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APPLYING OPERATIONAL ART TO THE WAR ON DRUGS

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by
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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Operations Department.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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ABSTRACT

The Department of defense (DOD) has been assigned specific drug interdiction support missions as part of the national drug control strategy. Counter-narcotics operations are 'operations other than war (OOTW),' that also may be considered a type of low intensity conflict. Military force employment at the operational level has primarily fallen to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Command (LANTCOM), and the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM).

By reviewing the geographic, political and societal characteristics of the theater of operations and the cocaine-trafficking cycle, the cocaine trade's "centers of gravity," or critical elements can be identified as: cultivation capability; the product (cocoa leaf or cocaine); and consumer demand.

An analysis of ongoing counter-drug operations, the narco-trafficking cycle and the principals of OOTW provides a structure through which operational art may be applied to attack the cartels' centers of gravity. Although some success has been realized, a unified level of effort does not exist between surveillance and interdiction assets, and concise objectives have not been determined. LANTCOM and SOUTHCOM should be provided with the resources to correct noted deficiencies, and the confidence of national leadership that their forces can play a decisive role in a protracted war on drugs.

PREFACE

As the research for this paper was being completed, press releases and statements made by the Clinton Administration have indicated that future counter-narcotics program emphasis and funding would shift toward demand reduction and away from stemming the flow of illegal drugs to the United States. There has been great speculation as to what role, if any, the military would have if interdiction is no longer considered to be of primary importance. However, formal policy changes have yet to be implemented and, in the absence of definitive executive branch guidance, I have recognized, but chosen not to debate speculation. This paper examines the military's counter-narcotics effort at the operational level based on formal mission assignments and policies in force.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Operational Art is defined as "...the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization and conduct of campaigns and major operations."¹ The operational commander uses operational art as a lens through which tactical actions are focused to realize strategic goals and ultimately achieve political objectives; he attempts to balance concepts with available resources to decisively impact the enemy's nucleus or center of gravity. Operational Art is applicable not only within the realm of traditional armed conflict between legally constituted forces, but may also be applied to operations other than war (OOTW). In OOTW, the unique capabilities and expertise of military forces are selectively applied in a limited context, usually in concert with diplomatic, political or economic actions.²

The Department of Defense's (DOD) role in counter-narcotics operations provides a prime example of OOTW that should be planned and executed within the context of operational art to define and achieve success. The so called "war on drugs" presents operational commanders with the formidable challenge of using limited resources and force options to combat criminal organizations who possess immense wealth, informal power and control within the sovereign nations from which they operate.

Discussions within this paper will analyze DOD efforts, at the operational level, to combat the cocaine trade emanating from South America's Andean Ridge region, which has been identified as the nation's primary narco-trafficking threat.³ The characteristics of the theater of operations, the mechanics of the cocaine cycle, and the principals of OOTW will be analyzed to determine a framework through which operational art may be successfully applied.

CHAPTER II
THEATER OF OPERATIONS DEFINED

The theater of operations containing the South American cocaine trade presents a unique mixture of sovereign nations, political insurgents, and cocaine cartels within a continental and maritime region of immense geographic proportions. The South American landmass within the Andean Ridge region encompasses an area roughly equal in scope to the U.S., east of the Mississippi River. The maritime theater contains 3 million square miles, including the Caribbean Sea and portions of the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific Oceans.

Andean Ridge countries of Peru, Colombia, and Bolivia are at the heart of the cocaine cultivating and processing industry.⁴ All three countries have flirted with democracy since the conclusion of World War II, periodically returning to authoritarian or military rule. Colombia and Bolivia currently have fledgling democratic institutions in place that are struggling for stability and credibility. Peru continues to rebound from President Alberto Fujimori's suspension of democracy in April 1992, although a Fujimori-endorsed commitment to the restoration of a representative form of government has been professed.⁵ All three nations are plagued by insurgencies in a polarized region of the 'haves' and 'have nots.' Organizations such as the Sendero Luminoso in Peru and Colombia's Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionario Colombiana, continuously seek to undermine

