NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

CARIBBEAN AND EASTERN PACIFIC MARITIME SECURITY: REGIONAL COOPERATION IN BRIDGE AND INSULAR STATES

by

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March 2018

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704–0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE March 2018	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE CARIBBEAN AND EASTERN PACIFIC MARITIME SECURITY: REGIONAL COOPERATION IN BRIDGE AND INSULAR STATES	5. FUNDING NUMBERS
6. AUTHOR(S) Matthew R Conners	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A	10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB number ____N/A____.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.	12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

The international cocaine market has transformed the Caribbean Basin into the most violent region in the world. Against the onslaught of drugs and violence, interstate security cooperation and intelligence sharing are increasingly prominent features of state security strategies. The evolution of security cooperation has pushed cocaine flows from the Caribbean to Central America and the Eastern Pacific. Overtime, increasing state capacity and cooperation has shaped cocaine trafficking and cut into the profit margins of cartel organizations. This thesis examines the evolution of maritime countertrafficking networks and argues that increased cooperation in the Insular Caribbean caused narcotraffickers to shift trafficking routes to regions without multilateral security mechanisms. Using naval strengths, interdiction data, and government estimates, this thesis determined that security cooperation shaped current smuggling routes. This thesis concludes that multilateral security arrangements are more effective against transnational criminal networks than unilateral state action. It points to holes in the regional security network and calls for a unified approach to transnational criminal networks. The regional hegemon has an outsized impact on regional security and must take steps to build and maintain multilateral relationships between Mexico and Central America to effectively control smuggling in the Eastern Pacific.

14. SUBJECT TERMS cocaine, maritime security cooperation, Central America, Caribbean, Cuba, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, regional security system, Honduras, Guatemala, JIATF-S, SOUTHCOM, United States Coast Guard, United States Navy, foreign relations, counternarcotics, smuggling	15. NUMBER OF PAGES 159
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified

NSN 7540–01-280-5500 Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2–89) Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239–18

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CARIBBEAN AND EASTERN PACIFIC MARITIME SECURITY: REGIONAL COOPERATION IN BRIDGE AND INSULAR STATES

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(WESTERN HEMISPHERE)

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
March 2018

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ABSTRACT

The international cocaine market has transformed the Caribbean Basin into the most violent region in the world. Against the onslaught of drugs and violence, interstate security cooperation and intelligence sharing are increasingly prominent features of state security strategies. The evolution of security cooperation has pushed cocaine flows from the Caribbean to Central America and the Eastern Pacific. Over time, increasing state capacity and cooperation has shaped cocaine trafficking and cut into the profit margins of cartel organizations. This thesis examines the evolution of maritime countertrafficking networks and argues that increased cooperation in the Insular Caribbean caused narcotraffickers to shift trafficking routes to regions without multilateral security mechanisms. Using naval strengths, interdiction data, and government estimates, we determined that security cooperation shaped current smuggling routes. We conclude that multilateral security arrangements are more effective against transnational criminal networks than unilateral state action. We point out the holes in the regional security network and call for a unified approach to transnational criminal networks. The regional hegemon has an outsized impact on regional security and must take steps to build and maintain multilateral relationships between Mexico and Central America to effectively control smuggling in the Eastern Pacific.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACIS	Advanced Cargo Information System
APIS	Advanced Passenger Information System
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARSI	Central American Regional Security System
CBSI	Caribbean Basin Security Initiative
CCDB	Consolidated Counterdrug Database
CFAC	Central American Armed Forces Conference
CNIES	Cooperating Nations Information Exchange System
CSII	Cooperative Situational Information Integration System
CSS	Crime and Security Strategy
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAC	Fast Attack Craft
FUSINA	National Interagency Task Force (Honduras)
GAO	Government Accountability Office
INCB	International Narcotics Control Board
INCSR	International Narcotics Control Strategy Report
JIATF	Joint Interagency Task Force
JRCC	Joint Regional Communications Center
JTF	Joint Task Force
MPRA	Maritime Patrol Reconnaissance Aircraft
MSF	Maritime Security Force
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
ONDCP	Office of National Drug Control Policy
OPBAT	Operation Bahamas Turks and Caicos
OPV	Offshore Patrol Vessel
PC	Patrol Craft
RSS	Regional Security System

ROTHR	Relocatable over the Horizon Radar
SEAN	National Air-Naval Service (Panama)
SEANFRONT	National Border Service (Panama)
SICA	Central American Integration System
SOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
SPSS	Self-Propelled Semisubmersible
TCN	Transnational Criminal Network
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Christopher Darnton for his assistance, time, and abundant patience. Without his help this project would surely have run aground. I would also like to thank Professor Erik Dahl for providing a much needed second set of eyes and naval experience, Professors Zachery Shore and Rodrigo Nieto-Gomez for their indulgence and support, and Mr. Sasan Mousavi for his critical assistance and advice.

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I. COOPERATIVE SECURITY AND INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY; COMPETING MODELS OF MARITIME SECURITY

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the effect of interstate cooperation on Caribbean maritime security and illicit maritime trafficking through Central America and the Insular Caribbean?

Transnational Criminal Networks (TCN) transport cocaine from the Andean region of South America through the Caribbean and Central America to the United States. The bulk of this traffic relies on maritime smuggling routes through the Caribbean and the Eastern Pacific to transshipment points in Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean, or directly to the mainland United States. In the context of the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific, maritime security refers to the control of national sea space and coastlines.

TCNs operate according to the "balloon effect," wherein pressure on a route or production area causes smuggling organizations to shift to a different route or production area.[1] The balloon effect is something of an academic trope and although it is often used to support broad arguments it is rarely examined in depth. Peter Reuter, one of the rare academics to tackle the balloon effect, holds that the effect is possible but tenuous and that shifts in cocaine flows occur in large, complex environments, making the quantification of the balloon effect difficult.[2] For example, an increase in naval patrols in the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti may lead smugglers to attempt transshipment through the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico.

The balloon effect has become a nigh ubiquitous feature of the drug war debate as critics use it to denounce counter trafficking efforts. However, since trafficking began in earnest in the 1980s, the overall percentage of cocaine seized has continued to increase.

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[1] Marguerite Cawley, "Why Increased Interdiction Does Not Lead to Less Drug Trafficking," Insight Crime, 21 May 2014, https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/why-increased-interdiction-not-lead-less-drug-trafficking/.

[2] Peter Reuter, "The Mobility of Drug Trafficking," in *Ending the Drug Wars* (London: London School of Economics, 2014). 33–35, http://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/Assets/Documents/reports/LSE-IDEAS-Ending-the-Drug-Wars.pdf?from_serp=1.

Where once interdictions sat at a mere 10 percent of all cocaine produced, now they stand at an impressive 40–50 percent of all cocaine produced.[3] The implication is that as states are becoming more effective at seizing drugs, cocaine is becoming more difficult and costly to ship, and that the balloon effect has limits.

Understanding the role of interdiction operations in countering maritime cocaine smuggling deserves special attention; the limited area in which cocaine is produced dictates its transportation extreme distances and through multiple transshipment points before reaching its primary consumer market, the United States.[4] The Darien Gap, an impassable span of jungle separating Colombia and Panama, bars overland trafficking which requires the bulk of cocaine trafficked to the United States to travel by air or sea. Over the last 30 years, trafficking routes have shifted from the insular Caribbean to the waters east and west of Central America. The Insular Caribbean, a network of island states stretching from Trinidad and Tobago to Cuba and the Bahamas, appears weaker than the states of the Central American isthmus.

Economic logic would hold that control of the entire supply chain and direct shipment allows organizations to maximize profits. Therefore, Colombian organizations, even small *cartelitos*, maximize profits by producing, shipping, and distributing cocaine directly to the United States. Large shipments of product require fewer people and transportation assets to move a large quantity of product than numerous small units transporting small amounts of product. Taking a long, convoluted route also costs time and money. Colombian cartels able to bypass Mexican middlemen would, theoretically, maximize profit. Instead, distribution is a Mexican affair and transportation routes rely heavily on transshipment through Central America. The implication is that interdiction efforts have been successful in shifting cocaine flows, increasing the value-added component of transportation in the supply chain, and decreasing net profits for producers.

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[3] Yury Fedotov, et al. United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report, 2017; Vol 3; Market Analysis of Plant-Based Drugs; Opiates, Cocaine, Cannabis* (New York;, United Nations Publications 2017), 27, https://www.unodc.org/wdr2017/field/Booklet_3_Plantbased.pdf.

[4] Yury Fedotov, et al. United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report; 2016* (New York, United Nations Publications 2016), 35, https://www.unodc.org/doc/wdr2016/WORLD_DRUG_REPORT_2016_web.pdf.

Therefore, whereas once the Pablo Escobars were the world's richest drug dealers, they are now the "El Chapo" Guzmans of the drug trade.

The Caribbean Basin consists of small, poor countries grappling with a well-financed criminal threat. Multiple navies and coast guards must coordinate to interdict smugglers and prevent the establishment of routes through their territorial waters. Within this context, determining effective cooperative strategies and legal regimes can assist in the better application of regional policy. Furthermore, interdiction rates in terms of percentage of global cocaine production have risen as high as 68 percent. For a time, this drove purity adjusted costs up and reduced overall consumption.[5] This thesis proposes to determine the efficacy of cooperative maritime security mechanisms and determine the reason that the relatively weak insular Caribbean is subject to less illicit trafficking than the comparatively strong states of Central America. In doing so, it envisions a vast, cooperative, maritime security network wherein the states of the Caribbean and Central America cooperate and share information facilitating increased counternarcotics success.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Transnational and transregional threat networks operate in nearly every nation in the Caribbean and cause high levels of violence in each state where they have a major presence. They actively seek to undermine the stability of transshipment states in order to maximize profits by reducing law enforcement efficacy. As a result, the Caribbean Basin is the deadliest region outside of Syria and Iraq with a homicide rate of 60 per 100,000 in Honduras, 37 per 100,000 in Guatemala, 29.8 per 100,000 in the Bahamas, and 104 per

[5] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2016*, 37; Beau Kilmer, "Uncle Sam's Cocaine Nosedive: A Brief Exploration of a Dozen Hypothesis," in *After the Drug Wars; Report of the LSE Expert Group on the Economics of Drug Policy*, ed. John Collins (London, London School of Economics 2016), 67–68, http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/LSE-IDEAS-After-the-Drug-Wars.pdf.

100,000 in El Salvador as compared to 4.7 per 100,000 in the United States.[6] The strength of the cartels is in part due to the continued success of their trafficking operations. Determining the best practices and most effective interdiction organizations would allow regional governments and interstate agencies to pressure revenue streams and limit the income and power of regional threat networks.

This thesis focuses on maritime security because maritime smuggling dominates the transshipment process. Maritime drug smuggling allows the cartels to transport larger cargos at higher speeds than overland transportation and with less radar exposure than aerial transportation. The 1999 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report, wherein 5 percent of captures, in terms of number of interdictions, accounted for 41 percent of gross product seized indicates the importance of maritime transit to cocaine smuggling and the importance of proper maritime counter-smuggling measures.[7] Ships, boats, and submarines are simply the best bulk carriers, regardless of cargo.

Because of counter-smuggling actions, Cartels use semi-submersibles, go-fast boats, and even covert civilian traffic to carry large cargos of narcotics to the U.S. mainland via insular states or to Mexico via bridge countries, the Central American Republics from Panama to Mexico. Most maritime smuggling skirts the coastline of these countries, refueling in coastal islands and inlets, or lands and is converted into overland traffic. The states of the Insular Caribbean include the Anglo-phone Caribbean, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, and a variety of European and American dependencies. These states tend to be smaller and possess fewer resources; they also account for less of the total cocaine flow to the United States, approximately 13 percent.[8] Direct shipment to

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[6] Homicide rates are currently unavailable for Iraq and Syria as they are active war zones. "Homicide Monitor," *Igrape Institute,* 2017, https://homicide.igarape.org.br/; Belen Fernandez, "Getting Away With Murder," *Al Jazeera,* 2 November 2016, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/10/murder-rate-mexico-161031122439604.html; "El Salvador becomes the World's Most Deadly Country Outside a War Zone," *The Telegraph,* 5 January 2017, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/centralamericaandthecaribbean/elsalvador/12083903/El-Salvador-becomes-worlds-most-deadly-country-outside-a-war-zone.html.

[7] United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *Global Illicit Drug Trends; 1999* (New York, United Nations Publications 2017), 47, http://www.unodc.org/pdf/report_1999-06-01_1.pdf.

[8] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report; 2016,* 38.

the United States is rare so almost all cocaine bound to the United States must be transshipped through these states.

Historically, the best route to the United States has been the most direct; from 1990–1994, an estimated 70 percent of U.S.-bound cocaine traveled through the Caribbean.[9] However, by 2011, an estimated 90 percent of U.S.-bound cocaine transited Mexico and Central America.[10] Most cocaine destined for the U.S. market is Colombian in origin and a direct maritime route through the Caribbean offers higher profits by transporting large volumes directly to distribution and bypassing middlemen in Mexico. A direct route through the insular Caribbean shortens the supply chain and increases potential profit by delivering product to the most population dense portions of the United States. The question then begs itself: "Why have smugglers decided to avoid this route?" Increasing interdiction rates correlate to an increase in purity weighted price and a decrease in consumption (both total and in the United States).[11] This implies that pressure on the supply chain may impact price and consumption. It also means that the security environment of the Caribbean must be less conducive to transportation than the Central American corridor.

The two significant regional transit routes, the insular and bridge routes, operate under different regional security apparatuses. The Insular Caribbean operates under the Caribbean Community's (CARICOM) Crime and Security Strategy (CSS), the Regional Security System (RSS, a security organization consisting of the micro states of the Lesser Antilles), and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI, a State Department-based capacity building initiative).[12] The bridge states of Central America have CARSI, Central American Armed Forces Conference (CFAC), and the Central American Integration

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[9] Michael Morris, *Caribbean Maritime Security* (New York, St. Martin's Press 1994), 138.

[10] Peter Chalk, *The Latin American Drug Trade; Scope, Dimensions, Impact, and Response* (Santa Monica, RAND Corporation 2011), 5–6; United Nations Office For Drug Control and Crime Prevention, *Global Illicit Drug Trends 1999*, 46.

[11] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report; 2016*, 40.

[12] Marcela Donadio, Samanta Kussrow, *A Comparative Atlas of Defense in Latin America and the Caribbean* Latin American Security and Defense Network (Buenos Aires, RESDAL 2016), 87, http://www.resdal.org/ing/assets/atlas_2016_ing_completo.pdf; *Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, Testimony Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs*, 111th Cong. (2009) (Statement of Julissa Reynoso, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs) https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2009/141958.htm.

System (SICA). The contrast between narcotics traffic through these two regions indicates that these institutions and organizations behave in structurally different ways and that the insular Caribbean security mechanisms function more effectively.

The constant presence of the United States also drives the regional security situation. SOUTHCOM, Joint Interagency Task Force–South (JIATF-S), Fourth Fleet, and the USCG (U.S. Coast Guard), represent the U.S. contribution to regional security and, although they operate on a relatively small budget for the United States, dwarf the strength of every other regional power. SOUTHCOM employs U.S. forces in the region and focuses on enabling regional partners. Through interstate information sharing and increased inter-agency communication, JIATF-S has sought to increase interdiction rates and regional security.[13] The increasing tendency of cocaine traffickers to transit over the southwestern land border, as opposed to a sea route, indicates the impact of the USCG. Conducting an academic investigation into the efficacy of these efforts can demonstrate both the value of regional maritime security efforts and highlight best practices. Given the relative strength and capability of U.S. maritime forces and their regional dominance, U.S. efforts warrant examination.

There is a larger academic and political debate about the utility of interdiction and supply side counter-smuggling efforts. Arguments range from simply legalizing narcotics to developing better demand reduction strategies and policies in consumer nations.[14] However, given that interdiction efforts and supply side operations are the current methods of choice for combating transnational crime and drugs, this study shall largely ignore the demand reduction debate. Regional security mechanisms and maritime interdiction

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[13] Kurt Tidd, "2017-2027 Theater Strategy," United States Southern Command, http://www.southcom.mil/Portals/7/Documents/USSOUTHCOM_Theater_Strategy_Final.pdf?ver=2017-05-19-120652-483, 6–9.

[14] Tom Wainwright, *Narconomics; How to Run A Drug Cartel* (New York, NY, Public Affairs 2016); Peter Watt and Roberto Zepeda, "Perspectives of Decriminalization and Legalization of Illicit Drugs," in *Cooperation and Drug Policies in the Americas; Trends in the Twenty First Century,* ed. Roberto Zepeda and Jonathan Rosen (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books 2015); Emily Swanson, "Here Are All the Drugs Americans Want to Legalize," Huffington Post, 17 April 2014, Accessed 9June 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/17/drug-legalization-poll_n_5162357.html; Lars Scholtz, "US Security Policy Towards Latin America; Emerging Themes, Changing Realities," *Strategy for Empire; U.S. Regional Policy in the Post-Cold War Era,* ed. Brian Loveman (Lanham, SR Books 2004), 257–258.

operations in bridge and insular Caribbean states have been largely neglected by the larger academic literature. This thesis proposes to examine regional interdiction efforts in the hope of determining best practices.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

Regional security, counter-narcotics, and counter-network operations all attract a fair amount of academic study and are related to the regional maritime security problem, but the specific field receives little direct attention. Regional security discussions center on state strength, local levels of corruption, and the capacity of local law enforcement. Counter-narcotics operations are generally discussed in terms of catching smugglers on dry land, perhaps reloading a small plane or thwarting local production. The U.S. government and the UNODC have examined security efficacy and smuggling for decades. These reports include the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) annual reports on Cocaine Smuggling, the UNODC's World Drug Report, the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) annual intelligence report, the International Narcotics Control Board's annual report (INCB, another UN organization), and the State Department's annual International Narcotics Control Strategy Reports (INCSR). Occasionally, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) will conduct a review of current programs and strategies, but these documents tend to provide the best regular assessments counter-narcotics operations.

The drug threat began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s but the fundamental dynamics driving regional security only emerged in the 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The literature of the 1990s focused on security cooperation among states no longer threatened by Soviet sponsored leftist insurgents. This created a field wherein Serbin, Griffin, and Morris discussed the behavior of individual states in a monopolar environment and considered the possibility of small state conflict. These post-Cold War

writers tended to promote cooperative, stability-oriented structures, and neglect counter-network oriented treaty structures like the RSS.[15]

Since the beginning of the "War on Drugs" and the emergence of powerful criminal organizations in South and Central America a robust literature on the drug trade has emerged. Most writers on the 21st century focus on the garish violence of Mexico and discussions of narcotics smuggling organizations have tended to focus on the gore and flash of that state's persistent conflict. However, some degree of subtlety has entered the discussion; Bunck and Fowler address the specific plight of "bridge countries" and state-nonstate conflict it generates. Their focus is primarily on small Central American states and the resilient, adaptable nature of smuggling networks.[16] Lars Scholtz asserts that the DoD's focus on regional security, as defined as counter-narcotics and counter-terror related efforts, largely result from institutional momentum.[17] By asserting that the most effective form of counter-narcotics is demand reduction, he essentially writes off the importance of

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[15] Morris, *Caribbean Maritime Security*, 11–61; Ivelaw Griffith, *Drugs and Security in the Caribbean; Sovereignty Under Siege* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University, 1997); Andres Serbin "International Security in the Caribbean" in *Regional Mechanism and International Security in Latin America*, ed. Olga Pellicer (New York, The United Nations University Press, 1998).

Two prominent treatments of Caribbean Maritime security issues exist: Michael Morris's "Caribbean Maritime Security" and Ivelaw Griffith's *Drugs and Security in the Caribbean*. However, Morris's treatment was written in 1994 and Griffith's book only contains one operational chapter and was written in 1997. Morris states that the Caribbean states have traditionally neglected sea control and maritime security as it was generally guaranteed by an imperial client. This is a valid explanation for the Caribbean's early trafficking dominance, but the dated nature of the material and the lone chapter dedicated to counter-narcotics operations reduces the books relevance. Morris also provides a useful analysis of state maritime capacity by platform and creates a hierarchy for assessing regional capabilities. While dated, this could provide a useful framework for analysis if properly updated. Griffith's multiple works have advocated multilateral coordination to affect total effectiveness, and a renewed focus on prosecution. His 1997 book and subsequent works focus on the interrelationship of "drugs, geography, power, and politics" and, while descriptive of programs, tended to neglect results.

The regional security field has shifted significantly since the fall of the Soviet Union. While counter-network operations are discussed, the starting point of post-Cold War security studies remains rooted in simply determining the course of regional security structures within a monopolar system. Andres Serbin states that the evaporation of the bipolar conflict of the Cold War left regional states without a common threat and reduced the importance of interstate security cooperation. His 1998 assessment held that most states tended to defer to hemispheric organizations like the OAS on security issues. His main critique is U.S. dominance of regional security debate and he essentially advocates an independent, stability focused agenda for the region. However, this fails to account for the fact that threat networks now constitute one of the primary drivers of regional instability.

[16] Julie Marie Bunck and Michael Ross Fowler, *Bribes, Bullets, and Intimidation; Drug Trafficking and the Law in Central America.* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press 2012), 1–13.

[17] Lars Scholtz, "US Security Policy Towards Latin America," 257–258.

counter-network and interdiction operations. Similarly, Wainwright's *Narconomics* studies narcotics smuggling and distribution in the context of capitalism and economics. Authors focusing on the violence of the drug trade tend to advocate for legalization claiming the illicit nature of narcotics causes capitalistic competition to find form in violence. The tendency is to forsake the drug war entirely and call for broad legalization and regulation of the market. This strategy, possessing theoretical merit, is political folly in all cases but marijuana. Cocaine, heroin, crystal methamphetamine, and other "hard" drugs lack the popular support that marijuana has garnered in recent decades and have too many associated health risks to be authorized for legal consumption.

The academic field of counter-narcotics tends to focus on failures and impacts. The monopolar power of the United States draws a lot of attention; academics have tackled the U.S. unilateral and bilateral relationships throughout the region. These studies are mostly accounts of U.S.–Mexican or U.S.–Colombian efforts. Some of them focus on individual states as opposed to counter-narcotics networks. For example, Monica Serrano examines the impacts of transnational crime on governments, the effectiveness of "weak" and "strong" states, and the impact of regime type on counter-narcotics.[18] Similarly, Lilian Bobea holds that the insular Caribbean suffers from institutional weakness that limits the consistency and efficacy of states and that these regional leaders lack real commitment to regional security and counternarcotic networks. This lack of local institutional strength has limited the effectiveness of regional efforts.[19] Unilateral state studies also tend to find a lack of political will; Kirton and Anatol determined that state opinions are moving closer to the emerging academic consensus that acting independently and unilaterally is less effective at counter-network operations than working within a regional framework.[20] In part, this field has emerged in the wake of security developments such as the Obama

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[18] Monica Serrano, "Transnational Crime in the Western-Hemisphere," in *The Future of Inter-American Relations,* ed. Jorge Dominguez (New York, NY: Routledge 2000), 87.

[19] Lilian Bobea, "The Dawn of Post-Hegemonic Cooperation?" in *Cooperation and Drug Policies in the Americas; Trends in the Twenty First Century,* ed. Roberto Zepeda and Jonathan Rosen (Lexington, MD: Lexington Books 2015) 153–154.

[20] Mark Kirton and Marlon Anatol, "Current Trends in Caribbean cooperation in the War on Drugs," *Cooperation and Drug Policies in the Americas; Trends in the Twenty First Century,* eds. Roberto Zepeda and Jonathan Rosen (Lexington, MD: Lexington Books 2015), 81–97.

administration's embrace of multilateralism and the creation of the CARICOM security apparatus. The tendency toward collective security and counternarcotics traces back through Serbin and the Cold War concept of collective, hemispheric defense embodied by the OAS. These commentaries on the efficacy of cooperative relationships neglect imperial measures of cooperative success and are almost all limited to simple law enforcement cooperation without much coverage of maritime cooperation.

Examinations of regional institutions remain relatively rare; even *Cooperation and Drug Policies in the Americas* tends to focus on the state out approach as opposed to the systemic or regional, institutional approach. However, a report by Peter Meyer and Clare Seelke, members of the Congressional Research Service, indicates that Central America's problems with transnational crime are in part due to the institutional weakness of SICA as a coordinating body.[21] The paper is essentially a regional overview with a focus on CARSI spending, but the mention of this lack of regional institutional capacity belies the topic's significance. Again, the maritime component of drug smuggling is only as an afterthought despite its clear importance to the field of counternarcotics.

There have been several attempts to assess CARSI on a state-by-state basis. A series of working papers by Nicholas Phillips and Aaron Krothius indicate that CARSI has been less effective than possible because of the lack of regional coordination.[22] "The studies find that CARSI does not reflect an integrated strategy for addressing the critical security threats in Central America and thus has had a negligible impact on the factors driving the

[21] Peter Meyer and Carl Seelke, *Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress*, CRS Report No. R41731 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015), 14, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41731.pdf.

[22] Aaron Korthuis, "The Central America Regional Security Initiative in Honduras," (Working paper prepared for the Woodrow Wilson Center, September 2014), https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CARSI%20in%20Honduras.pdf; Nicholas Phillips, "CARSI in Guatemala; Progress, Failure, and Uncertainty," (working paper, Woodrow Wilson Center September, 2014), https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CARSI%20in%20Guatemala_1.pdf; Eric Olson, "Examining the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI)," Woodrow Wilson Center; Latin American Program, 12 September 2014, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/examining-the-central-america-regional-security-initiative-carsi.

increased Central American migration since 2011."[23] Their work contributes to the emerging consensus on the necessity of close interstate coordination.

In contrast to the emerging literature on multilateral action, some claim that U.S. efforts are the entirely responsible for any gains in the region. Evan Munsing and Christopher Lamb credit SOUTHCOM's Joint Interagency Task Force South with the lion's share of credit for regional maritime security successes. They argue that the U.S. interagency and international capabilities brought to bear by JIATF-S are responsible for an overall uptick in interdiction rates.[24] Their analysis of JIATF-S precludes meaningful action by regional partners.

RAND has also added to the academic assessment of the U.S. Government's regional impact. A 2011 RAND Corporation report by Peter Chalk highlighted an emerging trend. Maritime shipping dominates drug trafficking; 80 percent of the cocaine consumed in the United States is transported by sea, of which 90 percent enters Mexico before shifting to overland transportation The study's authors, writing for an Air Force audience, recommended the maintenance and improvement of ISR capabilities and further development of positive relations with regional host countries.[25] A different RAND report from 2012 on maritime irregular warfare argued that capacity building in Colombia had increased the detection and interdiction of Self-Propelled Semi Submersibles (SPSS) and Go-Fasts.[26] Finally, a 2013 RAND assessment of partner capacity building in SOUTHCOM found that the command had been largely effective and efficient in its efforts to build partner capacity to counter transnational crime. The report even cites the relative

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[23] Olson, "Examining the Central America Regional Security Initiative."

[24] Evan Munsing and Christopher Lamb, *Strategic Perspectives 5: Joint Interagency Task Force-South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success* (Washington, National Defense University Press 2011), 85, 86, https://permanent.access.gpo.gov/gpo16331/Strategic-Perspectives-5.pdf.

[25] Peter Chalk, *The Latin American Drug Trade; Scope, Dimensions, Impact, and Response*, MG-1076-AF, (Santa Monica, RAND Corp, 2017), 67–70, https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1076.html.

[26] Molly Dunigan et al., *Characterizing and Exploiting the Implications of Maritime Irregular Warfare*, MG-1127-NAVY (Santa Monica, RAND Corporation 2012), 40–44, https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1127.html.

success of attempts to develop Guatemala's maritime interdiction capacity.[27] However, this study was only oriented toward direct bilateral aid and neglected the necessity for a comprehensive approach to the region; similarly, it neglected to assess the shortcomings of SICA.

