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C3 AND ORGANIZATION FOR THE DRUG WAR

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Conventional wisdom holds that the United States has not been invaded since the War of 1812, that the home front has escaped the violence and danger of our many wars. This is not true. Strategic targets throughout our nation are under attack from abroad. The organizations and governments that import and sell illegal drugs in the U.S. have done us more damage than any army that ever marched. They have corrupted individuals and organizations, drained capital and effort from productive ends, blighted the potential of millions of our people, and played a role in the deaths, injuries, and property losses of millions of victims of drug-related crime. Drug abuse has damaged our economy, divided our people, weakened our institutions, and killed or wounded many thousands of Americans.

The drug trade is a greater threat to our national security--our safety, health, and prosperity--than any danger in our history except the specter of nuclear war. But though we have avoided nuclear attack, we have neither deterred nor effectively defended America against the international drug traders and their allies.

In the past we have fought much harder against enemies who did us less harm. This attack is hard to see in progress, but its results are impossible to overlook. Its nature differs from that of threats we have faced before. Some believe that because it involves a criminal industry, it is a problem of law enforcement. Others cite its

international scale and the quasimilitary ways in which drug traffickers organize and arm themselves as reasons the armed forces should fight this battle. Many argue that education and rehabilitation can attack the demand for drugs more effectively than any method can curtail the supply. A few advocate partial or wholesale legalization of drugs to make their sale less profitable and easier to control. They are countered by others calling for harsher penalties to deter Americans from using or selling illegal drugs.

Drug abuse is a multifaceted problem unlikely to be overcome quickly or by any one means. All the methods cited and others have been pursued in limited ways. (8:5) The only consensus is that we must do more than we are doing now.

In this study we narrow our focus to the role of the military in the war on drugs, and specifically to command, control, communications, and intelligence (C3I) and related questions of organization. By doing so we bypass larger questions. Among these questions, and our reasons for excluding them from consideration, are the following.

First, we will not discuss any strategy except interdiction between the drugs' point of origin and the United States' borders. Other methods are the provinces of other agencies.

Second, we will not debate whether the armed forces should fight the war against drugs. This question is moot,

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because the legislative and executive branches of our government have decided that we will fight it. Our duty is to attack this problem as urgently as we would an aggressor wreaking equal havoc on our heartland with missiles or armored divisions. Our country expects us to find the best way to accomplish the mission; ours is not to accept it or turn it down.

Third, we omit discussions of how much cooperation foreign governments should give us, and within that realm, the validity of restrictions against various actions in foreign countries (e.g. infantry sweeps through areas sheltering cocaine refining facilities.) Based on precedent and political realities, we must accept that our anti-drug operations in any foreign nation will be severely restricted in size, duration, and types and amounts of force used. No sovereign nation is likely to give U.S. forces a free hand on its soil. We foresee a low-intensity conflict (LIC) emphasis in the war on drugs for political reasons unrelated to tactical effectiveness.

Our position is as follows. Given that the Department of Defense has been ordered to interdict the movement of illegal drugs into the U.S., we can best carry out this mission with a unified effort under a single dedicated command rather than with our current energetic but piecemeal approach. The principles of unity of command, economy of force, and mass are as valid here as anywhere.

I. Background

The international trade in illegal drugs is huge compared to most legal industries. The National Narcotics Intelligence Consumer Committee estimates that in 1988 growers in Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru harvested over 450 metric tons of coca leaves (8:62); that over 3,000 metric tons of opium was produced in Burma, Afghanistan, Iran, Laos, Pakistan, and Thailand (8:64); and that production of marijuana in Colombia, Mexico, Jamaica, and Belize topped 13,500 metric tons (8:64). Most of this harvest was eventually sold and consumed in the United States.

