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United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY
EXPECTED AT 10:00 a.m., EST
September 9, 1986

STATEMENT OF
WILLIAM J. ANDERSON, ASSISTANT COMPTROLLER GENERAL
GENERAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION, JUSTICE, AND AGRICULTURE
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON
FEDERAL DRUG INTERDICTION EFFORTS



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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to be here today to discuss the preliminary results of the review of federal drug interdiction efforts that we are conducting for the Subcommittee. As you requested in your letter of September 1, 1986, my remarks today will summarize our preliminary observations regarding key drug interdiction issues. We will provide the Subcommittee with a report on the results of our work later this year.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin by briefly listing our observations, and then discussing them in more detail. Most importantly, we observed that:

--Federal interdiction efforts in recent years have focused primarily on catching drug smugglers who use privately owned aircraft and private and commercial marine vessels as conveyances. Many but not all of these smugglers attempt to smuggle drugs across the U.S. border between ports of entry rather than through U.S. ports. Movements of illegal drugs through U.S. ports of entry via passengers and cargo shipments have also been the object of federal interdiction efforts as part of the normal Customs' inspection process. (We have recently reviewed Customs' cargo processing at the request of Senator D'Amato and the report should be released shortly.) Until recently, movement of illegal drugs by land across the U.S. border between ports of entry has received little emphasis as an interdiction target. The most

extensive interdiction efforts have been geographically concentrated along the coast of South Florida and in the air and water space which separates South Florida from the Caribbean Islands and Latin America.

--Federal interdiction efforts have resulted in the seizure of substantial amounts of illegal drugs in the last 5 years. Cocaine seizures have increased; marijuana seizures have declined; and heroin seizures have increased. Nevertheless, the amounts of illegal drugs captured by federal interdiction efforts are believed to be small compared to the amounts of drugs successfully smuggled into the United States. Consequently, smuggled drugs remain widely available within the United States.

--The drug smuggling threat is dynamic. Drug smugglers respond to changes in the demand for illegal drugs by the U.S. domestic market.

--The federal drug interdiction system is vulnerable to smugglers. Drug smugglers are adept at changing their routes so as to penetrate the U.S. border at its weakest and least defended points. The locations, capabilities, readiness, and operational security of federal interdiction resources and activities present weak points which drug smugglers successfully exploit. At your request, I will discuss the vulnerabilities and weak points in more detail in this statement.

We also observed two other issues relating to the federal drug interdiction efforts which we will discuss in more detail later: (1) the role of the military in supporting civilian interdiction agencies, and (2) the limited availability of tactical intelligence (who?, what?, when?, where?, and how?) regarding drug smuggling operations which interdiction agencies can use to target smugglers.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

During our review, we interviewed officials and examined records at headquarters and field locations of the two main federal interdiction agencies (Customs and Coast Guard). We also interviewed and obtained information from officials and representatives of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the military services, the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System, and the National Drug Enforcement Policy Board. The emphasis of our work was on observing the interdiction process firsthand. We observed some of the activities and resources of the civilian and military personnel and units who are responsible for detecting smuggling intrusions by air, sea, and over land; seizing illegal drugs and smuggling equipment; and arresting drug smugglers. Our focus was primarily on efforts to interdict smuggling by private aircraft and boats because these efforts involve most of the federal interdiction activities that occur separately from the Customs Service inspection process at U.S. ports of entry. (As mentioned previously, we have just concluded a review of the

inspection process.) We therefore concentrated our fieldwork on the border areas where most cocaine and marijuana smuggling is believed to occur: along the Southeastern border and off the coast of Florida; in the Gulf of Mexico; along the land border with Mexico; and along the Pacific Coast. Our field work was conducted from November 1985 to July 1986.

FOCUS OF FEDERAL DRUG INTERDICTION EFFORTS

Federal drug interdiction efforts fall into two broad categories: (1) interdicting drug smugglers in international waters and smugglers who try to avoid the normal U.S. Customs inspection process by smuggling drugs across the U.S. border between ports of entry; and (2) interdicting drug smugglers who try to smuggle drugs through ports of entry and to evade the Customs inspection process by hiding or disguising the illegal drugs.