Over the course of the last 20 years some academics have attempted to study the impact and efficacy of supply reduction strategies. Beau Kilmer notes that there was a decrease in the total quantity of pure cocaine imported from 2006–2010 by approximately 50 Percent with a corresponding price hike of 40 percent.[28] Kilmer assesses a number of other possible causal explanations for the increasing cost and reduced total supply in the United States.[29] He generally gives credence to the possible success of supply side measures including a spike in interdiction.[30] The data he tracks also indicates an overall reduction in cocaine use.[31] Since Kilmer's summary of the 2006–2010 decline in consumption and increase in price the UNODC has assessed a stabilization in both supply and interdiction.[32] Similarly, Juan Castillo, Daniel Meija, and Pasucal Restrepo argue that interdiction efforts have been largely effective in supply reduction. However, they also argue that the consequence of this supply reduction has been the massive spike in cartel violence in Mexico.[33] This emerging body of research is valuable because it demonstrates that interdiction efforts can affect end cost and consumption. Additionally, when coupled with UNODC data on an increased, but purity adjusted cost of cocaine, supply reduction

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[27] Jennifer Moroney, David Thaler, and Joe Hogler, *Review of Cooperation Mechanisms Combatant Commands Utilize to Build Partner Capacity*, RR-413-OSD, (Santa Monica, RAND Corporation 2013), 47–48, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR413.html.

[28] Beau Kilmer, "Uncle Sam's Cocaine Nosedive," 67.

[29] Ibid., 75.

[30] Ibid., 65–80.

[31] This assessment is borne out by UNODC data that indicates a steady increase in interdiction as a percentage in overall product. Which has seen a rise from approximately 20 percent in the 1980s to up to 68 percent in 2014. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report; 2016*, 36.

[32] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report; 2016*, 37.

[33] Juan Camilo Castillo, Daniel Mejia, and Pascual Restrepo, "Scarcity without Leviathan: The Violent Effects of Cocaine Supply Shortages in the Mexican Drug War," (Working Paper 356 for the Center for Global Development, February 2014), https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/scarcity-leviathan-effects-cocaine-supply-shortages_1.pdf.

can be correlated to a 34 percent reduction in cocaine related deaths and a 54 percent reduction in users.[34] In the cases of Kilmer, Castillo, Meija, and Restrepo maritime security is treated as an afterthought or a component piece of supply reduction. The efficacy of maritime interdiction efforts in the insular Caribbean is noted by Vanda Felbab-Brown. She argues that interdiction is preferable to eradication, especially in unstable regions like Colombia.[35] However, the bulk of her argument is geared toward providing novel interdiction practices rather than regional cooperation. These authors all note the impact increased interdiction rates and other supply side pressures which indicate the possible effectiveness of a supply side approach to the problem.

Government and UN reports also debate the cause of the shift in cocaine trafficking market. The 2000 UNODC World Drug report noted the reduction of the Colombian cartels and the relative strength of Mexican criminal organizations as having rerouted the cocaine market through Mexico and the Southwestern United States, a process eased by the implementation of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement).[36] This is a relatively consistent UN interpretation of the shift in narcotics trafficking; the 2009 "Cocaine from South America to the United States" report also claims that the rise of Mexican Cartels drew the trade toward Central America and Mexico.[37] This follows the logic of Mexican dominance drawing the cocaine trade away from the Caribbean, instead of law enforcement efforts pushing it away from the Caribbean.

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[34] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report; 2016*, 37.

[35] Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Report: Improving Supply-Side Policies: Smarter Eradication, Interdiction and Alternative Livelihoods— and the Possibility of Licensing," The Brookings Institute, 6 May 2014, https://www.brookings.edu/research/improving-supply-side-policies-smarter-eradication-interdiction-and-alternative-livelihoods-and-the-possibility-of-licensing/.

[36] United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, *World Drug Report; 2000* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000), 45, http://www.unodc.org/pdf/world_drug_report_2000/report_2001-01-22_1.pdf.

[37] "Cocaine From South America to the United States," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, accessed 10 March 2018, 31, http://www.unodc.org/documents/toc/Reports/TOCTASouthAmerica/English/TOCTA_CACaribb_cocaine_SAmerica_US.pdf.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

There are several possible explanations for the shift in narcotics smuggling from the Insular Caribbean to Central America and Mexico. First, the existence of CARICOM, the RSS, and other Caribbean security mechanisms may allow the Caribbean states to operate as a unit, allowing them to better deter and interdict narcotraffickers.[38] When properly supported by the United States these united efforts may prove resistant to smuggling attempts. The weakness of these states may be forcing a type of balancing in the face of an irregular threat. This cooperation, in turn, makes it harder to traffic narcotics through the region and prompts a reliance on the Central American route. If the multilateral nature of the RSS and the Insular Caribbean's security relationship provides it with adequate cooperative strength, Central America's continued prevalence as a transshipment point may be due to their lack of a similar cooperative security mechanism.[39] While they do receive aid from the United States, a lack of true interstate cooperation may inhibit their effectiveness. This lack of unity may be due to their relative size, wealth, and a history of interstate rivalry. Because the Central American Republics are not small and weak enough, they may opt to act unilaterally as opposed to operating through a multilateral structure. It is possible that the political disunity and weakness of the area may contribute to their shortcomings.

In tension with the collaborative hypothesis is also the possibility that the states of the Insular Caribbean simply maintain a stronger presence in their waters than the Central American navies and coast guards. Free from the burden of maintaining large land forces these small states can field larger navies and better deter smugglers. The maritime orientation of the state security apparatus may make maritime law enforcement easier and cartel reliance on maritime smuggling may dictate route selection.

Finally, the United States deserves special consideration. As the global hegemon, it has clear interests in regional stability and the interdiction of cocaine bound to the U.S.

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[38] Donadio, *A Comparative Atlas of Defense in Latin America and the Caribbean 2016*, 72.

[39] Olson, "Examining the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI)"; Meyer and Seelke, "Central America Regional Security Initiative," 14.

The actions of SOUTHCOM, JIATF-S, the USCG, and Fourth Fleet could deserve most of the credit for dissuading traffickers.[40] The USCG routinely interdicts traffic in the maritime Caribbean, and a vigorous press in the late 1980s stemmed the flow of marijuana from the Caribbean. The USCG represents a relatively powerful force, and the United States tends to dominate in terms of interdiction rates: accounting for 15 percent of global seizures, second only to Colombia.[41] If it is U.S. policy that has shaped regional security operations and efficacy, then the problem of cocaine interdiction may not be as intractable as it appears.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this project is a comparative case study of Central American and Caribbean smuggling vectors, maritime security capacities, and cooperative security arrangements. It considers the possibility that U.S. involvement has been the driving factor in regional security behavior and performance. CARICOM seems to have been relatively effective in driving down regional smuggling rates. Conversely, SICA has overseen a rise in regional smuggling. The efficacy of the two systems is assessed to determine if the Caribbean interdicts more of cocaine's regional flow than Central America and Mexico. Then each of the regional systems needs to be assessed based on a combination of individual and regional capability. Establishing the quantity and quality of maritime security assets on a state-by-state basis also occurs and allows a determination of relative Maritime Security Force (MSF) strength. Comparing this to interdictions allows us to determine if maritime security capacity drives interdictions. Updating Morris's analytical framework for state maritime capacity provides qualitative assessments of relative strengths and categorizes state maritime assets. This is accomplished using industry publications and *Jane's Fighting Ships*. Comparing UNODC interdiction data from individual states against changes in state capacity demonstrates the relative importance of force strength.

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[40] Munsing and Lamb, *Joint Interagency Task Force-South*, 85, 86.

[41] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report; 2016*, 37.

Regions are then assessed on a state-by-state basis with special attention paid to developments in interstate security relationships. Studying developments in regional security relationships in comparison to changes seizure rates demonstrates the efficacy of cooperative security mechanisms. Special attention is paid to the form and function of organization and military-military cooperative relationships. Changes in state capacity are also assessed in the context of the changing security environment to track changes in state capacity against changes in state behavior.

The assessment of the United States includes an examination of the U.S. unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral roles in the region. The assessment of the U.S.'s regional impact considers changes in policy and subsequent changes in trafficker behavior. The United States is the regional hegemon but also a member of the region's larger community. Its role in the region is assessed over the long term to determine changes in efficacy.

F. DATA AND SOURCES

The analysis of interdiction related data to determine the impact of various policies is inherently difficult. Cocaine producers rarely maintain records that are readily available for academic analysis, governments are naturally disinclined to share data, and government agencies tend to choose numbers that suit their institutional interests. This paper relies heavily on UNODC data and methodologies but also incorporate data from the U.S. State Department and, when it is available, the U.S. Department of Defense. Determining if increased interdiction relates to increased effectiveness or increased traffic is heavily reliant on all parts of the supply chain: production, transport, consumption.

Determining just how much cocaine states seize annually is surprisingly difficult. Theoretically, the best database is the UNODC's annual seizure report and spreadsheet. However, there are numerous inconsistencies between the data currently available on the UNODC website and the annual U.S. State Department's INCSR. In some cases, this disparity is multiple metric tons; in others, data is simply missing. For example: in 2007, the INCSR reported that the Commonwealth of Dominica seized 353 kg of cocaine while the UNODC has no data for that year. Similarly, the Bahamas is reported as having seized

630 kg of cocaine in the INSCR and 717.9 by the UNODC database.[42] Perhaps most egregious is the 2008 INCSR report claiming that by October 2007 Antigua and Barbuda had only interdicted 5.7 kg of cocaine while the UNODC claims that 1600 kg had been seized.[43] Furthermore, UNODC data is inconsistently sourced. A comparison of an INCSR cocaine seizure table from 1994–2003 and the UNODC data for the same year appears in Figure 1. These disparities create a barrier to analysis. Additionally, available data on individual drug seizures is relatively sparse. The UNODC does have an annual individual seizures database but it is relatively recent and not well maintained.

[42] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2008 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Part 1: Drug and Chemical Control; The Caribbean*, (March 2008), https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2008/vol1/html/100778.htm.

[43] United States Department of State, *2008 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report;* "UNODC Statistics," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, accessed 15 March 2018, Data.unodc.org.

Dominican Republic					
2003	**Drug Group**	**Drug**	**Quantity**	**Unit**	**Source**
	Cocaine-type	Cocaine (base, paste and salts)	729.84	Kilogram	ARQ
2002	**Drug Group**	**Drug**	**Quantity**	**Unit**	**Source**
	Cocaine-type	Cocaine (base, paste and salts)	2,293	Kilogram	HONLAC
2001	**Drug Group**	**Drug**	**Quantity**	**Unit**	**Source**
	Cocaine-type	Cocaine (base, paste and salts)	1,907.9	Kilogram	ARQ
2000	**Drug Group**	**Drug**	**Quantity**	**Unit**	**Source**
	Cocaine-type	Cocaine (base, paste and salts)	1,307	Kilogram	FO
1999	**Drug Group**	**Drug**	**Quantity**	**Unit**	**Source**
	Cocaine-type	Cocaine (base, paste and salts)	1,071.4	Kilogram	ARQ
1998	**Drug Group**	**Drug**	**Quantity**	**Unit**	**Source**
	Cocaine-type	Cocaine (base, paste and salts)	2,341.92	Kilogram	ARQ
1997	**Drug Group**	**Drug**	**Quantity**	**Unit**	**Source**
	Cocaine-type	Cocaine (base, paste and salts)	1,234.21	Kilogram	ARQ
1996	**Drug Group**	**Drug**	**Quantity**	**Unit**	**Source**
	Cocaine-type	Cocaine (base, paste and salts)	1,341.3	Kilogram	ARQ
1995	**Drug Group**	**Drug**	**Quantity**	**Unit**	**Source**
	Cocaine-type	Cocaine (base, paste and salts)	4,391.09	Kilogram	ARQ
1994	**Drug Group**	**Drug**	**Quantity**	**Unit**	**Source**
	Cocaine-type	Cocaine (base, paste and salts)	2,888.28	Kilogram	ARQ

Figure 1. UNODC Cocaine Seizures for the Dominican Republic[44]

[44] Adapted from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "UNODC Statistics."

Dominican Republic Statistics
(1994-2003)

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994
Seizures										
Cocaine (mt)	1.3	1.1	1.8	1.27	1.01	2.34	1.35	2.14	3.60	2.80
Heroin (mt)	0.059	0.115	0.017	0.020	0.012	0.069	0.008	0.005	—	—
Marijuana (mt)	0.5	01.7	3.794	2.90	0.18	0.11	0.78	1.01	1.00	6.81

Figure 2. INCSR Cocaine Seizure for the Dominican Republic for 1994–2003[45]

This thesis necessarily relies heavily on UNODC data due to ease of access and relative clarity of sourcing data, a feature not found in the INCSR reports. However, this data trails off precipitously in 2008–2009 and is nigh non-existent from 2010 to the present. Therefore, analysis relies on UNODC data from the 90s through the 2010s, the qualitative assessments conducted by the U.S. State Department, DEA, and DoD, and other publicly available documents. When necessary it pulls individual data points from the annual INCSR to fill in gaps in the UNODC database. In the case of Central America and Mexico it makes extensive use of INCSR seizure data from 2009–2016 to compensate for the lack of UNODC data.

Northbound cocaine, Global Production, and Regional Cocaine Flow are all estimates. Law enforcement agencies and militaries cannot directly monitor flow and production and make estimates based on estimated crop yield and multiple intelligence

[45] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2003 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Part 1 Drug and Chemical Control; The Caribbean* (March 2004) https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2003/vol1/html/29834.htm.

sources. Some of this data is pulled from UNODC databases, other data is pulled from the U.S. State Department or the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) annual reports. The UN and the U.S. government do not always agree but they usually follow similar trends in smuggling. Furthermore, Northbound cocaine includes cocaine destined for transshipment to Europe through the Lesser Antilles. A lack of access to source data bases, such as the Consolidated Counterdrug Database (CCDB), has necessitated the sourcing of estimates from published reports instead of source databases.

The result of an estimate-based understanding of the cocaine market and ecosystem is that it makes wildly different conclusions possible. Some methodologies rely on detected suspect maritime tracks and generate cocaine trafficking estimates based on estimated cargo while other estimates rely upon acreage under cultivation and known crop yields. Sometimes these can produce mismatches in total cocaine trafficked through a country. For example, the 2017 INCSR claims that in 2016, 1000 MT of cocaine transited Guatemala alone.[46] This movement-based estimate fails to account for estimated global production estimated at 1125 MT in 2015 by the UNODC.[47]

Naturally, more data makes for better analysis. This data exists but is closely held by governments and institutions. This makes academic analysis difficult to conduct with any accuracy. The UNODC's drug database is far from complete, updating and expanding the Individual Drug Seizures Report would be an excellent start to expanding the material available for review. Similarly, JIATF-S operates at an UNCLASS level and much of their data regarding suspect tracks and routes could be released for academic and public review.

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[46] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control* (Washington, DC: United States Department of State, March 2017), 167, https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/268025.pdf.

[47] United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2017, Booklet 3 Market Analysis of Plant-Based Drugs; Opiates Cocaine, Cannabis* (Vienna, United Nations Publications, 2017) 26, https://www.unodc.org/wdr2017/field/Booklet_3_Cocaine_market.pdf.

G. COOPERATIVE STRATEGIES AND THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF THE WAR ON DRUGS

Illicit maritime smuggling is inherently difficult to measure, analyze, and counter. Over the course of the last four decades cartels and states have fought each other and for years cartels maintained an edge. Operations across borders and territories long stymied states and allowed cartels to improvise and adapt. This thesis demonstrates that states have finally begun to adapt to this dynamic. Intelligence-sharing and joint operations have proliferated and increased state efficacy against an onslaught of narcotics. Interstate cooperation enables states to better secure their own waters, enforce their own laws, and, ultimately, strike blows against complex cartel criminality.

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II. MARITIME SECURITY FORCES AND REGIONAL CAPABILITIES

This chapter demonstrates that the Insular Caribbean generally has a higher interdiction rate than Central America and Mexico. It compares seizures during the 2000–2008 time frame to estimated flow through the Caribbean and Central American vectors. It then seeks to correlate interdiction rates, changes in cocaine flow, and changes in regional maritime security strength. This determines if and how changes in force structure affect smuggler route selection. The Caribbean basin sub-regions are assessed by "vector," or general route taken toward the United States, because most publicly available estimates on flow do not include "First Stop Country" data. Should consistent data become available over time, it would improve the state level analysis of cartel smuggling routes.

To determine maritime security strength this chapter utilizes geographic data, including coastline and claimed Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), to determine sea space control as a factor of platform (any military or law enforcement asset able to facilitate or execute an arrest) density and responsibility.[48] Using data on MSF strength and quantity of cocaine seized this chapter tests for a correlation between strength and effectiveness. This chapter shows that simply adding ships or aircraft to a fleet does not significantly increase interdiction rates but that the Caribbean consistently maintains a better offshore presence. However, it also finds that changes in regional force structures did not significantly impact flow and that it likely does not affect cartel vector selection.

Later regional chapters consider the RSS states, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama on an individual basis and in their broader security context. This chapter briefly considers the force structures of Mexico and Cuba because both have experienced significant changes in force structure with counterintuitive results on trafficker behavior. Trafficker behavior toward Mexico and Cuba

[48] "Home Page," Sea Around Us, accessed 10 March 2018, http://www.seaaroundus.org/; "CIA World Factbook," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed 10 March 2018, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook.

makes no sense if traffickers are simply attempting to avoid strong navies. Therefore, these states receive brief overview before further consideration in Chapters III and IV.

A. DETERMINING REGIONAL COCAINE FLOWS

The data used to calculate regional cocaine flow and regional interdiction as a percentage of flow comes from ONDCP estimates on northbound cocaine and regional flow. This has produced two data sets representing flow through Central America and the Caribbean. These regions are assessed as vectors; as such, Mexico is included in the Central American vector and European dependencies are included in the Caribbean vector. However, Mexico's size and strength skews analysis and it is noted when Mexico is excluded from the analysis of the Central American states. Additionally, as France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Spain, and the United States may choose to alter their deployed force levels in the region without fundamentally changing their force structure, they are omitted from state level analysis. European seizures are listed as a measure of overall vector interdiction and are not used to assess force impact. The Caribbean vector is referred to as the Independent Caribbean when the various European dependencies are excluded and as the Total Caribbean when the various dependencies are included in analysis. Tables 1 and 2 represent cocaine flow by region and percentage seized. A lack of access to the Consolidated Counterdrug Database (CCDB) and the lack of consistent UNODC seizure data past 2008 have necessarily limited my analytic lens to a 9-year window from 2000 to 2008. It is also possible that 2007–2008 are inaccurate due to incomplete reporting to the UNODC and a 50 MT increase in Colombian seizures.

These numbers are far from perfect. They represent estimates of estimates, and this has resulted in the rather wild skewing of numbers. The Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) produces an annual Unclassified Commander's Update Brief that includes estimates of regional flow percentages interdicted. Unfortunately, access to previous years has proven elusive and the current version is FOUO. In order to keep this thesis at an unclassified level, its scope is limited to publicly available information and estimates.

$$(Northbound\ Cocaine) * (Estimated\ Regional\ Cocaine\ Flow)$$
$$= (Northbound\ Cocaine\ by\ Region)$$

$$\frac{Cocaine\ Interdicted\ by\ Region}{Northbound\ Cocaine\ by\ Region} = Regional\ Interdiction\ Percentage$$

Table 1. Central American Vector: Cocaine Interdiction Rates (Includes Mexico)[49]

	U.S. Bound Cocaine	Percentage of Cocaine flow: Central America	Regional Cocaine flow MT	Central American Cocaine Seizures (MT)	Percentage of Central American Cocaine interdicted
2000	598	0.635	380	40.60567	0.106983
2001	563	0.72	405	45.80336	0.113123
2002	544	0.7	381	25.46971	0.066885
2003	536	0.77	413	52.93266	0.128253
2004	528	0.9	475	54.01323	0.113664
2005	520	0.9	468	65.6248	0.140224
2006	530	0.9	477	61.16643	0.128232
2007	545	0.9	491	158.4357	0.323009
2008	572	0.91	521	116.0468	0.222944

[49] See Appendix A for source information.

Table 2. Insular Caribbean Vector: Cocaine Interdiction Rates[50]

	U.S. Bound Cocaine	Percentage of Cocaine flow	Regional Cocaine flow MT	Total Regional Cocaine Seizures	Independent State Cocaine Seizures	Percentage of Total Caribbean Cocaine Interdicted	Percentage of Independent Caribbean Cocaine interdicted
2000	598	0.365	218	21	11	0.094551	0.05107
2001	562	0.26	146	21	11	0.14642	0.075862
2002	544	0.27	147	14	12	0.092439	0.08181
2003	536	0.22	118	19	17	0.159661	0.140651
2004	528	0.1	53	18	14	0.344193	0.270749
2005	520	0.09	47	29	13	0.625216	0.287367
2006	530	0.1	53	32	18	0.594845	0.333325
2007	545	0.12	65.4	22	11	0.338855	0.167335
2008	572	0.09	51.48	14	10	0.267614	0.188453

There are several caveats that need to be considered: the cocaine bound for Europe is not accounted for, these numbers do not account for purity, and there are always unknowables. However, if taken at face value, the states along the Caribbean vector seize more cocaine as a percentage of total flow than the states of the Central American vector. This is consistent throughout the data set. This indicates that interdiction in the independent Insular Caribbean and the various Caribbean dependencies occur at a consistently higher rate than it does in Central America. This has resulted in a rerouting of northbound drugs toward the less effective Central American Corridor. Figure 3 displays this difference in regional security apparatus effectiveness and compares it to smuggler route selection. Figure 4 displays JIATF-S's knowledge of smuggler and suspected smuggler movement for 2016. While it does not include raw data and does not align with the time frame in question it is illustrative of the essential dynamics of smuggler behavior that emerged in the early–mid 2000s.

[50] See Appendix A for source information.

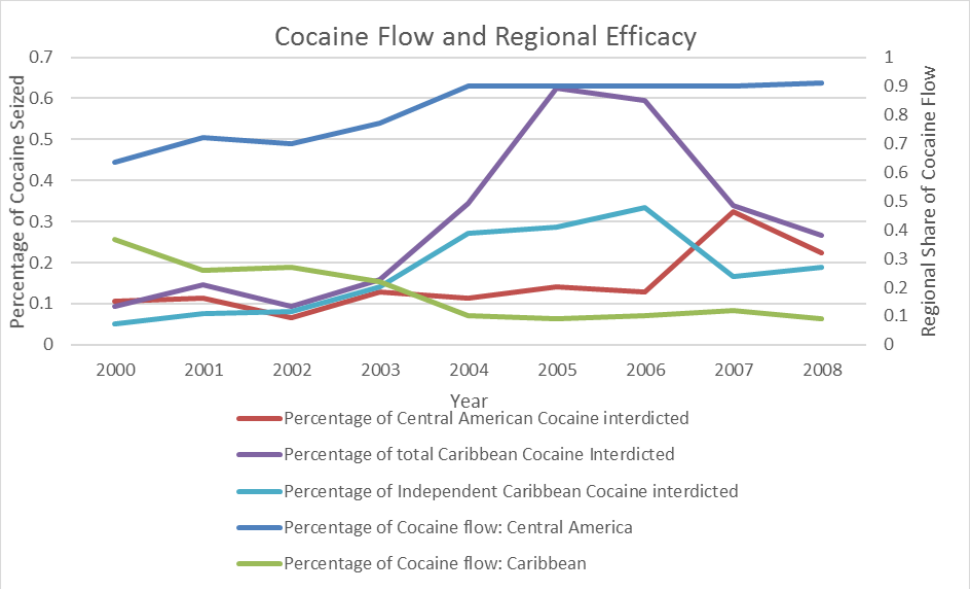

Figure 3. Cocaine Flow and Regional Efficacy[51]

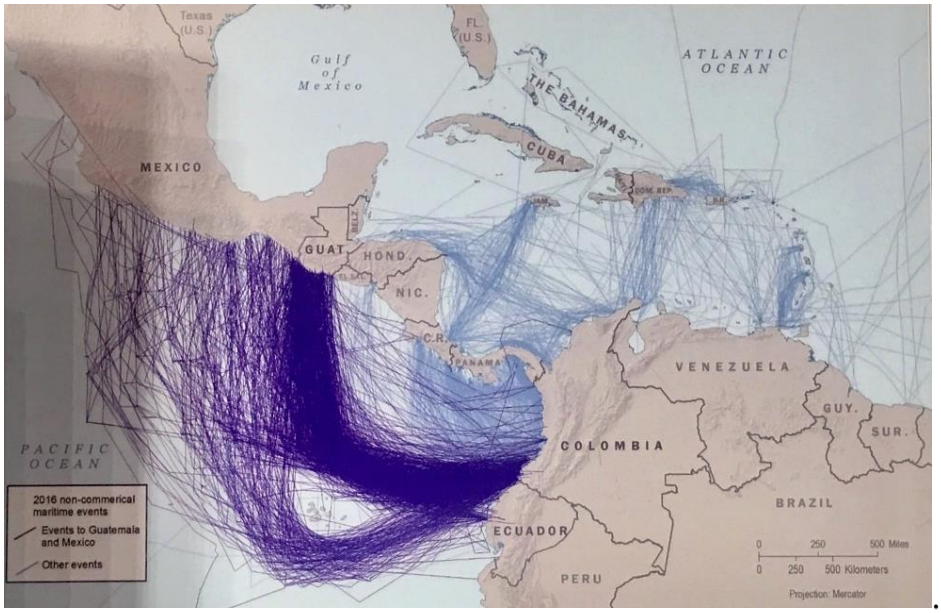

Figure 4. 2016 Suspect Maritime Tracks[52]

[51] See Appendix A for source information.

[52] Christopher Woody, "Here's How Drugs Are Getting Smuggled from South America to the US," Business Insider, 14 September 2017, http://www.businessinsider.com/heres-how-drugs-are-getting-smuggled-from-south-america-to-the-us-2017-9.

B. QUANTIFYING STRENGTH: GLOBAL RANKINGS

Maritime security strength can be assessed qualitatively and quantitively. Michael Morris's *Caribbean Maritime Security* includes a methodology for classifying and ranking both regional coastguards and naval forces; it provides the basis for a qualitative assessment of regional maritime security rankings. His work is based on order of battle data (number and nature of ships) and associated shore support facilities. He ranks these two categories separately as they have different missions and capabilities. Naval forces are regarded as capable of combat at sea while coastguards operate in a paramilitary or constabulary role.[53] Unfortunately, the last year assessed by Morris is 1992. In order to conduct a proper assessment Morris' methodology is reviewed and his rankings and classifications are updated based on data pulled from the annual editions of *Jane's Fighting Ships*. This provides a rough qualitative assessment of MSF strength.

Morris's rankings are useful to a point but less relevant in the modern security context. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the traditional internally oriented focus of armed forces and lack of external threats means that most regional militaries are necessarily internally focused. Furthermore, a historical ranking of regional naval powers places the bulk of the region's navies somewhere between token navies and inshore territorial defense navies. A better metric for naval and coastguard potency and ranking is to simply lump these forces together and to rank them all as Maritime Security Forces (MSF). Ranking MSFs requires the consideration of total maritime potency against scope of waters patrolled and protected. Total force is considered but force structure also matters; intercept craft (40+kt speedboats), Maritime Patrol Reconnaissance Aircraft (MPRA), and large Patrol Craft (PC) all play specific roles in the interdiction process. Here MSF are ranked from 1 to 3. A Rank 1 MSF is the low end of the capability spectrum, for example: a navy consisting of a handful of old Boston whalers would be considered a rank 1 MSF. The occasional frigate, corvette, or fast attack craft can be filed under coastal patrol craft and usually indicate a Rank 3 MSF.

[53] Morris, *Caribbean Maritime Security*, 11–13.

The control of a state's territorial waters is dependent on the capabilities of operational platform types. Smaller craft are best for coastal operations and do not venture far from land due to fuel constraints, crew endurance, and sea keeping issues. Larger craft are better suited for operations beyond territorial seas, and MPRA assets allow still better coverage of a state's maritime domain. Therefore, platforms are classified as follows: Patrol Craft (including corvettes, PCs, and craft greater than 50 ft in length), harbor security craft (mostly capable of costal and harbor security), interceptor craft (capable of speeds over 40 kts or highspeed craft specifically tasked with intercept duties), and MPRA. These are considered against their respective operational zones: total EEZ (sea space extending from a state's shoreline at lower low tide out to 200 nm) and total coastline. Patrol Craft, and MPRA are tools for the control of the EEZ while harbor security craft and interceptor craft patrol the coastline and territorial sea. MPRA and Patrol Craft can also play a role in coastline security. Using the MSF ranking system, a Rank 3 MSF represents a robust state maritime security apparatus that can effectively control its coastline and extend its reach into its EEZ and a Rank 1 MSF can only secure a small segment of coastline or provide security in a port.