In 1989 the White House estimated annual gross sales of illegal drugs in the U.S. at \$110 billion--money lost to investment and legitimate commerce--and added that our industry and business lose an additional \$60 billion each year to drug-related accidents and lowered productivity. The U.S. income of the illegal drug industry exceeds that of legal agriculture. (8:2)

The people who produce, import, and sell these drugs include criminal organizations, terrorist groups, corrupt individuals in various governments, and in some cases the governments themselves. Their goals include profit, power, financing political and military operations, or damage to American interests. Motives overlap in some groups and organizations with different agendas sometimes cooperate. (5:7-11), (10:8-11), (11:12-15)

Regardless of who produces the drugs and why they bring them into the United States, the results are devastating. Hospitals saw drug-related emergencies rise 21% from 1985 to 1988. Each year up to 200,000 pregnant women use drugs. Many of their babies are born premature, addicted, and physically and mentally damaged. Infant mortality is high among these children, and those who live may require lifelong care. (8:1-2)

With cheap, powerful, and dangerous drugs easily available, our schools are dangerous places. Many of this war's casualties are children.

Drug-related violence and larceny affects all Americans--directly as victims (or perpetrators) or indirectly through increased taxes for law enforcement.

To the extent that our prosperity is tied to that of our trading partners, damage caused by drugs in other countries also hurts us. The drug trade is a destabilizing and corrupting influence on any economy and government.

In the war on drugs, the mission of the armed forces is to reduce the flow of illegal drugs and related materials across our borders to a point at which smuggling drugs into the U.S. is unprofitable and impractical. Civilian and military interdiction currently stops a fraction of the flow, but not enough to seriously reduce the trade's profits. We are spread thin, and the foe we hunt is often better equipped to evade us than we are to find him. Every

year the narcotics cartels ship more drugs, especially coca products, into the United States.

The role of the armed forces in the war on drugs has been growing since the early 1980s. In 1981 the Congress amended the Posse Comitatus Act, which banned military participation in police functions, to let the President use the military for limited anti-drug missions. (11:35) In 1986 President Reagan declared drugs a threat to American national security and sent troops to Bolivia to help destroy cocaine production sites. (11:45-47)

Several key events occurred in 1989. The Congress named the Department of Defense as the lead agency for detecting and monitoring aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs into the United States and assigned the Secretary of Defense to integrate U.S. command, control, communications, and technical intelligence assets into an effective C3I network for the war on drugs. (6:3) President Bush announced plans to commit U.S. troops in South America (6:21-23) and to spend more than two billion dollars over a five-year period on military and police activity to combat the flow of drugs into the U.S., asking the Congress to give the military \$567.5 million for anti-drug efforts in FY90. (8:123) This was an increase of some 33% over the \$420 million spent in 1989 and over 100 times the \$5 million spent in 1982. Near the end of 1989 American forces invaded Panama, citing General Noriega's involvement in the drug

trade among the reasons for the action. President Bush stationed aircraft carriers off Colombia's coast to interdict drug traffic.

In 1990 DOD's anti-drug spending rose to over \$900 million (considerably more than the \$567.5 million the President had earlier requested). Commitments of troops, ships, aircraft, and C3I systems grew, and both the national guard and the regular armed forces performed thousands of counternarcotics missions.

At this writing early in 1991, the government is asking to raise DOD funding for the war on drugs to \$1.2 billion. (9:1) Within the Defense Department five unified commands are working through three Joint Task Forces (JTFs) to carry out anti-drug operations in their areas of responsibility, supported by other unified and specified commands. (6:5-11) Outside the Department of Defense more than thirty offices, divisions, bureaus, services, and agencies within eleven other cabinet-level departments are fielding anti-drug programs and operations. (7:1), (8:122-123)

The armed forces have both promising strengths and troubling weaknesses relative to the international drug trade. Among our advantages are the following:

- 1) National support for this mission is widespread and vocal. The DOD commitment to fighting the import of illegal drugs is higher than ever before, even in the face of the demands of the recent war in the Persian Gulf.

2) The people and equipment we can use for anti-drug operations are capable and sophisticated. Our ability to detect and track aircraft and ships is unmatched. Our leadership in communications and computers gives us a potential edge in sharing and exploiting information.

3) Our enemies cannot match our firepower in high-intensity or mid-intensity conflict. They must hide from us; confrontations are to our advantage.

Still, the problems are daunting. The drug dealers also have advantages:

1) The sheer size of the drug trade gives it tremendous survivability. We cannot guard every mile of border and coastline, inspect every container of cargo, search every traveller. The drug syndicates treat moderate losses of merchandise and low-level personnel as acceptable overhead. They can routinely flood our defenses, knowing that enough drugs will get past our guard to return a large profit.