The first category of interdiction is performed primarily by air and marine units of the U.S. Customs Service and U.S. Coast Guard marine units. These agencies' efforts are augmented by operational and intelligence assistance from other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies--especially the Drug Enforcement Administration--and by air and marine surveillance missions conducted by the military services, and from the national intelligence community. The focus of the interdiction efforts is almost totally on drug smuggling by aircraft and marine vessels. Until recently, very little attention was devoted to smuggling across land borders by motor vehicles or on foot.

Resources applied to interdictions by the Coast Guard and Customs account for most of the federal spending on border interdiction. It was budgeted for about \$522 million in fiscal year 1986. This total includes \$398 million for Coast Guard drug interdiction activities, \$90.4 million for Customs air programs, and \$33.8 million for Customs marine programs.

The second type of interdiction is performed primarily by the U.S. Customs Service. Most of these interdictions occur during the course of Customs' normal inspections of passengers and cargo passing through ports of entry. Customs also has established special Contraband Enforcement Teams whose primary function is to find illegal drugs being smuggled in cargo shipments. Most heroin seizures are made through port of entry interdictions. As with the first type of interdiction, Customs receives operational and intelligence assistance from other federal, state, and local government agencies. Customs expects to spend about \$255.9 million in fiscal year 1986 on other interdiction activities, mostly at ports of entry.

I will devote my remarks today to the first category--between port interdiction.

Since 1982, interdiction efforts have been geographically concentrated along the South Florida Coast and in the air and sea areas which separate South Florida from the cocaine and marijuana exporting countries in the Caribbean and in Latin America. These interdictions are carried out by the Coast Guard's Seventh District and the Customs Service's Southeast Region, both of which are headquartered in Miami, Florida; and

by the Miami Customs Air Branch. Coast Guard marine units perform multiple missions in addition to drug interdiction, such as search and rescue missions, and environmental and fisheries protection. As of November 14, 1985, the Coast Guard's Seventh District had 28 of the Coast Guard's 122 cutters.

As of February 1986, Customs' Southeast Region was assigned 103 of the 173 marine vessels operated by the Customs Marine Program, and the two Customs air branches in the region (Miami and Jacksonville) were assigned 26 of the air program's 80 aircraft. South Florida is the only geographic area in the country with an extensive radar surveillance system to identify drug smugglers using low-flying airplanes. The Southeast area has also been the location of the largest multi-agency special drug interdiction operations in recent years such as Operations HAT TRICK I and II and Operation BLUE LIGHTNING.

RESULTS

Drug interdiction efforts have resulted in the seizure of substantial amounts of drugs in recent years, but the amounts of drugs seized are relatively small compared to the amounts successfully smuggled into the United States. According to available data, the supply of the three principal smuggled drugs--cocaine, heroin, and marijuana--as measured by the price and purity of drugs sold to consumers has remained high throughout the 1980s. The following table shows the total amounts of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana seized in fiscal year

1985 compared with Customs' fiscal year 1985 and 1986 estimates of the amounts destined for the U.S.

	<u>Seized in FY 1985</u> (Metric Tons)	Customs' estimate of illegal drugs destined for the U.S.	
		<u>1985</u> (Metric Tons)	<u>1986</u> (Metric Tons)
Cocaine	22.90	58.0 ^a	124.6
Heroin	.36	4.5	5.9
Marijuana	1093.60	13,880.0	9,979.0

^aCustoms' officials told us that this estimate was grossly understated as reflected in the 1986 estimate.

Cocaine and heroin seizures have increased significantly in recent years, while marijuana seizures have declined:

	<u>Seizures</u> (Metric Tons)			
	<u>FY 1982</u>	<u>FY 1983</u>	<u>FY 1984</u>	<u>FY 1985</u>
Cocaine	5.20	8.90	12.5	22.90
Heroin	.13	.27	.3	.36
Marijuana	1795.70	1239.70	1485.5	1093.60

Most marijuana and cocaine seizures took place in the Southeast and in international waters adjacent to the Florida Coast. Most heroin seizures took place at three or four international airports outside the Southeast.

	<u>Seizures FY 1985</u>	
	<u>Southeast^a</u>	<u>Rest of U.S.</u>
Cocaine	85.0%	15.0%
Heroin	3.2%	97.8%
Marijuana	71.0%	29.0%

^aCustoms' Southeast Region and Coast Guard Seventh District.

I would like to note that these statistics on seizures were drawn from Customs' computerized law enforcement reporting system. We have not audited the accuracy of this system.