MSF rankings involve a measure of qualitative judgement. Pure coverage is an important metric, but there are intangibles that are difficult to directly assess with publicly available data. For example, Mexico has less coverage of its EEZ and coastline than Honduras, Guatemala, or El Salvador simply due to the size of its coastline and EEZ. However, Mexico's Navy is superior to these smaller MSFs in terms of professionalization, communication infrastructure, blue water maritime strength, and MPRA sensors. Similarly, the Bahamas has to patrol a massive territory consisting of numerous islands with complex shorelines that lower the density of its available platforms. However, these platforms are high quality, most are new, and they receive support from the United States and the United Kingdom. Conversely, El Salvador has an intense concentration of ships and small boats of dubious quality. These guidelines are established in Table 3.

Table 3. Maritime Security Forces: Ranking System[54]

Maritime Security Force Ranking	Vessel Inventory	Capabilities
3. Offshore MSF	All or nearly all coastguard vessel categories well represented including patrol craft, or even corvettes and frigates. *May include regular naval units.* Also, generally some *MPRA*	Constabulary capabilities in EEZ such as search and rescue. Some law-enforcement potential in territorial sea (i.e., drug interdiction, fishing, offshore oil installation protection, environmental protection). *Vessel size and allows for longer range, on station time, and sea keeping. MPRA extends potential reach of law enforcement*
2. Inshore MSF	One or more (PC) plus modest representation of craft at all lower levels. Limited MPRA.	Irregular, spotty law enforcement in territorial sea, generally emanating from single coastguard base. *Limited ability to enforce laws or interdict in EEZ.*
1. Port-and-harbor MSF	No PC, (PC) or MR and sparse representation of craft at all lower levels	Constabulary capabilities limited to ports, harbors, and waters in vicinity of single coastguard base.

In assessing the Caribbean and Central America, most states are assessed individually. However, the RSS countries are assessed as a single unit due to the integrative, treaty-based nature of their security apparatuses. These states are small and can hardly manage even a Rank 1 maritime security force but together can collectively field a Rank 2–3 MSF. Furthermore, the unique legal rights afforded to other members of the RSS, including the right of hot pursuit into each other's territorial seas, allow the RSS to act in a truly networked and unitary manner. Both the UN and the U.S. State Department tend to refer to the RSS as a single unit. Given the guidelines from Table 3, Table 4 includes an approximate ranking of naval power in the Caribbean Basin.

[54] Adapted from Morris, *Caribbean Maritime Security*, 11–13.

Table 4. Maritime Security Force Ranking and Platform Responsibility 2008[55]

Central America	EEZ. Platform (KM/ Platform)	Coastline. Platform. (KM/ Platform)	MSF Rank (2008)	Insular Caribbean	EEZ. Platform	Coastline Platform	MSF Rank (2008)
Belize	18091	26	2	RSS	29173	35	2
Costa Rica	114426	117	1	Bahamas	104761	354	2
El Salvador	16618	5	2	Cuba	10125	104	3
Guatemala	14709	11	2	Dominican Republic	15852	51	3
Honduras	19891	21	2	Jamaica	18806	42.6	3
Nicaragua	24750	32	2	Trinidad and Tobago	4200	11	3
Panama	17409	54	3				
Mexico	31476	40	3				

What is apparent upon a review of operational forces is that the Central American Bridge states have fewer dedicated offshore platforms. From 1998–2009, *Jane's* only listed 6 MPRA assets for the entire region (not counting Mexico). This limits their organic maritime domain awareness. This hinders the abilities of the individual state to act unilaterally and adequately control their coastlines. However, regional geography also plays a role in relative strength. El Salvador's MSF is relatively strong. They operate 52 small craft, 6 large patrol craft, and 2 interceptor craft. This gives them an intense concentration of coastline/platform (5.11 km per platform in 2008).[56] Despite this concentration of force, the lack of MPRA, and general low platform quality relegates them to the status of a rank 2 MSF.

C. MSF STRENGTH DATA: RELATIVE STRENGTH AND REQUIREMENTS

Evaluating MSFs also depends on the size of a state's maritime space and number of platforms. A state with a small coastline, limited EEZ, and no rivers may not require a muscular coast guard. Therefore, MSF strength is quantitively assessed using kilometers of coastline per platform or square kilometers of EEZ per platform. These metrics require

[55] See Appendices B and C for source information.

[56] See Appendix C for source information.

a couple caveats: small patrol boats (those under 15 meters or 50 feet) and interceptor craft cannot spend prolonged periods at sea and are therefore better suited for coastal operations. Larger vessels and MPRA, collectively referred to as Off-Shore Patrol Vessels (OPV), can are designed to patrol the EEZ but can aid in coastline security. Therefore, an assessment of strength would hold that OPVs can affect coastline security, but small patrol craft cannot affect EEZ security. Not all ships can be underway at all times, and not all sea space is relevant to trafficking, but as a nation adds to its fleet, each platform needs to cover less sea space. Two theoretical measurements of sea control are:

$$\frac{EEZ\ (square\ Km)}{OPV\ (number\ of\ vessels + MPRA)} = Platform\ \text{EEZ}\ Responsibility$$

$$\frac{Coastline(km)}{MSF\ (total\ platforms)} = Platform\ \text{Coastline}\ Responsibility$$[57]

Platform responsibility values should, theoretically, be inversely related to cocaine seizures. With less coastline or EEZ per platform, each platform will be more effective, and seizures will increase. In assessing vector platform density, total EEZ and total coastline for the Central American and Caribbean Vectors are compared to total platform number by operating area. Table 5 demonstrates the difference between Platform Responsibility in Central American and the Caribbean. Central American states have more platforms patrolling their coastlines and a much weaker presence in the EEZ when compared to the states of the Insular Caribbean.

[57] Platform Responsibility refers to the total amount of theoretical seaspace each platform is responsible for; when responsibility goes up, density goes down. Increased platform density means each platform is responsible for less space and vice versa.

Table 5. Vector Platform Responsibility[58]

	C. America + Mexico EEZ/ Platform	C. America + Mexico Coastline/ Platform	Central American EEZ/Platform	Central American Coastline/Platform	Independent Caribbean EEZ/Platform	Independent Caribbean Coastline/ Platform
2000	44895.03	74.34742	122509.9	31.16038	11546	38.28135
2001	42968.21	62.59289	114204.1	30.58333	11842.05	38.6822
2002	47902.35	56.15603	116173.2	27.07377	11842.05	38.6822
2003	47902.35	57.16968	116173.2	27.64017	12048	38.88579
2004	55008.75	65.16872	118211.3	33.03	11450.58	36.75771
2005	61799.95	62.84127	118211.3	32.86567	11450.58	36.04049
2006	62965.99	57.16968	122509.9	31.45714	10909.61	35.35072
2007	62572.45	54.41924	120322.2	29.75676	11264.39	36.21716
2008	61799.95	52.96321	112300.7	28.23077	10576.49	33.43122

D. STRENGTH AND INTERDICTION PERCENTAGE: CENTRAL AMERICA

What becomes apparent upon a review of the transit zone is that Central America and Mexico have more sea space to control, both in the Eastern Pacific and in the Western Caribbean. As a platform's responsibility decreases interdiction rates should increase. These values should be negatively correlated. However, an attempt to correlate Central American EEZ/Platform with interdiction rates showed a correlation of only 0.61. The correlation of efficacy in terms of coastline/platform was similarly low at only -0.475. This demonstrates changes in MSF strength do not statistically affect interdiction rates in Central America. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate this lack of correlation between platform responsibility and seizure rates.

[58] See Appendices A, B, and C for source information.

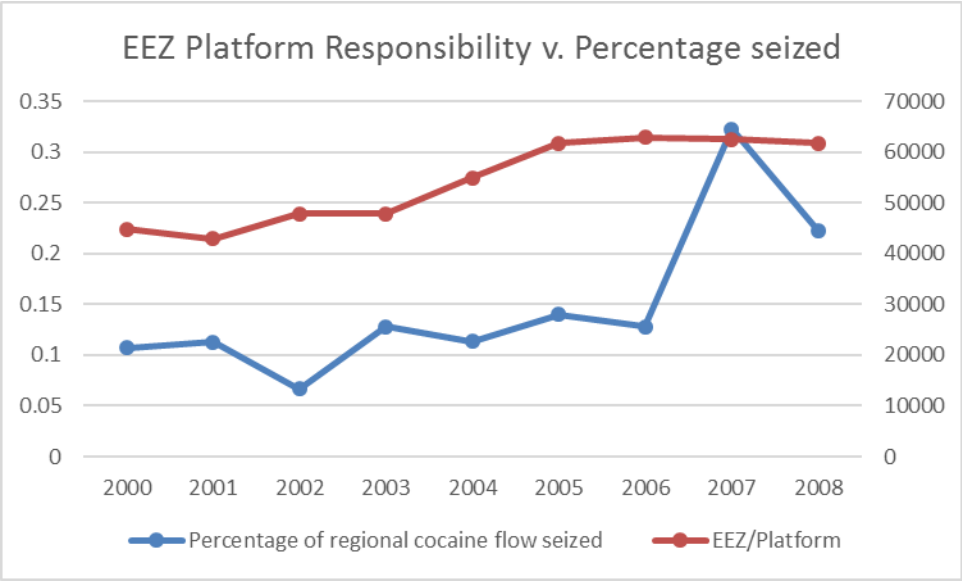

Figure 5. Central American Vector: EEZ Platform Responsibility v. Percentage of Cocaine Flow Seized[59]

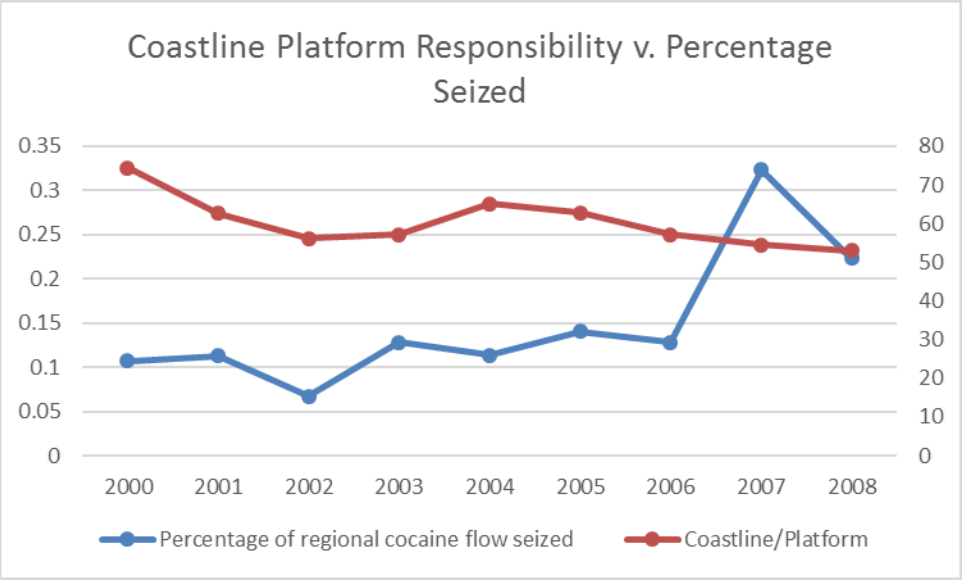

Figure 6. Central American Vector: Coastline Platform Responsibility v. Percentage of Cocaine Flow Seized[60]

[59] See Appendix C for source information.

[60] See Appendix C for source information.

E. STRENGTH AND INTERDICTION PERCENTAGE: INSULAR CARIBBEAN

The Caribbean operates more maritime security forces for less total sea space. In contrast to Central America, where each ship capable of operations in the EEZ is responsible for over 100,000 sq. km (Mexico nearly cuts this in half but plays little direct role in collective security), Caribbean security craft only have a little more than 10,000 km per platform. The relatively small states of the insular Caribbean have fielded almost twice as many PCs, 5 times as many MPRA, and have less total sea space to control than the Central American Republics (not including Mexico).

Changes in MSF levels still fail to generate statistically significant changes in asset efficacy in the Independent Caribbean. There is only a -0.53 correlation between EEZ responsibility and percentage of flow seized and only a -0.64 correlation between Coastline Responsibility and percentage of flow seized. Figures 7 and 8 illustrate the lack of strong correlation between regional strength and percentage of cocaine flow seized.

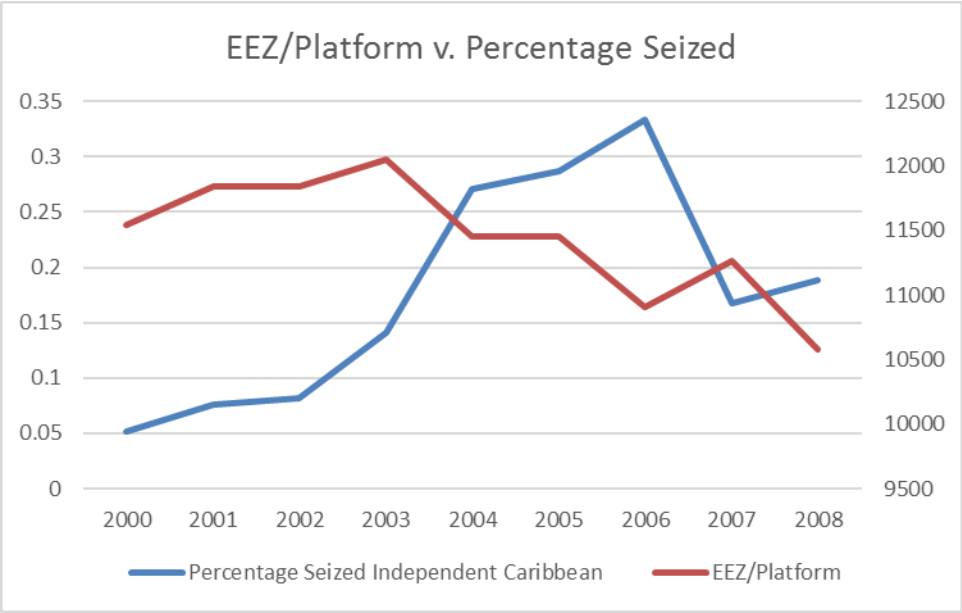

Figure 7. Insular Caribbean Vector: EEZ Platform Responsibility v. Percentage of Cocaine Flow Seized[61]

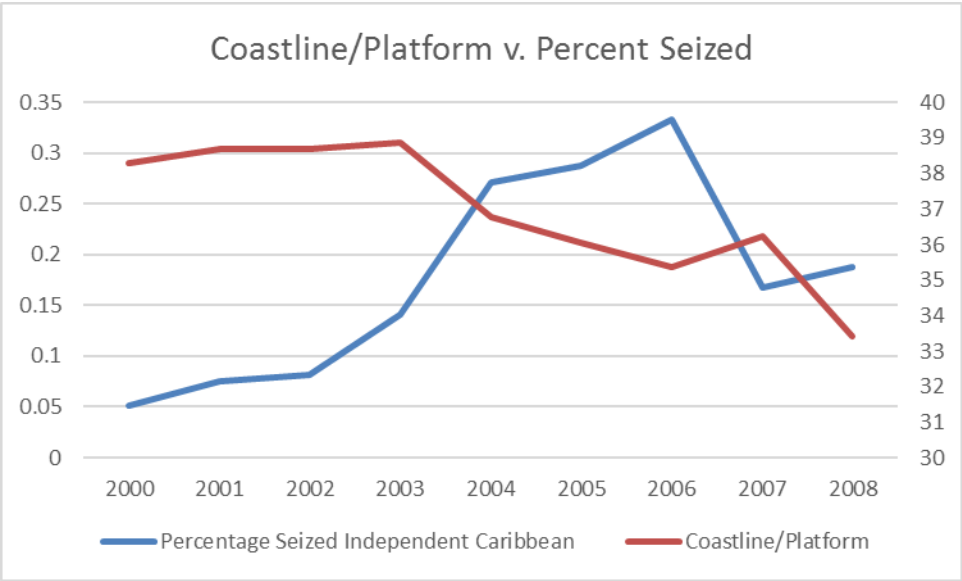

Figure 8. Insular Caribbean Vector: Coastline Platform Responsibility v. Percentage of Cocaine Flow Seized[62]

[61] See Appendix B for source information.

[62] See Appendix B for source information.

F. INTERCEPTORS

One of the only vessel types to correspond with interdiction rates is the interceptor. The ONDCP estimated that 30–67 percent of all U.S. bound cocaine travels by go-fast through the Central American corridor during the 2000–2008 time frame.[63] This number has changed over time and currently stands at percent and percent of suspect movements in the Eastern Pacific and Western Caribbean.[64] Although the prevalence of the go-fast has varied it has become increasingly popular and is currently the preferred method of delivery. Corresponding investments in interceptor craft, small boats capable of speeds over 40+kts or otherwise specifically assigned to interceptor duties, correlate strongly with increases in regional interdiction rates. Central American investments in interceptor craft better correlate with regional interdiction efficacy. This correlation is stronger than the correlation of total costal platforms, harbor security craft, and offshore patrol vessels and stands at 0.7 which is still not statistically significant. Figure 9 demonstrates that, while there is some correlation between interceptors and cocaine seziures, it is not statistically signficant.

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[63] Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Cocaine Smuggling in 2007*, ONDCP-01-08 https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/pdf/cocaine_smuggling07.pdf, 3.

[64] Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Global Cocaine Trafficking* (March 2017), accessed 10 March 2018, 6. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/ondcp/global_cocaine_trafficking.pdf.

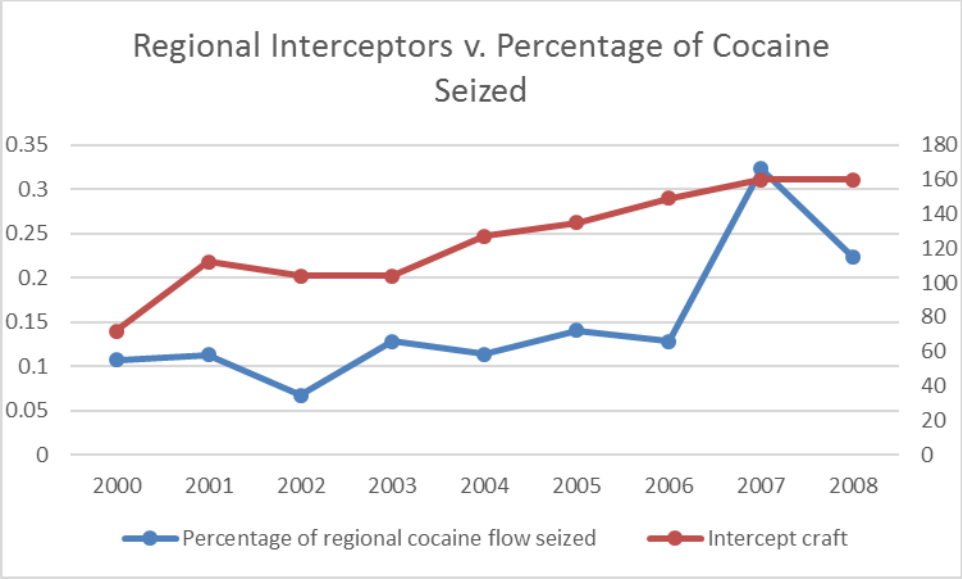

Figure 9. Central American Vector: Regional Interceptors v. Percentage of Cocaine Seized[65]

As go-fast cocaine transports dominate transit zone smuggling patterns investments in interceptor craft has a logical, although still tenuous, correlation with changes in regional efficacy. For example, the year Panama added 2 interceptors its annual seizure rate spiked but it is not clear if it was due to these specific craft, earlier organizational changes, or deeper cooperation. A more complete dataset from the UNODC's individual seizures database would help to establish causality in this instance. However, the Individual Drug Seizure report is only available from 2010 to 2015 and even then, the only country that reported individual drug seizures in Central America was Guatemala.[66]

In total the region operates more costal security craft and interceptor craft for less total coastline than the insular Caribbean but there is not as much correlation between coastline/platform or EEZ/platform as there is in the Caribbean. The higher correlation between interceptor craft and interdiction rate works logically with preferred smuggler transportation methodology during the time frame in question even though the correlation to success is tenuous.

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[65] See Appendix C for source information.

[66] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "UNODC Statistics."

Much like the Central American Corridor countries the Caribbean Corridor countries saw the most correlation between interdiction rates and interceptor levels: 0.57. However, this remains non-statistically significant and there is a lack of detailed seizure data that would show a real connection between seizures and platform levels.

G. THE IMPORTANCE OF CUEING

The process of steering surface craft and law enforcement to interdict suspect vessels is referred to as cueing. Cueing occurs when a MPRA asset or a maritime surveillance radar station detects a potential drug runner. These assets then direct surface ships or helicopters to intercept and detain said suspect vessel. States with extended coastlines, multiple small islands, and broad swaths of sea space cannot rely on deployed surface craft alone because interceptors and patrol boats often lack the endurance to spend prolonged periods at sea and are best deployed with specific information. Cueing may also take the form of simply informing friendly ships and partner nations of potential drug runners, allowing said ships or partner nations to interdict as they see fit. The following is a brief discussion on the impact of MPRA and radar stations by vector.

1. Maritime Patrol, Reconnaissance, and Surveillance

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s the insular Caribbean maintained a higher level of total maritime aviation assets. For the purposes of data entry this included all aviation platforms listed in *Jane's Fighting Ships* without a detailed assessment of surveillance capabilities. The Central American Republics maintained only about 6 maritime aviation assets in the 2000s while the Caribbean states expanded their overall inventory from 27 to 38. However, MPRA force levels and interdiction efficiency only had a statistical correlation of 0.42 in the Insular Caribbean and no discernible effect in Central America (without Mexico) where stagnant MRPA force levels coincide with an increase in interdiction rates. More may not be better; the lack of statistical correlation between efficiency and MPRA force levels shows that simply counting planes has limited utility on a vector level. Additionally, considerations such as platform surveillance capabilities, range, and even age may impact the utility of an MPRA asset. Simply put, a Cessna is not

a P-8 Orion. Individual cases like the RSS show slight correlation between changes in interdiction rates and the addition of MPRA assets but others remain dispositive.

2. RADAR Systems and Data Sharing

RADAR is the other major source of cueing. The 2011 INSCR notes multiple organic maritime radar stations coming on line in the Eastern Caribbean in 2010. The initiation of one such system in St. Vincent and the Grenadines was followed by the near immediate interdiction of a Go-Fast carrying approximately $62,000 in cash.[67] A simple year-year comparison of 2009 and 2010 demonstrates a nearly 329 percent increase in interdictions in the small island nation.[68] Similarly, Cuba has a noted network of fixed and mobile radar systems that they use to cue either own nation or neighbor state interdiction assets.[69] The 2011 INCSR notes that Cuba's radar network and willingness to cooperate with neighboring states enabled multiple USCG interdictions and seizures.[70] In 2005 Trinidad and Tobago upgraded its costal surveillance radar and saw a near tripling of its annual seizure rate. It is also worth noting that the number of platforms (ships/MPRA) did not increase in 2005, but their sensory capabilities and cueing assets did improve.[71] In 2005 the Netherlands decided to invest in the cueing capabilities of their costal surveillance networks in the region by purchasing 8 Maritime Small Target Tracker radars across the islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao.[72] However, the effect of these additional radar

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[67] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2011 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: Country Reports- Croatia through Haiti* (March 2011), https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2011/vol1/156360.htm#elsalvador.

[68] See Appendix A for source information.

[69] Department of State, *2011 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*.

[70] Ibid.

[71] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2006 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: The Caribbean* (March 2006), https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2006/vol1/html/62108.htm.

[72] "RNLN Orders Small-Target Radar for Caribbean," Jane's by IHS Markit, 1 December 2005, https://janes.ihs.com/DefenceEquipment/Display/1201725.

assets is difficult to track systemically and they may have a deterrent effect. For example, the Netherland Antilles reported 9025 kg captured in 2004 but only 1989 kg in 2006.[73]

Finding evidence of costal and maritime surveillance RADARs along the Central American isthmus is much more difficult. Theoretically, access to RADAR and other cueing systems would enable higher rates of interdiction. However, the complex geography of coastlines and the frequency of costal fishing traffic give smugglers areas to evade detection. This explains the increased impact of additional interceptors in the region. The closer correlation may be due to a lack of other cueing assets that allow other states to employ their platforms more effectively.

Increasing radar coverage and increased area surveillance heightens government knowledge of the transit zone. This can result in some shocking shifts in data. For example, SOUTHCOM notes a massive spike in cocaine smuggling from 2015–2016 but it is not clear if this is caused by increased regional awareness or by increased flow.[74] However, it is likely that previous flow estimates had been low due to lower domain awareness and not a steep increase in cocaine production. Such an increase in production would require massive cartel investment during a period when the security situation in Colombia was improving significantly. As more systems come on line, authorities may become aware of additional smugglers which may raise estimates of total flow. Conversely, flow may be much higher than suspected but passing undetected.

H. COMPARATIVE STRENGTH AND COUNTERINTUITIVE TRENDS

Since the 1990s, the Central America Republics have had better theoretical control of its coastline and the states of the Independent Caribbean have had better control of their EEZ. During the 2000–2008 time frame the states of the Independent Caribbean had a greater theoretical presence in the EEZ than the states of Central America by a factor of nearly 10 to 1. When Mexico's strength is added this trend shifts slightly as Mexico's

[73] See Appendix A for source information.

[74] Kurt Tidd, *Posture Statement of Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, Commander United States Southern Command, Before the 115th Congress Senate Armed Services Committee* (2 April 2017) 33 http://www.southcom.mil/Portals/7/Documents/Posture%20Statements/SOUTHCOM_2017_posture_statement_FINAL.pdf?ver=2017-04-06-105819-923.

impressive maritime airwing and regular line warships (destroyers, frigates, and corvettes which are counted as OPVs) potentially compensate for a lack of OPVs in Central America. This shows that the Caribbean region has consistently exercised greater control of the blue water domain than either Mexico or Central America. However, these force levels are relatively consistent from the 1990s when 30–70 percent of cocaine still transited the Insular Caribbean. In fact, Caribbean platform density was higher than Central American platform density before Cuba demobilized and Mexico started investing in its navy. From the 1990s to the 2000s there is a small decline in Central American OPV assets caused by Nicaragua decommissioning some large surface craft, however, Nicaragua is not a noted transshipment state and invested in high speed costal security craft at the same time they decommissioned their blue water patrol assets.

I. CASE STUDY PREVIEW

The following states represent puzzles in the counter-narcotics problem. While vector level analysis shows that the Insular Caribbean has more platforms capable of controlling its EEZ, this has been a long-term trend and changes in force levels do not necessarily correlate with the big shifts in cocaine smuggling. Subsequent chapters will discuss each individual region and state in detail. This is a brief overview of some of these case study states discussed at length in subsequent chapters and focuses exclusively on force structures.

1. Cuba: Shrinking Capability, Enhanced Security

Cuba is a paradox. At the start of the 1990s it was suspected of being a major cocaine transshipment state and had a MSF that rivaled the Mexican Navy. By 1999–2000 it had essentially completed its post-Cold War draw down and settled into the position of a Rank 2 MSF. Its force structure has remained roughly consistent, but cocaine smugglers almost completely avoid the island starting in 2000. Constant MSF strength should interdict a similar amount of cocaine as a percentage of flow. The fact that seizures drop despite a stabilization of force shows that sheer capacity is not key to interdiction. Cuba's maritime security capacity shrank, but interdictions and seizures in the communist state did not begin to fall until after the demobilization. This drop does occur in the midst of the Caribbean's

diminishing role in the drug trade; flow estimates from the early 2000s track a general decline in the route's dominance. Additionally, the force draw-down in the early 2000s is not particularly sharp and interdictions in 2000 were relatively high despite the demobilizations of 1999.