2) The trade's size also gives it the power of great wealth. The income of the cocaine industry alone is many times what we spend to fight drugs. Traffickers use that wealth to subvert many who are trusted to fight them--some governments are so riddled with corruption that sharing information with them is dangerous.

3) Often governments cannot gain the cooperation of their own citizens whose livelihoods depend on the drug trade or who are terrorized by the organizations that run

the trade. In this country too, many work and fight on the side of the enemy.

4) In much of Latin America the U.S. is viewed with hostility, suspicion, and fear. Our anti-drug efforts there may be hampered by anti-American sentiment.

5) At the local level, traffickers are often better informed and equipped than we are. Though they lack surveillance satellites and aircraft carriers, these enemies are well-equipped with communication and signal intelligence equipment and information about our activities. (2:11) Smugglers use U.S. cryptographic equipment and keys bought on the black market to monitor our "secure" communications and evade interdiction.

6) Our rules of engagement, while necessary, put us at a disadvantage. Our actions are restricted by law, by politics, and by our obligation to spare the innocent while pursuing the guilty. Our enemies have no such practical or moral limits. They disregard borders and governments. They use indiscriminate violence, assassination, and our own legal system against us.

The war on drugs is very different from the activities more usual for most of our military. Some of our units are well prepared to detect and track airborne and waterborne drug smugglers. However, for the most part our personnel are untrained for noncombat interception and apprehension. Our communications intercept and signal intelligence units

excel at gathering information for military intelligence purposes, but often it cannot be used in court.

Our present command structure for the drug war is complex. An Assistant Secretary of Defense acts as the Coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy. He has two Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense, a civilian and a major general. (6:2-3) These three people develop policy but do not command forces in the field.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is tasked with planning the war on drugs and assigning missions to organizations to carry out the Coordinator's policies. (6:5) The work is actually done by the Chairman's staff. But the Chairman does not command forces outside the Pentagon. Active forces are controlled by the Commanders In Chief (CINCs) of the unified and specified commands or by their individual service headquarters. The CINCs and services report to the National Command Authority (NCA), the President and Secretary of Defense. (1: chap. 2)

Within the armed forces there is no single authority over the units carrying out drug interdiction. Three unified commands have organized joint task forces to carry out their counternarcotics missions: (6:5-8)

1) U.S. Atlantic Command (USLANTCOMM) controls JTF 4, operating out of Key West, Florida and commanded by a Coast Guard Vice Admiral;

2) U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) controls JTF 5, based at Alameda, California and commanded by a Coast Guard rear admiral; and

3) Forces Command (FORSCOM) controls JTF 6, headquartered at Fort Bliss, Texas and commanded by an Army lieutenant general.

These commands are responsible for drug interdiction within their geographical areas of responsibility. However, other commands have duties that cloud the picture. (9:1-5)

U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM) is in charge of defending U.S. airspace. For aerial drug smuggling this overlaps with FORSCOM's responsibilities.

U.S. Southern Command (USSOCOM) is responsible for the drug war within its jurisdiction as USLANTCOMM, USPACOM, and FORSCOM are within theirs. But it has no joint task force, and the JTFs controlled by other CINCs conduct operations in areas for which CINCSOUTH is responsible.

The other unified and specified commands are ordered to support those fighting the drug war as needed, but no one below the Secretary of Defense can settle disputes between CINCs over what support is needed.

Finally, no command has a primary mission of drug interdiction. It is a secondary mission or one of several.

Opportunities abound for conflicts between CINCs carrying out the same mission where their authority and responsibilities overlap, between administrative and

operational control of units and individuals, between different commands' policies and methods, and between missions within a given command.

This system depends on cooperative personalities to keep internal frictions from paralyzing all action. It makes planning complicated. The CINCs must divert people and equipment from their primary missions to man JTFs or support JTF operations. The JTFs must work through their CINCs to get support from other commands, to operate across lines of CINC authority, and to coordinate with one another. For federal, state, and local agencies also fighting the drug trade, coordination with the military is complex.

