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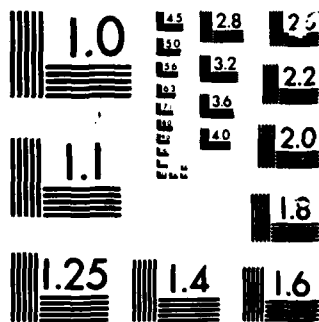
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AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

STUDENT REPORT

US AIR FORCE ROLE IN DRUG INTERDICTION

DECEMBER 1981 TO OCTOBER 1985

MAJOR TONY L. WIGGINS

86-2705

"insights into tomorrow"

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REPORT NUMBER 86-2705

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DECEMBER 1981 TO OCTOBER 1985

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requirements for graduation.

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19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) In December 1981 the <u>Posse Comitatus</u> Act was amended in order that the US Department of Defense could play an active role in curbing the illegal flow of narcotics into the United States. In early 1982, President Reagan established the South Florida Task Force that was to target on illegal drug smuggling into the US. Shortly thereafter, the US Air Force was tasked with aiding civilian law enforcement agencies in stemming the illegal drug flow. This historical review describes the <u>Posse Comitatus</u> Amendment and the subsequent tasking of the Department of Defense in aiding the civilian community in its war on illegal narcotics. The review then describes the role the US Air Force has played in this area. Finally, the results and future Air Force participation are dealt with. <i>and... of Cocaine... Smuggling Drug Traffic</i>					
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PREFACE

After an afternoon of directing mock F-15 dogfights over the Gulf of Mexico, the E-3A Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) Weapons Director settled back in his seat. His eyes roamed over the console before him where shimmering green flecks dotted the scope; aircraft detected for hundreds of miles in every direction.

Suddenly, focusing upon a tiny, luminiscent blip, he reported over the intercom that he had a possible target. Nearly 6 miles below, zigzagging north just 500 feet above the ocean, was a small aircraft, flying as if trying to escape detection by landbased radars.

Within seconds the Southeast Region Operations Control Center (ROCC) at Tyndall AFB, Florida, was alerted. A US Customs aircraft was scrambled from the New Orleans Air Support Center, and with the aid of the E-3A controller, positioned itself above and behind the suspected drug smuggler (1:9).

When the suspicious aircraft landed in south Texas, the pilot and another man were arrested by waiting agents. The final catch: 1 Cessna 206, 2 trucks, and 600 pounds of marijuana.

The aircraft had departed Belize about 10 hours before its landing in Texas. Its seizure culminated a four-year investigation by the US Customs Service and would not have happened without use of the E-3A (14:1).



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The main reason there are smugglers to apprehend is due to the enormous American appetite for illegal drugs. The demand for and dollars involved is staggering. The National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee's last estimate of \$79 billion generated every year in the United States by illegal drug sales is exceeded only by the annual revenues of one corporation: Exxon (1:14).

From the astronomical profits that can be garnered from drug sales, everyone from neophyte entrepreneurs to organized crime veterans have entered the smuggling scene. These huge profits permit smugglers to purchase the latest in navigational and communications equipment along with highspeed aircraft and low profile speed boats. Combine this equipment with the thousands of miles of US coastline and the US/Mexican border, the task of adequate surveillance becomes nearly impossible. The United Nations reports that only 10 percent of all drugs being smuggled into the US are ever interdicted (1:16). The war on illegal drug smuggling has become so overwhelming that the civilian law enforcement agencies of this country can no longer wage it alone. Because of this, the US Air Force and the other services have entered the fray.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Tony L. Wiggins received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Administration from Washington State University in 1973. While at Washington State, Major Wiggins completed the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Course, and was commissioned in June of 1973. After completing undergraduate pilot training at Moody AFB, Georgia, in 1974, Major Wiggins was assigned to the 92d Air Refueling Squadron, Fairchild AFB, Washington, as a co-pilot on the KC-135. From August 1975 until July 1978, Major Wiggins was assigned to the 92d Bomb Wing Standardization/Evaluation branch. From July 1978 to February 1982, Major Wiggins was assigned to the 455th Flying Training Squadron, Mather AFB, California. While assigned to the 455th, Major Wiggins assumed the duties as an instructor pilot in the T-37, instructing undergraduate navigator candidates and newly assigned pilot instructors. While at Mather, Major Wiggins received a Master of Arts Degree in Business Administration from Golden Gate University. From Mather, Major Wiggins was assigned to the 323rd Flying Training Wing Detachment 3, Fairchild AFB, Washington, in support of the Accelerated Co-pilot Enrichment Program (ACE). While at Fairchild, Major Wiggins acted as detachment commander until 1985 when he was assigned to Maxwell AFB, Alabama, as a student at the Air Force Air Command and Staff College. His Professional Military Education includes Squadron Officer School (correspondence) and Air Command and Staff College (seminar and residence).

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Chapter One

THE CALL FOR HELP

The state of Florida is contained by 8,426 miles of shoreline, much of which is desolate and ideal for the landing and unloading of large fishing boats, cabin cruisers, or sailing yachts. Along with its enormous shoreline, Florida has hundreds of airstrips, both operational and abandoned, and because the peninsula of Florida juts into the Atlantic and Caribbean Oceans, its geographical proximity to source countries for drug trafficking make it an excellent avenue of entry for illicit narcotics to the United States.

It has been estimated that 80 to 90 percent of all marijuana and cocaine (26:55) and a large percentage of quaaludes illegally entering the US travelled through Florida on their way to other parts of the country.

Principally as a result of the smuggling of drugs, there had been an influx of staggering amounts of criminally obtained US currency into south Florida, which resulted in Miami becoming a major center for the laundering of billions of illegal narco bucks through its expensive, legitimate, domestic and international banking community.

In short, epidemic drug smuggling, laundering of illegal "megabucks," use of illegal automatic firearms, and illegal immigration had created a crime crisis in south Florida that seriously threatened the safety and quality of all of its citizens--rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution.

On January 28, 1982, President Reagan noted that in regard to the south Florida situation, the federal government had a special responsibility to fill in temporarily and do what it could to reduce these problems. He established a federal task force comprised of the very highest officials in his administration and chaired

by Vice President Bush. This task force, The South Florida Task Force (Narcotics Control), includes the Attorney General, the Secretaries of State, Defense, Transportation, Treasury, and Health and Human Services, as well as Presidential Counselor Edwin Meese. The task force is not intended to supersede the responsibilities of state and local law enforcement, but rather to assist and coordinate federal efforts in order that together we can restore civility, safety, and calm to south Florida (26:55-56).

For the South Florida Task Force to become effective in its fight against narcotics traffickers, an improvement in enforcement procedures was needed. The smugglers' huge profits bought equipment (airplanes, boats, radios, etc.) superior to that which was being deployed against them, thus maintaining an edge over the enforcement agencies.

Law enforcement officials were highly frustrated by their inability to react in a timely fashion to the inadequate intelligence reports they received concerning movement of drug-laden ships and aircraft. Technology had surpassed the meager perimeter defense of the Customs Service, Coast Guard, and other anti-smuggling agencies. Only the Department of Defense (DOD) possessed the equipment that was reputed to detect, identify and track many of the smugglers. The DOD, however, was prohibited in most cases from assisting civilian law enforcement authorities because of the Posse Comitatus Act and a tradition in this country that the armed forces did not participate in the enforcement of civilian statutes within the civilian community (24:1-2).

POSSE COMITATUS

Posse Comitatus (literally to have assistance available) was defined in common law as all those over the age of 15 upon whom

a sheriff could call for assistance in preventing any type of civil disorder (24:3). The Posse Comitatus Act (18 USC 1385) was enacted in 1878 in the wake of extensive use of the Army to enforce the reconstruction laws and to suppress labor strife in the post-Civil War Era. The act makes it a felony except in cases and under circumstances expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress to willfully use any part of the Army or Air Force as Posse Comitatus or otherwise to "execute the law."

The excerpt "execute the law" means the direct application of authority against civilians through activities such as arrests, searches and seizures (4:6). As originally proposed, the act would have applied to all of the armed services. The final version of the act, however, mentioned only the Army because the act was a rider to an Army Appropriations Bill. The reference to the Air Force was added in 1956 when it was codified in Title 18 of the US Code to take into account the separation of the Air Force from the Army (24:4).