DRUG SMUGGLING THREAT

The drug smuggling threat is dynamic. Smugglers have historically displayed an ability to respond to changes in the U.S. market for illegal drugs, adapt to change in drug interdiction strategy and tactics, and exploit weaknesses in the interdiction system. For example, the use of cocaine has increased dramatically in recent years. The National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee, an interagency group of federal agencies concerned with drug abuse and drug law enforcement, estimates that consumption of cocaine increased from 33-60 metric tons in 1981 to 55-76 metric tons in 1984. Customs officials told us that they estimate about 125 metric tons will be smuggled into the U.S. in 1986, based on the amount seized in 1985 and the lack of effect that seizures had on the price and purity of cocaine sold to consumers. Thus, the market for cocaine has tripled over a five year period--and drug smugglers have responded by supplying that market with a supply so large that prices in some major metropolitan areas have actually decreased while purity has remained steady.

In a similar fashion, drug smugglers have changed their methods and tactics to respond to changes in drug law enforcement strategy and tactics. For example, until the 1970s, Mexican growers and traffickers supplied nearly all of the marijuana consumed in the U.S., smuggling the marijuana in

across the Southwest border by car or truck. The Mexican monopoly ended in 1975 when Mexico and the U.S. began a joint venture to interdict and eradicate marijuana. By 1981, the Mexican share of the marijuana market in the U.S. had dropped to 4 percent. Colombian criminal groups filled the vacuum using marine vessels and large four-engine aircraft capable of transporting large amounts of marijuana. By 1982, Colombia provided 57 percent of the marijuana available in the U.S., and Jamaica provided 16 percent, while Mexico's share remained low at 6 percent. The marijuana from these new sources of supply was brought in by marine vessels and aircraft via the most direct route to the closest U.S. border--(Southeast U.S.) and in quantities which overwhelmed the interdiction forces in place.

The South Florida area has been the geographic focus of federal drug interdiction efforts since the early 1980s. In 1982 President Reagan established the South Florida Task Force, an interagency anti-crime group headed by the Vice-President and focused primarily on drug law enforcement. Drug law enforcement efforts in South Florida were augmented with additional law enforcement personnel and equipment, and the interdiction of smuggled drugs into South Florida became a priority objective of the federal government and the South Florida Task Force.

Substantial amounts of illegal drugs have been and continue to be interdicted in South Florida and the adjacent coastal and Caribbean waters and air space. Nevertheless, drug smugglers

continue to smuggle drugs into South Florida in large quantities, taking advantage of weaknesses in the existing interdiction system. In addition, there are indications that drug smugglers are shifting their smuggling routes to other parts of the country where the interdiction system is more vulnerable.

Customs officials told us that they estimate that 73 percent of smuggled cocaine and 45 percent of smuggled marijuana will enter the U.S. through Customs' Southeast Region in 1986. The continued preference for smuggling across the South Florida border reflects the economic advantages of taking the shortest route to the United States from the supplying countries in Latin America and the Caribbean Islands. It also reflects the ability of drug smugglers to penetrate the interdiction system around South Florida, despite the relative strength of this system compared to other areas of the country.

Finally, although large amounts of drugs are being smuggled into South Florida, drug smugglers are also transporting drugs across to more vulnerable parts of the 96,000 mile U.S. land border and coastline. There is general agreement among the drug law enforcement officials we interviewed that the Southwest border has reemerged as a prime entry point for illegal drugs either produced or transshipped from Colombia through Mexico. Customs expects that 11 percent of the cocaine and 25 percent of the marijuana smuggled into the U.S. during 1986 will enter across the land border with Mexico in the Southwestern United

States. Interdiction resources are spread more thinly along this border than in South Florida. In particular, the Southwestern land border lacks the intensive radar coverage found in South Florida and the maritime and aviation chokepoints off the coast of South Florida which allow interdiction forces to concentrate their resources on a relatively limited geographic area. In August 1986, the Vice President and the Attorney General announced a new program, Operation Alliance, aimed at choking off the flow of drugs and other contraband being smuggled across the Southern border.

VULNERABILITIES OF DRUG

INTERDICTION EFFORTS

I would now like to discuss the vulnerabilities of the federal drug interdiction forces that we observed. Drug smugglers can and do change their smuggling methods and routes in response to changes in strategy and tactics by the government.

