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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

NAVAL OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE U. S. COUNTERDRUG POLICY

BY

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Naval Operations In Support of the U.S. Counterdrug Policy

by

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CDR Paul Kast Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of the United States National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) is to cut drug availability in the United States by half over the next ten years. The propensity to use U.S. military forces as a tool to assist in this strategy has grown exponentially since the late 1970s. The NDCS outlines several goals that are applicable to military forces, and the Department of Defense (DOD) has encompassed them into a military mission matrix. Specifically, Naval operations at many levels are impacted by this strategy; commanders must understand the effects and use the opportunities available to good advantage. Tremendous headway has been made in the drug war since the Navy became involved, and future participation is a virtual certainty. This paper will illustrate several missions of the United States Navy as part of DOD's efforts in the war on drugs in support of national policy.

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NAVAL OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE U.S. COUNTERDRUG POLICY

"For our children's sake.....I ask Congress to join me in a partnership to carry out this national strategy to reduce illegal drug use and its devastating impact on America."

President William Clinton

The United States is facing a threat as dangerous to its national well being and social morality as anything encountered in its history. From without and within, the United States is under attack from those who traffic in illicit drugs. In their pursuit of profit and power, these drug traffickers threaten our social and political institutions. In response, our political leaders have united in an effort that promises to be one of the longest battles ever waged by the United States. This battle will be fought by all agencies of the United States in a coalition under the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Drug trafficking has long been thought to be intimately involved in international organized crime, and is politically looked at as an increasing transnational threat. Over the last few years, the United States has paid increasing attention to it. A shift has been made from regarding it primarily as a law enforcement problem to a serious threat to national security. Now, national values such as freedom, human rights, open markets and the rule of law are at stake. As a result, military forces are now used as a tool in the war on drugs.

The use of the military in any operation with domestic overtones must be undertaken with due diligence. While military personnel have staunchly defended the constitutional rights of the people since their inception, it has typically been done on foreign soil. The illicit drug problem is threatening the very same constitutional rights that we protect, such as illegal search and seizures, but is doing so within our borders. Our Presidents, since Nixon, have concluded that the military is needed, with certain constraints, to fight this menacing problem. This paper will illustrate several missions of the United States Navy as part of the Department of Defense's efforts in support of the national counterdrug policy.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Though there were laws on the books during colonial times that prohibited public intoxication, the national attitude toward controlling psychoactive drugs was fairly lax until the middle of the nineteenth century following the Civil War. In the second half of the 19th Century addiction to narcotics such as morphine and opium was far more common in America than heroin addiction is today. Before and after the Civil War the use of opium-based products skyrocketed.²

Legislative attempts to regulate drugs in general began with the Pharmacy Act of 1868. Additional laws were enacted in

following years, such as the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, the Harrison Narcotics Act of 1914, the cornerstone of U.S. federal antidrug control, and the Narcotic Drugs Import and Export Act.³

Military support for the war on drugs began with President Nixon in 1971 with his declaration of war on drugs. 4 Military support was initially devoted towards the drug problems associated with Southwest Asia and Vietnam and was largely unsuccessful due to many factors. Some of these factors included the preoccupation of the military command with conducting the war in Vietnam. It was also at variance with some "Black" programs that were in the business of selling drugs for guns to arm guerilla fighters. After many years of law enforcement agencies battling the drug problem on virtually an international scale, President Reagan signed the Defense This act eventually led to a Posse Authorization Act of 1981. Comitatus Act amendment that allowed DOD to provide limited support to federal agencies. This support consisted largely of: Providing information collected during the normal course of military operations; use of military equipment and facilities and personnel to operate and maintain them; and training and advising of civilian law enforcement. It did not permit U.S. military personnel to participate in search, seizure and arrest, nor did it allow assistance to interfere with military readiness and direct participation in interdiction operations.