According to a spokesman for the Department of Justice, no one has been charged or prosecuted under the Posse Comitatus Act since its enactment (24:4). While only a limited number of cases have been reported under the Posse Comitatus Act, they suggested varying standards for the determination of the point at which military assistance becomes sufficient to constitute a violation. Because of these varying interpretations, there was uncertainty as to the nature and the extent of the assistance that would be rendered by the military to civilian enforcement (24:4). With the substantial legal controversy over military assistance to the

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) during the Wounded Knee incident in the mid-1970s, the federal courts offered a variety of conflicting interpretations of Posse Comitatus. This substantially complicated the military's ability to respond in a timely fashion during the late 1970s when civilian agencies began to request DOD assistance in the effort to stem the flow of drugs into the United States (4:6).

Congress responded to this problem during the debate on the DOD Authorization Act for 1982. Section 908 of Public Law 97-86 added a new chapter to Title 10, US Code, entitled "Chapter 18- Military Cooperation with Civilian Law Enforcement Officials." This legislation was approved 1 December 1981 and was designed to clarify restrictions on military assistance to civilian law enforcement imposed by the Posse Comitatus Act. As has been stated, this legislation was prompted by continuous concern over the massive influx of controlled substances along with the illegal entrance of immigrants into the US. The new Chapter 18 of Title 10 would:

(1) Permit various forms of military assistance to civilian law enforcement officials, (2) restrict the direct participation of military personnel in law enforcement activities, (3) require that furnishing assistance not adversely affect military preparedness, (4) provide for reimbursement for assistance to civilian authorities, and (5) make clear that the chapter does not limit the authority granted by existing law (24:4-5).

The new legislation clearly reaffirms the traditional prohibitions against direct military participation in law enforcement through arrests, searches, seizures, and similar activities. At the same time, it provided a specific authority for certain types of indirect assistance (4:6).

The DOD implemented the new legislation through DOD Directive 5525.5. This document outlined procedures for the use of each service and was issued on 22 March 1982, over the signature of then Deputy Secretary of Defense, Frank Carlucci.

Military cooperation with civilian law enforcement officials permits service components to provide federal, state, and local civilian law enforcement officials with information collected during the normal course of military operations that may be relevant to a violation of any federal or state law. It makes it clear that when a unit is otherwise authorized to obtain information for a military purpose, such information may be provided to civilian agencies when relevant to a violation of civilian law.

The directive allows DOD components to make available equipment, personnel, base facilities, or research facilities to civilian law enforcement officials if the provision of such assistance will not adversely affect the military preparedness of the United States.

The authority to provide training and advice, however, does not permit regular or direct involvement of military personnel in activities that are fundamentally civilian law enforcement operations.

The directive implements that portion of the new law that permits use of military personnel to operate or maintain equipment for enforcing the drug, customs or immigration laws. Assistance may be provided when the training of non-DOD personnel would be unfeasible or impractical and would not otherwise compromise national security or military preparedness concerns.

This assistance may include maintaining equipment, operating equipment used to monitor and communicate the movement of air and sea traffic, and using military personnel to operate equipment as a base of operations outside the United States for civilian law enforcement officials, so long as military personnel are not involved directly in an interception.

Also delineated are those areas in which direct participation in law enforcement efforts is permissible. Most of these pertain to internal military functions or civil disorders rather than routine law enforcement

efforts and fall into three categories. The first involves actions that are taken for the primary purpose of furthering a military or foreign affairs function of the United States. This includes actions under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, investigations for a DOD administrative purpose (e.g., in connection with an alleged contractor fraud), and actions related to a Commander's inherent power to maintain law and order on his installation.

The secondary category involves emergency action to prevent loss of life or wanton destruction of public property or to preserve government functions when civilian authorities cannot take adequate action. The final category includes the statutes that provide express authority for direct military participation in specified types of law enforcement activities of other civil agencies--primarily situations that are not likely to arise in the course of routine requests from civilian officials. These include, for example, actions in support of certain customs laws and assistance to civilian agencies with respect to crimes against the President, Members of Congress, and other dignitaries....

The types of assistance described are subject to a specific constraint under both the new law and the DOD directive. Assistance to civilian agencies is not permitted if such action could affect adversely national security or military preparedness. This, of course, is not to be used as a shield to avoid providing assistance when the impact on the national defense effort would be minimal.

At the same time, it is a reminder that the mission of the Department of Defense is a national defense, and that Congress has made it an express requirement that we not compromise that mission in the provision of assistance. The primary role in assessing the impact of requests for assistance will rest with the military departments and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (4:6-9).

Department of Defense Directive 5525.5 outlined the regulations for the new support role to the civilian community and required that departmental and service heads initiate the various internal and external planning and coordinative efforts. The Air Force complied with the new directive by implementing Air Force Regulation (AFR) 55-35, "Operations Support to Civilian Law Enforcement Officials," on 31 January 1983.

It provides uniform policies and procedures to be followed concerning authorized support provided to federal, state, and local civilian law enforcement agencies. It also specifies limitations and restrictions on use of Air Force members (military or civilian) and organizations at all levels of command. This regulation applies to all Air Force members, military and civilian, and all organizations at all levels of command. It does not apply or restrict the normal and traditional Air Force law enforcement responsibilities and activities, as in enforcement under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (12:1).

UNDERWAY

In a 24 February 1982 memorandum, the Vice President tasked the DOD with five immediate actions.

- (1) An E2-C surveillance aircraft as soon as possible to provide 12-hour per day coverage, seven days a week, to detect aircraft entering Florida illegally (Customs has only requested five hours a day, five days a week).
- (2) A US Air Force AWACS aircraft to provide the same coverage as the E2-C when the E2-C is not available.
- (3) The use of selected US Navy ships in the Caribbean area to interdict suspicious ships transiting the Windward Passage. US Coast Guard teams would be embarked to conduct the search and seizure.
- (4) The use of OV-1 aircraft with side-looking radar to monitor the Florida coastline.
- (5) The use of all air defense radars along the Florida coast to be netted with other available radars to detect aircraft penetrating illegally (24:11).

The Vice President gave a deadline of three weeks to the DOD on deployment of the E2-C aircraft.

By memorandum dated 2 March 1982, Deputy Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci informed the Service Secretaries and the Joint Chiefs of Staff of their new responsibilities, stating: "I wish to emphasize to you my concern with being as responsive to the Task Force's requirements as the constraints of our primary mission will truly allow" (24:11).

The US Air Force became an active member in the war on illegal drugs when it was tasked to back up the Navy E2-C operation. This participation commenced in May 1982 utilizing E-3A AWACS aircraft.

During this same time frame, the Air Staff approved a letter of agreement between the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Headquarters Tactical Air Command (TAC), and the US Customs Service that granted Customs agents access to all 46 Joint Surveillance System radars. Access was also granted to the Aero-stat radar system at Cudjoe Key, Florida (to be discussed in Chapter Three). Prior to the implementation of the Task Force, the Air Force provided information from the Southeast Region Operations Control Center (ROCC) at Tyndall AFB, Florida, to the Customs Command, Control, Communications (C³) facility in Miami, Florida. Whenever the Air Force was unable to identify a slow moving aircraft, Customs was notified and given the same information provided Air Force interceptors on unidentified aircraft. At other times, information is provided directly to Customs.

While the above actions were implemented prior to the publication of AFR 55-35, they were directly approved by the Secretary of the Air Force and were effective until the new regulation could be formulated. With the implementation of AFR 55-35, the request for Air Force assistance by civilian authorities took on a more structured framework. Agencies that request US Air Force assistance consist of the US Customs Service, Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the US Coast Guard, and other federal, state, and local

law enforcement agencies. When a request is made for assistance, it will follow one of two routes: the first of these is for the requesting agency to contact the supporting unit directly. If the request can be accomplished during a valid Air Force training or operational mission, it can be approved by the unit commander and no other action is necessary (monitoring and communicating the movement of air and sea traffic incidental to a valid Air Force mission does not constitute use of Air Force personnel for civilian law enforcement purposes) (12:3). However, if the request should require dedicated assets for the interdiction operation, then higher approval is necessary. Secondly, it can be initiated either through request by the supporting Air Force unit to the Anti-Drug Support Branch, HQ USAF/XOORC, which is located in the office of the Deputy Director for Operations and Plans, or as occurs in most cases, the requester contacts the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System (NNBIS) who in turn contacts the Anti-Drug Support Branch.