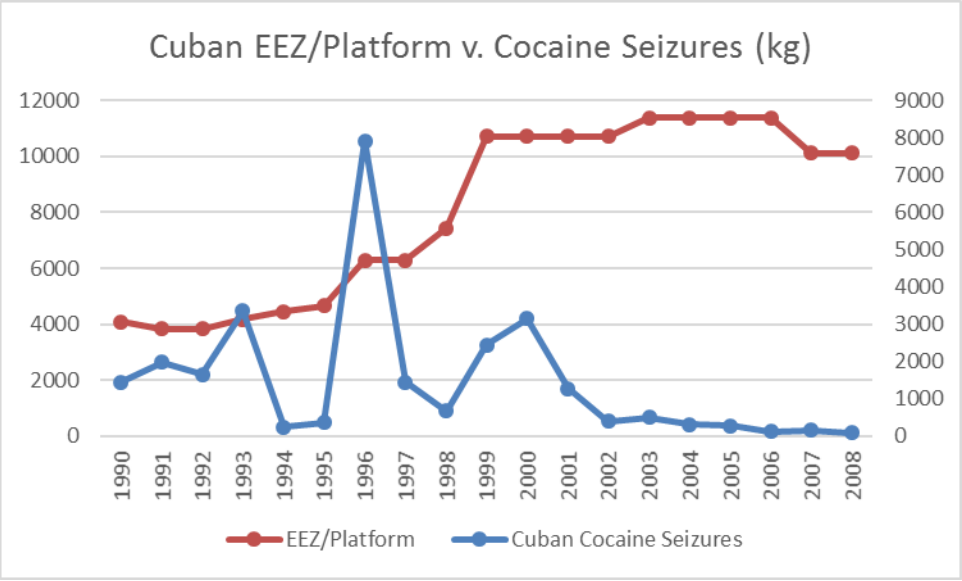

Figure 10. Cuban: EEZ Platform Responsibility v. Annual Cocaine Seizures[75]

As will be discussed in later chapters, the Cuban case shows that capacity is not the sole determinate of interdiction success or deterrence. As an individual state, working outside the rest of the system the Cuban government was able to seize a decent amount of cocaine transiting its waters and airspace. The fact that 2000–2001 saw a sharp decline in seizures and a decline in the dominance of the Caribbean route clearly demonstrates that force is not the sole determinant of cartel vector selection. How Cuba managed to steer cocaine away and develop this deterrent capability will be discussed in chapter three.

[75] See Appendix B for source information.

2. The Mexico Problem

Mexico is a unique case and demonstrative of the problems inherent in a stand-alone security policy. From 1990–2009 the Mexican navy grew and its force structure changed from a traditional blue water force, which mimicked the U.S. navy, to a specialized interdiction force. It shed most of its older destroyers and frigates in favor of corvettes and large, capable interceptor craft. It acquired more and more capable MPRA, including aircraft with advanced radars and optics. By 2009, the Mexican Navy had a greater coverage of its coastline than Panama, 54 km/platform to 40 km/platform. As the penultimate destination for most cocaine smuggled toward the United States one would expect interdictions to rise as a direct result of this expansion. However, annual seizures have fallen. In 2001 Mexico seized 29 MT of cocaine, this annual seizure rate dropped to 3.6 MT by 2014. Over the same span of time Central America has seen a spike in cocaine seizures despite a slower rate of MSF strength growth. The increased strength of the Mexican navy is either being misused or pushing cartel smuggling routes to the South.

J. CONCLUSION: NOT JUST PLATFORMS

The insular Caribbean has interdicted consistently more of its regional cocaine flow than Central America. While this is skewed by the spike in seizure percentage from 2005–2008, a result of reduced global supply and increased Colombian interdiction, it was consistent in the early 2000s. However, trends in interdiction are not as closely tied to force strength as may have been expected. The major shift from the Insular Caribbean to Central America occurred during a period of increasing Caribbean interdiction efficacy not joined to a significant increase in Caribbean strength. Cocaine smugglers have thus adjusted to perceived and actual relative material weakness. As a lower percentage of cocaine flow is seized in Central America it remains the preferred route for smugglers. The Caribbean, by fielding a larger number of patrol craft, MPRA, and interceptor craft has made itself a harder transit zone and the Central American states, despite their larger sizes, have not made maritime security investments sufficient to deter maritime smugglers. This has essentially been a constant, the Caribbean has always had a greater presence in the EEZ than Central America. The shift in flows occurred despite Mexican and Central American

investment and Cuban demobilization. Therefore, force strength as a major determinant of interdiction efficacy on a vector level can be eliminated. The major causal factors must be related to institutional and operational developments.

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III. THE CARIBBEAN AND COOPERATION

The Insular Caribbean consists of numerous dependencies, microstates, and two (regionally) powerful states. Most states maintain maritime constabulary forces and only Cuba and the Dominican Republic have ships that could be considered "combatants." These states are all relatively weak and few possess resources adequate to ensure the complete control and security of their respective national waters. This has caused the emergence of an overlapping, cooperative, series of relationships and a reliance on external support. Some counternarcotics relationships are overt and codified by treaty, others are unofficial and executed out of necessity. This chapter studies official regional security organizations and the impact of state behavior on cocaine smuggling. It then examines the RSS, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica due to varying levels of regional and extra-regional cooperation and their current or past prominence in the drug trade.

The individual case studies consider platform strength and regional cooperation. On a macro scale, where the whole of the Caribbean vector is considered, the addition of one or two craft may not be significant but on an individual state basis an additional ship or plane may double a state's ability to project power. Considering the implementation dates of cooperative agreements, their assessed efficacy, and the commissioning dates of various platforms shows has a greater impact than simply adding platforms. Some of the UNODC data is missing from the 1990–2009 time-frame, when relevant this chapter will draw on INCSR reports to fill these voids. This is only done for these specific cases and not the Caribbean in general. This chapter will show that increasing security integration has led to increases in seizures and can generate a deterrent effect.

A. PHYSICAL AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHIES OF THE INSULAR CARIBBEAN

Geographically, the Insular Caribbean is defined by several features. In the Eastern Caribbean there is a chain of small island states referred to as the Lesser Antilles. This chain stretches from Trinidad and Tobago, off the eastern end of Venezuela, to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The center of the Caribbean is defined by the gap between

Cuba, Jamaica, and Haiti which is often referred to as the "Windward Passage." North of the Windward Passage lie the Turks and Caicos, the Bahamas, and then the Eastern coast of the United States.

The region's geography and culture has defined the flow of various narcotics, especially cocaine. Culturally, the production of marijuana has dominated the region. Its use by large sectors of the Afro-Caribbean population has contributed to large scale, long term local production and a bustling interisland trade. As marijuana consumption in the United States started to climb, Caribbean producers and traffickers were willing to provide product to that expanding market.[76] These early smugglers adopted numerous tactics in their attempts to gain access to the U.S. market. These have involved covert fishing boats, pleasure craft, go-fast speedboats, small aircraft that air drop drugs to small boats, semisubmersibles, fully submersible craft, and even regular merchant ships. Some cocaine smugglers transited the Windward Passage directly to the United States or through another transshipment point, other smugglers simply attempted to get their products to Puerto Rico where a lack of tariffs and custom barriers with the mainland United States made detection difficult. These patterns persist with the bulk of regional cocaine transiting the Dominican Republic toward Puerto Rico. Today, some of the cocaine transiting the Caribbean is bound for Europe but a large share of Caribbean cocaine is destined for North American markets.

The insular Caribbean and the various maritime routes transiting through it to the United States represent the most economically viable route for drug smugglers. A maritime transit allows the criminal organization to carry large cargos and bypass middlemen in Central America. The security cooperation mechanisms in place in the Caribbean are effective enough to drive traffic toward the more expensive bridge countries and away from the faster, cheaper, Insular Caribbean route. They may also act as a deterrent, driving traffickers toward Central America in an effort to avoid the better organized Caribbean.

Since 1990 the region has changed. It has been shaped by both the bilateral influence of relationships with the United States and multi-lateral regional relationships.

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[76] Ivelaw Griffith, "Caribbean Manifestations of the Narcotics Phenomenon," in *Security Problems and Policies in the Post-Cold War Caribbean*, ed. Jorge Rodriguez Beruff and Humberto Garcia Muniz (New York, St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1996), 181–187.

Bilateral agreements among regional states have proliferated, as have steps toward regional integration. Correspondingly, flow through the region has continued to decrease. From 2000–2009 smuggling through the Eastern Caribbean, and the Windward Passage declined to less than 1 percent of U.S. bound cocaine while flow through Hispaniola remained somewhat variable (oscillating from 8–2 percent of total U.S. bound cocaine).[77] Today, the region is straddled by multiple overlapping security arrangements: the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an economically oriented integration mechanism with security and law enforcement components, the RSS is an integrated police and military force that allows numerous microstates to coordinate, and multiple global powers maintain a routine naval presence in support of their dependencies.

An underlying point of influence in the region is the United States. The U.S. Government's specific role will be discussed in additional depth in chapter 5 but a brief overview is appropriate as it shapes the region's behavior. For example: Operation Bahamas Turks and Caicos (OPBAT) is a large, ongoing, highly successful, cooperative security operation involving the United States and the United Kingdom. Cuba drove cocaine smugglers from its northern waters by closely cooperating with the United States, the RSS MSF and most of the region's navies are comprised largely of ex-US platforms. Both of the RSS MPRA assets are gifts from the US, most of the large patrol craft of the Dominican Republic's navy are ex-USCG, and most of the small interceptor craft operating in the region are gifts from USSOUTHCOM. The importance of bilateral maritime agreements is difficult to underrate. By 2000 nearly all major Caribbean States had entered into bilateral maritime agreements with the United States; this contrasts with Central America which, except for Panama, only started entering into bilateral maritime security agreements in the 2000s. These agreements generally allowed the USCG and the U.S. Navy to conduct law enforcement activities in the territorial seas of treaty nations.[78] While

[77] See Appendix A for source information.

[78] Joseph Kramek, "Bilateral Maritime Counter-Drug and Immigrant Interdiction Agreements: Is This the World of the Future?" *The University of Miami Inter-American Law Review*, 31, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 150–151, http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40166419.pdf.

platforms, training, radar stations, and regional coordination systems may be facilitated by the U.S. this chapter focuses on local, interstate relationships.

What is apparent is that the Caribbean states have made consistent efforts to coordinate on a treaty basis. As these efforts are increasingly integrative and smugglers have shifted the bulk of their traffic. Even Cuba, a regional outlier, routinely pushes track data to its neighbors and now stands nearly unmarred by the cocaine trade. However, another regional outlier, the Dominican Republic, remains relatively isolated form its neighbors and has remained a major transshipment point. The case of the Insular Caribbean demonstrates the value of the collaborative multilateral relationship and have deterred smugglers.

B. UN AND INTERNATIONAL TREATY STRUCTURES

Caribbean and Central American States are, generally, party to a number of UN sponsored treaties that have impacts on their collaborative legal rights and obligations. The main treaty relevant to the counternarcotics issue is the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psycho-tropic Substances. This treaty established the obligation to prevent narcotics trafficking and allowed states to request permission to board a vessel flagged to another state with permission.[79] This particular treaty provides global governments with a generally uniform, prohibitionist stance on illicit narcotics but does not establish an operational coordination organization.

There is are additional extra-regional treaties and agreements. One, signed in 2003, involves France, the US, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Guatemala, the Netherlands, and Belize.[80] It is a multi-lateral collaborative treaty which is designed to accelerate pursuit into partner waters and mandates close regional coordination. The other, the Paramaribo Declaration, involving the US, UK, France, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Surinam,

[79] "Combating Transnational Organized Crime Committed at Sea," UNODC Issue Paper (New York, United Nations 2013), 27–29, https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/GPTOC/Issue_Paper_-_TOC_at_Sea.pdf.

[80] Department of State, *2011 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*.

Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, is focused on information sharing and became effective in 2006.[81]

C. CARICOM AND THE REGION

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is the most prominent regional security organization, it also focuses on economic development and non-binding cooperation. CARICOM essentially amounts to a customs union with security and law enforcement powers.[82] However, there are concrete security components that underlie the larger economic framework. Chief among these is the "CARICOM Maritime and Airspace Security Co-operation Agreement" (henceforth referred to as the CARICOM Security Agreement).

Key permissive features of the CARICOM Security Agreement include the right to enter, patrol, and conduct law enforcement activities in partner nation's waters. There are caveats regarding ship-riders and notification from partner states but in general this is a sacrifice of a degree of sovereignty in favor of security.[83] Typically, the conduct of activities other than innocent passage cannot be conducted in the waters of a sovereign state, sacrificing or augmenting this element of sovereignty eliminates potential security seams caused by overlapping and colliding territorial seas. Patrols that cross these seams hoist a CARICOM ensign as a sign of their joint security duties.[84] Furthermore, while most bi-lateral maritime security agreements authorize the boarding of a partner nation flagged vessel with permission, the CARICOM Security Agreement allows the requesting state to board and search the vessel flagged to the requested state if no response is received within

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[81] Organization of American States; Intern-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, *International Anti-Narcotics Conference Paramaribo Declaration,* Strategy Document, 1 December 2006, http://www.cicad.oas.org/apps/Document.aspx?Id=431; *2011 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

[82] "The Revised Treaty," The Caribbean Community, accessed 10 March 2018, http://caricom.org/about-caricom/who-we-are/our-governance/the-revised-treaty/.

[83] "Maritime and Airspace Security Cooperation Agreement," The Caribbean Community, accessed September 2017, http://archive.caricom.org/jsp/secretariat/legal_instruments/agreement_maritime_airspace_security_cooperation.pdf, 10–11.

[84] Ibid., 12.

2 hours.[85] The permissive aspects of the CARICOM Security Agreement are not as interesting as one of the compulsory elements: data sharing is mandated in Article XII para. 1. Since the Agreement entered force in 2008 there has been a brief spike in estimated regional cocaine flow (roughly 2010–2012, UNODC data is unavailable but ONDCP estimates indicate a brief return to the region, mostly to Hispaniola) but a subsequent decline in the importance of the route to below 7 percent.[86]

Prior to the implementation of the CARICOM Security Agreement the organization founded the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS). Founded in 2005, IMPACS is primarily a research, coordination, and advisory body.[87] Again, this organization post-dates the main shift of cocaine to Central America. Yet, it has an impact on how the maritime security environment changed in the 2000s. In July of 2006 IMPACS created a regional sub-agency dedicated to sharing information, the Joint Regional Communications Center (JRCC).[88] The JRCC uses the Advanced Passenger Information system (APIS) and the Advanced Cargo Information System (ACIS) to monitor the transit of registered vessels, aircraft, passengers, and cargo containers in support of regional law enforcement efforts.[89]

CARICOM also seeks to create a framework for intergovernmental coordination in its CARICOM CSS.[90] Two of the document's 14 goals are particularly relevant:

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[85] The Caribbean Community, "Maritime and Airspace Security Cooperation Agreement," accessed September 2017, 14, 15, http://archive.caricom.org/jsp/secretariat/legal_instruments/agreement_maritime_airspace_security_cooperation.pdf.

[86] Drug Enforcement Administration, *Colombian Cocaine Production Expansion Contributes to Rise in Supply in the United States*, DEA-DCT-DIB-014-17 (August 2017), https://www.dea.gov/docs/DIB-014-17%20Colombian%20Cocaine%20Production%20Expansion.pdf, 5.

[87] "About Us," Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, Accessed 10 March 2018," http://www.caricomimpacs.org/aboutus.

[88] Michael Jones, Director Joint Regional Communications Center, *Special Security Concerns of Small Island States of the Caribbean; a Presentation on Enhancing Border Control Measures* (25 March 2010) http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2010/CP24010T.pdf; "CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security," The Caribbean Community, Accessed 10 March 2018, http://www.caricom.org/about-caricom/who-we-are/institutions1/caricom-implementing-agency-for-crime-and-security-impacs.

[89] Ibid.

[90] "CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy: 2013," The Caribbean Community, accessed 10 March 2018, https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/210844.pdf 4.

"increasing trans-border intelligence and information sharing" and "enhance maritime and airspace awareness, strengthen CARICOM borders including contiguousland [sic] borders."[91] The CSS also estimates a "significant reduction in crime" within three years of implementation. As the strategy was released in 2013 and UNODC data on drug interdiction is only available up until 2009 the efficacy of this strategy is extremely difficult to discern.

Formal CARICOM regional security, predicated largely on the above agreement, is relatively recent and the multi-lateral functions of the organization did not begin to take effect until after most cocaine trafficking had shifted away from the Caribbean toward Central America. Furthermore, while written agreements and treaties exist, the UN assessed these treaty organizations as less than fully functional or effective in 2007, before most of the recent innovations went into effect. That UN report, on "Crime, Violence, and Development," was written in 2007 and attributes most counter-trafficking progress to bilateral efforts with the US.[92] Therefore, while it may have a deterrence impact and may contribute to increasing regional security, it cannot be judged as the primary driver of the balloon effect.

D. INSULAR CARIBBEAN CASE STUDIES

The following states are selected due to their historical prominence in the interisland drug trade. The states of the Insular Caribbean have all taken some form of meaningful action against cartel organizations, but some have experienced more success. In the Insular Caribbean states have been able to increase their interdiction efficacy through cooperative security relationships with their neighbors, which has driven narcotraffickers toward Central America. Because this is not a comparative chapter it uses Platform Levels instead of Platform Responsibility. This is to determine if additional platforms make a significant impact on an individual state level.

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[91] The Caribbean Community, "CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy," 8.

[92] United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *Crime, Violence and Development: Trends, Costs and Policy Options in the Caribbean*, report no. 37820 (March 2010) http://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/Cr_and_Vio_Car_E.pdf.

1. The Regional Security System and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States

The RSS is a treaty-based organization consisting of seven micro states of the Eastern Antilles: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.[93] These seven states are referred to as the Eastern Caribbean and are generally treated as a unitary security force. While this organization does not pose a completely unified front, the island chain is intercepted in several spots by European dependencies, they do cover a roughly contiguous stretch of sea.

The essential form of the RSS took shape in the 1970s and 1980s in response to the persistent external threat posed by international communism and the decline of the British Empire.[94] As the empire contracted, and British dependencies gained their freedom, these small, English speaking, afro-Caribbean states were incapable of guaranteeing their own independence or responding to regional crises. The British facilitated the construction of a joint coast guard facility and provided the fledgling force with its first ships in 1979.[95] In the 1980s, partially in response to the Marxist revolution in Grenada, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Barbados, St Lucia, and St. Vincent.[96] This organization was and is dependent on external aid and most of its platforms are gifts from either the United States or the United Kingdom.

In the post-Cold War world, as state defense forces shrank, the RSS expanded, and its functions changed from external defense to internal stability operations. It took official treaty form first time in March of 1996.[97] (The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) includes Monserrat, Martinique, and Anguilla and acts as an economic

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[93] United States Department of State, *Treaty Establishing the Regional Security System,* (5 March 1996), https://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/70686.htm.

[94] "About Us," Regional Security System, accessed September 2017, http://www.rss.org.bb/about-us.html.

[95] Paul Sutton "Britain and the Commonwealth Caribbean," in *Security Problems and Policies in the Post-Cold War Caribbean,* ed. Jorge Rodriguez Beruff and Humberto Garcia Muniz (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 67.

[96] Ibid., 67.

[97] Department of State, *Treaty Establishing the Regional Security System.*

counterpoint to the security-oriented RSS. Monserrat, Martinique, and Anguilla are full dependencies of France and the United Kingdom. As a result, participation in a mutual defense treaty organization such as the RSS is limited.) However, the component members of the RSS do seek active, unofficial cooperation with regional partners. In a 2017 *Dialogo* interview Col. Glyne Grannum of the Barbados Defense Force (BDF, a critical component of the RSS) cited specific cooperation with Trinidad and Tobago and the French dependencies of Guadalupe and Martinique (these territories disrupt the contiguous EEZ of the RSS).[98] This cooperation is not mandated by an international treaty or agreement but appears to occur naturally.

Collaboration with the French territories interrupting the continuous RSS also produced substantial results. In 2008 St. Lucia MSF collaborated with French authorities operating out of Martinique to seize over a metric ton of cocaine.[99] 2005–2007 has a dip in RSS seizures but a spike in French seizures, assuming that this is not just statistical noise it indicates that seizures in the RSS pushed traffickers to French waters where they were caught at a similar rate. The fact that seizures then fall, despite no other major changes in law enforcement presence or strength, shows that the route was becoming less viable and that smugglers were probably choosing to abandon it.

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[98] Geraldine Cook, "A strong Partnership with its Neighbors," *Dialogo Digital Military Magazine*, 4 May 2017, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/strong-partnership-its-neighbors.

[99] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: Country Reports- Costa Rica through Haiti*, (February 2009), https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2009/vol1/116521.htm.

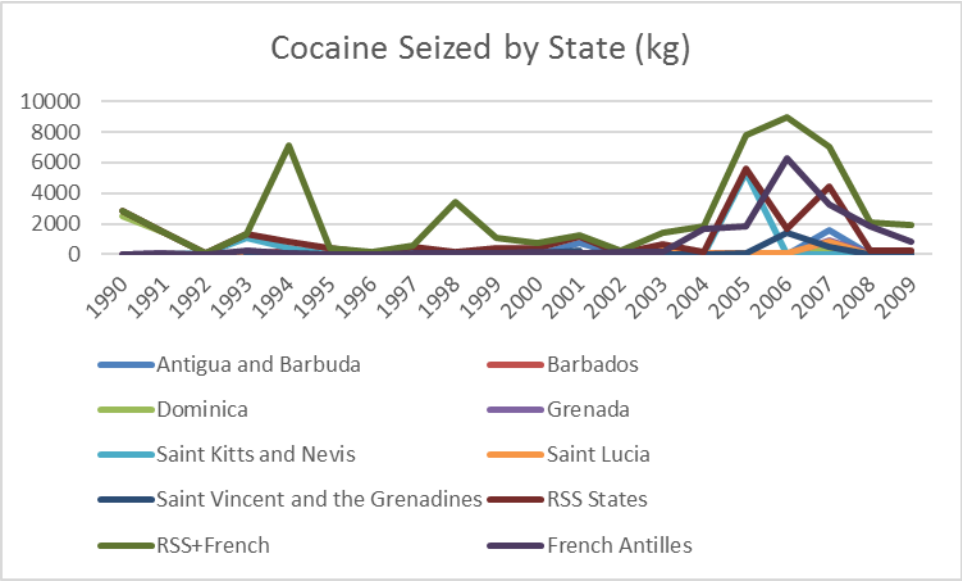

Figure 11. Cocaine Seizures by State: The RSS and the French Antilles[100]

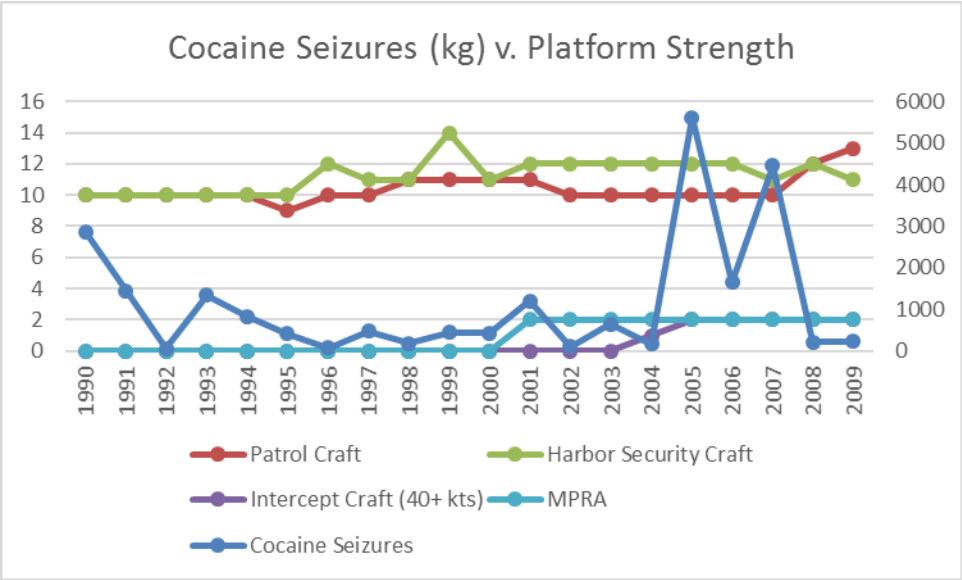

Figure 12. RSS Platform Levels v. Platform Strength[101]

However, even before the ratification of the RSS treaty, the Eastern Caribbean was noted for its security cooperation and attitude toward drug trafficking. The 1996 State

[100] See Appendix A for source information.

[101] See Appendix B for source information.

Department INSCR report noted the high level of regional and extra-regional cooperation (with European powers and the US) present in the Eastern Caribbean and only recommended the ratification of the RSS treaty.[102] The 1997 INSCR noted an uptick in interdictions in Central America, just the year after the RSS treaty was ratified.[103]

Functionally the organization operates jointly on a number issues including fisheries patrols, counter-narcotics, mutual defense, Search and Rescue (SAR), policing, pollution control, and disaster relief. To this end there are specific carve outs for the right of "Hot Pursuit," which grants constabulary forces of one country the right to pursue suspected criminals into the territorial waters of another country.[104] In cases where direct mutual support is required the host state gains operational command of forces provided by the other members of the RSS but the unit commander retains tactical control.[105] Uniformity is further attained by an RSS Training institute which is designed to create a relatively even military style tactical skill set in the police forces of states lacking formal militaries and interdiction specific training in RSS component militaries.[106]

A critical force component of the RSS is the RSS air wing. Consisting of two donated Fairchild C-26As the airwing has functioned as effective Maritime Reconnaissance and Patrol Aircraft (MPRA) and provided the RSS with organic cueing. These aircraft were delivered in 2001 and have been intermittently operational but effective when employed.[107] Over the span of 6 months in 2005 they were credited with the

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[102] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *1996 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: The Caribbean* (March 1997), https://1997-2001.state.gov/www/global/narcotics_law/1996_narc_report/carib96.html.

[103] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *1997 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Policy and Program Developments* (March 1998), https://1997-2001.state.gov/www/global/narcotics_law/1997_narc_report/policy.html.

[104] Department of State, *Treaty Establishing the Regional Security System.*

[105] Ibid.

[106] Geraldine Cook, "The Caribbean Relies on Hybrid Organization for Mutual Support," *Dialogo Digital Military Magazine*, 27 April 2017, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/caribbean-relies-hybrid-organization-mutual-support.

[107] "The RSS Air Wing," The Regional Security System, accessed September 2017, http://www.rss.org.bb/air-wing.html.

identification of 26 maritime targets, the capture of 40 smugglers, 480kg of cocaine, and a metric ton of marijuana.[108] A 2009 blurb on the aircraft claims that the RSS airwing was responsible for 356 interdictions and 1791 counter-narcotics missions between 2001 and 2009.[109] These platforms, and the additional interceptors added in 2004 and 2005 provided the RSS with significant new operational capabilities.

UNODC interdiction data indicates that seizures did not start climbing markedly until 2001. 2005–2008 show a significant increase in total cocaine seizures in the RSS states.[110] A paucity of reliable data post 2009 means it is difficult to project the continued rate of seizures in the RSS but negative interdiction trends following the successes of the major systemic improvements put into place in the mid-2000s and the stabilization of RSS force structures and capabilities show that the RSS has fallen out of favor as a transshipment point. Subsequent ONDCP and DEA reports on the cocaine have observed a reduction in the RSS state's transshipment role.[111]

Furthermore, operational strain in a resource short environment apparently reduced the operational capacity of RSS coast guards but not trafficking patterns. The 2008 and 2009 dip may be attributable to a total reduction in regional MSF strength. A *Jane's* report on regional readiness found massively reduced operational capacity in 2009 and that the RSS had come to rely almost exclusively on the Barbados Coast Guard. In the report the Regional Security System Coordinator stated that "The majority of the OPVs are not operable."[112] Furthermore, Grantly Watson, the coordinator, claimed that the region's operational problems had persisted for since at least 2006.[113] However, the 2009 INCSR

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108 "US Pulls Support for Caribbean Air Wing," Jane's by IHS Markit, 19 July 2005, https://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/1778462.

109 The Regional Security System, "The RSS Air Wing."

110 See Appendix A for source information.

111 Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Cocaine Smuggling in 2013* (September 2015) https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/ondcp/international-partnerships-content/cocaine_smuggling_in_2013_digital_1505-05221.pdf; Drug Enforcement Administration, *Colombian Cocaine Production Expansion*.

112 "Caribbean Coastguard Fleets Seek to Meet Security Needs," Jane's by IHS Markit, 29 July 2009, https://janes.ihs.com/DefenceEquipment/Display/1207075.

