the military into a drug war that may not be winnable.

In a U.S. Army War College publication it is predicted that the drug war is winnable, but the United States is not yet winning. The authors go on to define winning the war as:

"reducing the amount of drug abuse and drug traffic to a level which is acceptable to U.S. society and which does not seriously degrade our national security, our economic well-being, and our social order."<sup>20</sup>

The national drug control strategy outlines nine sets of objectives, or goals, for the reduction of drug abuse in the U.S.. One such objective deals with "current overall drug use". The two-

year objective seeks " a 15 percent reduction in the number of people reporting any illegal use of drugs in the past month", and the ten-year objective seeks a 55% reduction in the same category.<sup>21</sup> Although these goals are based on individuals' use of illegal drugs (demand), they can not possibly be attained without targeting the supply side. The military effort, if they were to be operationally tasked, would basically be directed to the supply side.

If the military is given the mission to fight a "drug war", then the national strategy and objectives would have to be clearly stated by our government so that the military could develop a corresponding military strategy. It is doubtful that the objectives as outlined in the national drug control strategy would be enough from which to develop an effective military strategy.

#### **IS IT TIME FOR A NARCOTICS COMMAND?**

For purposes of discussion, let's assume that Congress has granted the active military a "carte blanche" to attack the supply side of the drug war. Obviously, the current military structure would have to be modified to be capable of accomplishing this newly assigned mission. The problem is of such magnitude that to spread the total mission across many lines of command serves only to dilute the total effort. A logical approach to the problem could be to establish a new combatant command (Narcotics Command), with the sole responsibility of drug interdiction and suppression. The

intent here is not to outline procedures on how to fight a drug war, but rather how to organize in preparation for a war on drugs.

NARCOM could be similar in organization to that of the U.S. Special Operations Command. CINCNARC would have forces assigned to him that would be specifically trained for the very unique aspects of the counter-narcotics missions (ie. detection, destruction, HUMINT, SIGINT, etc.). He would primarily be a supporting CINC who would provide his forces to unified commanders who would exercise COCOM over them. Only when directed by the National Command Authority would CINCNARC maintain COCOM of his forces in another CINC's theater.

To effect coordination between CINCNARC and other combatant commanders it would be prudent for each warfighting CINC to develop sub-unified commands, joint task forces, or special staffs to handle only counter-narcotics missions (ie. NARCPAC, NARCLANT, etc.). These organizations would work very closely with NARCOM to ensure that their respective CINC was making use of all available resources in coping with the counter narcotics problems in their area of responsibility (AOR). Although there already exists several Joint Task Forces whose primary mission is support to drug interdiction, it is not likely that these JTFs would be adequate if the active military was to take an operational role in drug interdiction.

CINCNARC would be capable of supporting other CINCs with both joint and service unique forces. He would also assist in coordinating with other countries to ensure that allied and

coalition forces were properly trained in U.S. methods of drug interdiction and visa versa. This would be critical since the effective use of combined forces would be extremely important in counter-drug missions conducted in foreign countries.

With the establishment of NARCOM, civilian/governmental agencies such as the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and the Justice Department would only have to coordinate with one military entity. The current structure forces numerous CINCs to have to coordinate with numerous civilian agencies. This process is both awkward and time consuming, not to mention manpower intensive. It is further complicated by the fact that each CINC staff has a different level of expertise on counter narcotics, and counter-narcotics missions may not always be their number one priority. The staff of CINCNARC would be dedicated to counter-narcotic operations alone. It would be their only mission and they would be the only military "clearinghouse" for such operations.

The drug problem is a global problem and in most cases it would have to be attacked on a regional basis. This is where CINCNARC could be extremely effective. He would provide a very synergistic effect by adding his unique forces to those already assigned to the supported CINC. As mentioned earlier, he could also act independently when required by the NCA.

NARCOM could assume several additional responsibilities, thus relieving a duplication of effort currently found in the military. In addition to being the focal point with all civilian agencies involved in the counter-narcotic effort, NARCOM could also be the

focal point for intelligence with regards to their unique mission. This processed/raw information could be provided to the warfighting CINCs while ensuring that all compartmentation requirements were met. This is important since intelligence for one CINC may not be pertinent to another CINC, and indiscriminate release of intelligence, especially in counter-drug efforts, can adversely effect sources, plans and operations.

NARCOM would also be responsible for the publication and dissemination of any unique operational or training doctrine as it applies to counter-narcotics missions. Special training sites and schools for military counter-narcotics operations would come under the control of NARCOM. This would ensure standardized training and standards of operations across all military services, both active and reserve.

As is the case with CINCSOC, CINCNARC would have his own budget. Since CINCNARC would have no competing demands, funding for counter-narcotic operations would be his number one priority. This is not necessarily the case with other warfighting CINCs. Having his own budget would allow CINCNARC to conduct research and development and procure that unique equipment that he and the other CINCs need to fight the war on drugs.