The NNBIS, formed by Vice President Bush on 17 June 1983, coordinated the efforts of different federal law enforcement agencies plus the DOD to interdict the flow of narcotics into the United States. NNBIS is not an agency or a service, but a system for guiding law enforcement efforts on a national level. (See Figure 1) Six NNBIS regional centers have been established throughout the United States. These centers are responsible to the Vice President and are coordinated, at that level, by the Vice President's Chief of Staff. The centers, located in Miami, New Orleans, El Paso, Long Beach, Chicago, and New York, have representatives from the intelligence community and the military, as well as from the federal interdiction agencies. Geographical areas of responsibility for the respective NNBIS centers are shown in Figure 2. The regional center structure and functions are shown in Figure 3. Each regional center has either a US Coast Guard or US Customs Service

Executive Board

The Vice President
Secretary of State
Secretary of the Treasury
Secretary of Defense
The Attorney General
Secretary of Transportation
Counselor to the President
Director of Central Intelligence Agency
Director, Drug Abuse Policy Office

Coordination Board

Chief of Staff to the Vice President, Chairman
Secretary of the Army
Secretary of the Navy
Secretary of the Air Force
Commandant of the Coast Guard
Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division
Director, FBI
Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters
Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Enforcement
Commissioner of Customs
Commissioner, Immigration and Naturalization Service
Administrator, Drug Enforcement Agency
Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration
Acting Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms
Deputy Director, Drug Abuse Policy Office

Figure 1. Members of the NNBIS (28:6)

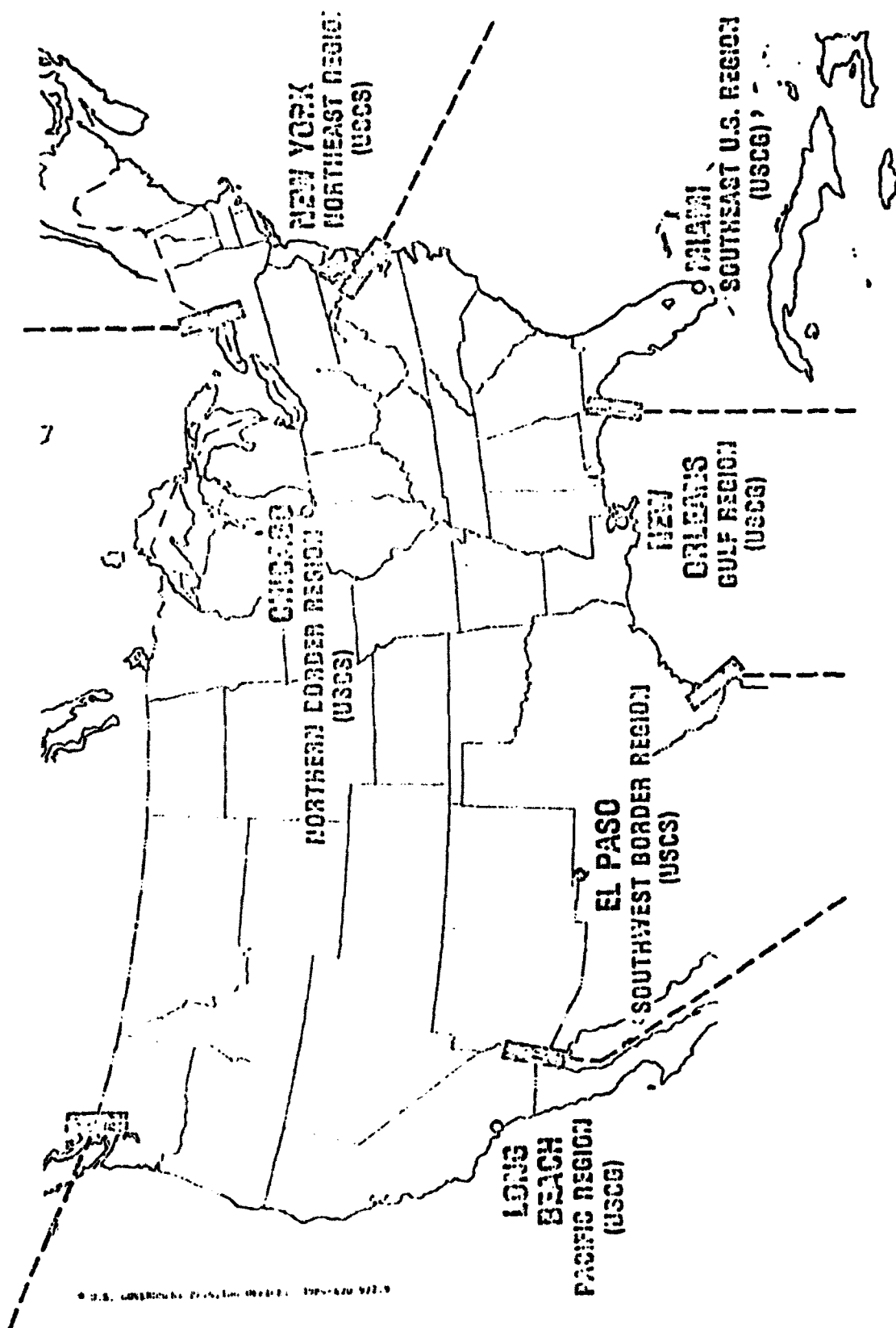


Figure 2. NNBIS Regional Center Organization (12:33)

- COORDINATOR
- DEPUTY COORDINATOR
- INTELLIGENCE COORDINATOR

FUNCTIONS	
OPS INFO CENTER	AIR OPS & RADAR
USCG	CUSTOMS
CUSTOMS	USCG
DEA	FAA
INS	DOD
DOD	
USA	
USN	
USAF	
USMC	

OPS INFO CENTER	INTELLIGENCE	AIR OPS & RADAR
USCG	CIA	CUSTOMS
CUSTOMS	DEA	USCG
DEA	FBI	FAA
INS	INS	DOD
DOD	CUSTOMS	
USA	USCG	
USN	DIA	
USAF		
USMC		

Figure 3. NNBIS Regional Centers/Areas of Responsibility (12:32)

official as coordinator and a deputy coordinator from the opposite agency. The intelligence coordinator is generally a Customs official, Drug enforcement Agency representative, or Central Intelligence Agency agent. Air Force and other uniformed services representatives are assigned to the operations information center to provide expert operational advice on resources capable of supporting civil law enforcement agencies incidental to normal operations and training. These individuals also assist in canvassing US Air Force units within the NNBIS region area of responsibility for support, when requested. The air operations and radar functions are displaced at Custom Service employment airfields and US Air Force air defense radar facilities, respectively. For example, the Miami and New Orleans NNBIS center radar operation is located at Tyndall AFB Region Operations Control Center (ROCC); the El Paso and Long Beach NNBIS center radar function is located at the March AFB ROCC.

The NNBIS regional centers receive much of the air and sea drug smuggling intelligence from the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), operated by DEA and jointly staffed by several law enforcement agencies, which serves as a central point for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating drug smuggling-related information. The primary objective of EPIC is to provide a complete and accurate intelligence picture of drug movement by land, sea, and air throughout the world. Major emphasis is focused on trafficking organizations whose narcotics are destined to the United States. It is anticipated that the majority of the requests for US Air Force resources support from participating NNBIS civil law enforcement agencies will be to collate sea and air movement intelligence data provided by EPIC.

Procedures for submitting and processing NNBIS-coordinated Custom Service and Coast Guard requests for information gathering assistance incidental to US Air Force operational and training missions are prescribed in memoranda of agreement between the US Air Force and these agencies (12:31)

When a request is forwarded to the Anti-Drug Support Branch, it must be passed through the major command (MAJCOM) or separate operating agency (SOA) that will provide support. The MAJCOM or SOA Operations Center will contact the office of primary responsibility (e.g., Deputy for Operations [DO] for Aircraft, Deputy for Personnel [DP] for personnel) to accomplish coordination within the MAJCOM or SOA. After the coordination is completed at

the MAJCOM or SOA level the request and appropriate recommendations will be sent to the Air Force Operations Center.

The Air Force Operations Center will contact the HQ USAF/XOORC point of contact to coordinate the action within headquarters. When the HQ USAF/XOORC point of contact has coordinated the request, he or she will contact the Secretary of the Air Force/Director for Program Integration (SAF/MIZ), brief the situation, and provide a recommendation. The SAF/MIZ will coordinate the request within the Secretariat and with the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Director of DOD Task Force on Drug Enforcement (ASD(FM&P)DE), as appropriate. Once the final decision has been made, SAF/MIZ will contact and relay the approval or disapproval decision. The HQ USAF/XOORC point of contact will relay this information back to the Air Force Operations Center which will down-channel the approval or disapproval through the MAJCOM or SOA operations center and tasking to the unit (12:4) (See Figure 4).