Smuggling by air

The Customs' forces in place in South Florida to counter smuggling by air include a radar surveillance system for detecting suspect aircraft, jet interceptors, tracking aircraft, and helicopters for deploying interdiction teams. There are not sufficient resources, however, for Customs to operate around-the-clock, 7 days-a-week. Customs' Miami Air Branch operates two shifts, 5 days a week, when personnel are available to monitor radar and when pilots are on alert to launch against

a suspected smuggling intrusion. This leaves long periods of time when smugglers can enter the U.S. by air through South Florida without being challenged.

In addition, the radar systems in South Florida are not always operational at the same time interceptors and tracking aircraft are available to act, thereby increasing the windows of opportunity for drug smugglers. For example, the Customs' aerostat (a balloon which carries a radar system) in the Bahamas, which has been the most productive South Florida radar for suspect detection, was inoperable 49 percent of the time when the Miami air branch was operational during the period February 1985 to March 1986. It was inoperable because of routine maintenance, weather conditions, mechanical problems, and staffing constraints.

Despite these shortcomings, there are indications that Customs has been successful in keeping some smugglers from flying their illegal drugs directly into South Florida, and thus depriving them of their preferred mode of operation. In April 1986, we observed that the Miami Air Branch identified 18 private aircraft flights on radar which appeared to be suspect. None of the 18 were confirmed as smuggling intrusions into South Florida. The only seizure that the branch was involved in during April involved an aircraft flying with nearly all lights out which was spotted by a Customs' aircraft on routine patrol. The suspect plane was tracked to a public airport in Pompano Beach,

near Miami, where a search showed the plane to be carrying 500 pounds of marijuana.

Outside South Florida, Customs' anti-air smuggling efforts lack the extensive detection capabilities found in South Florida, and the U.S. border is particularly vulnerable to drug smuggling by aircraft. Customs officials told us that, because there is little radar coverage to detect low-flying aircraft outside South Florida, many smugglers who once preferred to fly into South Florida now fly across other parts of the Southern border, from Florida to California.

Outside the South Florida area, Customs operates four airborne radar platforms--converted Navy aircraft equipped with radars designed for use in military fighter planes. In the first 10 months of fiscal year 1986 the four aircraft flew a total of 1,723 hours--ranging from 71 hours in December 1985 to 275 hours in June 1986. Because of their limited flying time and the limited surveillance capabilities of their radar equipment, these planes provide radar coverage for relatively small portions of the U.S. border, and for limited periods of time each month. Additional radar coverage is provided by Navy and Air Force surveillance aircraft. The ability of some of these radar systems to detect low flying aircraft over land is limited because of interference with radar signals resulting from ground terrain features such as hills. Thus, outside South Florida, Customs officials told us they used other methods of identifying

air smuggling attempts, such as the use of confidential informants and the use of covert transponders on suspect aircraft to monitor their movements.

Meanwhile the interceptors, trackers, and other aircraft do not get much use in capturing smugglers. For example, Customs' Tucson Air Branch was involved in 14 seizures in 1985, even though Customs officials believe a much larger number of air smuggling operations occurred during that time in the Tucson Air Branch's area of responsibility. One particular problem in attempting to capture smugglers from Mexico is that there is no international airspace between the Mexican-U.S. border to allow the lead time needed after detection of a target to successfully launch intercept and tracking aircraft. Customs has reported many instances where suspected smugglers across the Southwest border were detected by radar and the suspect simply returned to Mexican air space.

Marine smuggling

Coast Guard marine patrols monitor marine vessel movements between South America and the U.S. Because marine traffic on the East Coast naturally flows through a limited number of "chokepoints" between islands in the Caribbean, this provides a means of detecting and seizing bulk loads of marijuana traveling through the Caribbean chokepoints. The U.S. continues to be vulnerable, however, to marine smuggling of cocaine and to smugglers who travel through the Caribbean chokepoints when the Coast Guard is not on station or who use other routes on the

Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Customs and the Coast Guard attempt to interdict such shipments through routine patrols and special interdiction operations but their methods are often unsuccessful because of the smugglers' ability to change their routes and methods, and the limited resources available to the interdicting agencies.

In April 1986, the Customs' sponsored Blue Lightning Operations Center began operations in Miami. The Center initially cost \$2.2 million and has an annual operating cost for fiscal year 1986 of another \$2.2 million. The Center is intended to identify suspected smuggling vessels through a continuous centralized radar watch over marine traffic into the South Florida area. It brings together an extensive detection net, consisting of the Cudjoe Key radar balloon, and five other radars located on rooftops. If suspected smugglers are detected, the Center can direct law enforcement vessels to their location to interdict them.