This structure increases the amount of communication needed between and within commands. The more we talk the more delay and confusion we incur and the more chances our enemies have to use our communications against us.

The communications systems we need to run such an intricate network are expensive and bulky. The equipment and the people who operate it are scarce. As the war on drugs grows, it will call for more and more satellite channels, communications vans, and cryptographic equipment.

Our success in interdicting the drug traffic depends on the soundness of our methods. Our armed forces are emerging from nearly twenty years at peace other than minor actions. We have worked during these years to improve our doctrine, training, and equipment. We have made fundamental changes

in the way we think and fight. We have shifted our focus from quantity to quality, from firepower-based attrition doctrine toward the maneuver-based philosophy described in FM 100-5 and FMFM-1. Most of us have wondered how we would do the next time we had to fight. In this case, how well prepared are we for this war against the drug trade?

Our recent overwhelming success in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm bodes well for our general state of training and leadership. However, the war against Iraq was radically different from the war against drugs. It was fast, while the drug war has already lasted years and may take decades.

Most of the war in Southwest Asia was fought in terrain where tanks, LAVs, and aircraft had immense advantages over footmobile infantry. There was little fighting at sea or in the air. By contrast, any land actions in the drug war will take place in rough terrain ideal for light infantry, and the bulk of smuggled drugs travel by sea or air.

In the Middle East, our enemy was isolated from world trade. The surrounding countries were on our side, neutral, or too weak to matter. Our troops were housed and supported by rich nations grateful for our presence.

In the drug war we must be ready for an endurance contest, with no strong allies. Our enemy is part of a worldwide system of trade and information flow. The other governments involved are poor and often suspicious of our

intentions. Some of them are hostile to us, some don't care, and some are too weak to make any difference. (3:68, 159, 176, 205-6, 213, 242, 248-252, 306, 330-331)

We used mid- and high-intensity conflict (MIC/HIC) tactics and weapons against Iraq. Other than nuclear, biological, and chemical arms, we used any weapons we chose. The fight against the drug trade will depend on electronic information-gathering and exhaustive patrolling rather than B-52s and cruise missiles. Developments in U.S. LIC doctrine and skills since the end of the Vietnam war are still largely untested except in training exercises.

We cannot change the nature of the enemy, the geography, or the poverty and weakness of other nations. Short of fighting a guerrilla war somewhere else, we cannot truly test our LIC skills. There is one part of our success in Southwest Asia we can apply to this conflict, however.

Military and civilian observers alike were struck by the emphasis on C3 they saw, and by the speed and unity of action achieved by centralized direction and decentralized execution of the campaign. By contrast, in the drug war we see fragmented efforts by fragmented organizations, military and civilian. Unlike the military symphony of Desert Storm, in this concert every section of instruments is trying to outplay its neighbors, the musicians don't have the same sheet music, and the orchestra has no conductor.

In contrast to Desert Storm, World War II's Battle of

the Atlantic had many parallels to the counternarcotics war. U.S. forces hunted an elusive foe, the German U-Boat fleet, by sea and air. We had the edge in firepower; the U-Boats, like the drug smugglers, depended on evasion and escape to survive. Technical systems played a key role--electronic detection and surveillance, signal intelligence, and cryptography were life-and-death concerns for both sides. Our goal was harder to achieve than the enemy's. He did not need to defeat our military ships and aircraft, only to avoid them. For our forces to succeed, they had to find the enemy and intercept him, drive him away, or prevent him from entering our waters at all.

America nearly lost the Battle of the Atlantic in 1942. In Military Misfortunes, Eliot Cohen and John Gooch analyze the campaign in detail and conclude that our key failures in anti-submarine warfare (ASW) were: (4:83)

- 1) Failure to match structure to mission--multiple commands were tasked with ASW missions and none was in charge overall, resulting in lack of unity of effort;

- 2) Failure of coordination and communication between separate commands trying to carry out the same mission, resulting from the structure described above; and

- 3) Most fundamental, failure to learn, standardize, and "get the word out" on the lessons in ASW warfare already learned by the British. The main lesson the British had learned was that central direction and decentralized

execution were needed to coordinate different commands, make best use of scarce resources, and exploit short-lived opportunities. Our efforts to learn from the British focussed on hardware and ignored organization as a key C3 consideration.