Quarterly, the NNBIS White House convenes a meeting of NNBIS regional representatives to coordinate and consolidate support requests for the coming quarter. As these are somewhat more complex than the day-to-day requests, they follow a different approval procedure. The combined consolidated requests are sent from NNBIS White House to the Secretary of Defense. The request is then passed to ASD(FM&P)DE for staffing. There, the requests are screened and farmed out to the services for a determination as to whether the requested support can be provided (30:-).

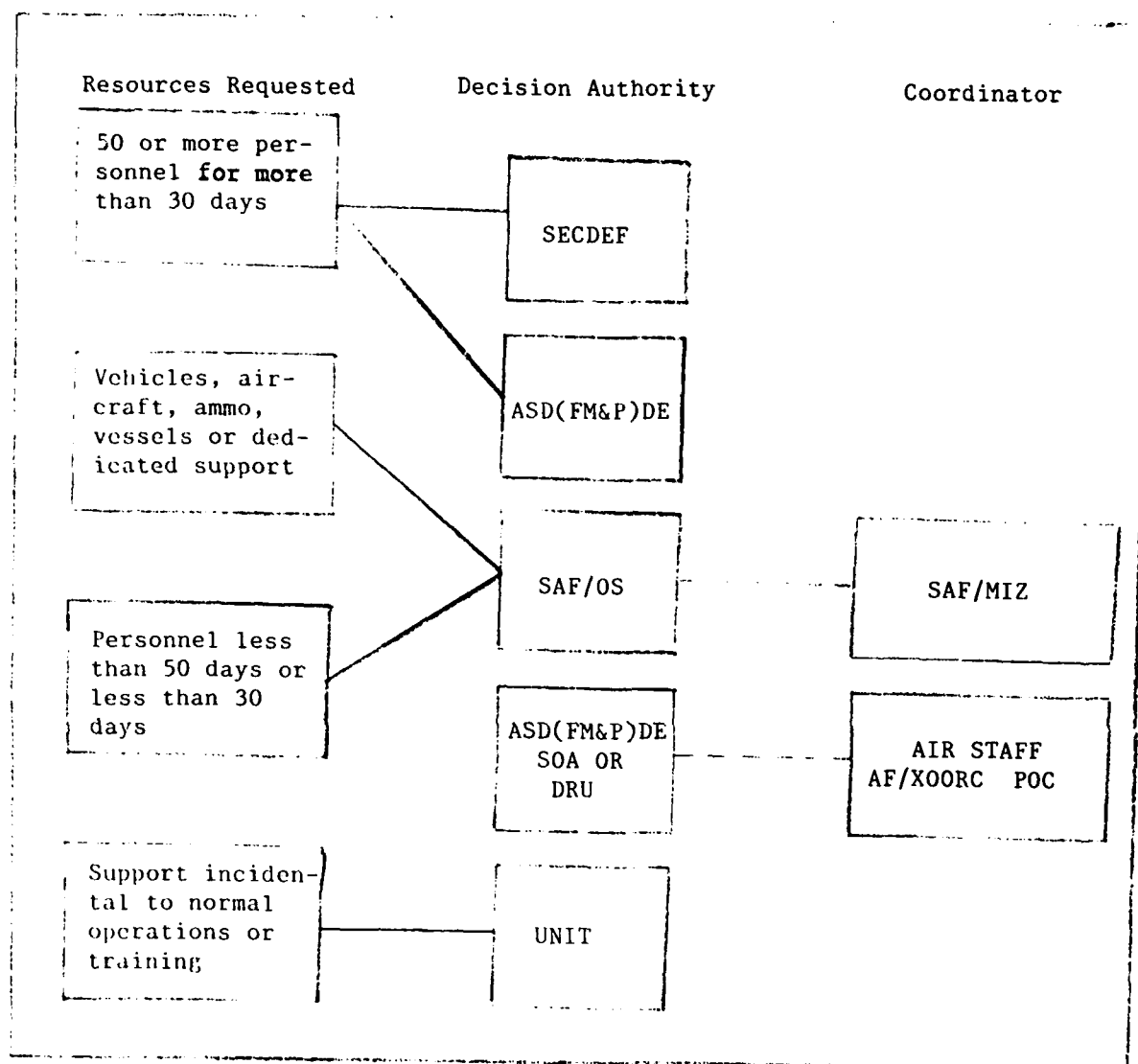


Figure 4. Approval and Coordination Authorities for Operations Support (12:29)

The Anti-Drug Support Branch processes the support requests sent to the Air Force and through coordination with the various MAJCOMs, determines what level of support can be provided within the constraints of the Posse Comitatus Law.

Once the requests have been staffed, a memorandum to ASD(FM&P)DE is prepared for the principal Deputy Assistant to the SECDEF (SAF/MID) signature outlining what support the Air Force can provide and what requests must be denied.

The ASD(FM&P)DE consolidates the service replies and then responds back to NNBIS White House as to the level of support DOD can provide for the coming quarter (30:-).

The aforementioned procedures have been utilized since early 1983 and have gone through minor changes since that time. It is these procedures that free Air Force assets to be instrumental in the interdiction of illegal drugs into the United States.

Memorandum of Agreements (MOA)

By January 1984 the US Air Force had entered into MOAs with both the US Coast Guard and US Custom Service. The purpose of the agreements is to establish procedures for submitting and processing requests from the Coast Guard and Custom Service for information gathering which is incidental to Air Force operational and training missions. The MOA also gives guidelines on procedures for providing support on a dedicated and/or recurring/continuous basis. Finally, it established procedures for reporting information that was collected during the normal course of Air Force operations that were not directly related to specific Coast Guard or Custom Service requests (13:1-2).

Chapter Two

THE KEY PLAYERS

This chapter is devoted to the two Air Force organizational units that supply the majority of support to the drug interdiction program. The 552d Air Warning and Control Division (AWACD) located at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma, is the senior unit involved in drug interdiction. Prior to the organization of the South Florida Task Force, the 552d assisted the US Customs Service as a surveillance platform during training missions over the Gulf of Mexico and along the US/Mexico border. This surveillance agreement operated as an "over-the-shoulder operation" by Customs personnel flying with E-3A aircraft on a non-interference basis. This surveillance operation began in August of 1978 and lasted until 11 January 1981, when the officers of the US Coast Guard Tactical Air Section were officially transferred from Tinker AFB. During this time frame, Customs officers flew on 129 E-3A missions (8:1-2) with 2 assists being credited in the apprehension and seizure of illegal drug smugglers. The Customs assistance was terminated in January 1981 due to overseas AWACS deployments. It should be noted that no E-3A missions were ever dedicated to the Customs Service (thus remaining within the law of Posse Comitatus). The E-3A flew scheduled training sorties in areas where the Customs Service had an interest, but the orbit areas were based on US Air Force requirements and the time of day was

not always the best for detection of illegal drug smugglers for the Customs Service.

The second key unit involved in the drug interdiction process is the 20th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) of the 1st Special Operations Wing (SOW) located at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The 20 SOS' role was to be in combined support with the Customs Service, State Department, US Coast Guard, and the Bahamian Government.

552d AIR WARNING AND CONTROL WING

With the passage of the revised Posse Comitatus Act and implementation of the Vice President's South Florida Task Force, the Air Force role expanded into a more active phase when it was tasked to back up the Navy E-2 operation supporting Customs. Active E-3A participation in the task force commenced in May 1982. Scheduled E-3A flights were made available to Customs on a case-by-case basis. Beginning in June 1982, the E-3A monthly flying schedule was made available to the Customs Service. Customs then selected E-3A missions that were flying in areas and at times they deemed were most favorable for interdicting drug smugglers.

In July 1982, 25 E-3A missions were offered and Customs utilized 5. One intercept was conducted on a multiple aircraft track of interest in the Texas area. Also, beginning in July, Customs reinitiated assignment of personnel to Tinker AFB on a temporary basis. When available, Customs agents were scheduled on board the E-3A for missions of interest to them (26:116-117).