In 1986, President Reagan declared drug trafficking a threat to national security and issued Presidential National Security Directive (PNSD) 221. This threat and how to deal with it was subsequently incorporated into the quickly expanding Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) category. Subsequent to PNSD 221 the National Security Strategy has included Counterdrug Operations as a military mission.

Military support to the war on drugs was opposed at the highest levels of the Department of Defense. Secretaries Weinberg and Carlucci were vehemently opposed to the relaxation of the Posse Comitatus restrictions because they did not want the military to become involved with law enforcement. However, with the passage of the Defense Authorization Act of 1989, and annually thereafter, DOD was tasked with extensive interdiction and counterdrug missions. Specifically, DOD was now the lead agency for detecting and monitoring the drug flow. 5 The Department of Justice was made lead agency for law enforcement utilizing its subordinate agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Customs Service (USCS) and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF). Other agencies, such as the Coast Guard under the Department of Transportation, were given additional law enforcement responsibilities.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MISSIONS

The objective of U.S. military counterdrug efforts is to reduce the flow of illegal drugs into the United States.

Military support is a balanced effort to attack the flow of illegal drugs at each phase of the supply cycle: at the source; while the drugs are in transit; and during distribution in the United States. DOD support to counterdrug operations is primarily military in nature and varies with each phase of the drug cycle.

The missions of the Department of Defense are derived from the five goals of The National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) and employ a multinational and multiagency approach to the problem of illegal drugs. These goals include:

- Educate and enable America's youth to reject illegal drugs as well as alcohol and tobacco;
- Increase the safety of America's citizens by substantially reducing drug related crime and violence;
- Reduce health and social costs to the public of illegal drug use;
- Shield America's air, land, and sea frontiers from the drug threat;
- Break foreign and domestic drug sources of supply. 6

 These goals are far reaching and are applicable to all U.S.

 agencies involved in the effort to reduce illegal drug use in

America. While the DOD is not necessarily directly involved with each goal, each of us as individuals in American society has a responsibility to see that the goals are accomplished successfully.

The Secretary of Defense (SecDef), in response to both the Defense Authorization Act and the NDCS, issued guidance to assist DOD in the preparation of mission statements. This guidance is listed in Table 1.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM GUIDANCE
Dismantling the cartels
Source nation support
Detection and monitoring of the transport of illegal drugs
Direct support to drug law enforcement agencies domestically
Demand reduction

Table 1. Overview of SecDef Program Guidance⁷

Mission derivations are varied, depending on the agency implementing the policy, and DOD is not necessarily involved in all aspects of the NDCS policy. Current DOD missions are listed in Table 2. All DOD missions are conducted under Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) standing peacetime Rules of Engagement (ROE).

MISSION CATEGORIES	EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT
Detection & Monitoring	Airborne Early Warning
	Sea & Land-based Radar
	Interceptor Aircraft
	Maritime Patrol Aircraft
	Picket Ships
Host Nation Support	Security Assistance
	Civil-Military Operations
Planning Support	Liaison
,	Planning
	Strategy Development
Logistic Support	Transportation Support
	Maintenance Support
	Engineer Support
	Facilities Usage
	Equipment Loans
Training Support	Deployments for Training
	Mobile Training Teams
	Extended Training Service
·	Specialists
	Operations planning groups
Manpower Support	Plant Eradication Support
	Administrative Support
	Diver Support
	Linguist Support
Research, Development, and	Off-the-Shelf Technology
Acquisition	Developed Technology
Reconnaissance	Aerial Reconnaissance
	Land Reconnaissance
Command, Control,	Multi-agency anti-drug network
Communications, and Computers	
Intelligence Support	Tactical Analysis Teams

Table 2. Counterdrug Mission Categories and $\operatorname{Examples}^8$

Clearly, there must be a great deal of attention, analysis, and discussion devoted to any mission that DOD considers as possibly inappropriate or beyond the traditional "fight and win the nation's wars."

NAVAL MISSIONS IN SUPPORT OF COUNTERDRUG OPERATIONS

The Navy plays a significant role in executing six of the DOD's missions (see Table 3).