However, because of the options the smuggler has in routes and methods, the value of the Center may be limited to deterring the smugglers from using their traditional smuggling patterns rather than identifying suspect smugglers. Traditional marine smuggling methods have been detectable by radar--e.g., the use of fast boats, usually at night, to ferry drugs from offshore airdrops, or from storage areas in the Bahamas, or from motherships anchored off shore. If the smugglers use secret boat compartments and/or blend in with legitimate marine traffic or if

they use fiberglass boats which do not provide a distinctive radar image, the Center's effectiveness will be reduced.

Another recent Customs initiative--marine modules--provides detection, sorting, tracking, interception, and apprehension capability for marine interdiction. The modules consist of one 50 to 60 foot boat equipped with radar, and two 30 to 40 foot high-speed interceptor boats. The modules are intended to identify and intercept suspect vessels at night. Routine patrols were not effective against night smuggling because the smuggling vessels operated without lights and with fast boats which could flee Customs' slower patrol boats.

We visited Customs' marine stations at Key West, Florida; Miami, Florida; Houma, Louisiana; Galveston, Texas; and San Diego, California, where marine modules had been assigned. We found that the modules were often not in service because of the need for maintenance and repairs and lack of operating personnel. For example, Houma, Louisiana, was provided with a radar-equipped boat in January 1985. Out of 220 scheduled operational days in 1985, the boat was inoperable for 162 days--67 for repairs and 95 for lack of operating personnel.

At Galveston, Customs took delivery of a radar-equipped boat from a factory in North Carolina on November 1, 1985; however, because of extensive mechanical problems, the trip to Galveston required six weeks. At the time of our visit in May 1986, the resident agent-in-charge said that the marine module concept had not yet been employed as it was intended because of maintenance

problems. Records showed that the two interceptor boats were inoperable 84 and 100 percent in the period April 1985 through December 1985.

For the most part, the Coast Guard relies on patrol and utility boats for making seizures in coastal waters. There are 76 patrol boats which range in length from 82 to 110 feet. The patrol boats are old, and are inoperable a high percentage of time because of maintenance problems. In the Coast Guard Seventh District, which includes South Florida, there are 15 such patrol boats which on average were removed from active service for maintenance 45 percent of the time. The Coast Guard has 330 utility boats of which 34 are stationed in its seventh district. The patrol and utility boats are slower than the smugglers' small boats. These patrol and utility boats have been augmented by 3 high speed surface effect boats and 10 high speed patrol boats (delivered in the last few months).

Another Coast Guard vulnerability is its need to give first priority to protecting against loss of life and property in marine distress incidents. The extent to which smugglers have used fake distress signals to lure Coast Guard boats away from smuggling intrusions is unknown but drug law enforcement officials believe this practice is common.

The Eleventh Coast Guard District, in Long Beach, California, has one medium endurance cutter which is used principally for drug interdiction purposes together with smaller patrol boats and helicopters. It has been used as a detection

station off the coast of Mexico, San Diego, and Santa Barbara with engines shut down, while smaller boats and helicopters patrol the coastal area and respond to detections. In calendar year 1985, the cutter devoted 117 days to interdiction. Thus, marine smugglers had ample opportunity to cross the U.S. border on the Pacific Coast.

Smuggling by land

Until the establishment of Operation Alliance, the Customs Service did not have a program for interdicting drugs crossing the U.S. borders by land between ports of entry. Federal law enforcement presence between ports of entry consisted of members of the Immigration and Naturalization Service's Border Patrol, who have limited search authority and whose principal responsibility is to apprehend illegal aliens crossing the border. Operation Alliance is intended to expand interdiction forces along the Southern U.S. land border.

OPERATIONAL SECURITY AFFECTS

INTERDICTION CAPABILITIES

Because the key surveillance assets--principally radars used to identify smuggling attempts and the equipment used to respond when they are identified--are few in number and are not operational at all times, smugglers can use information on when the assets are operating to avoid detection. The lack of secure communications on air and marine interdiction missions enables smugglers to identify the positions, objectives, and operational status of law enforcement aircraft, vessels, and radar

equipment. With this information, smugglers can avoid detection and pursuit. In its assessment of Customs' Air Program in September 1983, a "Blue Ribbon Panel", consisting of contract experts and funded by Customs, commented that security within the Customs Air Program was notable by its absence. Although we found that some actions have been and are being taken to provide greater operational security, we believe the panel's comments continue to apply to the Customs' Air Program, and to the Customs and Coast Guard marine interdiction programs as well.