By January 1984, designated Customs sorties were being scheduled at the quarterly fighter scheduling conference held at Langley AFB, Virginia. Regional NNBIS requests were made and between four to six sorties per month would be designated for Customs support. During other scheduled E-3A training missions within the Continental US, NNBIS would identify "Customs Watch" sorties and E-3A crews would provide incidental surveillance support to the NNBIS Gulf regional office in New Orleans. In August 1984, two Customs officers were stationed full-time at Tinker AFB for the sole purpose of flying on designated Customs sorties (16:12). (See Tables 1&2)

1ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING
AND
OPERATION BAT

In the early part of 1983, the Air Force was asked to expand its participation in its drug interdiction efforts through a cooperative effort between the governments of the United States and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. It was a well-known fact that a tremendous amount of illegal narcotics were funneled into the US via the Bahama Islands (5:5). Therefore, an effort to cut the flow of drugs before they reached the US was recommended by both countries. The Drug Enforcement Administration Narcotics Attache at the American Embassy in Nassau conceived an operation that would hopefully stem this flow of drugs. It would be known as Operation BAT (Bahamas and Turks). This project was integrated into the South Florida Joint Task Force under the general direction of a US Coast Guard Admiral. A total of 17 federal agencies were involved in Operation BAT (5:5).

Designated Sortie Results:	<u>1st</u> <u>Qtr</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>
Flights scheduled	18	12	13	14
Flights flown	16	10	12	8
Flights aborted	1	0	0	2
Flights cancelled	2	2	1	4
Total station time	90.9	56.3	64.3	38.6
Total flight time	135.3	93.3	113.3	69.7
Total sightings	12	6	9	7
Customs intercepts	5	0	8	4
Customs Watch Results:				
Total flights flown	111	122	100	100
Total sightings	9	5	10	7
Customs intercepts	1	0	10	7
Known arrests	1	0	1	0
	(14:2-3)	(15:2-3)	(16:2)	(17:2-3)

Table 1. E-3A Activity in Support of US Customs Service: 1984

Designated Sortie Results:	<u>1st</u> <u>Qtr</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>
Flights scheduled	18	17	15
Flights flown	17	9	11
Flights aborted	0	4	3
Flights cancelled	1	4	1
Station time	89.3	48.2	66.2
Total sightings	233	42	9
Identified non-suspect	212	40	9
Customs intercepts	75	25	5
Customs Watch Results:			
Flights flown	83	77	67
Total sightings	0	1	0
Identified non-suspect	0	0	0
Customs intercepts	0	0	0
Known arrests	0	0	0
(18:3-4) (19:3-4) (20:7-8)			

Table 2. E-3A Activity in Support of US Customs Service: 1985

After approval by both governments, BAT was directed by the Drug Enforcement Administration, with support from the United States Customs Service, State Department, US Coast Guard, and Bahamian agencies. Due to a lack of sufficient DEA helicopters the US Air Force became involved on 1 May 1983. The Air Force designated the 20 SOS of the 1 SOW for participation. In order to enable the DOD resources to participate in this operation, the United States Attorney General and the Secretary of Defense signed a declaration of an emergency situation (5:5-6).

Initially the 20 SOS was tasked for 2 UH-1N aircraft and 18 aircrewmen for 1 month, but this period was later extended several times (5:5).

The mission consisted of providing tactical mobility for armed Bahamian Police Strike Force Teams similar to American Strategic Weapon and Tactics (SWAT) teams. Air Force personnel could not make arrests, conduct searches or seizures, or interdict vehicles or vessels as they had no law enforcement authority. The 20 SOS utilized their UH-1Ns to transport Bahamian police to the scene of drug activity so they could seize contraband and evidence of illegal drug activity and arrest the smugglers.

The geography of the Bahamas area made this a challenging and often frustrating assignment. The Bahamas consisted of 700 sparsely-populated islands located in over 100,000 square miles of the Caribbean Sea. This ideal environment for drug smuggling also had the advantage of its nearness to the United States (7:290).

Most of the drug dealing aircraft flew from Colombia, refueled in Jamaica, then flew around Cuba directly to Florida or to the Bahamas via the Windward Passage. Large shipments were airdropped or airlanded in the Bahamas, and they were subsequently moved by boats to Florida (5:6).

By high speed boat, the trip required less than an hour. Boats evolved as the primary transport replacing aircraft as these became more vulnerable to interception. Despite the advantage the druggers had by virtue of being able to pick the time, place, and mode of transport of the marijuana and cocaine from Colombia through the Bahamas, authorities became increasingly successful in their efforts (7:290). (See Table 3)

Early in Operation BAT, radar emerged as a primary tool for identifying druggier aircraft. The Customs Service operated three radars located at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Andros Island in the Bahamas; and Miami, Florida.

After aircraft from Colombia refueled in Jamaica, they flew the Windward Passage to avoid overflying Cuba. Radar operators at Guantanamo Bay picked them up and applied a profile of a low, slow aircraft with no radar transponder and no filed flight plan (7:290).

When radar identified a likely target, Guantanamo alerted Customs who in turn scrambled an aircraft to conduct a covert air surveillance. They looked for a specific profile such as a crew of two with the rear seat removed and packages visible unless the windows were covered. The Customs officials checked the tail numbers of these planes with a listing of known suspected

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985*</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Hours Flown	966.5	1,151.1	885.8	3,003.4
Sorties Flown	968	1,086	759	2,813
Infiltration Missions	38	53	+	
Patrols	115	178	+	
Individuals Apprehended	60	71	42	173
Cocaine Seized	1,716 lbs	2,322 lbs	4,175 lbs	8,213 lbs
Marijuana Seized	165,870 lbs	57,097 lbs	31,338 lbs	254,305 lbs
Vessels Seized	9	11	9	29
Aircraft Seized	11	17	10	38
Aircraft Crashed During Chase	5	1	+	
Vehicles Seized	4	8	1	13
Weapons Seized	12	2	2	16
	(7:303)	(7:308)	(6:25)	
*Thru September 1985				
+ No data available for 1985				

Table 3. Operation BAT Results

drug hauling aircraft compiled by the El Paso Information Center (EPIC)--the Joint Agency Drug Smuggling Intelligence Center (7:291). If the aircraft under surveillance were considered suspicious, then the DEA launched fixed-wing aircraft from the Bahama Islands and/or US Air Force helicopters with Bahamian police (strike force personnel) aboard. Customs had no law enforcement authority in the Bahamas, therefore, they were not utilized. When the US Air Force helicopters were launched on interdiction missions, they were equipped with "POLICE" signs on the side of the helicopters (5:7).

The 20 SOS forward operating location operated helicopters out of the area of the Police College in Nassau. These UH-1Ns were specifically modified with high frequency radios, Omega navigational equipment, and sensors. The aircrews operated with night vision goggles when appropriate. The commander, operations officer, two four-man crews, five maintenance personnel, and a fuel truck driver lived in contract apartments in Nassau. They were provided five compact rental cars and a fuel truck for support. They were located in Nassau due to the proximity of the American Embassy and the Bahamian police. One crew chief and a war readiness spares kit (WRSK) specialist were quartered at the United States Navy's Atlantic Underwater Test and Evaluation Center (AUTEC) on Andros Island. The WRSK and other maintenance facilities were located there (5:7).

The DEA personnel maintained close liaison with the US Air Force personnel. Two DEA agents were assigned at the US Embassy in Nassau, and three other agents were on temporary duty with

Operation BAT. The DEA people manned the operations center, conducted joint planning with the Air Force, flew as law enforcement advisors to the Bahamian police, and acted as liaison between the police and the Air Force aircrews. The DEA maintained two light fixed-wing aircraft and provided four pilots to support BAT. They would have preferred to own the helicopters, but the US Air Force provided convincing arguments that the Air Force could better maintain the helicopters (5:7).

Working against the drug dealers provided the BAT crews with training very close to combat conditions. The opposition was unpredictable, and new tactics and strategies were encouraged. It was necessary to work and communicate jointly with other "friendly forces" (DEA, Customs, Bahamian Police, US Coast Guard, and US Navy) (5:8).

The aircrews faced potentially hazardous flying duty due to the geographical make-up of the BAT area, the limited radar and radio control, and inherent maintenance difficulties in operating from a deployed location (7:291). The potential flying hazard embodied in Operation BAT became a reality on 9 January 1984. After over eight months of mishap-free operation, tragedy struck in the Bahamas. At 2108L Eastern Standard Time, a BAT UH-1N experienced mechanical failure and ditched in the ocean approximately 10 nautical miles northeast of Nassau, Bahamas. Of the four-man crew and five passengers aboard, three crewmen and two passengers were missing and ultimately declared to be fatalities. One crewman and three passengers, however, were rescued. One American DEA agent and one Bahamian policeman also perished (7:292).