existing governments, playing on the emotions and economic hardship of the masses who have not benefitted from past democratic experiences and continue to exist below the poverty line. Alarmingly, indications have been received that increased pressure from the counter-drug effort has driven the Cartels to pursue alliances with these terrorist organizations. The political guerillas, who are paid to protect smuggling operations from law enforcement activities, use their unique status to negotiate with the cartels for higher wages for the cocoa leaf farmers in hopes of gaining the peasants' popular support.⁶ All three nations are carrying out their own counter-narcotics agendas. Colombia has shown its resolve to control the cocaine industry as 400 law enforcement officials perished during the past year while carrying out tougher anti-drug policies.⁷ Colombia finally removed narco-trafficking icon Pablo Escobar from the drug culture through his much publicized death in 1993. Although the actual prowess of his Medellin Cartel had diminished greatly in recent years and was actually responsible for only a small percentage of the cocaine trade, Escobar's death was highly symbolic of Colombian progress in its struggle to achieve credibility in the counter-narcotics effort and sustain democratic political stability. In fact, all of Escobar's senior compatriots have now either been incarcerated or killed by Colombian authorities.⁸ In Peru Sendero Luminoso leader Abimael Guzman is behind bars, and both Peru and Bolivia have made progress in instituting alternative cocoa leaf substitution

programs, although there continues to be some limited expansion of cocoa leaf planting fields within regions under insurgent control.

The principal transit region is found in, and in the waters surrounding, Central America, although some smuggling activity persists through the Antilles island chain to Puerto Rico and the Bahamas. All of the Central American nations possess democratic governments with Honduras generally recognized as the region's political "guiding light."⁹ The Central American economies are weak and the standards of living low, creating an environment conducive to insurgency and narco-trafficking. The transit nations possess varying levels of law enforcement capability and responsiveness. Cooperation between transit nations has been limited.

Today's dominant cartels are "...among the best financed and most ruthless organizations in the world."¹⁰ They are intelligent and adaptable, playing on the delicate balance of power which defines political success in South America. Their ability to survive through intensive domestic and multi-lateral eradication and interdiction efforts indicates their resiliency. The drug lords reign in an economically depressed and socially polarized region, providing the masses who toil in cocoa leaf fields with at least some means of existence. With virtually limitless financial assets, the cartels' grip on the cultures of the Andean Ridge nations can reach governments' highest levels. Those authorities whose loyalties cannot be purchased or coerced

find themselves and their families targets of remorseless
terrorist aggression."¹¹

CHAPTER III
ANALYZING THE COCAINE FLOW

Cocoa leaf is primarily cultivated in the Chapare region of Bolivia and Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley.¹² Raw cocoa leaf is harvested and sent to processing and distribution centers in Columbia where essential chemical additives are used to produce cocaine. Cocaine is then smuggled to the U.S. via numerous vehicles, trade routes and transit nations. Narcotics traffickers have historically smuggled cocaine through overland routes in Central America as well as via air and maritime surface routes throughout the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean. The ties formed between the cartels and international underworld organizations now provide alternatives to traditional trafficking routes. Drugs may be shipped via commercial carrier using complex routing in an attempt to escape counter-drug surveillance unit scrutiny.¹³ The opportunities to interdict the stereotypical drug-running Cessna or coastal freighter are decreasing as more sophisticated methods of concealment and complex trans-oceanic routes are used with greater periodicity. Profits gained through cocaine sales are "laundered" in countries like Panama, whose liberal trade laws permit the exchange of currencies with minimal restrictions. The laundered profits are then funneled back to the cartels under the guise of legality to perpetuate the cycle.¹⁴

Centers of gravity represent those factors without which a given activity or operation cannot be performed or successfully executed. In the context of the cocaine cycle, three centers of gravity exist: cultivation capability; the product itself, cocoa leaf or in its refined state, cocaine; and consumer demand. Denying use of cocoa leaf growing fields forcibly through chemical spraying, or passively through government sponsored crop substitution programs, eliminates cultivation capability and 'breaks' the cycle at its source. Interdiction of the product at any point between harvesting and consumer delivery will also disrupt the narco-trafficking cycle. The final center of gravity resides within consumer demand. The mission of eliminating consumer demand does not belong to DOD, and neither its methodology nor impact will be discussed herein.