113 Ibid.

does not mention a reduction in regional efficacy other than to state that "St. Kitts' Police Drug Unit has been largely ineffective."[114] Furthermore, the same *Jane's* article notes that the Barbados Defense Force had been able to maintain patrol operations and compensate for a lack of support from its partner nations demonstrating an additional bonus to the cooperative relationship: the ability to compensate for weak allies in a collaborative security context.[115] Despite this reduction in operational ability, and even cocaine seizures, smuggler use of the Caribbean fell from 12 percent of north bound cocaine to 5 percent of north bound cocaine from 2007 to 2011.[116]

The biggest change in the maritime security environment from 2006–2009 was the creation of the CARICOM security apparatus. While the RSS did add a few small platforms, its operational capabilities had been reduced due to maintenance requirements and platform age. The 2009 INCSR notes that Barbados officials reported a reduction in seizures and that the Government of Barbados estimated a reduction in trafficking in their territory.[117] The RSS demonstrates the potential role of relative strength and productive cooperative relationships. Despite the reduction in operational capacity from 2006–2009 the dominance of the Eastern Caribbean route continued to diminish. It is evident that the network of collaborative maritime security agreements allowed the Barbados Defense Force to compensate for the weakness of its counter-narcotics allies. Aided by the implementation of larger security arrangements like IMPACS, the JRCC, the French, and the United States, the RSS managed to maintain sufficient efficacy to deter most smugglers.

2. Cuba: Practical Cooperation

Cuba's unique geopolitical situation has long placed it at odds with its neighbors. As one of the larger states of the Caribbean region it has long represented one of the strongest naval forces; even following the full collapse of Soviet/Russian support its fleet

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[114] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2008 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: The Caribbean* (March 2008) https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2008/vol1/html/100778.htm.

[115] See Appendix A for source information.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Department of State, *2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

outnumbered those of all other insular powers. However, given the size of Cuba's EEZ and the sheer quantity of coastline it has traditionally needed to control, its naval and coast guard forces have long been inadequate. The drawdown in MSF strength is clear going back to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent withdrawal of Soviet military support. However, Cuba has maintained a hard line against trafficking, even executing an army general convicted of trafficking, and routinely coordinates with neighboring countries. Cuba is not a member of CARICOM but does cooperate with the region on an informal and bilateral basis. Because of these collaborative features of Cuba's counter-narcotics strategy, most smugglers avoid Cuban waters and airspace.

By the year 2000, most of the Cuban fleet had been demobilized. It decommissioned its frigates, all but one corvette, and 80 percent of its Fast Attack Craft inventory. In total Cuban EEZ platform responsibility had fallen below 50 percent of its 1990 level.[118] This does not even account for operational limitations resulting from a lack of fuel. The 1998 INCSR noted a distinct inability to interdict maritime drug-runners due to fuel restrictions: "Cuban officials blame their lack of resources for the GOC's [Government of Cuba] inability to patrol its territorial waters. As U.S. Coast Guard reports attest, drug traffickers appear to be taking advantage of that inability to an increasing extent."[119] This is further reflected in the nature of cocaine seizures, the bulk of 1998's cocaine seizures occurred on land or as a result of smuggler incompetence. Major seizures were made at the airport and during port inspections of container ships and the bulk of maritime captures stemmed from "wash-ups." Wash-ups typically occur when aircraft drop drugs to waiting boats and the boats fail to recover the entire cargo.[120] Trafficker employment of Cuban waters provided a work-around, allowing traffickers to bypass the relative strength of OPBAT. Figure 5 details the Cuban demobilization in contrast with falling seizure rates.

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[118] See Appendix B for source information.

[119] Department of State, *1998 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

[120] Ibid.

Despite trafficker attempts to use Cuba as a transshipment point the Cuban government has a history of counternarcotics. Cuba's opposition to the drug trade is a curious mix of revolutionary indignation and pragmatism. The revolution itself occurred in part due to the corruption and rampant drug use allowed by the Batista regime and Fidel Castro took a hardline almost from the outset.[121] The consumption of narcotics was considered counterrevolutionary and Castro was unwilling to appear complicit in narcotrafficking. At one point in 1985 Castro even proposed direct cooperation with the Reagan administration but was rebuffed.[122] Thus, isolated, the 1980s and early 1990s saw the extensive use of Cuban waters by cocaine smugglers and a fair number of cocaine traffickers were Cuban exiles. Even the fictional Tony Montana from Scarface was Cuban. However, the Castro government denied any involvement in narcotrafficking and vehemently rejected the Regan and Bush administrations' accusations of collusion. The arrest and execution of several high-ranking officials, including General Ochoa in 1989, demonstrated Cuba's counternarcotics credentials and desires. However, the Bush and Reagan administrations were unwilling to work with the communist governments and as such, Cuba continued to languish in isolation.

Despite clear indicators of Cuban enthusiasm for the war on drugs, during the 1990s Cuba remained a regional pariah due to the vagaries of U.S. domestic politics. The 1996 INCSR noted a lack of fuel hindering counternarcotics forces. It also noted numerous bilateral counter narcotics relationships with Mexico, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, and the UK. Deprived of its traditional trading partners in the Soviet bloc Cuba was attempting to normalize its relationship with the region through both economic and security cooperation. Unofficial coordination with the United States took place on a tactical level and produced major results with the 1996 capture of the MV Limerick, a fishing vessel carrying multiple tons of cocaine. This led U.S. military and law

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[121] Joshua Partlow and Nick Miroff, "In the Fight Against Drugs, Cuba and U.S. on Same Team," *The Washington Post*, 5 January 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/in-fight-against-drugs-cuba-and-us-on-same-team/2015/01/05/6416305a-90fc-11e4-a66f-0ca5037a597d_story.html?utm_term=.656f4a0cd1bf.

[122] William LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh, *Back Channel to Cuba; The Hidden History of Negotiations Between Washington and Havana* (Chapel Hill, NC; University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 326–327.

enforcement leadership to advocate for deeper cooperation with Cuba almost immediately.[123] However, annual cocaine seizures and capacity dropped to the under 1000 kg annually (1994, 1995, and 1998). It is only when the Clinton administration starts working with the Cuban government in the late 1990s that seizures begin to climb again.

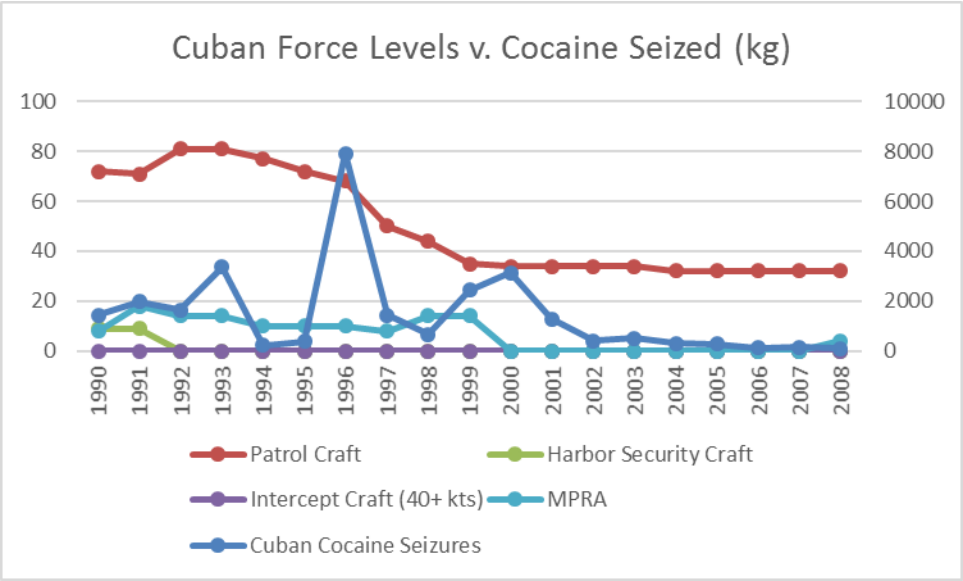

Figure 13. Cuban Force Levels v. Cocaine Seized[124]

1998 saw an expansion of bilateral counter narcotics agreements to Portugal, Spain, Colombia, Italy, and France.[125] In some cases this included counter-narcotics training provided by France and the UK.[126] 1999 also notes the beginning of routine information sharing with the United States Coast Guard with the USCG providing information on air tracks and the Cubans providing information on maritime tracks. There were even specific instances of collaboration leading to arrests.[127] The culmination of US-Cuban cooperation

[123] LeoGrande and Kornbluh, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 329.

[124] See Appendix B for source information.

[125] Department of State, *1998 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

[126] Ibid.

[127] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *1999 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: The Caribbean* (March 2000), https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/1999/921.htm.

came in 2000 with the official conclusion of a collaborative counternarcotics agreement and the implementation of a coordinating mechanism. This coordinating mechanism consisted of: the real time exchange of tactical data via a telephone network, coordinating frequencies for ship-ship communications, the counter-narcotics liaison of the U.S. interests section in Havana, and technical assistance for VBSS (Visitation Boarding Search and Seizure) operations.[128] This development, facilitated by the Clinton Administration, established a cooperative security regime between immediate neighbors.

Since this transition to more cooperative framework with the U.S. the Cuban government claims to have provided the U.S. with cueing data over 500 times.[129] The 2007 INCSR notes specific cooperation and cueing behavior between the Cuban and U.S. governments that led to the capture of a Bahamas bound aircraft.[130] The increases in airport and maritime port security created a spike in interdictions. As cocaine smuggling began to shift toward Central America these seizures trailed off. UNODC data shows the brief spike in the early 2000s followed by the shift away from Cuba as a transit country.

Cooperation is not limited to assistance and coordination with extra-regional powers and the US. Cuban efforts to establish multi-lateral cooperation with its immediate neighbors include proactive attempts to provide both the Bahamas and Jamaica with cueing data.[131] A 2010 CNN report citing leaked documents notes that Cuba had attempted to push track information to the Jamaicans, even going so far as to translate that data to English from Spanish.[132]

Cuba's MSF strength has remained about the same since the end of the draw down in the late 1990s. The 2005 INCSR claims that Cuba ceased being a common transit point due to increased U.S. presence in the Windward Channel, but this is more representative

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[128] Leogrande and Kornbluh, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 330.

[129] Patrick Oppmann, "Drug Smuggling a Risk if U.S. Relations with Cuba Shift, Officials Say," CNN, 12 June 2017, http://www.cnn.com/2017/06/12/politics/cuba-us-drug-smuggling/index.html.

[130] State Department, *2007 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

[131] "Cuba and Jamaica partner in Fighting Organized Crime," Caribbean360, 7 September 2011, http://www.caribbean360.com/news/jamaica_news/cuba-and-jamaica-partner-in-fighting-organised-crime.

[132] Tim Lister, "Wikileaks: Cables reveal U.S.-Cuban Cooperation over Drug Smuggling," CNN, 17 December 2010, http://edition.cnn.com/2010/US/12/16/wikileaks.smuggling/index.html.

of Cuba's cooperative approach to the problem. The evolving cooperative nature of the US, Cuban relationship has kept interdictions low by deterring traffickers.

Apparent strain in the US-Cuban relationship, sparked by President Trump's combative rhetoric and policies, have already caused narco-traffickers to reconsider Cuba as a transshipment point: "so far in 2017, Cuban officials say they have seized or recovered nearly 3 tons of marijuana and cocaine from drug traffickers, more than triple the amount of drugs they seized during the first six months of last year."[133] As neither capacity nor the working relationship have functionally changed it is likely that narco-traffickers are simply being proactive and attempting to revive old routes.

3. Dominican Republic: Less Than Splendid Isolation

The Dominican Republic is another traditional smuggling transshipment point. Its location in the central Caribbean and proximity to both the U.S. mainland and Puerto Rico has made it a crucial transit state. It also operates a MSF and police force roughly commensurate with its size. Geopolitics also plays an important role in on the island as the Dominican Republic shares a land border with the generally unstable Haiti.[134] In recent years the instability of its neighbor has limited its efforts to integrate with the larger regional community.

The Dominican Republic is something of a regional anomaly. It is the one of the only prominent Spanish-speaking island with the region's strongest economy and largest population. The island has generally sought to align with the U.S. and U.S. policies above those of its regional neighbors.[135] It also remains an outcast from the larger CARICOM security and economic collective. Its multi-lateral preferences have been more closely aligned with its linguistic compatriots in Central America and South. This has resulted in

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[133] Oppmann, "Drug Smuggling a Risk"; Christopher Woody, "Trump's Hardline on U.S. relations with Cuba could create a blind spot in a major drug-trafficking corridor," Business Insider, 17 June 20017, http://www.businessinsider.com/trump-end-security-cooperation-with-cuba-drug-trafficking-in-caribbean-2017-6.

[134] Haiti is notable for its profound lack of stability. It is an example of a state that is almost too far gone to provide traffickers with a reliable transshipment point.

[135] David Jessop, "The Dominican Republic and CARICOM," BBC Caribbean, 2 August 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/caribbean/news/story/2010/08/100730_jessop_dominican_rep.shtml.

its membership in the SICA, an organization from which it is geographically removed as opposed to CARICOM and bilateral security treaties and agreements with Mexico, Colombia, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Honduras.[136] Additionally, while it has attempted to integrate with CARICOM, relations with Haiti, a CARICOM member state, have hindered the Dominican Republic's efforts. The latest attempt at integration was in 2013 and it was rejected when the Dominica Republic's Constitutional Court authorized the government to strip Dominicans of Haitian decent of citizenship.[137]

The U.S. has noted strong bilateral ties with the island going back to the 1990s. The 1996 INCSR noted that the Dominican Republic lacked the capacity to secure its coastline and that its institutional weakness further limited the government's effectiveness.[138] The Dominican Republic has a pattern of facilitating regional cooperative mechanisms. In the 1990s the INCSR lauded the operations of a Joint Information Coordinating Center (JICC). The JICC was an information sharing system operated in coordination with the US.[139] In general, the U.S. State Department has high praise for the Dominican Republic's persistent bilateral cooperation and in 2003 a comprehensive series of cooperative maritime security treaties, some authorizing overflight, were signed.[140] However, despite consistent cooperation and even U.S. augmentation of Dominican forces the island remains a major transshipment states.

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[136] Notable among these bilateral agreements is the 2010 bilateral agreement with Venezuela, a major embarkation point for cocaine bound to the Dominican Republic, which seems to have had little effect on the Dominican Republic's role as a transshipment point. This may be due to Venezuela's continuing economic troubles and a subsequent reduction in state capacity; "Stuart: Dominican Republic Committed to Joining CARICOM," Caribbean Journal, 9 July 2013, https://www.caribjournal.com/2013/07/09/stuart-dominican-republic-committed-to-joining-caricom/#; United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2015 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: Dominican Republic* (2015) https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2014/vol1/222879.htm; Bobea, "The Dawn of Post-Hegemonic Cooperation," 141.

[137] "CARICOM to Suspend Consideration of Dominican Republic's Bid for Membership," Caribbean Journal, 26 November 2013, https://www.caribjournal.com/2013/11/26/caricom-to-suspend-consideration-of-dominican-republics-bid-for-membership/#.

[138] Department of State, *1996 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Department of State, *2007 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*.

The Dominican Republic annual seizures experienced a general upward trend in cocaine seizures in the 1990s and early 2000s, despite a reduction in the Caribbean route's importance. Therefore, the Dominican navy and Dominican Law enforcement have been becoming more effective. Additionally, a lack of strong correlation between platform levels and area coverage indicate that fluctuations in the Dominican Republic's MSF strength does not have a real effect on cocaine smuggling. It maintains a larger blue water force (patrol craft capable of operations in the EEZ) than its regional partners but lacks the small, fast craft operated by some of its neighbors. Additionally, the 2012 and 2013 ONDCP reports note that the primary Caribbean transshipment method is to take a go-fast directly to the Dominican Republic prior to transit to Puerto Rico or the US.[141] Dominican Republic's importance to the cocaine trade increased after 2010, a period wherein they had minimized the threat posed by small non-commercial flights through bilateral cooperation with the U.S. and additional interdiction assets.[142] On a force analysis level the implication is that the Dominican Republic's lack of interceptor craft and MPRA made it vulnerable to the go-fast threat. However, the addition of MPRA and interceptor craft does not appear to have made a difference. As Figure 14 shows, the addition of MPRA and interceptors does not coincide with a major spike in seizures. Additionally, the Dominican Republic has remained a favored transshipment state.

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[141] Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Cocaine Smuggling in 2012*, accessed September 2017, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/cocaine_smuggling_in_2012_unclassified_approved_web.pdf 5; Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Cocaine Smuggling in 2013*, accessed September 2017, 9, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/ondcp/international-partnerships-content/cocaine_smuggling_in_2013_digital_1505-05221.pdf.

[142] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2012 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: Dominican Republic* (2012), https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2012/vol1/184099.htm#Dominican_Republic.

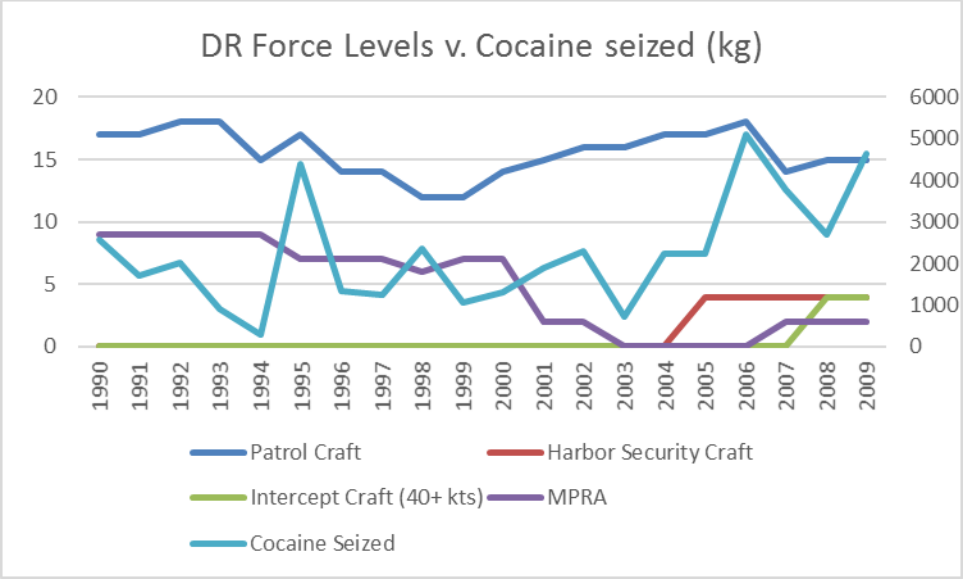

Figure 14. Dominican Republic Force Levels v. Cocaine Seized (kg).[143]

Despite regular praise for its bilateral cooperation with the United States, the Dominican Republic has remained a transshipment point while the rest of the region's importance to the U.S. market has dropped. In 2017 an estimated 60 percent of Caribbean flow transited the Dominican Republic.[144] There is a potential trafficker centric thesis to the Dominican Republic issue; the annual 2017 ONDCP Cocaine Report notes that Dominican smugglers maintain a close relationship with Mexican and Colombian cartels. If this is the case, the Dominican Republic's continued importance to the cocaine trade may be due to a trafficker unwillingness to sacrifice these routes and relationships. The Mexican and Colombian cartels may simply be maintaining this relationship with the Dominican Republic because they share a common language and because the Dominican Republic is less risky than Cuba. This dynamic may be changing, while the Dominican Republic is still excluded from the larger CARICOM security mechanisms, President Danilo Medina just signed an intelligence Memorandum of Understanding with CARICOM. This may lead to a significant reduction in narcotics smuggling.

[143] See Appendix B for source information.

[144] Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Global Cocaine Trafficking 2017*, 6.

4. Jamaica: An Inflection Point

Jamaica is ideally located to act as a maritime transshipment point but its role in the cocaine trade has decreased dramatically since 2002. Located at the entrance to the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti, Jamaica presents a stunning example of the utility of bilateral cooperation. Prior to 2000 it is estimated that 11 percent of U.S. bound cocaine transited the tiny island. However, despite the fact that the region's importance was decreasing, interdictions increased in 1998, 1999, 2001, and 2002. This correlates with the entry of a bilateral security cooperation agreement with Colombia. The UNODC notes that in April of 2002 Jamaica officially entered into a bilateral security arrangement with Colombia and that three major drug interdictions (1,543kgs, 1,363kgs and 814kgs all seized from speedboats) were the result of joint Colombian-Jamaican Security operations and intelligence sharing.[145] This massive spike in seizures accounted for nearly all of Jamaica's 2002 maritime captures and was followed by a sharp drop off in cocaine interdictions. By 2005 less than 1 percent of all U.S. bound cocaine was estimated to have transited Jamaica.[146] The deterrent effect of this bilateral maritime security arrangement does not extend to other drugs as a marijuana trade with Costa Rica appears to be persistent, but it remains a remarkable accomplishment.

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[145] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Caribbean Drug Trends 2001–2002* (Bridgetown, Barbados, February 2003), http://www.unodc.org/pdf/barbados/caribbean_drug-trends_2001-2002.pdf.

[146] Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Cocaine Smuggling in 2006*, ONDCP-01-2006 (July 2006), https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/pdf/cocaine_smuggling05.pdf.

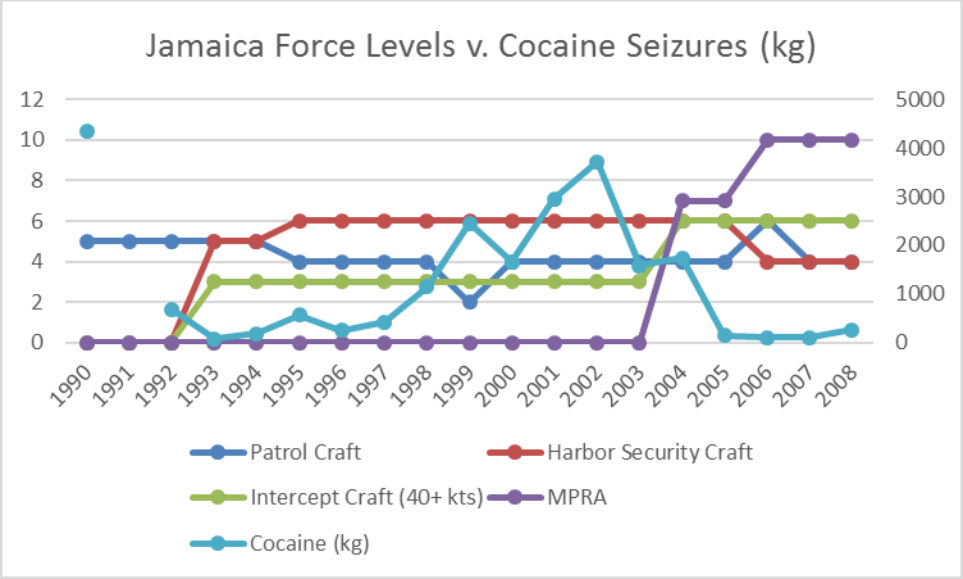

Figure 15. Jamaican Force Levels v. Cocaine Seizures (kg).[147]

Jamaica in 2002 represents a clear inflection points in cocaine interdiction. In 2003 the U.S. government began to further back the Jamaicans with additional platforms and maintainers, but these platforms were not active until 2004, after the major drop in cocaine seizures. This indicates that cocaine smugglers perceived the increased difficulty of a successful transit from Colombia to Jamaica and instead decided to alter their routes. The subsequent reduction in seizures 2004–2010 correlates with a large a doubling in the number of interceptor craft and the addition of a number of MPRA but the larger inflection point is in 2003 and therefore pre-dates the addition of extra forces.

E. CONCLUSIONS: CARIBBEAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIPS

In 2002, ONDCP data suggested that Caribbean cocaine flowing through Hispaniola constituted about 8 percent, the Jamaica-Cuba-Bahamas route was responsible for about 12 percent, and that the Caribbean in general was responsible for 27 percent of U.S. bound cocaine. By 2004 these numbers had been effectively suppressed and the insular Caribbean accounted for only 10 percent of U.S. bound cocaine.[148] However,

[147] See Appendix B for source information.

[148] See Appendix A for source information.

starting in 2006 Hispaniola becomes the dominant route to the US. Only once, in 2010 after the earthquake wrecked most of Haiti's infrastructure, did the rest of the Caribbean dominate the vector's cocaine smuggling. This trend solidified after 2007–2008 when CARICOM signed the CARICOM Security Agreement. By 2012 an estimated 78 percent of Caribbean cocaine transited Hispaniola and the bulk of that traffic was to the Dominican Republic.[149]

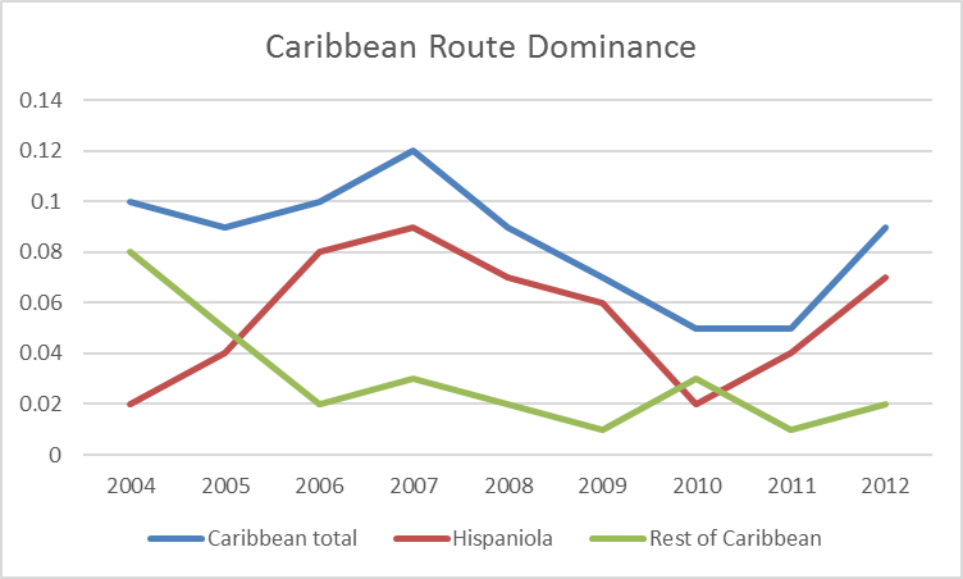

Figure 16. Caribbean Vector Route Dominance.[150]

The cases of the Insular Caribbean demonstrate the importance of cooperative relationships in a changing security environment. As a microcosm of the larger Caribbean, the RSS shows the value of a collaborative security arrangement as Barbados compensated for the relative weakness of its partner states in the second half of the 2000s. Similarly, Cuba made itself a hard transit point through deliberate, consistent, and proactive coordination and communication with its neighbors. Cuba's hardening occurred despite a major force drawdown and was clearly a result of its embrace of regional cooperation. Even

[149] See Appendix B for source information.

[150] See Appendix A for source information.

Jamaica was able to drastically reduce the Colombia-Jamaica cocaine flow simply by entering into an intelligence sharing and coordination agreement. However, the Dominican Republic, despite changes in force structure and a consistent willingness to act in conjunction with the United States has remained relatively isolated from its geographic neighbors and therefore subject to continued use by narcotraffickers. Recent developments may shift this dynamic, based on observed trends in the Caribbean it is likely that the Dominican Republic MOU may produce results. If this is the case, we can expect a spike in seizures followed by a precipitous drop in seizures as smugglers abandon the Dominican Republic as a viable transshipment point. Cocaine smugglers abandoning the Insular Caribbean would continue to turn toward the politically fractured Central American isthmus.

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IV. CENTRAL AMERICAN SECURITY: STRATEGIC DISUNITY IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ADAPTABLE SMUGGLING NETWORK

In stark contrast to the Insular Caribbean, the states of Central America lack large scale, meaningful, multilateral security coordination mechanisms. However, in certain cases, bi and even trilateral security mechanisms facilitate cross-border and maritime security cooperation. Economic unity and free trade agreements have reduced border controls, allowing for economic development, the ready flow of goods, and secreted narcotics. In contrast to the smaller Caribbean States, the Central American States are less capable and less united.

This chapter will examine Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and SICA. The focus in this chapter is the individual states and their relationships with their immediate neighbors. In part, this is because these states do not act under true regional cooperation frameworks. Those mechanisms and bodies that do exist are generally advisory and do not seem to carry the heft of treaties.

This chapter will also discuss Mexico's relationship with the region. Mexico and Colombia can both safely be deemed regional powers; by most measures they operate far superior, or at least larger, security forces than the rest of the region. But Colombia has chosen to reach out to the countries beyond its borders while Mexico has remained relatively disengaged. Following the successes of Plan Colombia and working in conjunction with the Obama administration, the Colombian government has exported security training and intelligence in a manner that is not apparent in Mexico.[151] Mexico's aloof relationship with the Central American Republics warrants attention as it relates to Guatemala especially. This persistent lack of cooperation allows large shipments of narcotics to transit the region with relative ease.