One could argue that USSOCOM would be capable of performing all of the previously mentioned taskings. Although some of the responsibilities of NARCOM may appear to parallel those of SOCOM, such is not the case. Forces assigned to NARCOM would have expertise in areas not normally associated with SOCOM. Some of the

forces would be highly trained linguists, while others would be selected and trained to perform HUMINT operations as they relate to the very dangerous arena of drug production and sales. Additional forces would be highly skilled in detection techniques, both from airborne platforms and the ground. There would be a mix of forces who understand the agricultural basis for drug growth alongside forces who are trained in crop eradication techniques. These examples are not meant to be all encompassing of the capabilities that NARCOM could possess, but only to give a flavor for the uniqueness of such a Command. Although NARCOM would be different in functional areas from SOCOM, it would be very likely that SOCOM would be a major force in providing support to other CINCs in the counter-narcotics effort. In most cases, forces from NARCOM would not provide the "combat" power needed to prosecute the ground/air battle.

The military leaders of today are acutely aware of the possible changes that may occur in their roles and missions pertaining to counter-narcotics operations. Participation of U.S. forces in the war on drugs has increased in the past several years. If the active military is given the operational mission of drug interdiction and destruction (CONUS and OCONUS), they must be prepared to fight. This would be an unprecedented "war" and every advantage would be needed to make any progress. It is only through the vision of our military leaders that the advantage can be gained. Now may be the time to develop organizations, such as the

Narcotics Command, that will give U.S. forces the advantage that they will most definitely require.

#### CONCLUSION

The drug problem in this country has reached such a magnitude that the President has declared the war on drugs to be of vital importance to our national security. The active military is being used to assist in the battle, but are not left unrestrained. By law, they can only be used in support roles.

The frustrations of our government in combatting this problem have allowed a very liberal interpretation of the pertinent laws on several occasions, thus allowing the active military some latitude that had not been authorized in the past. A recent increase in DOD funding to help combat the drug problem will in most likelihood expand the number of active military units and personnel who will join the war on drugs.

It is important to realize that the military is involved in the overall drug battle as the result of the mandates of Congress. Congress provided the funding and stated the missions in the Defense Authorization Bill(s). Congress has also allowed for the liberal interpretation of current laws that have enlarged the role of active duty military units in the drug war.

If it is agreed that the drug war is a matter of national security, then it would seem proper to use all available resources to secure our interests. Logically, this would include the active



military. The effectiveness of the military would be proportional to the amount of authority granted them by Congress. Some are even suggesting that the armed forces be given the same latitude as civilian police when it comes to searches, seizures and arrests. If the role of the military is to increase, it would be incumbent upon our government to restate the national strategy so that the military planners could develop the corresponding military strategy.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> White House. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES. Washington: August 1991, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson, Miriam. "Can Soldiers Stop Drugs? Militarizing The Mexican Border." THE NATION, 1 April 1991, p.406.

<sup>3</sup> Kitfield, James. "Drugs: The Military's New Unwinnable War." GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE, March 1990, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Army Combined Arms Command, Counterdrug Operations, Newsletter No. 91-4 (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, November 1991), 1.

<sup>5</sup> White House. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES. Washington: August 1991, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Army Combined Arms Command, Counterdrug Operations, Newsletter No. 91-4 (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, November 1991), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Defense. DEFENSE PLANNING GUIDANCE, FY 1994-1999. Washington: 22 May 1992, p. 2. SECRET

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p., 15.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p., 27.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of the Army. THE ARMY PLAN, FY 1994-2009. Washington: October 1991, p. 11. SECRET

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p., E-1.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p., 11.

<sup>13</sup> High, Gil. "Army's Drug War Role Expanding." SOLDIERS, Vol. 45, January 1990, pp.14-15.

<sup>14</sup> Abbott, Michael H. "Army and the Drug War: Politics or National Security?" PARAMETERS, Vol. 18, December 1988, p. 109.

<sup>15</sup> Dunlap, Charles J. "The Origins of the American Military Coup of 2012." PARAMETERS, Winter 1992-93, p.3.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p., 13.

<sup>17</sup> Barnet, Richard J.. "The Use of Force." The New Yorker, 28 April 1991, p.82.

<sup>18</sup> George S. Prugh and William C. Westmoreland. "Judges in Command: The Judicialized Uniform Code of Military Conduct in Combat(A Draft Code Amendment)." 3 HARVARD JOURNAL OF LAW &

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<sup>19</sup> White House. NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL STRATEGY. Washington: January 1990, p. 71.

<sup>20</sup> Murl D. Munger and William W. Mendel, Campaign Planning and The Drug War, (Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1991), 77.

<sup>21</sup> White House. NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL STRATEGY. Washington: January 1990, pp. 117-118.

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