MISSION CATEGORIES	EXAMPLES OF NAVAL SUPPORT					
Detection and Monitoring	Sea-based Radar Maritime Patrol Aircraft Picket Ships					
Logistic Support	Transportation Support Facilities Usage Equipment Loans					
Manpower Support	Administrative Support Diver Support					
Research, Development, and Acquisition	Off-the-Shelf Technology Developed Technology					
Command, Control, Communications, and Computers	Multi-agency anti-drug network					
Intelligence Support	Tactical Analysis Teams					

Table 3. Naval Counterdrug Mission Categories and Examples

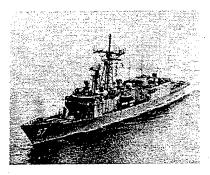
Active and reserve Navy ships, submarines, and aircraft conduct virtually continuous detection and monitoring missions in the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Also, Navy and Marine Corps personnel serve as tactical planners, analysts, and mobile training teams in drug-source countries to enhance host-nation law enforcement. Marine Corps units have also conducted missions along the Southwest border, in support of domestic law enforcement agencies. Navy personnel operate and maintain re-locatable over-the-horizon radar (ROTHR) sites in Virginia and Texas, providing wide area surveillance of the

transit zone. Efforts are underway to construct a ROTHR site in Puerto Rico, which will extend surveillance capabilities to the source countries. The director of Naval Intelligence maintains dedicated, maritime-focused counterdrug intelligence support and interagency coordination via multisource fusion analysis of commercial shipping and noncommercial vessels. These intelligence sources provide information to law enforcement and DOD personnel to assist in the conduct of their normal duties.

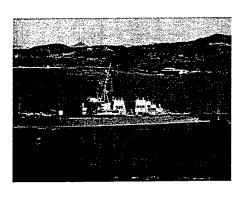
Commander, Western Hemisphere Group (WESTHEMGRU) (CTF 125/JTF-PM) is the Naval Forces Component Commander responsible for the execution of maritime operations in the waters around South America and the Caribbean region in support of national interests and unified commanders. Moreover, he is designated NAVSOUTH (FWD) and CTF-40 for naval counterdrug operations. PACOM is responsible for the Eastern Pacific waters off of Central America, as well as other areas in his AOR.

When the Navy operational responsibilities in the Caribbean were assigned to WESTHEMGRU, it was able to focus ships on counterdrug operations, as opposed to dual tasking ships who were preparing for deployment. Ships that participate in counterdrug operations are not normally assigned to deploying battle groups.

Naval ships assigned to counterdrug operations normally include fast frigates (FFGs),



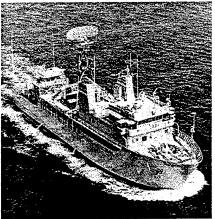
destroyers (DDGs/DDs),





cruisers (CGs),





or USNS T-AGOS ships.

T-AGOS ships are manned primarily by civilians and their function is detection and tracking only. They do not become involved with law enforcement operations.

Also many of these ships will normally have an embarked helicopter

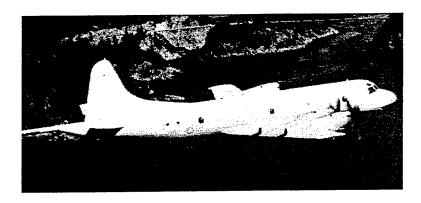


detachment (SH-60),

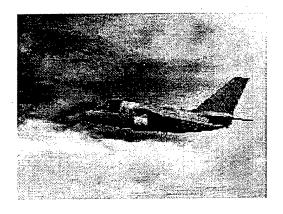
and Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET). These ships may be awaiting overhaul, post-overhaul workups, newly commissioned ships, or naval reserve ships. In doing so, the Navy maintains battle group integrity and ship deployment stability, a significant quality of life issue, while counterdrug ships are typically assigned 2-3 years ahead of time to allow stability in their schedules.