[151] "U.S.-Colombia Security Partnership," Embassy of Colombia, accessed 10 March 2018, http://www.colombiaemb.org/security.

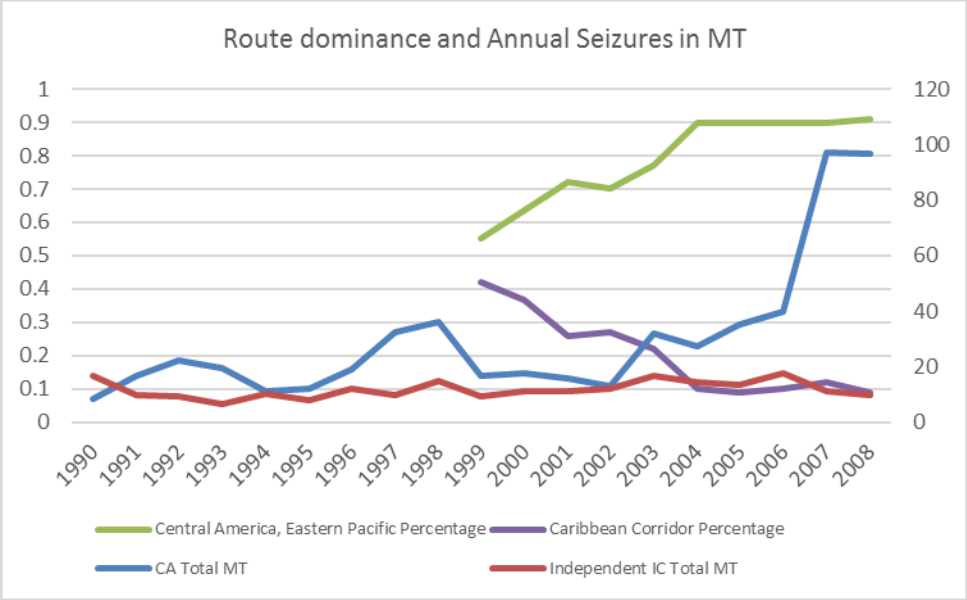

Figure 17. The Broader Context: The Caribbean and Central America[152]

A. CENTRAL AMERICA: KEY GEOGRAPHIC ELEMENTS

Central American geography and infrastructure has come to dictate and define regional cocaine flows. Geographically separated from South America by the Darien Gap, there is no reliable overland route from South America to North America. This mandates that cocaine travel by sea or air at some point. There is, however, the Pan-American Highway, which runs from Panama and all the way to North America. In the context of weak Central American states these land boundaries present an additional vulnerability. Many of these states do not have firm control of their land borders and the Pan American Highway is frequently used for overland transportation into Mexico. Therefore, when states can exert more air or sea control, traffickers merely need to land further down the coast and cargo can be shifted to overland transportation. Even if states seek to control major border crossings traffickers can often use to poorly patrolled jungle or river crossings. This is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that, despite the continued dominance of Central America and Mexico as a transshipment route, cocaine seizures in Mexico have decreased every year since 2007, the start of Felipe Calderón's drug war and despite an increase in

[152] See Appendix A for source information.

naval building and maritime surveillance capabilities.[153] This is a direct result of traffickers using overland routes from Central America.

The great irony of the Central American Isthmus is that weak economies have attempted to combat economic poverty through the "Washington Consensus." The "Washington Consensus" relies on free trade and open borders. However, moves toward free trade and the free flow of goods have allowed narcotraffickers to hide narcotics in the routine traffic between nations. Thus, while regional integration efforts like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and SICA may facilitate free trade they also enable illicit traffickers. This has contributed to the flexibility of maritime trafficking, allowing cocaine to land in one country and transit overland toward Mexico with minimal inspection.

B. MEXICO AND REGIONAL POWER

As the final transshipment point for cocaine and a major producer of opiates, Mexico has long been ravaged by crime and narco-terrorism. During the 1980s cocaine transshipment through Mexico emerged as an alternative to direct shipment to the United States. Mexican smuggling networks for heroin and marijuana had already been established and a U.S. led Caribbean crack down prompted Colombian-Mexican Cartel cooperation.[154] However, since the mid-2000s, Mexican maritime counter-narcotics and the expansion of the Calderón administration's drug war seem to be playing a role in pushing maritime drug smuggling south toward Central America. This illustrates the relative vulnerability inherent to maritime traffic over land traffic; vessels at sea are easier to see and less common than vehicles on land.

Cocaine initially flowed across the insular Caribbean, most often transiting directly to Florida through the Bahamas. Initially, cocaine trafficking to the U.S. was dominated by Colombians, namely the Cali and Medline Cartels. During the mid-1980s, in an early example of the balloon effect, Pablo Escobar sought to avoid increased law enforcement

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[153] See Appendix A for source information.

[154] Roberto Escobar and David Fisher, *The Accountant's Story*, Kindle ed. (New York, NY: Hachett Book Group, 2009), Loc. 1008.

in the Bahamas by seeking a partnership with Felix Gallardo in Mexico. Preexisting Mexican networks and routes allowed the trade to pass into Mexico and began the shift in cocaine flow. Colombian cartels essentially used the Mexican smuggling organizations as transportation sub-contractors. In the early 1990s this trade shifted from a direct cash commission to a share of cocaine brought across the border.[155]

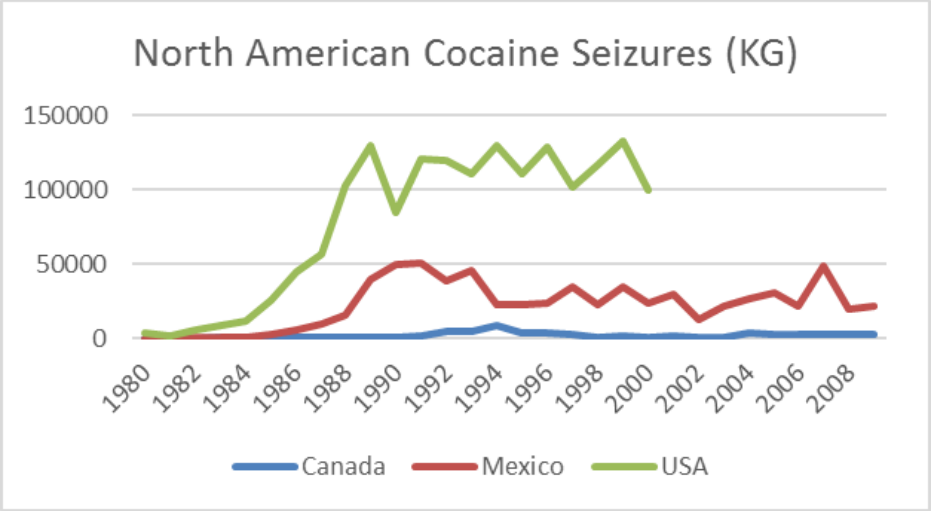

Figure 18. North American Cocaine Seizures[156]

There is clearly an uptick in U.S. interdictions prior to Mexican interdictions followed by a relative stabilization of the Mexican interdiction rate, despite a putative shift in cocaine smuggling through Central America and Mexico. This illustrates the emerging importance of the Central American-Mexican route and corresponds with the Escobar-Gallardo connection. Logically, smugglers would rely on direct transit to Mexico by sea or air. Despite the Mexican–Central American corridor becoming more popular in the 1990s and early 2000s, interdictions essentially flatlined.

This leveling off and decrease in Mexican interdictions appears to be the result of an emerging trafficker reliance on the overland route into Mexico. The decrease in seizures

[155] Bunck and Fowler, *Bullets Bribes and Intimidation*, 48–49.

[156] See Appendix A for source information.

is due to the typical multi-ton size of maritime interdictions, as fewer vessels made directly for Mexico in favor of overland transshipment through Central America, Mexican cocaine seizures decreased. Thus, increases in Mexican maritime security deterred shipment directly to Mexico. This trend started when Mexico began to invest in interceptor craft, starting in 1993. This maritime security expansion would start with just 2 patrol craft capable of 40+kts but would eventually expand to a fleet of over 120 assorted small boats and Fast Attack Craft (FAC) capable of speeds in excess of 40 kts.[157] In comparison to the Central American Maritime Security Forces (MSF) the Mexican Navy and coast guard is able to exercise much better control of its EEZ and, despite having fewer platforms in relation to its extensive coastline, fields a far larger total number of interceptor craft. The current Mexican Navy is fairly strong and highly specialized. Bunck and Fowler indicate that the impact of Mexican vigilance is not limited to the maritime sphere alone. In the 1990s drug flights had landed both in southern Mexico and in Guatemala. However, in the late 1990s Mexico began to increase its counter-air efforts and drove the air bridge south, into Guatemala and Honduras.[158] In the mid-2000s, coinciding with the implementation of the Merida initiative, an increase in Mexican investment in maritime interdiction assets, and Felipe Calderón's drug war, cocaine began to land in Central America for an overland transit north.[159] The large number of interceptors and MPRA (again, a number in excess of the Central American total) combined with Mexico's existence as a single political unit and the fact that the Mexican Navy can operate all along its coastline to make the Mexican navy a daunting obstacle to maritime narcotraffickers. The increased risk and exposure of direct maritime shipment to Mexico is the same factor limiting direct shipment to the United States through the Caribbean. This pushed maritime smuggling south toward the Central American republics.

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[157] See Appendix C for source information.

[158] Bunck and Fowler, *Bullets, Bribes, and Intimidation*, 235–237.

[159] Peter Meyer and Clare Seelke, Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress, CRS Report No. R41731 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, May 7, 2013), 7, 8 ,https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc463150/m1/1/high_res_d/R41731_2013May07.pdf.

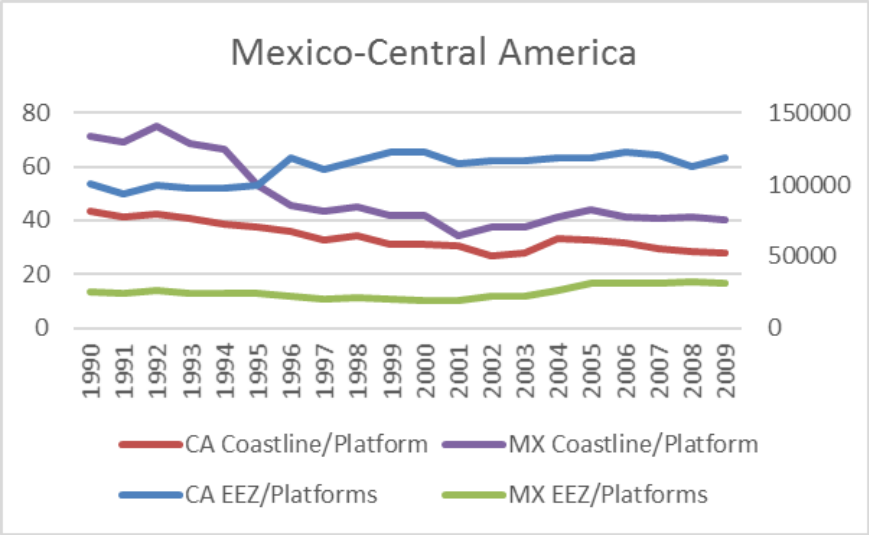

Figure 19. Mexico-Central America Platform Responsibility.[160]

C. CENTRAL AMERICAN CASE STUDIES

The following cases are selected based on their recent prominence in narcotics trafficking. Guatemala and Honduras are both close to Mexico and adapted to this proximity in different ways with similarly disappointing results. Panama has been selected due to its proximity to Colombia and the interesting trilateral cooperative security arrangement that has developed with its neighbor to the south and the hemispheric hegemon.

1. Guatemala: So Far From God, So Close to Mexico

Guatemala's proximity to the penultimate transshipment state, Mexico, had made it an increasingly appealing target for narco-traffickers seeking to bypass the relatively powerful Mexican Navy. A 2009 UNODC report held that 90 percent of cocaine bound for the United States transited Guatemala and that the bulk of this traffic came overland from Honduras due to poor border control.[161] Historical animosities kept Mexican–Central American border cooperation at a minimum until 2012, when minor attempts at

[160] See Appendix C for source information.

[161] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "UNODC World Drug Report: Cocaine from South America to the United States," 39.

cooperation began to emerge.[162] The first real effort at cooperative border control came in 2012 when the Guatemalans announced the construction joint border base a Mexican-Guatemalan security conference in 2013.[163] However, it is not clear that these efforts amounted to much and the 2017 INCSR fails to note any cooperation at all between Mexico and Guatemala.[164] Added to historical animosity is Mexico's treatment of Central American refugees. President Enrique Peña Nieto's 2014 decision to crack down on Central American refugees, carried out at the behest of the Obama administration, has resulted in the widespread criminal abuse of Central American citizens and act as a potential barrier to future cooperation.[165] Finally, economics dictate that fewer intermediaries mean bigger profit margins; as U.S. and Mexican maritime border security has improved, this economic impulse drove supply through the closest, weakest state: Guatemala.

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162 "Mexico-Guatemala: The Invisible, Disturbing Border," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine*, 26 April, 2011, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/mexico-guatemala-invisible-disturbing-border.

163 "Guatemala and Mexico Strengthen Border Security Operations," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine*, 13 June, 2013, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/guatemala-and-mexico-strengthen-border-security-operations; "Guatemala to Open Bases on Border with Mexico," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine*, 6 September, 2012, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/guatemala-open-bases-border-mexico.

164 United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, 2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: The Caribbean (March 2017), https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/268025.pdf.

165 Deborah Bonello, "Mexico's Deportations of Central American Migrants are Rising," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 September 2015, http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-mexico-migrants-20150905-story.html.

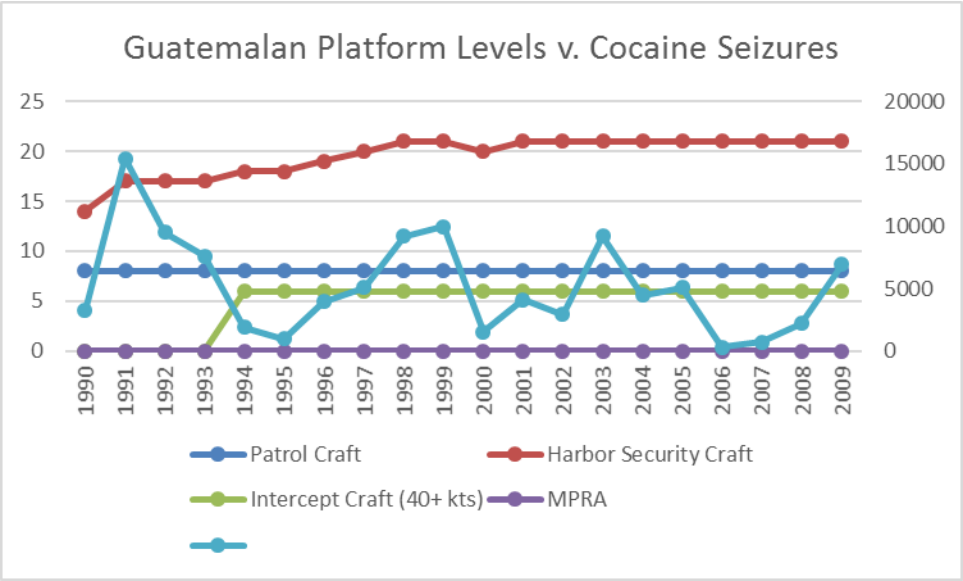

Figure 20. Guatemalan Platform Levels v. Cocaine Seizures (kg)[166]

Platform strength matters in Guatemala, but cooperation seems to be driving seizures. For example, the 2000 drop in seizures, in spite of constant force levels is attributed to a crisis of endemic corruption and high personnel turnover.[167] The U.S. State Department credits the gains of 2002 and 2003 with increased Guatemalan internal coordination and bilateral cooperation with the United States, including the passage of a cooperative maritime security agreement.[168] However, Guatemala is still a lesson in why force structure can matter: in 2004 it had to ground most of its A-37 light attack aircraft and helicopters due to maintenance issues, a problem that lasted into 2006.[169]

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[166] See Appendix C for source information.

[167] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2000 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: Canada, Mexico, and Central America*, (2001), https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2000/888.htm.

[168] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2003 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: Canada, Mexico, and Central America*, (2004), https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2003/vol1/html/29833.htm.

[169] United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2006 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: Canada, Mexico, and Central America*, (2006), https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2006/vol1/html/62107.htm.

The nature of Guatemalan security cooperation changed recently as the Guatemalan government took steps aimed at increasing internal security and regional security with its immediate neighbors: Honduras and El Salvador. These efforts aimed at increasing land-border security in response to the long-term trend of traffickers landing all along the isthmus then moving shipments overland using the Pan American Highway. The importance of the Pan American Highway is illustrated by the fact that the largest cocaine bust in Guatemalan history was actually a land based seizure of 3.3 MT.[170] The effect of these emerging collaborative operations, combined with internal reforms, seems to have had a counter intuitive effect, as narcotics smuggling in the Pacific has moved to bypass countries further down the isthmus and concentrate on Guatemala.[171] This indicates that Guatemala's land borders with its neighbors may be more secure but in the absence of an adequate maritime security force and a lack of meaningful cooperation with Mexico, the incentive to land in Guatemala remains.

Although the 2010s are outside the scope of my force structure study, the seizure rates of the last 16 years are remarkable and the biggest changes in seizure rates coincide with changes in Guatemala's relationship with its neighbors. The climb in seizures from 2000 to 2003 coincided with an increase in bilateral cooperation with the United States but the astronomical surge from 2015–2016 correlates with the start of multilateral relations with its immediate geographic neighbors.[172] The 2017 INCSR maintains that this surge in seizures is due to the increased importance of Guatemala as a landing zone but this is counterintuitive because starting in 2012 the Guatemalan government began consistently seizing more cocaine than Mexico.[173]

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[170] Bunck and Fowler, *Bullets, Bribes, and Intimidation*, 247.

[171] Woody, "Here's how Drugs Are Getting Smuggled from South America to the US," 9.

[172] There are other indicators of a surge in total cocaine production since 2014 that may be skewing this data. But the doubling of seizures from 2015–2016 in Guatemala exceeds the projected growth of production in terms of percentage changes; Drug Enforcement Administration, "Colombian Cocaine Production Expansion."

[173] See Appendix A for source information.

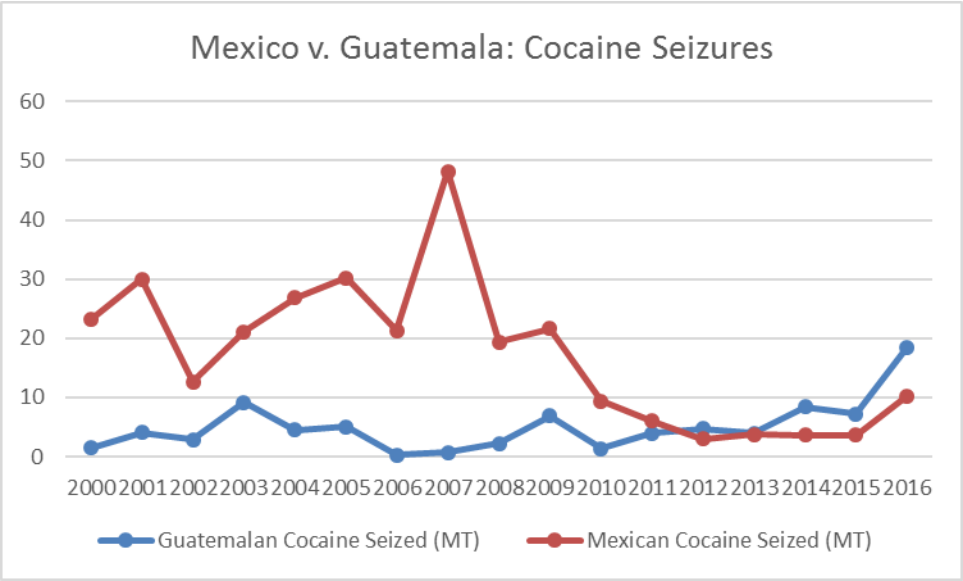

Figure 21. Mexican and Guatemalan Cocaine Seizures[174]

2. Honduras: Adopting the Guise of Counternarcotics Cooperation

Honduras struggles with corruption and a sparsely populated Caribbean coast that have made it an appealing cocaine transshipment point since the 1980s. It is an example, not of pervasive maritime smuggling, but of airborne cocaine smuggling. While Honduras remains an unstable, corrupt state, actions taken since the 2009 coup seem to have effectively stifled airborne cocaine smuggling to the isthmus for a time. A brief lull in U.S. material and economic support provoked by the coup resulted in an increase in the quantity of cocaine transiting the country and reignited aerial smuggling into Honduras. This trend seems to have reversed only in response to the 2014 decision to implement a shoot-down policy. Even though the United had temporarily stopped sharing radar data with Honduras in response to the shootdown policy, air smuggling was effectively deterred. This is because Honduras acquired its own radar stations could detect and intercept inbound drug flights. This combined with a demonstrated willingness to shoot down suspect planes and

[174] See Appendix C for source information.

has resulted in the decline of the Honduran airbridge.[175] Honduras, while operating as an independent unit, appears to have reduced its importance to aerial smugglers.

Honduras has adopted several other internal reforms of questionable efficacy since the coup. In 2014 Honduras adopted a version of the Interagency Task Force model in the form of the National Interagency Task Force (FUSINA).[176] This appears to have been generated organically as a part of President Hernandez's broader approach to counternarcotics operations.[177] While FUSINA has the potential for success it is not clear that it will be able to deliver. The nonexistent response in 2016 to narcotrafficking indicates that the systemic corruption that has long plagued Honduras has severely limited the states meaningful maritime interdiction efficacy.[178]

Honduras has made several attempts to coordinate security with its neighbors and the United States, but the inherent weakness of the Honduran state indicates the limits of the collaborative advantage. In 2011 and 2012 there was a notable spike in interdictions that is directly attributable to cooperation with the United States, but endemic corruption seems to be affecting state capacity. Some of these large seizure operations were carried out with U.S. personnel.[179] The 2013 fall in seizures to under 2 MT occurred despite a 2 percent uptick in the importance of the Western Caribbean route.[180] In 2016 Honduras had permanent, bilateral JTFs with both of its neighbors and received 100 pieces of actionable maritime smuggling intelligence from the United States but was unable to act on any of

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175 Arron Daugherty, "Has Honduras Shutdown its Cocaine Air Bridge," Insight Crime, 2 October, 2015, https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/has-honduras-shutdown-cocaine-air-bridge/; 2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Daimen Cave and Ginger Thompson, "U.S. Rethinks a Drug War After Deaths in Honduras," New York Times, 12 October 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/13/world/americas/in-honduras-deaths-make-us-rethink-drug-war.html.

176 R. Evan Ellis, *Honduras: A Pariah State, or Innovative Solutions to Organized Crime Deserving U.S. Support,* (Carlisle, PA: United States Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2016), 16, https://permanent.access.gpo.gov/websites/ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/download.cfm-q=1315.pdf.

177 Ibid., 17.

178 Department of State, *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report,* 182, 183.

179 United States Department of State; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2012 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Volume 1 Drug and Chemical Control: Country Reports- Honduras through Mexico* (2012), https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2012/vol1/184100.htm#Honduras.

180 Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Cocaine Smuggling in 2013*.

them.[181] Additionally, the current chief of police is accused of having facilitated a cartel shipment in 2013.[182] Thus, despite having deterred some aerial cocaine smugglers, and experienced maritime success, smuggling remained constant and Honduras did not report seizing any cocaine at all to the U.S. State Department.[183] Honduras since is an example of a state attempting to take multilateral actions but failing due to a lack of internal ability. The state appears to have the capacity and some of the structures that would be required for cooperative multilateral security but since 2013 appears it appears that either the Honduran state or elements of the Honduran security forces have been corrupted to the point that practical cooperation does not actually occur.

3. Panama: Intelligence Sharing against the Flood

Panama is a state doomed by its geography. Located near the main source of U.S. bound cocaine, Panama seizes more cocaine than any other country in Central America. At an average seizure rate of 47.6 MT annually between 2007 and 2016, the Panama of the 21st century has come a long way from the narco-state of Manuel Noriega. Much of these gains have come in just the last decade. In 2007 Panama seized a record 60 MT, since then Panamanian seizures have consistently annual rate Mexico, cocaine's penultimate destination. However, 2006 only saw the seizure of 3.6 MT. Additionally, route flow had essentially stabilized to Central America and Mexico by 2004. Panama's consistent success in seizing large quantities of cocaine since 2007 is a result of its desire to work cooperatively with its neighbors. Panama remains one of the only Central American states to maintain a treaty-based counter-narcotics arrangement with an immediate neighbor, Colombia.[184]

Panama's growing maritime security infrastructure plays a role in its independent cocaine seizure rate. Panama added its first interceptors in 2005, by 2007 the number had

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[181] Office of National Drug Control Policy, *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

[182] "New Police Chief of Honduras once helped drug cartel deliver nearly a ton of cocaine with the help of corrupt cops, report claims," Daily Mail, 26 January 2018, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5315071/Secret-report-Honduras-new-cop-helped-cartel-coke.html.

[183] Department of State, *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report,* 182 183.

[184] Department of State, *2008 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

risen to 6. While these did, undoubtedly, have some influence on interdictions in the Central American Republic the addition of several additional interceptor craft in 2011 does not appear to have had an additional a positive impact on cocaine interdictions.[185] In Panama, the collaborative mechanism seems to have a stronger impact than mere platform strength as increasing internal integration has generally coincided with increased interdictions. The move toward a unified National Air-Naval Service (SEAN) took time but the body has proved extremely effective.[186] The INCSR for 2016 also notes that, when cued by MPRA, Panama maintained a 100 percent interdiction rate.[187] When compared to Honduras' dismal 2016 track record Panama demonstrates that simply having ships or coordinating institutions is insufficient, they need to be effective.

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[185] See Appendix C for source information.

[186] Julieta Pelcastre, "Panama Strengthens Interdiction Capacities with Boston Whaler Boats," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine*, 7 December 2017, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/panama-strengthens-interdiction-capacities-boston-whaler-boats.

[187] Office of National Drug Control Policy, *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 234–235.

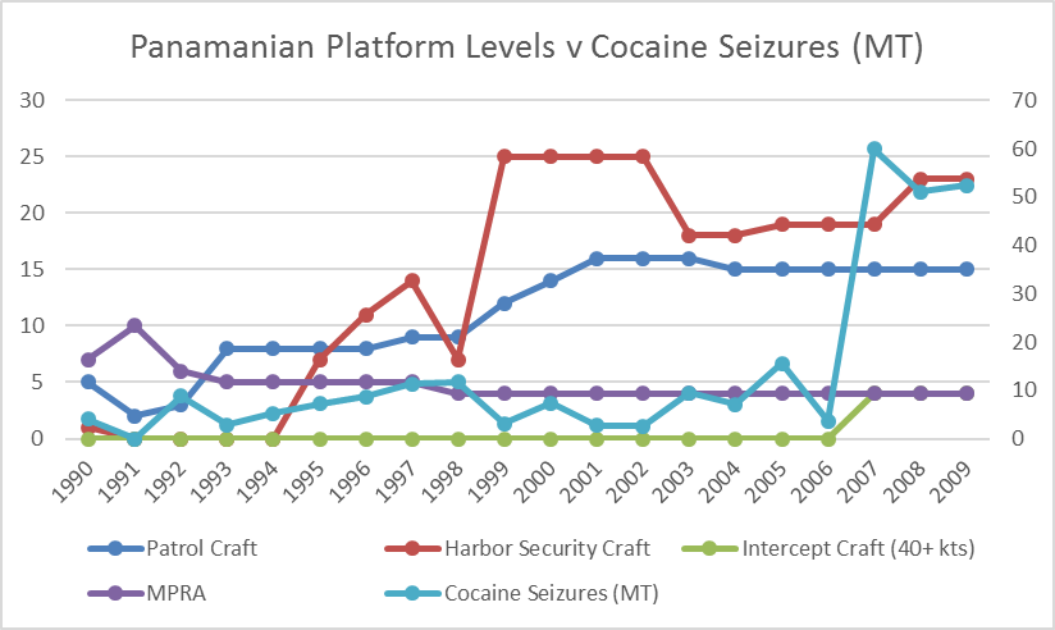

Figure 22. Panamanian Platform Levels v. Cocaine Seizures (MT)[188]

The Panamanian collaborative impulse carries into the state's bilateral relationships with its neighbors. These started in 2002 with the extensive Salias-Becker Treaty, a security treaty giving the U.S. broad powers and authorities to patrol Panamanian waters and assist the SEAN.[189] In 2003 Panama began border security cooperation with Colombia under the Bilateral Border Commission.[190] In 2011 this cooperation was solidified under the Bilateral Border Security Plan.[191] The 2008 INCSR notes that Panama, in addition to capturing 60 MT of cocaine with U.S. assistance, provided data to the U.S. that resulted in the capture of 32 MT of cocaine.[192] Additionally, the National Border Service (SEANFRONT) has become proficient enough to provide training to Panama's neighbors:

188 See Appendix C for source information.

189 Pelcastre, "Panama Strengthens Interdiction Capacities."

190 Hannah Stone, "Colombia, Panama Sign Border Security Pact," Insight Crime, 12 February 2011, https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/colombia-panama-sign-border-security-pact/.