There were no consistent security standards within the law enforcement agencies for protecting information which might be used by smugglers to neutralize interdiction operations. The interdiction agencies are faced with the need to obtain and use such information from a wide variety of sources in their efforts to identify smuggling intrusions. They are also faced with the need, in many cases, to widely share that information, both within and outside of their agencies, in coordinating interdiction operations.

The extent to which smuggling organizations gather information to reduce their risks is not known, and is only suggested by the known cases where such attempts have been discovered. However, the following examples illustrate how relatively low-level espionage can negate the effectiveness of interdiction assets.

--Knowledge of the duty hours of Customs' radar watch personnel, who monitor the extensive network of radars beamed at smuggling traffic by air into South Florida,

allows smugglers to choose the time to leave with their loads to minimize their risk of detection. This information can be obtained by observing the arrival and departure of Customs' watch personnel at their work site, or by obtaining a copy of the watch work schedules--which carry no security classification.

--Knowledge of when Customs' jet interceptors are in operation or in maintenance is obtainable from visual observations and from maintenance records. Some plans for special interdiction operations carry no security classification. Such information could allow the smuggler to pick a point of border penetration where, even if detected by radar, the smuggler could pass through the radar net and be unobservable by radar surveillance before interception efforts could get underway.

--Knowledge of when the Coast Guard cutters are on station in the chokepoints, which can be monitored by use of air patrols, could allow smugglers to choose the time and the particular marine passage they will use to evade detection.

--Knowledge of the meager radar surveillance capabilities to spot low-flying aircraft along most of the U.S. borders, outside South Florida, can be used to plan points of border entrance with minimal risk of detection. The vulnerabilities of the detection system along parts of the Southwest border were published in a metropolitan

newspaper, which graphically showed the elevations between geographical points at which radar surveillance did not exist. This information was based on a federal study of surveillance coverage. The Customs Air Branch Chief at El Paso believed smuggling traffic increased substantially in a corridor within his jurisdiction, not monitored by radar, after this data was published.

Without adequate security standards to govern the handling of information critical to interdiction success as it passes to and from those who need to know, unintentional security breaches may occur. Intentional security compromises have also occurred. In one incident, two Customs marine supervisors were charged with intentionally diverting law enforcement resources away from planned smuggling attempts. According to officials in Customs' South Central Region, this security leak compromised the entire marine interdiction strategy of the Region in fiscal year 1985, as well as the identity of confidential informants who might be known by the supervisors. Customs officials told us that this completely dried up their confidential informant network.

OBSERVATIONS ON OTHER

DRUG INTERDICTION ISSUES

In the course of our review we have also explored other issues which relate to the federal government's ability to interdict drug smugglers. I would now like to briefly summarize our preliminary observations regarding these important pieces of the federal drug interdiction picture.

Military Support to
Interdiction Agencies

Since the passage of the Posse Comitatus Amendment in December 1981, which clarifies the role that the military may play in assisting civilian law enforcement agencies, the military has played an increasing role in the federal interdiction effort. Its primary contribution has been airborne radar coverage of areas thought by Customs and Coast Guard to be major air and marine smuggling routes. Air Force AWACS and Navy E-2 aircraft have flown numerous missions for the purpose of detecting aircraft smuggling drugs across the border. The AWACS and E-2 aircraft, in addition to Air Force C-130s and B-52s, and Navy P-3s and S-3s, also provide surveillance information on suspect marine vessels. Military aircraft also provide interdiction support in other ways. Army OV-10 Mohawks take aerial intelligence photographs along the Mexican border. Marine Corps OV-10 aircraft visually identify and track suspect aircraft until a Customs interceptor is launched.