In addition to ships and helicopters, Naval aircraft are also employed in the detection and surveillance of surface craft and aircraft.

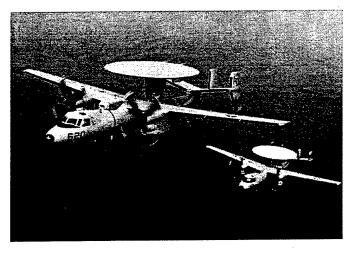
These include the P-3C maritime patrol aircraft,



the S-3B Viking maritime patrol aircraft,



and the E-2C Hawkeye, airborne early warning aircraft.



These aircraft will typically operate from bases in South Florida, Guantanamo Bay Cuba, or Puerto Rico. When conducting

counterdrug operations, they will fly in direct support of an on-station naval ship in order to coordinate communications, ship location information, and flight safety.

COMWESTHEMGRU also has Coast Guard Squadron 42 assigned to his headquarters to assist in the coordination of operations within the Caribbean. The USCG is responsible for providing counterdrug operations training to naval air and ship crews prior to deployment. Also, they provide the LEDET crews who are responsible for law enforcement operations. Under Title 10, military personnel are not authorized police powers. As a result, the LEDET is required to conduct maritime search and seizure operations to preclude the Navy from becoming involved in law enforcement in violation of the Posse Comitatus Act. When a Naval vessel is about to board a ship for the purpose of inspection and possible search and seizure, tactical control is shifted to the Coast Guard by raising a Coast Guard Ensign, thus temporarily becoming a Coast Guard vessel. The LEDET will conduct the boarding, search and inspection of records, and if required, the subsequent seizure.

According to CDR Austin Callwood, Chief Staff Officer of Squadron 42, "A boarding may not necessarily be just for contraband. It could be for the enforcement of laws and treaties of the United States, or if we are working with a host nation where we have a bilateral agreement, we could enforce

their laws as well. We are putting together what we hope will be a standard operation for counter-narcotics deployers." 10

The Coast Guard is the lead federal agency for maritime drug interdiction and shares lead responsibility for air interdiction with the U.S. Customs Service. Interdiction is the actual enforcement of the law. DOD is the lead agency for maritime and air surveillance. As a result of these and other lead agency assignments, the partnership of the numerous federal agencies was conducted under the creation of four Joint Interagency Task Forces under DOD, see Figure 1.

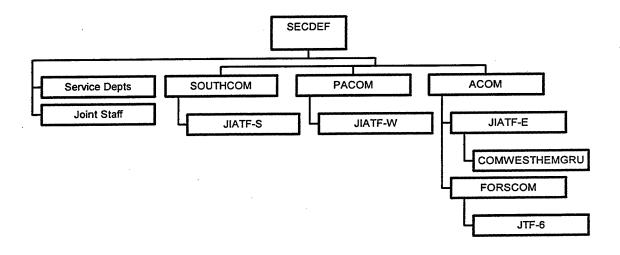


Figure 1. DOD Counterdrug Operations Chain of Command 11

The length of time a ship may remain at sea conducting surveillance, boarding, search and inspection, and seizure operations, makes the Navy unique and in high demand to conduct counterdrug missions in the Caribbean basin and Eastern Pacific. As a result, ships schedules while conducting counterdrug operations on station are just as varied. Most ships' daily routines include a number of internal training issues, depending on where the ship is in what is called the inter-deployment cycle. (The inter-deployment cycle is a term used to describe the period that commences when the ship returns from a deployment to the date it departs on its next deployment. period is broken into several periods that normally include a comprehensive maintenance period and lengthy training cycle. While the majority of ships participating in counterdrug operations are not included in a deployment cycle, the term is still colloquially used and is based on a 24 month cycle.) most difficult job of any ship on a 2-4 month counterdrug operation is solving the "boredom" factor. Keeping 200-400 crewmembers occupied is the almost full time project of the Executive Officer and the Planning Board for Training.