The accident victims and aircraft had been operating on a mission involving Operation BAT. A DC-3 aircraft had been seen jettisoning marijuana bales in the ocean and upon landing at Freeport airport on Grand Bahama was interdicted by the Bahamian strike force. It was during the return flight from Freeport to Nassau that the accident occurred. The loss of the aircraft, property, and injuries resulted in costs in excess of \$1.5 million (7:292).

At the time this historical review was written, the above accident had been the only major incident during Operation BAT involving US Air Force aircraft.

Near the close of December 1984, an incident occurred which emphasized a potential for complicating Operation BAT efforts significantly. It had happened before, but not often. A loaded smuggler aircraft being pursued in Bahamian airspace by a US Customs aircraft flew into Cuban airspace after apparently missing an airdrop and subsequently escaped capture. If Cuban authorities allowed drug smugglers to fly in their airspace or allowed boats to operate in Cuban waters, controlling the flow of drugs into Florida would be more difficult. Without the use of Cuban airspace, smugglers were forced into the BAT operations area (7:337-338).

Like any new type of operation, Operation BAT encountered some problems. Some of the conflicts or misunderstandings related to relationships among the various US agencies involved in Operation BAT. Each was interested in building its own organization and budget requirements. Some conflicts existed

between the US agencies and the Bahamian government. From the US point of view, its forces were aiding the Bahamians to get rid of drug smugglers and illegal activities, but from the Bahamian point of view, they were aiding the US in getting rid of drugs which were illegally entering the United States, the market area for nearly all of the drugs passing through the Bahamas (5:8).

The 20 SOS was experiencing some internal difficulties as well. Although Operation BAT provided excellent training, it wasn't necessarily the type of training required for currency in special operations missions. Although air rescue crews were relieving the 20th aircrews on a temporary basis, it took time to train the rescue people to do the BAT mission. The 20th aircrews were on temporary duty from their home station at Hurlburt Field for periods exceeding 90 days at a time, causing undesirable effects on families. The UH-1Ns were unavailable for participation in special operations exercises, and aircrews were not able to complete upgrade training (5:9).

Special operations personnel clearly believed that the UH-1N portion of the 20 SOS was under stress due to Operation BAT and the continuing split operation between Hurlburt and the Bahamas (5:9). They sought relief from this "temporary" responsibility which was beginning to appear to be a long-term responsibility. Therefore, on 1 October 1985, the US Air Force role in Operation BAT was turned over to the newly organized 48th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS) at Homestead AFB, Florida, and the 20th Special Operations Squadron returned to Hurlburt Field.

Operation BAT successes pointed up the high profit from smuggling drugs and Operation BAT failures demonstrated how

difficult it was to win the war on drugs. The large and diverse geographic area previously identified, the limited resources available to employ in the war, the short time required to transfer drugs from aircraft to boats, the largely reactive posture of the authorities, and the inexact intelligence regarding drug activities combined in various degrees to provide smugglers with an almost overwhelming advantage. However, Operation BAT won a number of "skirmishes" which helped ease personnel hardships and compensate to some degree for the hazards of the duty (7:302).

The statistics in Table 3, as provided in yearly recaps, display a picture of the BAT activity. The picture is painted in terms of hours and sorties flown, in types of missions, in drugs, aircraft, vessels, smugglers, and weapons captured. Although casualties in the drug war are not addressed in the table, death was a constant potential on both sides. The Operation BAT losses have been discussed. Sorties averaged approximately an hour each and the total for the calendar year 1984 for hours and sorties amounted to over 1000 in each category. The cocaine seized during 13 operations amounted to over 1,300 pounds in 1984 and the marijuana seized in 54 operations added up to almost 30 tons during that same period. The count for the year of marijuana dumped in the hope of avoiding capture with drug evidence approached 500 bales. For the entire BAT operation through 1984, over 2 tons of cocaine and over 100 tons of marijuana were seized by authorities. However, the loss of these drugs, along with the loss of 20 vessels, 34 aircraft, 12 vehicles, and miscellaneous equipment failed to halt the flow of cocaine and marijuana through the Bahamas and into the United States (7:302, 309).

Chapter Three

THE OTHER PLAYERS

23RD AIR DIVISION

The 23d Air Division utilizes two surveillance assets that have proved highly successful in the interdiction of illegal drugs. The first of these surveillance systems is the Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS), alias "Fat Albert." It consists of a 250,000-cubic foot aero-dynamically shaped balloon (slightly larger than a Goodyear blimp) that can survey more than 70,000 square miles of surface area (see Figure 5). A thousand-pound radar attached to its belly picks up targets up to 150 miles away. A 300-pound generator, fueled from a 100-gallon tank, powers the \$1.3 million radar platform for around-the-clock surveillance (1:10-11).

Air defense surveillance is the main purpose of the TARS, but it also relays information to US Customs Service agents on aircraft attempting to sneak under land-based radar coverage (1:10). There are presently four TARS balloons in operation. The oldest system is located at Cudjoe Key AFS, Florida, and consists of two balloons, the second system is located at Cape Canaveral, Florida, and the third in the Grand Bahamas which is operated solely by the US Customs Service. Each site, other than that located in the Bahamas, has a complement of Customs and US

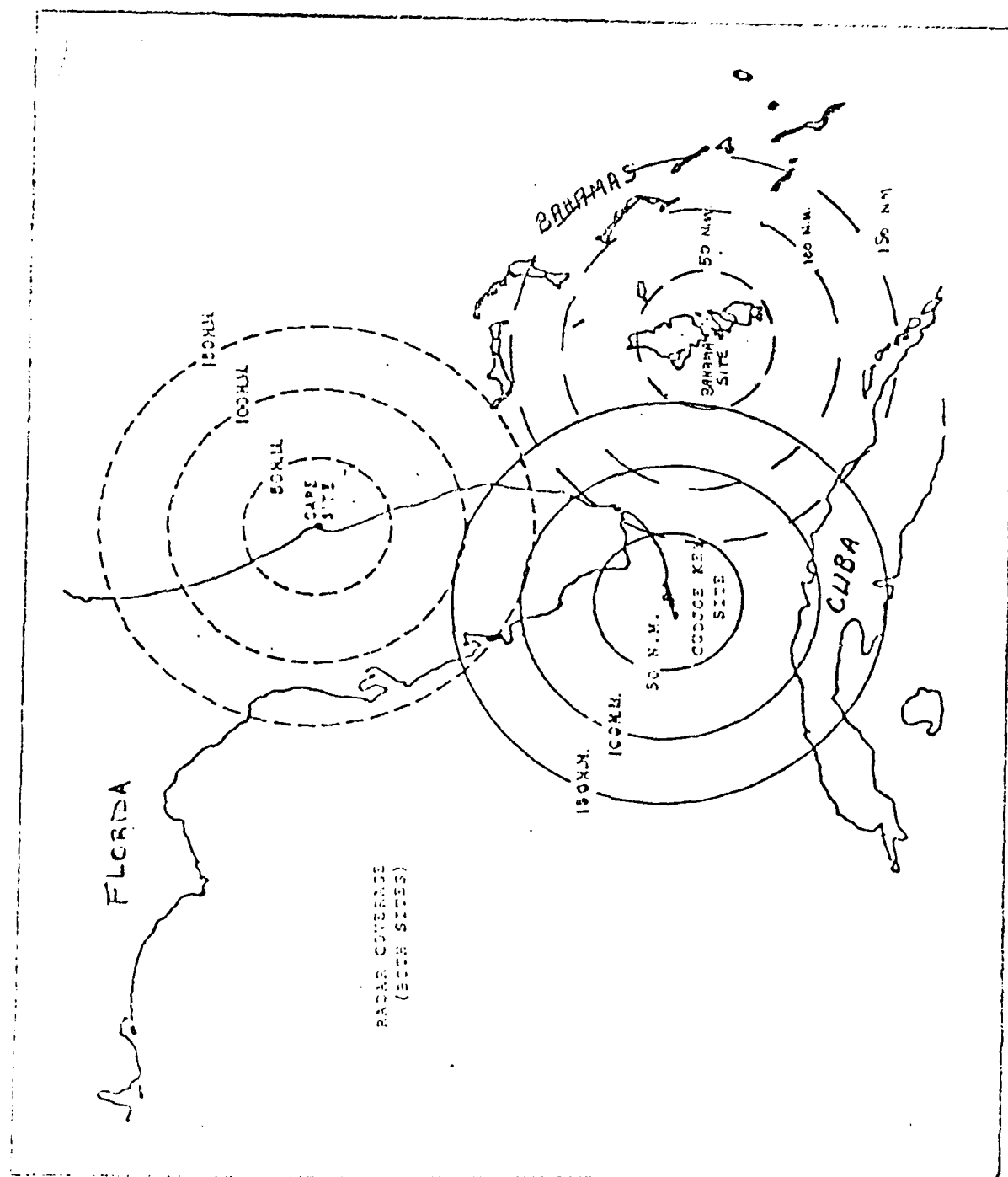


Figure 5. Aerostat Surveillance Coverage (11:181)

Coast Guard personnel who assist Air Force members in monitoring aircraft.