191 Ibid.

192 Department of State, *2008 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

Costa Rica, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras.[193] Panama is not just a lone actor, Panama is well integrated with its neighbors and currently acts as an exporter of security.

D. CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION: A LONG-AWAITED, HALTING STEP

While the individual states of the isthmus may cooperate, Central America functions without a true multi-lateral security frame work. While there are some bilateral relationships (mostly with the US, Colombia, and occasionally Mexico), most security arrangements only include one or two Central American States. Other than the OAS the only real exception to this trend is the SICA which is focused on economic integration and development.

These efforts at regional security cohesion are not very effective. While SICA does maintain a security commission and does puts out the occasional strategic plan, a 2013 report to the U.S. congress described Commission as essentially advisory.[194] As noted by a 2012 Insight Crime report, "The Central American Integration System's annual summits are often heavy on rhetoric and weak when it comes to actual funding or policy commitments."[195] There is no joint command like the Caribbean's RSS. Furthermore, there is little evidence that any of SICA's counter-narcotics strategies have been put into effect. One of the primary counter-narcotics goals of the 2011 strategy was to "promote the adoption of a memorandum of understanding on international drug trafficking" which would "establish and coordinate procedures to regulate the identification, capture, interdiction, and interception by land, sea and air [sic], of ships or aircraft through national grounds."[196] However, as noted in a 2013 report to congress and a 2015 profile of the

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[193] Department of State, *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report,* 233.

[194] Meyer and Seelke, *Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress.*

[195] Geoffrey Ramsey, "Central America Edges Towards Joint Security Strategy," Insight Crime, 19 July 2017, https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/central-america-edges-towards-joint-security-strategy/.

[196] "Central American Security Strategy," The Secretariat General of the Central American Integration System, 8 April 2011, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/dcam/dv/ca_security_s_/ca_security_s_en.pdf.

Honduran security situation, most of these multi-lateral commitments remain rhetorical.[197] Thus, inclusive regional security cooperation remains an unrealized, rhetorical goal as opposed to a genuine strategy.

However, there are strains of emerging operational cooperation. The operational nature of these frameworks makes them somewhat ephemeral. A task force can be stood up only to dissolve as political interest wanes. As a result, recent attempts at regional integration have not persisted long enough to represent permanent change but they are worth reviewing.

The military-military collaborative dynamic has generated operational cooperation where treaty-based cooperation may not be ratified due to ingrained political fears and longstanding border disputes. In the Northern Triangle this has generated programs similar to Operation *Martillo* but instead lead by the smaller Central American Republics and backed by the United States.[198] The *Maya-Chorti* task force, a joint Honduran-Guatemalan effort launched in early 2015, is one such effort. The new task force has broad authorities that may have been considered politically unacceptable in previous decades. Beyond simple intelligence sharing and coordination, task force members are authorized to make arrests on both sides of the border. *Maya-Chorti* also seeks the integrated coordination of air, sea, and land assets.[199] This Northern Triangle JTF was joined in 2016 by JTF *Lenca-Sempul*, a Honduran-Salvadoran border security JTF.[200] A brief review of cocaine interdiction indicates that 2016 saw an uptick in seizures in both El Salvador and Guatemala; from 2.4MT to 12.2 MT and 7.3 MT to 18.5 MT respectively.[201] The logical

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[197] Meyer and Seelke, *Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress.*

[198] See Chapter V for details on Operation Martillo.

[199] Holger Alva, "Honduran and Guatemalan Armed Forces Cooperate to Improve Border Security through the Maya-Chorti Task Force," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine*, 27 January 2015, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/honduran-and-guatemalan-armed-forces-cooperate-improve-border-security-through-maya-chorti-task-force.

[200] Iris Amador, "Northern Triangle Task Forces Stronger than Ever," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine*, 24 March 2017, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/northern-triangle-task-forces-stronger-ever.

[201] See Appendix A for source information.

conclusion to these bilateral JTFs came in December of 2016 with the announcement of a Tri-National Anti-Gang Task Force.[202] The Tri-National JTF is essentially an umbrella organization that incorporates the preexisting JTFs as components of a larger approach to crime, gangs, and smuggling in the Northern Triangle.[203] As the Tri-National force has been in action for less than a year its utility is difficult to assess.

Indeed, bilateral and tri-lateral security organizations are beginning to emerge throughout the region. Honduras has started coordinating with Nicaragua in a joint operation known as Operation *Morazan-Sandino.*[204] In a relatively short period of time this joint operation was able to seize 450 kilos of cocaine (about 6 percent of the annual total for Nicaragua and Honduras).[205] This cooperation occurred despite the lack of an official counter-narcotics treaty between the two states.[206] Despite the lack of an official treaty framework, joint operations appear to have continued along the poorly patrolled Nicaraguan-Honduran Caribbean coast. This cooperation has led to the destruction of large portions of the local marijuana crop.[207]

There are hints at potential regional frame works emerging through these JTFs. In 2016 a Honduran colonel noted that CFAC was also acting as a framework for regional

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202 Sarah Kinosian, "Inside Central America's New Anti-Gang Joint Task Force," Washington Office on Latin America, 1 December 2016, https://www.wola.org/analysis/inside-central-americas-new-anti-gang-joint-task-force/.

203 Julieta Pelcastre, "Northern Triangle Countries Create Trinational Force," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine*, 9 December 2016, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/northern-triangle-countries-create-trinational-force.

204 "Ejércitos de Nicaragua y Honduras firman protocolo para combatir el crimen," *La Tribuna*, 22 April 2015, http://www.latribuna.hn/2015/04/22/ejercitos-de-nicaragua-y-honduras-firman-protocolo-para-combatir-el-crimen/; Loren Riesenfeld, "Honduras, Nicaragua Deepen Military Cooperation Along Border," Insight Crime, 23 April 2015, https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/honduras-nicaragua-deepen-military-cooperation-along-border/; "Más de 100 detenidos en frontera Nicaragua y Honduras," *La Prensa*, 22 April 2015 http://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/833552-410/m%C3%A1s-de-100-detenidos-en-frontera-nicaragua-y-honduras.

205 Ibid.

206 Department of State, *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*.

207 Department of State, *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 223.

cooperation.[208] CFAC includes Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic and had traditionally served only as an annual coordinating meeting. Its potential evolution into a truly collaborative structure based on information sharing and cross border cooperation may result in an uptick in interdictions and an overall reduction of flow. However, neither CFAC nor the JTFs have treaty underpinnings.[209] This makes their futures relatively uncertain. Additionally, their heavy reliance on U.S. training and funds exposes them to operational irrelevance in the face of a potential Trump administration draw down.

E. CONCLUSION: CENTRAL AMERICAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIPS

Central America demonstrates the complex interaction of state capacity and interstate cooperation. An individual state may deter trafficking by adding new ships and shooting down planes may scare traffickers off a route, but security cooperation and operational proficiency are what increase overall interdiction rates. The Mexican Navy's expansion and Felipe Calderón's crack down did not actually result in increased cocaine seizures; traffickers simply shifted south. Honduras' shoot down policy severely limited airborne smuggling through the isthmus but smugglers went below the radar and trafficking shifted to the sea. However, operating in a cooperative environment, Panama raised and maintained an extremely high seizure rate and Guatemala has been able to raise its seizure rates. The emerging collaborative trend may result in cocaine interdiction rates sufficient to undermine the region's predatory transnational criminal networks. A major sign of progress is the fact that between 1980 and 2015 global cocaine seizures have gone from 20–24 percent of global supply to 45–55 percent of global supply.[210] Examining future developments in regional relations and operational organizations in the context of increasing seizures will indicate the efficacy of these emerging institutions.

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[208] Maria Angela Kay Valle Cerrato, "Honduras: Fusina Reinforces Border Security against Gangs," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine,* 10 June 2016, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/honduras-fusina-reinforces-border-security-against-gangs.

[209] Department of State, *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 182.

[210] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *2017 World Drug Report,* 27.

V. HEGEMONIC ACTION AGAINST A COMPLEX CRIMINAL THREAT

The United States plays an undeniable role in regional security and narcotics interdiction. With its muscular economy and military, the United States fields its own forces and supports the security forces of many of its regional partners. U.S. policy overlays regional security efforts and its increasing involvement in the region has shaped the evolution of the regional maritime security environment. Accordingly, trafficker behavior is directly affected by U.S. policy.

The U.S. government has taken three approaches to the region: it has acted unilaterally, bilaterally, and to foster multilateral organizations and operations. Each of these approaches is only possible due to America's disproportionate strength, but all of them approach the problem differently and some exist simultaneously. However, the modern maritime security environment is the product of gradual evolution, this evolution coincides with increasing interdiction rates. Since the George H. W. Bush administration, each administration has taken a different, deepeining approach to the region. These approaches have layered and built on each other.The sheer weight and relative power of the United States ensures that U.S. policy affects the flow of illicit narotics. What is less clear is how U.S. actions and policies act upon the complex networks of smuggling that overlay the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific and if it is the main determinant of trafficker behavior. This chapter examines how the United States has changed its approach to the maritime counternetworking problem overtime and traces the impact of these policy changes on the regional maritime security environment. It shall argue that while monopolar strength is effective to a point, the largest increases in interdiction and security occur when the United States works with and enables regional partners and organizations.

A. UNILATERAL ACTION: THE DEPLOYMENT OF AMERICAN MIGHT

The U.S. impetus for regional action has been largely based on the domestic war on drugs. Rooted in prohibition and the crusades of Henry Anslinger, the modern war on drugs found form under the Nixon administration. However, early government action was

domestic and aimed at domestic audiences. It was not until the 1980s under the Reagan administration that proactive, overseas counter-narcotics efforts began to receive priority. These measures included using the USCG and the U.S. military in counternarcotics roles.[211] American interdiction efforts began unilaterally and, although bilateralism and multilateralism have emerged as important tools, unilateral strength remains a major factor in the efficacy of interdiction efforts.

Modern unilateral power is best illustrated by the operational ability of the USCG. The USCG seized 91.824 MT of cocaine in 2010 alone, nearly 12 percent of all cocaine produced in 2010 and more than the total quantity seized by most countries.[212] The USCG, supported by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) represents the largest, most effective maritime security force in the region and in the world and operates as the main basis for U.S. maritime presence in the region.

Institutionally, U.S. unilateralism has long been expressed in the employment of the Joint Task Force (JTF) and Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) formulas. In the 1980s, the first JTF centered on Florida and was headed by Vice President Bush, this JTF made it harder to smuggle drugs into Florida and resulted in the use of creative landing points further up the East Coast of the United States.[213] After attempting to implement various coordinating mechanisms throughout the 1980s, the 1989 National Defense Authorization Act gave the DoD the impetus to create several JTFs with the goal of stemming narcotrafficking.[214] In 1980, the U.S. only seized 3.4 MT of cocaine, by 1985 it was seizing 25.7 tons, and by 1988 the U.S. government was seizing over 100 MT of cocaine annually.[215] The JTF formula would eventually become the IATF formula. As a mechanism for coordinating the "whole of government" approach, it is considered

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[211] Charles Fuss, *Sea of Grass; The Maritime Drug War 1970–1990* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1996).

[212] "United States Coast Guard 2011 Posture Statement with 2012 Budget in Brief," United States Coast Guard, February 2011, https://www.uscg.mil/Portals/0/documents/budget/2011_Posture_Statement.pdf, 17.

[213] Munsing and Lamb, "Joint Interagency Task Force-South," 8.

[214] Ibid., 9–10.

[215] See Appendix A for source information.

extremely successful.[216] The IATF model is even used by partner nations like Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, although these states still use the term JTF.

One of the clearest documented shifts in cocaine smuggling stems from America's outsized unilateral power. The deployment of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft to the Caribbean caused Colombian cartels to seek alternative means of product shipment. Roberto Escobar, Pablo Escobar's brother, details how the AWACS deployment caused Pablo to seek a relationship with the Mexican smuggling and distribution networks initially headed by Felix Gallardo; "after Customs began using AWACS, Pablo decided to change routes again and began bringing merchandise into the U.S. through Mexico."[217] This initial shift took advantage of preexisting smuggling routes and drug distribution networks often utilized for marijuana and heroin distribution. It also marked a trafficker response both to platform deployment and, specifically, to the actions of the United States.

The importance of U.S. maritime power in the fight against trafficking is also made clear in the wake of Sequestration. 2013's budget issues and sequestration witnessed a reduction in maritime security operations and U.S. maritime security force deployments to the Caribbean and Central America. This coincides with a brief swing back to the Caribbean. This swing came from a low point in 2011 when only 5 percent of U.S. bound cocaine transited through the insular Caribbean to a full 16 percent in 2013 with sequestration having gone into effect in March of that year.[218] Sequestration caused the USCG to reduce its interdiction operation budget by 30 percent causing a loss of 6,000 patrol hours or 25 percent of cutter presence in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific.[219] The

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[216] Munsing and Lamb, "Joint Interagency Task Force-South."

[217] Escobar and Fisher, *The Accountant's Story*, Loc. 1008.

[218] Charles Parkinson, "Disjointed Land, Sea Interdiction Shows Political Nature of U.S. Drug Policy," *Insight Crime*, 24 February 2014, https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/disjointed-land-sea-interdiction-shows-politics-of-us-drug-policy/.

[219] John Grady, "Sequestration Caused 30 Percent Cut in Coast Guard Drug Interdiction Ops," *United States Naval Institute Press*, 5 February 2014, https://news.usni.org/2014/02/05/coast-guard-budget-cuts-led-30-percent-increase-u-s-drug-traffic; Jason Fornicola, "Sequestration Forces Coast Guard to Get Creative," *Federal News Radio*, 13 March 2014, https://federalnewsradio.com/sequestration/2014/03/sequestration-forces-coast-guard-to-get-creative/.

commander of JIATF-S at the time, Rear Admiral Charles Mitchel estimated that an additional 35 MT would avoid interdiction in 2013 as a result of sequestration. He also claimed that he was only able to stop about 20 percent of estimated traffic.[220] The results of sequestration were not quite so dramatic: the difference between 2012 and 2013 cocaine "removals" only amounts to 18.6 MT.[221] Sequestration showed the practical limits of the USCG which was operating multiple, aging medium endurance cutters.[222] A diminished maritime presence resulted in a brief return to the sea-based Caribbean vector. This reduction in U.S. unilateral strength directly led to a decrease in seizures.

USCG and navy deployments to Central America and the Caribbean have clearly pushed cocaine traffickers around. However, data is not publicly available on force distribution, operating hours by region, and "removals" so it is hard to determine the exact impact of long-term deployment patterns. The insular nature of the USCG and the DoD limits the analytical potential of such an analysis.

The essential limit on unilateral strength is the territory of another state. While the violation of territorial integrity was once a major component of U.S. policy, especially under the Reagan-Bush administration with the invasion of Panama, it has ceased to be a norm in the region. Since Panama, the USCG and DoD have stopped at the borders of the smaller regional states to request entry in pursuit.

B. BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS: PARDON ME WHILE I ENFORCE YOUR LAWS

A fascinating element of America's relationship with the Caribbean Basin is dictated by the willingness of the region's small independent states to cooperate. Always protective of their autonomy, these states tended to resist U.S. influence in the region. During the Cold War, the United States limited its regional security cooperation to the

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[220] Sydney J. Freeberg Jr. "Sequester Means $1 Billion More of Cocaine Floods Into US: Coast Guard," *Breaking Defense*, 22 May 2013, https://breakingdefense.com/2013/05/sequester-cuts-will-let-1-million-more-of-cocaine-into-us-coast-guard/.

[221] Removal as a metric includes both seizures and estimated cargo jettisoned by smugglers trying to avoid capture.

[222] Grady, "Sequestration Caused 30 Percent Cut in Coast Guard Drug Interdiction Ops."

sponsorship of anti-communist forces or the presence of the odd DEA field office. Under the Clinton administration the United States began to shift its security policy away from classical interventions, like the invasion of Panama, and toward a treaty framework for regional security. As part of the Global War on Terror, the second Bush administration began to supply torrents of security aid to regional partners. These aid programs and treaty structures undergird the multilateral approach to be adopted by the Obama administration.

1. Certification and Bilateral Aid Programs

The early U.S. bilateral approach to narcotrafficking relied on the concept of diplomatic browbeating known as Certification. U.S. State Department would "decertify" states, shame them, and deprive them of aid if they failed to take adequate action against traffickers and "Certify" states that were taking adequate steps to suppress trafficking. Eventually, it became clear that Certification was counterproductive and that many small Latin American and Caribbean states were on the brink of civil war and chronically unstable. The United States abandoned the Certification process in the early 2000s but not before using it to strongarm regional states into cooperation on Washington's terms, extracting a series of bilateral maritime security agreements.

The bilateral approach the United States brought to the countertrafficking arena relied heavily upon the Certification process. The 1996 INCSR maintained that counternarcotic action was a matter of political will, which was tied to corruption. The Certification process began during the Reagan administration and leveraged Section 409 of the Foreign Assistance Act to predicate U.S. aid and U.S. approval of loans from major international banks on the client state's compliance with U.S. will and the adequacy of their actions against narcotrafficking and production.[223] U.S. government presence and the sponsorship of most of these international lending institutions made the threat of decertification particularly potent. The U.S. government was seeking to compel compliance with the cudgel of Certification and it is not clear that it really worked. The sheer unpopularity of the measure is apparent in the defiant tone of the 2000 INCSR which

[223] Department of State, *1996 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Executive Summary; Program and Policy Review.*

stated "Though controversial, throughout its 15 year-existence the certification process has proved to be a powerful, if blunt, policy instrument for enhancing counternarcotics cooperation."[224] This procedure changed and softened in 2002 eventually becoming more palatable, removing restrictions on aid, and focusing directly on collaboration.[225] The fundamental drawbacks of the Certification process are best demonstrated by the Colombian Case.

From 1995 to 1998 the United States decertified Colombia, which resulted in a decline in interdictions and a spike in violence.[226] This descent into violence and chaos allowed increased quantities of narcotics to transit toward the United States. Because of Colombian weakness, the U.S. government changed tactics and pursued Plan Colombia, a massive, security-centric aid package.[227] The bolstering of Plan Colombia under President George W. Bush coupled with his administration's decision to end the Certification process and pursue a bilateral, collaborative approach to countertrafficking. Roberto Zapeda and Jonathan Rosen, two scholars and editors of a text on cooperation in the region, accurately describe Plan Colombia as an example of a hegemon utilizing its bilateral strength while disregarding the potential of assistance from multinational institutions: "Plan Colombia demonstrates that the United States has often refused to work through international institutions and has set the agenda for the region."[228] However, this bilateral aid package would be followed by broader multilateral aid packages to Central America, and the Caribbean. The transition from a coercive bilateral relationship to a collaborative bilateral relationship marked the start of an evolution toward collaborative multilateralism that

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[224] Department of State, *2000 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report Program and Policy Developments*; Bill Spencer, "Drug Certification," *Foreign Policy in Focus,* 1 September 1998, http://fpif.org/drug_certification/.

[225] Rand Beers, "The President's 2001 Narcotics Certification Determinations," *U.S. Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law,* 25 February 2002, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/8466.htm; "Narcotics Legislation and the 'Majors' List," *U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law,* accessed 14 December 2017, https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/inl/rls/rpt/c11766.htm.

[226] See Appendix A for source information; Roberto Rosen and Jonathan Zapeda, *Cooperation and Drug Policies in the Americas; Trends in the Twenty First Century* (Lanham, Lexington Books 2015), xi.

[227] Ibid., xi.

[228] Ibid.

would emerge under the Obama administration. Subsequent aid packages took regionally oriented approaches and coupled with concerted attempts to build cooperative relationships between states in the transit zone. This softer approach to regional interaction was preceded by the earlier emergence of the bilateral maritime security arrangement.

2. Bilateral Maritime Security Agreements

Bilateral maritime security arrangements predate most economic and security based bilateral aid programs. Some of these arrangements are quite extensive and intrusive. In Joseph Kramek lists possible elements of a model bilateral maritime security agreement as: "(1) Ship-boarding, (2) entry to investigate, (3) overflight, (4) shipriders, (5) pursuit, and (6) order to land."[229] These basic maritime security agreements essentially represent a template of options for states. Some states have adopted some of these measures, others all of them. Writing in 2000, Karmek also charted the emergence bilateral maritime agreements with the United States. He demonstrated that by the end of the 20th century most of the insular Caribbean had extensive collaborative maritime security arrangements with the United States. He also showed that Central America did not follow this same trend; in fact, the only extant bilateral maritime security arrangements in place in Central America in 2000 were the ship-rider agreement with Panama and a broader agreement with Belize.[230] Most 29 of these bilateral maritime security relationships emerged during the second half of the Clinton administration.[231] It is worth noting that cocaine smuggling began shifting from the Caribbean route to the Central American route around 1998–1999, possibly in response to the proliferation of these agreements.[232] However, this trend continued into the Bush administration, and bilateral maritime security arrangements were reached with most of the Central American holdouts by the mid-2000s. For example,

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229 Karmek, "Bilateral Maritime Counter-Drug," 133.

230 Ibid., 150.

231 Ibid., 123.

232 Mary Layne et al., *Measuring the Deterrent Effect of Enforcement Operations on Drug Smuggling, 1991–1999*, Office of National Drug Control Policy, August 2001, 59 https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/pdf/measure_deter_effct.pdf.

Honduras and Nicaragua both entered bilateral maritime agreements in 2001.[233] Therefore, it is possible that this change in the security environment started the shift in trafficking toward Central America, but it does not explain the persistence of the route when all states in the region have bilateral relationships with the United States.

The importance of regional maritime agreements and bilateral maritime security arrangements plays out in the performance of the USCG. Vice Admiral Charles Ray stated that in FY2016, 59 percent of USCG interdictions relied upon "bilateral or operational procedure agreements."[234] One particularly striking case of the importance of U.S. bilateral influence is 2014's Nicaraguan maritime seizures. The State Department notes a steadily decreasing rate of seizures by the Nicaraguan Navy from 6 MT annually to less than 3 MT annually by 2013 and 1.9 MT in 2014. This reduction is attributed to a reduction in U.S. counternarcotics assets and operational support in the littorals.[235]

These U.S. bilateral relationship with the states of the region amounts to a vast practical expansion of U.S. jurisdiction. This undercutting of state sovereignty explains why the Central American states and Mexico have been hesitant to sign off on these agreements: they view these sweeping bilateral arrangements as corrosive to their independence and were essentially forced into these arrangements through threats of decertification.[236] Currently, Mexico remains one of the only states in the region without a bilateral maritime security treaty with the United States.[237] In a region where U.S. intervention casts a long shadow, it is no wonder that some Central American states delayed entry into these security pacts. Despite this reticence to relinquish sovereignty, bilateral

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[233] Department of State, *2004 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

[234] Charles Ray, *Written Testimony of USCG Deputy Commandant for Operations Vice Admiral Charles Ray for a Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control For A Hearing Titled 'Adapting U.S. Counternarcotics Efforts In Colombia*, Department of Homeland Security, 12 September 2017, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/09/12/written-testimony-uscg-senate-caucus-international-narcotics-control-hearing-titled.

[235] Department of State, *2014 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

[236] Kramek, "Bilateral Maritime Counter-Drug and Immigrant Interdiction Agreements," 145–146.

[237] Department of State, *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 215–219.

maritime security arrangements act as important subcomponents of the larger, multilateral security network that has developed in Central America and the Caribbean.

C. THE MANY FACES OF MULTILATERALISM

U.S. multilateralism has emerged haltingly and taken three essential forms: diplomatic multilateral agreements, multilateral aid programs, and multilateral security operation organizations. Each of these features of multilateralism has evolved over time and in response to regional developments and tend to interact with each other. However, multilateral approaches to countertrafficking and trafficking associated security problems took a central role during the Obama administration.

1. Diplomatic Multilateralism: Budding Egalitarianism

Although diplomacy achieved the modern global counternarcotics environment in 1988 with the UN Drug Convention, regional agreements and cooperative treaties did not emerge until the mid-2000s. The biggest, regional multilateral agreement backed by the United States is the Caribbean Regional Agreement on Maritime Counternarcotics and includes Guatemala, Costa Rica, Belize, the Dominican Republic, and France.[238] This treaty is set up like the earlier bilateral agreements and contains much of the same language regarding searches and boardings. Signed in 2005, this agreement is of limited utility as only Belize and Guatemala share a border, and they have standing territorial disputes that make cooperation difficult.[239] However, the Agreement marks a shift in thinking away from the simple bilateral treaties discussed by Karmek and allowed major powers to render direct operational assistance to the region's smaller states.

The Obama administration continued the move toward multilateralism. In 2013 it announced the launch of the U.S.–Colombian Regional Security Plan. This plan would leverage the capabilities and training of Colombian armed forces throughout the region. It marked a shift in tone and methodology: "'Colombia's established and expanding expertise

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[238] Department of State, *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.*

[239] Larry Luxner, "Belize Urges Solution to Guatemala's Long-Standing Territorial Claims," *The Tico Times*, 23 December 2013, http://www.ticotimes.net/2013/12/23/belize-urges-solution-to-guatemala-s-long-standing-territorial-claims.

and capacity for countering this threat and shared U.S. responsibility to address the demand for illicit narcotics.'"[240] Involving the revitalized Colombian government in a near peer role as an exporter of knowledge and leader in regional cooperation marks a clear shift from the one-sided relationships of the 1980s and 1990s. It has arguably produced results as Colombia has become a noted security exporter.

In a similar vein, the U.S. has pushed a "train the trainer" model with two of the region's leading counter-narcotics states: Panama and Colombia. The 2017 INCSR notes that Panama has been exporting its border security expertise to its neighbors including Costa Rica, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras.[241] Building these military-military relationships provide the underpinnings for future regional JTFs or treaty based multilateral organizations.

2. Financial Multilateralism: Underwriting Friendship

While the provision of aid in the form of equipment, training, and advisors has been a staple of U.S. security policy since the Cold War, its importance diminished following the collapse of the Soviet Union and only found rebirth under the Clinton administration. The first major aid program specifically for counternarcotics was Plan Colombia, which launched under President Clinton and expanded under President Bush. This program sought to rebuild Colombian state capacity on the theory that a robust Colombian government would be able to staunch the flow of narcotics. In practical terms, it caused an increase in narcotics interdiction with the Colombian government going from seizing only 60MT in 1999 to 250MT by 2008.[242] The Merida Initiative followed Plan Colombia and targeted Mexico and Central America for massive infusions military aid. Under President Obama, the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) placed Central America in its own program, in 2010 the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)

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[240] "Colombia and United States Announce A Regional Security Plan," *Dialogo: Digital Military Magazine*, 17 April 2012, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/colombia-and-united-states-announce-regional-security-plan.

[241] Department of State, *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 233.

[242] See Appendix A for source information.

followed.[243] Later iterations of these programs include institution building as a critical component of regional stabilization.

CARSI and CBSI are regionally oriented, State Department-led security initiatives that provide aid to individual states but take a softer approach than the simple, militarized counternarcotics approaches of the 1990s and early 2000s. These programs focus explicitly on internal state stability, security, and development, but beyond this, they actively seek to promote interstate cooperation and coordination.[244] These efforts to promote regional integration and cooperation followed several organic initiatives, SICA and the CARICOM security mechanisms.[245] Although CBSI and CARSI continue to focus mostly on military aid, despite requests from the region for a focus on economic aid, the programs have correlated with an increase in interdictions, although not an increase in regional stability.[246] The mixed results of these programs indicate a fundamental weakness in the security based approach to regional security.