COUNTERDRUG OPERATIONS

The predominant mission of the Navy is in the area of

detection and monitoring. Monitored drug routes are shown in Figure 2. Ships will be assigned operating areas based on capabilities, primarily in fuel and supplies. Frigates are the ships with the shortest on-station time and will be positioned in areas close to refueling ports.

Typically, WESTHEMGRU will have three ships on patrol in the Caribbean, while PACOM has one ship on patrol in the Eastern Pacific. Occasionally, a WESTHEMGRU ship will transit the Panama Canal for operations when PACOM has a gap in its coverage.

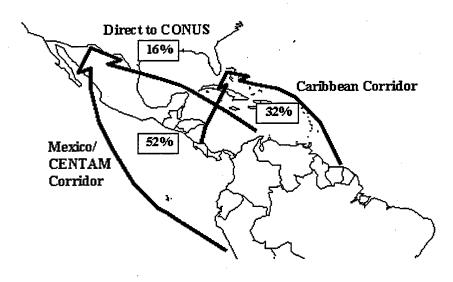
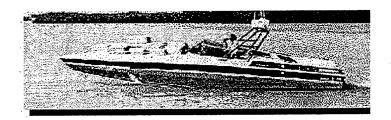


Figure 2. Drug Corridors and Percentage of Drugs That Are Carried Enroute to the United States 12

THE ENEMY

Drug smuggling by commercial vessels is the primary maritime method for shipping drugs in the transit zone. U.S. Customs and DEA officials believe that smugglers have concealed large shipments of cocaine in legitimate containers aboard commercial sea vessels. In some cases, crew members have attached smaller shipments in parasite containers attached to the outer hull of the mother vessel. As a result of the complexity of smuggling operations by commercial ships, the primary responsibility for interdiction efforts are assigned to DEA and Customs and occur when the vessel reaches its port of debarkation.

Naval operations primarily focus on a growing area of smuggling that uses "go-fast" boats.



DOD records show that the number of known drug-trafficking aircraft events in the transit zone declined by about 65% from 1992 to 1995, and that known maritime events increased by about 40%. Results from "known" events are apprehensions, seizures, or jettisons. Table 4 lists the number of air and maritime events for naval operations and indicates that maritime drug

activity accounted for more events and results than drug shipments via air.

·	AIR	AIR	MARITIME	MARITIME
YEAR	EVENTS	RESULTS*	EVENTS	RESULTS*
1992	344	66	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE
1993	217	71	174	122
1994	154	45	223	172
1995	125	26	249	135

^{*} Traffickers' aborts were not counted in the results.

Table 4. Naval Air and Maritime Counterdrug Results 14

"Go-Fast" operations are projected to increase to more than 400 annually beginning next year.

NAVAL OPERATIONS

While on station, a ship will conduct continuous radar operations to detect aircraft, ships or boats operating in what have become known as drug trafficking profiles. Normally, the ship will have advance warning from intelligence sources on when and approximately where to look for a suspected ship or aircraft. The embarked helicopter detachment is the primary detection platform for surface operations. A small wooden hulled boat is virtually undetectable on a surface-based radar

platform until within relatively close range, however, the helicopter at altitude is an excellent device for detection of small radar contacts. Once detected, the naval vessel will close the other ship in an attempt to identify it. The Coast Guard LEDET will conduct a query via radio with the suspect vessel, asking a number of formatted questions, and if probable cause is determined to exist will have the vessel slow and stand by to be boarded. On occasion, the helicopter crew is capable of conducting the interview with the vessel while the naval unit is closing the distance. The LEDET will board the vessel and inspect its papers while a search is conducted. If contraband is found, the crew is arrested and returned to the naval ship standing by. The vessel is then either towed to the nearest port or a navy crew is embarked to steam it into port.

This is not to suggest that operations are as cut and dried as this. They are not. With thousands of square miles to search by a single ship and its embarked helicopter, a small, high-speed boat can easily avoid detection, especially during bad weather where high sea states or large storm cloud masses can significantly degrade radar operations.