In mid-1943 Admiral King, Chief of Naval Operations, established Tenth Fleet--a new command--to control all ASW forces in the Atlantic. Tenth Fleet "fused operational intelligence, the control of convoys, the allocation of all antisubmarine units, and the direction of all establishments charged with the development of doctrine and technology..." (4:91) Execution was decentralized and exercised through task force commanders based on mission-type orders.

In the eighteen months before Tenth Fleet was created U.S. ASW forces sank 36 German submarines. In the first six months under unified command they sank 75. (4:91) U.S. technology advanced slightly, but German hardware also improved. The critical C3 factor was organization.

Difficult times are ahead in the drug war. Nationalism is increasing in the Third World; weak nations are reluctant to cooperate with us for fear of looking like puppets. Our own economy is unsteady and military resources will go on shrinking. The drug cartels keep growing in power.

The drug industry is stronger and more entrenched and sophisticated now than a year ago. Drug-related crime goes on bleeding our society. The traffickers will find new ways

to package drugs and new ways to get them to buyers. In the years ahead the anti-drug mission will grow. At the same time, the complexity and cost of our C3 equipment keeps growing while our budgets shrink. These trends point to the need for efficient C3. Like the rest of the military, command structures need to be leaner and lighter.

As long as we divide our effort between several CINCs our war on drugs will suffer many of its present problems. Other agencies will have to coordinate with several commands while those commands carry out their primary missions and the drug war simultaneously. Our efforts will lack central coordination, a large disadvantage against organizations that ship drugs through the jurisdictions of several CINCs.

In the recent war against Iraq C3 was treated as a critical asset. We attacked theirs and protected our own. We attacked targets chosen to deprive the enemy's forces in the field of unified guidance--the "decapitation attack." So far in the war on drugs we have decapitated ourselves.

II. Proposed Organization

Under our proposal the President, acting through the Secretary of Defense, would establish a unified functional command--tentatively called U.S. Drug Interdiction Command or USDRUGCOM--to control DOD's war against drugs, worldwide. Rather than five CINCs dedicating assets to counterdrug operations, one CINC would control the dedicated people and systems now divided between the five. Other DOD commands

would support his command as needed, much as they do now. This would be consistent with the establishment of the other unified and specified commands. Each was created to gather the forces dedicated to a given mission under a single CINC so as to best use those resources.

Doctrine and training would be standardized under CINCDRUG. Intelligence sharing would improve. Planning and execution of large operations would be smoother and faster and coordination would be simpler. We would need fewer communications links, reducing C3 technology overhead and enemy opportunities to exploit our communications.

JTFs 4, 5, and 6 would all report to CINCDRUG. USDRUGCOM would coordinate and exchange liaison groups with other federal agencies; at the regional level the JTFs would coordinate or trade liaisons with federal agency field offices and state or local organizations.

CINCDRUG's staff would meet with other national-level agencies at least quarterly in addition to exchanging liaisons as stated above. At the regional level the JTF staffs would meet with other agencies at least monthly.

As a starting point, CINCDRUG's personnel, units, and equipment would be those the CINCs now dedicate to their anti-drug missions. From the JTF level down the structures would change little except for standardization purposes, until operational experience under the new command structure showed where adjustments were needed.

The structure we propose would have several advantages:

1) There would be a CINC who was assigned the war on drugs as his primary mission. The drug war would no longer be an additional and secondary duty at the command level.

2) One person would be in command of DOD's efforts to fight the flow of drugs. Coordination and unity of effort would improve. Civilian agencies would have one command to coordinate with, one set of policies to adapt to.

3) By relieving other CINCs of secondary missions in drug enforcement, USDRUGCOM would reduce degradation of their primary missions. Other CINCs and their staffs could concentrate more effort on their areas of responsibility or function. Though they would support USDRUGCOM if needed, they would not be burdened with planning, administration, and coordination for drug interdiction operations.

4) Central direction would make the best use of the funding and resources assigned to USDRUGCOM. Some economies of scale would be possible with a single staff doing work formerly divided between five. Scarce C3 systems might also be more effectively used over wider areas by a CINC with worldwide responsibilities.