Long-term aid plans have also operated under SOUTHCOM, the USCG, and the Justice Department. These have mainly consisted of advise-and-assist missions, which include the training of elite counter-narcotics forces, the vetting of units and personnel, the provision of maintenance expertise, assistance in the establishment of court systems, the training of prosecutors, and the implementation of judicial reforms.[247] In some cases, these direct training programs have multilateral results. For example, the Trained Commando in Maritime Interdiction and Counter Trafficking (CAIMAN) course, conducted by SOUTHCOM and the U.S. Navy Seals, involved Honduran, Salvadoran, and Nicaraguan

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[243] Meyer and Seelke, *Central America Regional Security Initiative*, 17–19.

[244] Fonseca and Pestrana, "A Symptom of Crisis in Honduras," 127; Bobea, "The Dawn of Post-Hegemonic Cooperation" 149–150.

[245] Mark Kirton and Marlon Anatol, "Current Trends in Caribbean Cooperation in the War on Drugs," in *Cooperation and Drug Policies in the Americas; Trends in the Twenty First* Century ed. Roberto Zepeda and Jonathan Rosen (Lanham, Lexington Books 2015), 98; Bobea, "The Dawn of Post-Hegemonic Cooperation," 151.

[246] See Appendix A for source information.

[247] Department of State, *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 234.

trainees.[248] The course aims to create elite units for individual states but by training marines from different states, at the same time the United States helps build military-to-military relationships and trust. Thus, the financial component of U.S. efforts in the region improves qualitative elements of regional partner states.

3. Operational Multilateralism: The Hub and Spoke

Multilateralism is not an entirely new feature of the U.S. approach to the War on Drugs; some of the longest running counternarcotics operations are multilateral operations led by the United States. An early U.S. multilateral effort to staunch the flow of narcotics into the United States occurred during the 1980s under the Reagan Administration. In the early 1980s the Caribbean was the preferred route for cocaine smugglers and existing marijuana smuggling routes led from South America and a variety of Caribbean states to the Bahamas and Florida. Under the leadership of Vice President George H. W. Bush, the U.S. began to invest in regional interdiction efforts. The first major inflection point, Operation Bahamas Turks and Caicos (OPBAT), remains in place today.[249] OPBAT started in 1982 and involved the deployment of U.S. helicopters and law enforcement personnel to the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos. It also involved additional support from British government.[250] Whereas previous efforts to seize traffickers had been foiled by Bahamian territorial seas, OPBAT both granted U.S. forces explicit access to the many small islands and cays favored as hiding locations by drug smugglers and facilitated the transport of Bahamian law enforcement officers to conduct arrests. OPBAT is an experiment in the overbearing bilateral relationship and the broader multilateral relationship. OPBAT may have remained a relatively narrow operation because of the special nature of the U.S.–U.K. relationship and the continued dependency status of the Bahamas, the Turks, and the Caicos. It proved extremely effective but asking independent

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[248] Kay Valle, "Central American Naval Forces Receive Elite Antinarcotics Training," *Dialogo: Digital Military Magazine*, 8 November 2017 https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/central-american-naval-forces-receive-elite-antinarcotics-training.

[249] Ezra Fieser, "If You Build It, They Won't Come? U.S. Bases in Caribbean Target Drug Trafficking," *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 March 2012, https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2012/0312/If-you-build-it-they-won-t-come-US-bases-in-Caribbean-target-drug-trafficking.

[250] Fuss, *Sea of Grass*, 106.

states to sacrifice degree of sovereignty is fundamentally different than making a similar demand of an ally's former dependencies and associated commonwealth states.

Operational multilateralism reemerged as the predominant collaborative tool under the Obama administration. OPBAT remained in force and is largely effective but it was not mimicked in Central America until the 2012 implementation of Operation *Martillo* (Hammer). A multinational effort, *Martillo* resembles a hub-spoke operation, wherein the United States operates as an information collector and distributes cueing data to regional partners who are the spokes. *Martillo* receives external assistance from the Netherlands, Spain, France, and Canada. The operation also involves Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. Functionally, JIATF-S coordinates the efforts of these component states.[251] *Martillo's* goal is to increase littoral interdiction, forcing smugglers further into the Eastern Pacific and extending their time at sea, thus allowing additional interdiction by long range USCG and naval assets.[252] Significantly, *Martillo* places JIATF-S partner nation assets under JIATF-S's tactical control, a previously unheard of sacrifice of sovereignty.[253] The result has been the development of a counternarcotics network where a central processor coordinates and cues individual state security forces.

Since its implementation in January of 2012, *Martillo* has succeeded in the capture of 693 MT of cocaine and 581 suspect vessels and aircraft.[254] The success of this program, coupled with the implementation of CARSI and effects of sequestration is reflected in the slight push back to the Caribbean vector. In 2011 an estimated 95 percent of cocaine transited Central America; by 2013 this had shifted to 86 percent. This appears to have stabilized and in 2015 as 90 percent of cocaine transiting to the U.S. passed through Central America.[255] However, it has successfully pushed cocaine smuggling further into the

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[251] Angel Rabasa, Christopher M. Schnaubelt, Peter Chalk, Douglas Farah, Greg Midgette, Howard J. Shatz, *Counternetwork; Countering the Expansion of Transnational Criminal Networks* (Santa Monica, RAND Corp. 2017) https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1481.html, 129.

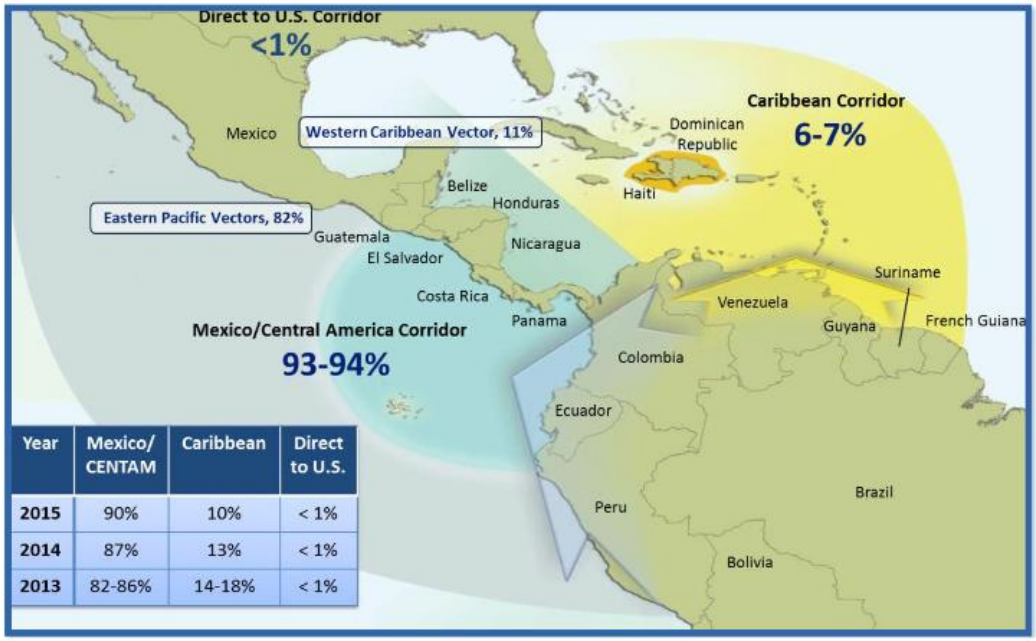
[252] Ibid., 129–130.

[253] Ibid., 129–130.

[254] "Operation Martillo," *U.S. Southern Command*, accessed 14 December 2017, http://www.southcom.mil/Media/Special-Coverage/Operation-Martillo/.

[255] See Appendix A for source information.

Eastern Pacific. In 2016 an estimated 62 percent of U.S. bound cocaine transited west of the Galapagos, avoiding the states of *Martillo* and extending their time at sea and vulnerability to U.S. unilateral power.[256] Figure 23 provides a graphic representation of cocaine flow in the context of *Martillo.*



Year	Mexico/ CENTAM	Caribbean	Direct to U.S.
2015	90%	10%	< 1%
2014	87%	13%	< 1%
2013	82-86%	14-18%	< 1%

Figure 23. Cocaine Movement in the Transit Zone. Source: DEA Colombian Cocaine Production Expansion Report.[257]

In addition to operational security arrangements, the United States has attempted to promote regional intelligence sharing and cueing by promoting technological tools. In the insular Caribbean and Central America, cueing is an integrative process that involves data sharing. While individual states may maintain discreet security forces, a degree of data sharing does occur under the Cooperative Situational Information Integration System (CSII) and the Regional Domain Awareness (RDA) system, USSOUTHCOM organized data sharing systems. The system's precursor, the Cooperating Nations Information

[256] Drug Enforcement Administration, *Colombian Cocaine Production Expansion*, 5.

[257][257] Ibid., 5.

Exchange System (CNIES), had been in place since 1998.[258] CNIES had functioned as a bilateral information sharing system centered on the United States.[259] The newer RDA and CSII systems employ unclassified, Internet-based data sharing systems that allow participants to actively exchange track data and made it more accessible. The initial build out of CSII in 2013 utilized mostly U.S. data from the Tethered Aerostat Radar System, the Maritime Safety and Security Information System, and the Relocatable over the Horizon Radar (ROTHR).[260] The first states to buy into this integrated system of information sharing were the states of the insular Caribbean, Guyana, and Belize.[261] CSII and RDA are the technological enablers of the larger operational effort but rely on the strength and ability of individual states to function. However, in the absence of action and component state security capacity, this technology is essentially an exercise in futility. Yet, when coupled with competent component states, it can enable collaborative, operational action. CSII therefore underpins regional relationship and serves as a major technological component of hub-and-spoke multilateralism.

Through operations like *Martillo*, agencies like JIATF-S, and technology like CSII, the United States has transformed its regional security policy from a complex network of bilateral relationships to a centralized coordinating network. To fill the role of the proverbial hub, SOUTHCOM employs JIATF-S to coordinate regional partners and the various U.S. federal agencies and departments. The bilateral format has been operating at various levels since the 1990s but the hub and spoke logic of *Martillo* and JIATF-S has helped to create a functional multilateral network overlaying the nearly the entire region.

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258 "CSII: The Eyes and Ears of the Caribbean," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine*, 1 April 2013, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/csii-eyes-and-ears-caribbean.

259 Lorena Montserrat Carcamo Maires, "El Salvador Joins SOUTHCOM Radar System to Combat Drug Trafficking," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine*, 11 February 2016, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/el-salvador-joins-southcom-radar-system-combat-drug-trafficking.

260 "CSII: The Eyes and Ears of the Caribbean."

261 Ibid.

D. FACILITATING REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The important undercurrent behind these operational forms of multilateralism is that they encourage and build local inter-military relationships. CARSI, Operation *Martillo,* and CSII serve to create a cooperative environment between neighbors that is unlikely to exist otherwise. This impulse to build multilateral relationships has led the United States to promote and back sub-regional partnerships. In the Northern Triangle States of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, the United States has underwritten recent local collaborative border control JTFs. The first of these new organizations was JTF *Maya-Chotri* a joint Guatemalan-Honduran effort launched it 2015, it was followed by JTF *Lenca-Sempul*, a border control JTF between Honduras and El Salvador, and a third border arrangement, the *Maya-Pipil* Task Force between Guatemala and El Salvador. Finally, late 2016 saw the formation of a Tri-National Anti-Gang Task Force that acts as a new umbrella JTF for *Maya-Chotri, Lenca-Sempul,* and *Maya-Pipil.*[262] These sub-regional cooperative bodies are relatively new, and it is difficult to assess their potential efficacy, but if they persist and additional data becomes available, they may prove effective.

E. CONCLUSIONS: COOPERATION AS A STAPLE OF COUNTERNARCOTICS OPERATIONS

According to the UNODC World Drug Report, in 2015 global governments seized 45–55 percent of all cocaine produced; in the 1980s law enforcement could only stop 20–24 percent of global cocaine.[263] Progress has been made and it has been made in South and Central America. The U.S. approach has changed and, over time, granted more autonomy to regional actors. This expansion of multilateralism has yielded concrete results. In FY2014, 56 percent of *Martillo* disruptions were the result of Latin American Partner participation and 37 percent of disruptions involved assistance from international partners

[262] Julieta Pelcastre, "Northern Triangle Countries Create Trinational Force," *Dialogo; Digital Military Magazine,* 9 December 2016, https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/northern-triangle-countries-create-trinational-force.

[263] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *2017 World Drug Report,* 27.

like the UK, Spain, or the Netherlands.[264] Due to its success U.S. led and enabled operational multilateralism is likely to remain a staple of U.S. counternarcotics policy. Retreating from multilateralism into the old hegemonic approach may stifle cooperation with partner nations and result in the increased availability of international narcotics. As such policy makers and should continue to facilitate partner nation collaboration and capacity.

The strength of the United States undergirds regional collaborative networks. It promotes and facilitates sub-regional cooperation while building partner nation interdiction capacity. In doing so, the United States has contributed substantially to the security of the region. Trafficker generated conflict is inherently driven by U.S. demand for narcotics, but U.S. security efforts have contributed substantially to regional efforts to beat back narcotraffickers

[264] Rabasa et al., *Counternetwork,* 129–130.

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VI. CONCLUSION: BUILDING MARITIME SECURITY IN THE AMERICAS

Capable states engaged in routine data sharing do a better job at catching smugglers than states that try to tackle the problem alone. As interstate cooperation and intelligence sharing have improved, interdiction rates have increased. The United States facilitates many of these intelligence-sharing operations and cueing mechanisms. Interstate coordination has clearly produced results while the impact of platform investment is, at best, questionable. Future policy makers must draw on these models of operational cooperation in the construction and facilitation of a Central American cooperative security framework.

A. NAVAL POWER: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is difficult to assess the strength of a military. Qualitative assessments require knowledge of naval operations and the exercise of judgement, while quantitative analysis may neglect quality and platform capabilities. However, given what data can be gleaned, minor changes in naval power and platform density do not significantly impact interdiction efficacy. Logically, there must be an impact, but it may be undercut by a lack of political will or endemic corruption. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Mexican case: the modern Mexican navy is large and built to interdict illicit traffickers, but either due to endemic corruption or a lack of political will, it hardly seizes any cocaine. Conversely, a small, competent navy may push traffickers further out of its waters. Recent upticks in traffic around the Galapagos imply that Panamanian efforts have begun to push some traffickers away from their waters.

Therefore, governments interested in improving the performance of their Maritime Security Forces should invest in force quality as opposed to force quantity. Vetting units, officers, and crews to prevent against corruption and ensure adequate interoperability is likely to yield better results than providing a regional navy with a couple small boats or even a small observation aircraft. Once quality professional personnel are in place and can talk to each other, governments can start providing regional allies with additional MSF

platforms. Adding a ship may be a tangible way to build naval strength, but it is unlikely to produce real results when local navies and law enforcement agencies cannot coordinate or are lack a desire to enforce the law due to corruption.

As the United States operates as single political, professional, entity, it could respond effectively to regional trafficking by deploying additional forces. The U.S. Navy and USGC already have coordinating and cueing mechanisms and assets and could reliably enforce security throughout the region. However, this would require the redeployment of U.S. assets from other global commitments. In the absence of an influx of USCG funding or the deployment of additional naval assets, the U.S. Navy must augment its existing forces with regional partners. This degree of integration and cooperation that may make real progress in the region.

B. COOPERATION: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The states of the Insular Caribbean have concluded that it is in their interests to cooperate with each other, with the United States, and with other European Powers. Because of the resulting cooperative mechanisms, they are more likely to seize cocaine shipments than the states of Central America. Central America and Mexico have not implemented similar cooperative mechanisms and accordingly operate in a less secure environment. This causes traffickers to opt for an Eastern Pacific and Central American route over the more direct Caribbean route.

There are many factors affecting a state's willingness to share information with its neighbors. Historical animosities may hinder cooperation; Central America has long been plagued by interstate conflict in a manner not found in the Insular Caribbean, and the Mexican-United States relationship is deeply rooted in historical grievance and mistrust. The resulting void in security cooperation presents traffickers with exploitable routes to the United States.

The governments of the Caribbean Basin and South America have a common enemy: the cartels. Historical grievances and ingrained mistrust aside, most governments can agree that illicit trafficking causes violence and destabilizes the region. When these states cooperate with their neighbors and share information they can better employ their

maritime security forces, capture smugglers, and deter cartels. Small states should seek deeper cooperation and routine coordination with their neighbors. The United States should continue to facilitate interstate cooperation, ideally through multilateral agreements with operational components like joint commands. The formation of the RSS was fostered by the United Kingdom, but CARICOM grew organically, and its continued effectiveness is partially underwritten by cooperation with the United States. The United States should continue to foster the fledgling Joint Task Forces that have emerged between Central American states and encourage their broader integration. Doing so requires the amelioration of historical and current interstate grievances.

One of the major stumbling blocks to Central American cooperation appears to be the persistence of the Central American migrant issue. Caused by the drug war these migrants are fleeing north, seeking refuge from the chronic instability caused by narcotrafficking. Since this began the United States has pressured the Mexican government to pursue a hard line on Central American migrants transiting Mexican territory. The abuse of migrants at the hands of organized crime and corrupt officials has hindered the development of Mexico-Central American relations. Additionally, the abuse of Mexican immigrants in the United States undermines American soft power in Mexico and provides a political roadblock to further cooperation. Shifting toward a more humanitarian refugee and migrant policy may reduce some of these sticking points and smooth security relations. This recommendation should not be taken as promoting open borders but consistent, humane treatment.

The other long-standing point of contention among the Central American republics is the persistence of interstate border disputes. These boundary disputes are responsible for wars and continuing interstate distrust. Resolving these old competing claims may help to minimize historical rivalries. Either by leveraging the OAS or acting as a direct mediator, the United States should play a role in finally resolving these issues, possibly by offering additional aid as an investment in future regional stability. States without competing territorial claims are more likely to cooperate and improve regional security.

Once major impediments to cooperation are removed, the Obama administration's multilateral approach to the region should continue as a model for future action. Building

cooperative links between the Central American states and Mexico may provide the region with a productive degree of security integration. However, given the questionable impact of additional arms and the necessity of local buy-in, U.S. efforts at capacity building are best oriented at qualitative force developments, including the use of intelligence to root out endemic corruption and the recruitment of vetted units. A force that is willing to cooperate because due to minimal trafficker penetration should be significantly more effective than a large, corrupt force.

If deep political cooperation is not possible, the development of low level military and law enforcement cooperation may suffice. The U.S.–Cuba relationship is hardly built upon deep ties of friendship, but it has proven extremely effective. The productivity of the U.S.–Cuba relationship proves that states do not have to be friendly, just willing to cooperate and relatively resistant to narco-corruption. The presence of liaison officers at JIATF-S and the implementation use of information sharing systems helps, but these may not be enough. Ships and aircraft deploying to the region should strive to have personnel on board capable of conversing with partner nations on a tactical level. They should also have the authority to cue nearby partner assets directly. The CARSI and CBSI programs need to focus on constructing effective collaborative mechanisms and fostering reconciliation between sub-regional rivals because simply providing the region with arms is no longer enough. The region knows what it needs, adopting flexible aid programs aimed at building economic strength may help states minimize corruption, develop economic strength, and build popular support for the United States by building U.S. soft power reserves.

C. LOOSE ENDS AND FUTURE STUDIES

Counternarcotics is a complicated endeavor. Throughout this thesis there are a number of themes lurking on the fringes and avenues for future investigations. Corruption, trafficker studies, the influence of revolutionary zeal, Haiti, and extra-regional states all deserve additional attention.

1. Corruption

Although it is not directly addressed in this thesis, corruption lurks at its edges as an impediment to cooperation. It is difficult to ascertain and difficult to measure. Yet, in some cases, its impact is quite clear. Honduras's relatively strong security apparatus is also chronically corrupt, the recent accusations about police complicity in narcotrafficking should surprise no one. Even though it has cooperative relationships with its neighbors and an average sized MSF it failed to seize any cocaine at all in 2016. So, while Honduras or Mexico may make the motions of cooperation, corruption may bar the effective implementation of counter-narcotics strategies and hinder security force responses to narcotraffickers. Research into the impact corruption has on interdiction efficacy and cooperation should be carried out as it could improve the operation of regional counternarcotics mechanisms.

2. Trafficker Studies

This thesis focused on the behavior of traffickers as effected by the state but does not contain much information from individual traffickers. As such, it infers behavior using numbers and government estimates. Future students of regional cocaine flows may wish to conduct a series of trafficker interviews. These studies should focus on route selection more than specific methodology. It would also provide a direct measure of how traffickers respond to state actions.

3. Marxist Revolutionaries

Having a Marxist revolution seems to be one of the best ways to deter traffickers. One of the great ironies of this study is the efficacy of U.S.–Cuban security cooperation and the subsequent reduction of the Cuban route despite overt political hostility. Similarly, Nicaragua remains one of the least trafficked states of the Central American isthmus and is noted for its cooperation with the United States and law enforcement competence.

The revolutionary fervor of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions both tie, in some part, to a deep disdain for the corruption and narcotics associated with the Batista and Samosa regimes. While these states both have some vulnerabilities to traffickers, like

Nicaragua's sparsely populated Caribbean coast, they are willing to cooperate with their neighbors and even their former North American rivals. While policy differences may persist, these states share common cause with the United States and maintaining a cooperative relationship is clearly in the best interests of all parties.

4. The Haitian Problem

Haiti appears to lack even the semblance of a coast guard and was not assessed as part of this study. However, since the 2010 earthquake the main target of smugglers transiting Hispaniola has been the Dominican Republic. This may be due to a lack of infrastructure that has plagued Haiti since the earthquake. The implication is that even traffickers require basic government provided goods and services to function. Accordingly, as Haiti continues to recover, law enforcement would do well to monitor the flow of drugs through the country in conjunction with rebuilding efforts. It is not clear if Haiti's membership in CARICOM will insulate it from future narcotics transshipment. Monitoring Haiti's role as a transshipment state as the recovery progresses and measuring it against the Dominican Republic may provide analysts with another excellent comparative case study.

5. Extra-Regional Powers

The role of European powers in altering the flow of regional narcotics is not entirely clear. The United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands all deploy ships to the Caribbean in support of their remaining overseas dependencies. These European powers are not directly addressed by this thesis, but they represent professional navies that work in conjunction with JIATF-S. As such, an assessment of their performance in conjunction with the United States and regional powers needs to be conducted. Additionally, extra-regional powers with no inherent interest in the region have become involved in security efforts: China and Russia both have extensive security operations in the region. Whether designed to directly challenge U.S. regional hegemony or simply to reduce global narcotics supplies, these relationships and their effect on regional security institutions warrants monitoring.

D. FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE POWER OF FRIENDSHIP

Cocaine seizures are merely an indirect measurement of maritime security. The capture of cocaine or the deterrence of smugglers occurs when the state exercises control over its waters. Security in the maritime commons is difficult to enforce unilaterally but the United States does not have to act alone. Acting with the small states of Central America and the Insular Caribbean, it can improve state supremacy at sea and protect the shared interests of all.

To this end, collaborative maritime law enforcement mechanisms allow regional partners to augment their forces with shared intelligence and cueing from their neighbors. The construction of regional security institutions and information sharing mechanisms helped to secure the Insular Caribbean and are helping to secure Central America. Some of these information-sharing mechanisms have been underwritten and supported by the United States. Ultimately, these relationships are more effective than simply adding ships to regional navies. However, cooperative security requires maintenance, diplomacy, and patience; when in place, these relationships can be highly effective. When states look past their political restrictions and take pragmatic action with their neighbors, regional security will benefit, and transnational criminal networks will suffer.

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APPENDIX A. COCAINE SEIZURE DATA AND FLOW ESTIMATES

Table 6. Data Sources for Cocaine Seizures and Flow Spreadsheets

	Description	**Parameters**	**Location**
1	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Cocaine Database	Seizures; Annual Drug Seizures; Region: Americas; Sub-Regions: Caribbean, Central America; From Year: 1990–2009, Drug Group: Cocaine-Type, Drug: Coca Base, Coca Salts; Unit: Kilograms	Data.unodc.org
2	UNODC Global Illicit Drug Trends	III (B)	http://www.unodc.org/pdf/report_1999-06-01_1.pdf
3	UNODC World Drug Report	Years: 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011. Cocaine and Cocaine Market Chapters	https://www.unodc.org/wdr2017/en/previous-reports.html
4	Office of National Drug Control Policy Cocaine Seizures Report	Years: 1997, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 Cocaine and Cocaine Market Chapters	https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ondcp/173584.pdf, https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/197033NCJRS.pdf, https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ondcp/200545.pdf, https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/pdf/cocaine_smuggling05.pdf, https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/pdf/cocaine_smuggling06.pdf, https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/pdf/cocaine_smuggling07.pdf, https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ondcp/Cocaine_Smuggling_in_2009.pdf, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/ondcp/international-partnerships-content/20_january_cocaine_smuggling_in_2010_for_posting_on_ondcp_webpage_2.pdf, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/ondcp/cocaine_smuggling_in_2011_english.pdf, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/ondcp/international-partnerships-content/cocaine_smuggling_in_2012_unclassified_approved_web.pdf, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/ondcp/international-partnerships-content/cocaine_smuggling_in_2013_digital_1505-05221.pdf

5	ONDCP Report on Deterrent Effect of Law Enforcement Operations	Page 59	Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Measuring the Deterrent Effect of Operations on Cocaine Smuggling 1991–1999, Washington, DC,* Abt Associates. https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/pdf/measure_deter_effct.pd
6	Drug Enforcement Cocaine Production Report	Pages 4, 5	Drug Enforcement Administration, *Colombian Cocaine Production Expansion Leads to an Increased Supply in the United States,* DEA-DCT-D1B-014-17, 2017, https://www.dea.gov/docs/DIB-014-17%20Colombian%20Cocaine%20Production%20Expansion.pdf
7	State Department International Narcotics Control Strategy Report	Years: 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017. Regions: The Caribbean and Canada, Mexico, and Central America. Countries: Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama	https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm https://1997-2001.state.gov/global/narcotics_law/narc_reports_mainhp.html

APPENDIX B. CARIBBEAN NAVAL STRENGTH

Table 7. Data Source for Supplemental Spreadsheet for Caribbean Naval Strength

	Description	Parameters	Location
1	Jane's Fighting Ships Survey From 1990–2009	Entry search for Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Surinam, and Haiti	*Jane's Fighting Ships*, edited by Richard Sharpe (1990-2000) and Stephen Saunders (2001-2009), UK, London: Janes Information Group 1990–2007, I.H.S. Markit, 2007–2009.
2	Seas Around Us	EEZ Entries for Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Surinam, and Haiti	http://www.seaaroundus.org/data/#/eez
3	CIA World factbook	Entry search for Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Surinam, and Haiti	https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/

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APPENDIX C. CENTRAL AMERICAN NAVAL STRENGTH

Table 8. Data Source for Supplemental Spreadsheet for Central American Naval Strength

	Description	**Parameters**	**Location**
1	Jane's Fighting Ships Survey From 1990–2009	Entry search for Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama	*Jane's Fighting Ships*, edited by Richard Sharpe (1990-2000) and Stephen Saunders (2001-2009), UK, London: Janes Information Group 1990–2007, I.H.S. Markit, 2007–2009.
2	Seas Around Us	Entry search for Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama	http://www.seaaroundus.org/data/#/eez
3	CIA World factbook	Entry search for Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama	https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/

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SUPPLEMENTALS

A. SPREADSHEET OF COCAINE SEIZURES AND FLOW ESTIMATES

This spreadsheet (Supplemental A) is sourced from Appendix A. It draws on data from the UNODC, INCSR, DEA, and ONDCP to track cocaine flow and government seizures.

B. SPREADSHEET OF CARIBBEAN NAVAL STRENGTH

This spreadsheet (Supplemental B) is sourced from Appendix B. It draws on data from *Jane's Fighting Ships; 1990–2009*, categorizes platforms, and compares this data to geographic data to determine relative strength.

C. SPREADSHEET OF CENTRAL AMERICAN NAVAL STRENGTH

This spreadsheet (Supplemental C) is sourced from Appendix C and follows the same guidelines employed by the spreadsheet on Caribbean Naval Strength.

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