For aircraft detection, the ship will contact the supporting JIATF or an on station Air Force AWACS with the information. US Customs and DEA have a fleet of aircraft used to intercept the potential drug runner, and normally they will

attempt a covert intercept and trail it to the drop off point for ground personnel interception.

DOD BUDGET

Initial DOD resistance to the additional counterdrug missions was in part caused by monetary considerations.

Congressional budget appropriations since 1987 have included funding consideration for counterdrug operations. Recent and prior year funding levels are shown in Table 5. While there was a slight reduction to funding in 1992, a 50% reduction occurred in 1994, due to a shift in funding to domestic and source country programs that were non-DOD related.

	•			
FY91	FY92	FY93	FY94	FY95
ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
\$407.1 million	\$504.5 million	\$426.0 million	\$220.4 million	\$214.7 million
FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99	FY00
ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ENACTED	REQUESTED
\$822.1 million	\$827.5 million	\$831.6 million	\$937.1 million	\$954.6 million

Table 5. DOD Drug Control Funding 15

While funding levels started to increase in FY96, it was primarily going to domestic and source country efforts that were shifted from other agencies to DOD roles. Funding levels over

the next 4 years are anticipated to rise to an 8% increase 16 in FY03.

Naval budgets have always included Operations and Maintenance (O&M) requests for ship steaming hours and aircraft flying hours that were based on normal operating projections. As a result, the requirement to conduct counterdrug operations in the Caribbean and the Eastern Pacific off Central America were, in one respect, an unanticipated funding addition to operations that would be conducted anyway, although these operations would normally be for training. As a side issue for those units participating in counterdrug operations, Navy readiness levels in areas that are in support of drug interdiction operations (maritime search and surveillance) are at an all time high. This includes small boat, helicopter, and replenishment-at-sea operations.

NAVAL SUPPLY ISSUES

One difficulty noted by all ships returning from counterdrug operations was that of supply. This did not mean only spare parts, but included personnel, fresh food and fuel. There is normally only one support ship at any given time in the southern Caribbean. This precipitates a periodic visit to any one of a number of countries in the region, and would require State

Department assistance in arranging the visit in advance. This

is not difficult, as long as you can plan approximately thirty days in advance, but it could prove expensive.

Ships would normally conduct a routine visit to either the Naval Station in Puerto Rico or Guantanamo Bay to top off prior to proceeding on patrol. A standing agreement with Panama and Colombia allows ships to pull in on a set schedule for a three day visit and resupply. Any emergent requirements would require extraordinary effort in order to negate the issues. Personnel emergencies could be handled via radio due to existing international agreements, but mission essential equipment difficulties could typically take a week to resolve.

Efforts to complete bilateral and regional agreements within the Caribbean region are underway to attempt to facilitate routine visits on a few days notice. Such an agreement exists with the Bahamas, but pierside berthing facilities are dependent on the number of cruise ships in port. Since the majority of the Caribbean countries depend on tourism, military vessels are usually only allowed in on a not to interfere basis. With the pending closure of the U.S. bases in Panama, ships and aircraft will find it increasingly difficult to replenish and refit while on patrol until new agreements are enacted with other regional countries.

NAVAL SUCCESSES

Since the onset of DOD's participation in the war on drugs, the Navy, in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard has made a major impact on drug interdiction. Table 6 shows the overall impact of forces under JIATF-East.