An on board computer telemeters 40 million bits of data each second to the ground station located directly below each of the TARS balloons (1:11), to the Customs Service Command Center in Miami (27:6), and to the 23d Air Division/Southeast Region Operations Control Center (SE ROCC) at Tyndall AFB, Florida.

The ROCC, the second 23d Air Division asset utilized in the drug war, interrogates targets identified by the TARS and its other surveillance radar systems. If a target cannot be identified, ROCC officials decide whether Air Force interceptors or Customs aircraft will scramble to investigate. An airspeed of 180 knots is generally used to decide what intercept method will be utilized. Below 180 knots a Customs aircraft will be launched while above 180 knots requires an Air Force intercept.

In January 1983, three US Customs officers were assigned to the SE ROCC (10:viii). Their official duty was to coordinate the ROCC and Customs Service in the drug interdiction program. An additional commitment was to raise the level of consciousness among ROCC scope watchers to be especially alert for types of tracks that were of high interest to Customs (11:60). Since 1983, between 9 and 20 suspicious tracks (aircraft flight paths) are spotted each month by the ROCC (17:2).

Several assists by the 23d Air Division TARS and ROCC have been recorded within the past two years, resulting in the seizure of significant amounts of illegal drugs and the arrest of traffickers. For example, in August 1984, ROCC personnel were

directly responsible for the seizure of 619 pounds of cocaine with a street value of approximately \$84 million (11:61). A string of successful interdictions in Florida has caused the drug runners to deviate from their long favored routes and to increase activity in the mid and western Gulf Coast region.

26TH AIR DIVISION

The 26th Air Division Southwest Region Operations Control Center (SW ROCC) provides routine surveillance information to Customs on suspicious tracks approaching the southwest United States, much as the SE ROCC does at Tyndall AFB. The SW ROCC is located at March AFB, California. Both ROCC's have allowed for the use of one or two Operator Display Control (ODC) console's by US Customs Service operators on a non-interference basis. This was initiated on 23 January 1984 (14:9).

The SW ROCC is primarily concerned with the US/Mexican border and its vast area utilized by drug smugglers. It is not uncommon to have 150 suspicious tracks during a 30-day time period. In June 1984, the SW ROCC identified six illegal entries which were tracked for intercept. Five of those escaped and 1 crashed resulting in the confiscation of 1000 pounds of marijuana (15:8).

24TH AND 25TH AIR DIVISIONS

The 24th Air Division, Griffiss AFB, New York, and the 25th Air Division, McChord AFB, Washington, began drug interdiction surveillance on 13 April 1984. This was requested by the New York and Chicago regional NNBIS offices due to the increased drug

activities along the US northern tier. They were tasked to collect data on traffic volumes from specified Canadian cities along with watching for suspicious incoming tracks.

As of this date, no assists have been made by either ROCC although numerous intercepts have been directed on suspected air and sea targets. All intercepts have occurred utilizing US Air Force aircraft (15:8-9).

53D WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON

In early 1983 the 53d Weather Reconnaissance Squadron from Keesler AFB, Mississippi, began supporting the illegal drug interdiction effort. Its tasking came from the National Narcotic Board Interdiction Regional Office in New Orleans, Louisiana. Its support consisted of sea surveillance while flying over the Gulf of Mexico and Yucatan Channel on weather reconnaissance missions. Support was administered on a non-interference basis with primary mission requirements and involved roughly one flight per week. The 53rd has met with good success and has been given high praise by those civilian agencies it has supported (23:65).

67TH TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE WING

On 3 February 1984, the 12th and 91st Tactical Reconnaissance Squadrons of the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing (TRW), Bergstrom AFB, Texas, began supporting the drug interdiction effort. It had been determined in late 1983 that the RF-4C aircraft could be a valuable asset in the surveillance and reconnaissance of remote airstrips and the territorial boundaries of the US. By utilizing pinpoint photography, the RF-4C could achieve excellent reconnaissance of harbors and ports along the Gulf Coast and remote airfields in west Texas. Tasking was

received from the El Paso NNBIS office. During a regularly scheduled mission these targets would be scanned and the photographic information would be passed to the requesting civilian agency. No missions were solely scheduled to support the interdiction effort (9:27-28). The 67 TRW continues to support the effort with new targets being identified on an as-needed basis. Approximately eight targets per quarter are selected by the El Paso NNBIS office for photographic reconnaissance (17:10).

STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND

In 1983 Strategic Air Command B-52s began supplying information to the interdiction effort while flying Operation Busy Observer missions. The operation began in the mid 1970s as a joint Air Force/Navy program. A Busy Observer mission consists of a flight of two B-52s, which search a large block of ocean. Their mission is to locate and identify all surface traffic within their assigned operating area. To accomplish this, one aircraft stays at high altitude and sweeps the surface with its radar. The second aircraft descends to 2000 feet, and visually identifies the surface contacts detected by the aircraft at altitude. Any suspicious looking vessels are then identified and the information passed to the nearest National Narcotic Board Interdiction regional office. An average of seven Busy Observer flights each month report suspicious sightings to the interdiction agency (23:65).

APG - 63 RADAR SYSTEM

The inadequate radar systems that have been installed in Customs' aircraft have recently been updated in order to meet Customs' needs. The Air Force and the Navy, working in conjunction with the Customs Service and Lockheed, have configured a P-3A Orion aircraft with an Air Force F-15 (APG-63) fire control radar system. If the radar proves effective, up to six more P-3As could be similarly configured (2:20). Reimbursement to the Air Force will be made once the radar is evaluated as being effective.

DIRECT REIMBURSABLE SUPPORT

The following is a list of base support activities, provided by the Air Force, that are reimbursed by civilian agencies.

1. McClellan AFB, California: provides the California Highway Patrol with hangar space and fuel.
2. Kelly AFB, Texas: provides the US Customs Service with base facilities for its aircraft.
3. Homestead AFB, Florida: supplies the Customs Service with base facilities for its aircraft.
4. MacDill AFB, Florida: supplies the Customs Service with base facilities for its aircraft.
5. Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona: supplies the Customs Service with base facilities for its aircraft along with storage of approximately 50 confiscated aircraft (23:53).

49TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING

In June 1985 the FBI requested the 49th Tactical Fighter Wing, Holloman AFB, New Mexico, to assist in identifying local area sites with potential for use as drug smuggling airstrips.

This is to be an ongoing operation utilizing local training sorties on a non-interference basis. A working group was formed by the FBI to solicit inputs from all pilots of the 49th (19:1-2).

Chapter Four

ANALYSIS

RESULTS

Prior to the amendment of the Posse Comitatus Act in 1981, the Air Force role in interdiction of illegal drugs was minimal. Participation consisted of an occasional flight in an E-3A AWACS by a Customs official or the tracking of suspicious aircraft by the ROCC at Tyndall AFB. There existed no formal structure or agreements between the Air Force and civilian law enforcement agencies. No records were kept as to interdiction assists by the Air Force; thus, it was very difficult to determine if its efforts were fruitful.

With the change of administration in 1980 and a new emphasis placed on interdiction, narcotics enforcement entered a new era. Not only were civilian law enforcement agencies and the criminal judicial system beefed up, but the entrance of the military as a key player was initiated.