Other military support is provided to interdiction agencies in a variety of forms. Since 1983, Air Force UH-1H helicopters, operated by Air Force personnel have transported Bahamian law enforcement teams on drug apprehension missions in the Bahamas, as part of a joint U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration - Bahamian government effort known as Operation BAT. As of July 1, 1986, Operation BAT has resulted in the interdiction of 121 metric tons of marijuana and 6.4 tons of cocaine, according to

the Air Force. Coast Guard law enforcement teams have been stationed aboard Navy ships on maneuvers in the Caribbean in order to board suspect vessels encountered by the Navy ships. The Army has made numerous equipment loans to the interdiction agencies. The most notable are the Blackhawk and Cobra helicopters and C-12 King Air aircraft that the Army has furnished to Customs on an extended basis.

The military, Customs and Coast Guard do not maintain complete records on the amount of military support provided to the interdiction effort, the cost of this support, or the number of arrests and seizures linked to the military's contribution to this effort. The following examples, gathered in the course of our review, illustrate some dimensions of the military's role in drug interdiction. The Air Force reports that in the period beginning fiscal year 1984 through the second quarter of fiscal year 1986, AWACS flew 108 sorties specially designated for drug interdiction and nearly 800 regular training sorties in areas of interest to interdiction agencies. Air Force records show that the cost of the 45 specially designated AWAC sorties flown in fiscal year 1985 was about \$3.6 million. According to the Navy, its E-2s flew 867 surveillance sorties in support of drug interdiction agencies during the period fiscal year 1984 through the first half of fiscal year 1986. The Navy reports that from fiscal year 1982 through fiscal year 1985, E-2 drug interdiction sorties cost \$4.7 million.

Information provided by the Customs Service on drug seizures indicates that the AWACS and E-2 sorties have aided in some

interdictions. From fiscal year 1983 through the first half of 1986, Customs reports that AWACS contributed to six interdictions resulting in the seizure of 4,903 pounds of marijuana. Over the same period, Customs estimated that it made 33 interdictions based on information from E-2 flights, resulting in seizures of 2,593 pounds of cocaine and 31,667 pounds of marijuana.

It is difficult to calculate the total cost of military drug interdiction activities. None of the participating agencies--civilian or military--maintain complete cost records on military assistance. Also, it is difficult to allocate costs to interdiction related activities because many military missions are multi-purpose--e.g., training plus surveillance for drug smugglers. Finally, it is difficult to measure the results of military assistance. It is unclear whether results should be limited to seizures and arrests attributable to military assistance, or should include some measure of deterrence--making drug smuggling more difficult and more expensive. As a result, the cost effectiveness of military assistance is still a subject of controversy.

Need for Tactical Intelligence

Tactical intelligence can be defined as information on smuggling operations which is perishable in nature and must be acted upon within a matter of hours in order to exploit its value; that is, the who?, what?, when?, where? and how? of specific smuggling attempts. Tactical intelligence allows the interdiction agencies to use their resources more effectively.

Depending upon how reliable and how specific the intelligence is, resources can be employed in a way that increases the chances of a successful seizure. Intelligence is particularly valuable when radar detection methods are not available or are ineffective. Information we obtained from Customs' computerized seizure reporting system demonstrates the value of obtaining intelligence prior to interdictions. A relatively small portion (16 percent) of fiscal year 1985 cocaine interdiction cases were based on prior information, but over 32,000 pounds of cocaine were seized in these cases. This accounted for 64 percent of the total cocaine seized as recorded in Customs' reporting system in fiscal year 1985.

Customs and the Coast Guard develop intelligence domestically, but have no authority to gather intelligence on drug shipments in foreign countries. The authority for source country intelligence collection rests with the DEA. However, gathering intelligence related to specific drug shipments is of secondary concern to DEA agents stationed in source countries. Recently, Customs and DEA began a trial program aimed at increasing the amount of tactical intelligence Customs receives from source countries. Under the program, Customs officers have been stationed at the DEA offices in Bogota, Caracas and Mexico City and have access to the information DEA agents collect in the course of their work. Customs hopes that these officers will be able to obtain tactical interdiction intelligence that DEA agents may not have otherwise reported, and that the Customs officers will disseminate the intelligence while it is still timely.

According to Customs, this program has not yet produced any interdictions.

The lack of tactical intelligence has forced interdiction agencies to depend heavily on "cold hit" radar detection and random air and marine patrols as the main line of defense against drug smugglers. As drug smugglers have demonstrated an increasing ability to evade radar and random patrols, Coast Guard and Customs have become increasingly concerned about the limited availability of tactical intelligence.

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Mr. Chairman, this completes my prepared remarks. My colleagues and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.