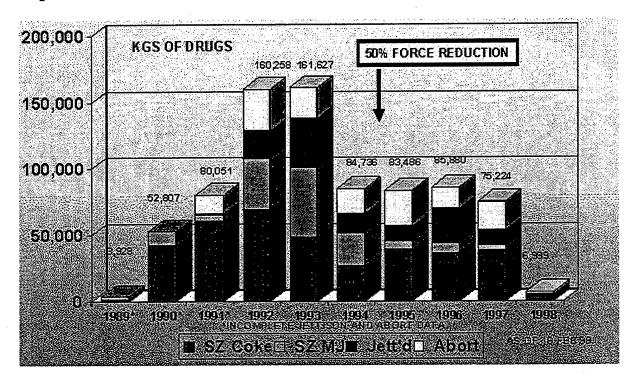


Table 6. JIATF-East Caribbean Success 17

This table illustrates the approximately 50% force reduction in 1994 that equated to roughly a halving of ships and aircraft participating in interdiction operations. This reduction was caused in spite of overall funding increases when apportionment of funds to incountry and domestic efforts were increased. The figures for 1998 had not been fully calculated at release time of this table. In spite of this reduction, in 1995, nearly 8000

military personnel participated in 754 missions that led to 1,894 arrests. 18 As shown earlier, funding levels for DOD have once again started to increase, some of which is caused by missions shifting from other agencies to DOD, but force levels are still lagging in the Caribbean while funds are increasing to domestic (National Guard) and source country efforts. The National Guard's drug eradication and enforcement program is the largest anti-drug mission in the DOD.

Naval/Coast Guard operations were instrumental in the counterdrug successes, and will continue to remain key to success in the future. In a two year period, these operations in the Florida Straits yielded the results shown in Table 7.

DRUG SEIZURES	1997	1998
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
Cocaine (lbs)	103,617	82,623
Marijuana (1bs)	102,538	31,390
Seizure Cases	122	129

Table 7. Maritime Interdiction Results in the Florida Straits. 19

While this data is important in showing the success in the combined war on drugs, the missing piece of the information is what and how much is still getting through. The decline of seized product in 1998 is indicative of the success of maritime

interdiction efforts and smugglers who are changing their routes and methods to avoid interdiction assets stationed in the transit zone.

CONCLUSION

Despite dwindling resources, DOD's mission in the counterdrug arena continues to expand. A booming U.S. economy means more money that can be spent on illicit drugs. The supply and demand curve is no less applicable to the illicit drug trade. For example, in the transit zone alone, an area of nearly six million square miles that includes the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, and Eastern Pacific, naval air and sea operations will continue virtually unabated in the search for narcotraffickers.

Yet even as this expansion occurs, the U.S. is reevaluating its political and military ties to many countries. A major fleet and air replenishment center is on the verge of closing, the Panama Canal Zone bases, further increasing the difficulties of supporting air and sea operations in the region.

The full significance of the shift in focus of U.S. interests in the Western Hemisphere on DOD's relations with Latin America and Caribbean military establishments is not yet clear. By the end of 1999, the United States has agreed to withdraw all military forces from the Panama Canal Zone unless

the US and Panama implement a provision in the treaty for both sides to negotiate a U.S. presence after the year 2000. If forces withdraw completely, there is little likelihood that U.S. military units will again be stationed in Panama. In today's changing environment, current budget cuts are affecting DOD's normal means of interacting with other military establishments. Only anti-drug programs currently have adequate resources, which do not include base facilities to conduct operations from.

The military can be effectively used in the struggle against illicit drugs. "Indeed, the bulk of eradication and interdiction successes over the last several years have been either directly or indirectly attributable to consistent and professional military support." In 1998 alone, as a result of military efforts, 145 metric tons were seized and destroyed. 22

The military conducts counterdrug operations as a result of Congressional and NSC tasking. If military activities become contrary to public desires (demand increases) then their contributions will be lost. Despite our best efforts, we will never seize all the drugs that arrive at our borders, air or seaports. Nevertheless, the fewer drugs that reach the boundaries of the United States, the less will enter our sovereign territory. Interdiction in the transit and arrival zones disrupts drug flow, increases risks to traffickers, drives them to less efficient routes and methods, and prevents

significant amounts of drugs from getting to the United States.

Military efforts to interdict the transit zone, where the Navy
is a primary player, are economically feasible, make sense and
should continue.

WORD COUNT= 5,052

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