It is very difficult to determine effectiveness of the military in combating the illegal drug flow. Detailed records of taskings and subsequent assists in apprehensions have only been kept since late 1983. As the figures indicate that accompany this review, the assistance to civilian agencies has increased dramatically since the Air Force entered the scene. A recent Government Audit Agency Report on Federal Drug Interdiction efforts pointed very favorably toward the military and its

assistance to the civilian enforcement agencies (29:4-5). The Government Accounting Office polled 58 federal, state, and local law enforcement officials between May and November 1984. They replied that NNBIS should be given high credit for facilitating access to military resources. Gaining military assistance is now much quicker, easier, and less costly than before (29:4-5).

Though Air Force participation began slowly, it has now advanced to where it is a formidable force in the interdiction program. By no means is it a token force as indicated by the staffing at the Anti-Drug Support Branch at the Pentagon, the full time support of Operation BAT, and the number of E-3A sorties that provide Customs Service surveillance. In 1984 alone, active and reserve aircrews flew nearly 3,100 sorties, totaling nearly 10,000 hours of flight coverage in support of civilian law enforcement agencies in the Caribbean area (21:4992). The list could go on and will continue to grow as more Air Force assets are brought to bear on the drug smugglers.

The South Florida/Caribbean area has already seen an increase in drug interceptions as surveillance systems and their operators have become more effective. Smugglers are now being forced to transport cargoes further north in order to escape detection. Recent tasking of the 24th and 25th Air Division ROCCs to provide surveillance attest to this. Seized aircraft and ships in the Northeast and Northwest have indicated that results in the southern region of the country are beginning to reap results (25:28). Improved intelligence by the DEA in source countries and refueling sights has led to increased seizures even though

smugglers have utilized sophisticated means to conceal drugs that are being transported. Examples include concealing marijuana and cocaine inside legally transported goods as compared to blatantly leaving them in the open as was the case before. Cocaine has been observed rotting on the docks in Colombia due to the increased fear by pilots and seamen of being apprehended (22:6657). Drug enforcement agents in Colombia let it be known that the shipments are being tagged when departing the country and in what type of carrier (22:6657). This information is then passed to the El Paso Interdiction Center for interception purposes when the carrier is picked up trying to enter the United States. During Operation Hat Trick in 1984, a joint Navy/civilian agency operation, over 600,000 pounds of marijuana, and 6,200 pounds of cocaine were seized (22:6657). The operation consisted of US vessels which steamed into waters off Colombia and had one mission--to stop the fall drug harvest from leaving Colombia for the United States (22:6657). Though the preceeding statistics are encouraging, the anti-drug effort is seizing only 10 percent of the marijuana entering this country (22:6657). However, it is believed that in 1984, 26 percent of the cocaine destined for the US market was seized (22:6657). It is also estimated that between 60-75 percent of the above seizures take place in the state of Florida (22:6657). The numbers are decreasing but ever so slowly. The war is far from over and appears to become a long drawn out one.

THE FUTURE

The Air Force entry into drug interdiction had been planned as a temporary role. However, as time progressed and smuggling failed to decline, it became apparent that the military would have to remain in the fray. As long as there are smugglers to apprehend, then the military must continue to provide the vital support it has supplied in the past. Not only will those assets continue to be made available but also new assets and assistance will be made available.

The Air Force's future commitment in this area has already been evident with the activation of the 48 ARRS at Homestead AFB. This new helicopter rescue squadron will now be available for much closer and expanded support of Operation BAT. The operation is so vital to the interdiction effort that the Air Force has dedicated increased assistance in this area.

In May 1985, the Senate approved a proposal to create a new Air Force Reserve Airborne Surveillance and Detection Unit consisting of 16 sophisticated, radar-equipped surveillance aircraft which would have as its major peacetime mission, drug surveillance for civilian law enforcement agencies. The unit would provide surveillance in the Caribbean, off the coast of South America in the Gulf of Mexico, and in the Yucatan passage (22:6653). This proposal had been adopted as an amendment to the Fiscal 1986 Defense Authorization Bill (cited as the "Reserve Forces Airborne Surveillance and Detection Enhancement Act of 1985") and would allow the DOD to assign Air Force personnel to assist civilian law enforcement officials as long as the

assistance took place outside the US land area and any territories (3:29). During the final version of the 1986 budget it appeared that funds would be made available to purchase either C-130 aircraft or to modify P-3A aircraft from the Navy (22:664).

The proposal was for the aircraft to be equipped, operated and maintained by the Air Force in cooperation with the US Customs Service, the US Coast Guard, and other civilian law enforcement agencies.

The aircraft would be equipped with air and surveillance radars that are equivalent in range to sensors currently operating on the existing Customs P-3A. Included would be a 220-degree surface radar, a 360-degree forward-looking infrared, and an optical detection system capable of identifying a 3 square meter target at a range of 40 miles (3:29).

If the P-3A is selected, six of the aircraft would come from those now operated and maintained, or scheduled to be operated by Customs. The Air Force would then modify another 10 aircraft as they are retired from the active Navy inventory (3:29). In the case of the C-130 aircraft, a new purchase would take place from Lockheed. These new acquisitions would be piloted by Customs officers who are also Air Force Reserve pilots.

It is proposed this new unit would be solely dedicated and tasked to the Commander of US Southern Command and be stationed at Hurlburt Field, Florida (22:6656).

In addition to the establishment of the Reserve Surveillance unit, the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives requested that the Secretary of Defense

provide a report on future DOD interdiction plans. This report was due no later than 30 September 1985 (22:6652).

The report was to include actions to establish and maintain the newly proposed Reserve Forces Airborne Surveillance and Detection unit; future actions and proposed actions to utilize DOD aircraft in support of civilian law enforcement agencies for the purpose of carrying out drug interdiction missions and for other operational activities relating to the enforcement of drug laws; and proposed actions to promote dual utilization of DOD aircraft and other assets by civilian law enforcement agencies (22:6655).

It is anticipated that in the very near future the Customs Service Command, Control, and Communications (C³) Centers which are located in Miami, Florida, and Los Angeles, California, will be relocated to the SE ROCC, Tyndall AFB, Florida, and to the SW ROCC, March AFB, California, respectively (27:6). This will allow for a closer working relationship and direct access to the ROCC tracking data. Colocation will also allow for the closing of the Customs C³ sites, thus realizing a large cost savings.

The effectiveness of the Tethered Aerostat in Florida and the Bahamas has indicated that an expansion of these radars may be highly advisable along the remainder of the Gulf Coast and Mexican border. Not only do these sites allow for low altitude detection but also reduce the hours of aircraft surveillance that are required to adequately patrol the region.

As has been mentioned previously, the US Air Force and other DOD agencies entered the interdiction effort on a temporary

basis. Due to the permanency of the program and the services' role anticipated to continue into the future, the DOD's ad hoc office on Drug Law Enforcement at the Pentagon is anticipated to be given permanent status and commanded by a three star general. General R. Dean Tice who has been heading that office is expected to continue as the commander of the agency (22:6653).

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION

The war on illegal drugs and their shipment into the United States is an age old problem and will continue to be so into the foreseeable future. As long as there is an appetite for illegal narcotics in this country, the flow will never stop. The enormous profits that are realized from drug sales will guarantee this flow. Drug trafficking has risen in the last 5 years by roughly 37 percent, from an estimated \$70 billion to \$110 billion worth of narcotic sales (21:4990). It is highly unlikely that the desire for drugs will diminish as long as American society remains affluent.

Although the US judicial system that deals with drug traffickers has been bolstered and new teeth given to the prosecution of these cases, sentences are still lenient to those who are convicted. As long as this trend continues, those who deal in illegal narcotics will remain in business. Until stiffer penalties are handed down to those convicted, massive amounts of manpower and assets will be needed to stem this illegal pipeline. This huge drain on America's resources could be utilized to a much greater extent in other areas of American society.

By virtue of the US military being called upon to aid in interdicting illegal narcotics, it is evident that the problem is of epidemic proportions. Though the military support had been

intended as a temporary solution, it has become evident that its presence is here to stay. The costs have been high, not only in funds expended, but also in lives lost as seen by the helicopter crash. President Reagan has committed his administration to keeping the fight against illegal drugs a high priority.

As the drug abuse problem in America increases, so does the awareness of the country's lawmakers. In 1985, Congress conducted numerous debates and hearings on the increased emphasis of drug interdiction. The key concept that always prevailed was that of increased participation by the US military. This epidemic of illegal drug smuggling is being viewed as a national security threat which must be met forcefully. In today's environment, only the military has the capability to carry out this mission in a magnitude that can be effective. For without total effectiveness, this drug cancer will continue to grow and prosper into the unforeseeable future.

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