5) With a primary mission of drug interdiction, USDRUGCOM people and units would get more proficient by concentrating on their duties in this area for their entire tours. A unified command with a stable structure would yield greater personnel stability as well.

No plan is free of weakness. We anticipate several objections to the structure we recommend:

1) This plan would require the approval and cooperation of the legislative branch, mainly for funding. However, the Congress has already demanded and funded a substantial military anti-drug effort. This reorganization would give the taxpayers a greater return on their taxes and do a better job of protecting them from the drug trade. We believe the Congress would applaud the creation of USRUGCOM.

2) Some might object to the establishment of USDRUGCOM on the grounds that the armed forces cannot afford to set aside the human and material assets this command would require. We would point out that these assets are already being dedicated to the drug war piecemeal, though they are not gathered in one organization.

3) Few of us relish the thought of turning a task over to someone else unfinished. Established CINCs might resist losing people, assets, and missions. This plan might have to be mandated by higher authority over strong objections. However, this will be easier to carry out in a time of force reductions and probable consolidation of commands.

4) We foresee objections to adding another command to the structure of the Defense Department, especially when DOD is contemplating consolidating some of the commands that now exist. We would reply that by streamlining the chain of command for counter-drug operations and simplifying the

missions and structures of several other commands the creation of USDRUGCOM would simplify the structure of DOD. We would further point out that the consolidations being considered are geographical while USDRUGCOM would be a function-based command similar to USSOCOM or USTRANSCOM.

III. Alternatives

We will examine four alternatives to our proposal.

The first is the status quo: DOD would continue to lead the effort to interdict the drug trade and leave the task divided between CINCs. The results would be what we see now--suboptimal performance, duplication of effort, "turf wars" between commands, and relegation of the drug war to secondary mission status in every command.

A second option is to consolidate drug interdiction under an established CINC rather than create a new command. This would yield some of the advantages of USDRUGCOM, but if that CINC's current mission retained its priority, the drug war would remain a sideshow. If the drug war became that command's focus its current mission would lose emphasis.

A third possibility is that of a great reduction in the military role in this war; this could happen only by mandate of the Congress and the executive branch. This would end the question of how to conduct a large military anti-drug effort, but we do not think it likely or desirable.

Lastly, the military could go on carrying a large burden in the drug war but lose its role as the lead agency

for interdiction. This is a worst-case prospect, giving control of much of the armed forces to civilian agencies unfamiliar with our methods and capabilities. The armed forces would then have little say in how those assets were used. However, we also consider this extremely unlikely.

IV. Conclusion and Summary

The armed forces will probably go on playing a large role in the war on drugs, and that war will remain one of our most important missions. At present we expend great effort but have no unity of command below the level of the Secretary of Defense. No one above the level of the three JTF commanders has a primary mission of fighting the drug trade. The results include confusion, conflict, duplication of effort, and lack of standardization, between commands and with civilian agencies. The bottom line is inefficient use of slender resources against a potent and growing foe.

To correct these problems, we propose that authority for military drug interdiction be consolidated in a new unified functional command, the U.S. Drug Interdiction Command or USDRUGCOM. Current anti-drug Joint Task Forces would be retained under CINCDRUG, who would be supported by other CINCs and DOD agencies as needed. The war on drugs would be USDRUGCOM's primary mission, relieving other CINCs of interdiction missions. Resources assigned to USDRUGCOM for this mission would be essentially the same as those now dedicated to counter-drug missions by five separate CINCs.

We consider the international drug trade as great a threat as any our society has ever faced; it has already done us greater damage than any enemy in history. This war is being fought in our streets and schools as well as beyond our borders. We, our culture, and our children will be the casualties if we lose. This threat calls for a response on all fronts--education, treatment, interdiction, and enforcement--of an urgency and effort beyond that we now give any of those areas. The military's part in this effort lies in stopping drugs outside the United States' borders.

We further believe that we are fighting against a large, entrenched illegal industry whose resources are many times those we as a nation are devoting to fighting it. This means we need to "fight smart" as much as we can, using whatever force multipliers we can. Unity of command is a force multiplier on the strategic level, and we cannot afford to go on leaving it unused.

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