While not centers of gravity in and of themselves, several decisive factors directly impact the centers of gravity mentioned in the preceding paragraph and represent critical paths to inhibiting narco-trafficking success. Control of regions conducive to cocoa leaf cultivation, processing chemical availability and money laundering operations are issues of vital importance to the drug lords. Cocoa leaf cultivation capability is heavily influenced by the level of control that the cartels have within a given region. If the cartels are the dominant force (or have procured dominant force by paying insurgents protection money), cocoa leaf can be produced at will; conversely, if cartel influence is limited, the cocoa leaf fields

may avail themselves to damage or destruction, or farmers may be influenced by crop substitution program benefits. Closely related to control of the planting field region is the level of popular support accorded the cartels by the cocoa leaf farmers. They are part of the lower socio-economic class who do not receive a large profit by growing cocoa leaf as opposed to any other crop. However, they do receive consistent payment from the drug lords and, as is the case with most people within the Andean Ridge, risk enduring the cartels' wrath should their loyalties be placed elsewhere. Cocoa leaf is shipped from source countries to processing centers in Columbia where chemical additives are used to produce cocaine.¹⁵ The enforcement of chemical trade restrictions can reduce cocaine production rates and influence smuggling tendencies and characteristics. Finally, money laundering operations provide the cartels with a means of recognizing seemingly legitimate profit from the drug trade. Stiffened international banking regulations would inhibit the ability to 'transform' dirty money into negotiable currency, eventually undermining the cartels ability to perpetuate the narco-trafficking cycle.

CHAPTER IV

DOD COUNTER-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS

DOD has been a contributor to the counter-narcotics effort since 1971. Its participation and capability were increased with a modification to the Posse Comitatus Act in 1981 that allowed military personnel to assist in the logistical support of law enforcement activities.¹⁶ DOD received formal counter-narcotics mission tasking in the war on drugs through the FY89 Defense Authorization Act, which was amended in 1990 to its present form:

- Serve as lead for Detection and Monitoring (D&M) of air and maritime transport of illegal drugs into the U.S.

- Integrate federal command, control, communications and intelligence (C3I) assets into an effective communications network.

- Approve/fund state governors' plans for National Guard support to drug law enforcement agency (DLEA) interdiction efforts.

- Provide counter-drug support to other departments, agencies, state/local or foreign DLEAs (as requested).

- Make available at no cost, excess DOD equipment, material required for counter-drug activities.¹⁷

DOD received Executive Branch guidance to treat the counter-narcotics operations as a "...high priority national security mission."¹⁸ The National Military Strategy states that DOD is

"...charged to help lead the attack on the supply of illegal drugs from abroad..." and should "...continue to enhance its detection and monitoring capabilities and assist other nations to develop aggressive efforts and capabilities necessary to stem the flow of drugs."¹⁹ In response to the specific counter-drug mission assignments from Congress, DOD established an Assistant Secretary of Defense position to coordinate DOD drug enforcement policy, guidance, programs and budgeting. The DOD drug coordinator integrates support from the Joint Staff and National Guard Bureau. From the national drug control strategy, a basic DOD counter-narcotics strategy containing the following elements has been adopted:

- (1) Stopping the flow
- (2) Source nation support
- (3) Dismantling cartels²⁰

Primary responsibility for executing DOD counter-narcotics missions emanating from South America has fallen to 2 Unified Commanders: Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Command (LANTCOM) and Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). The unified commanders of the Pacific Command and the Forces Command also bear some responsibility for the South American counter-narcotics effort and have established Joint Task Force (JTF)-5 and JTF-6, respectively, to deal with counter-narcotics operations within their areas of responsibility (AOR).²¹ However, their principal roles are to provide support to

SOUTHCOM and LANTCOM in terms of intelligence, maritime surface and air assets and continental U.S. border security.

LANTCOM established JTF-4 to execute the DOD counter-narcotics mission within his AOR. JTF-4's operational plan focuses on a single center of gravity, the product itself -- cocaine, and "...incorporates the principals of military, interagency and multinational teamwork..." to optimize D&M, surveillance coverage, in support of interdiction and apprehension (I&A) efforts.²² A sophisticated network of radar platforms and C3I nodes have been integrated to provide nearly continuous surveillance of the AOR. Suspected targets of interest are systematically tracked across the Caribbean basin and Eastern Pacific Ocean by a combination of Navy and Coast Guard ships and aircraft; Air Force E-3 Airborne Early Warning Control System (AWACS) and F-16 tactical aircraft; Army and National Guard helos and land based radar sites; as well as a number of drug law enforcement agency assets. Provided appropriate authorization is received, ships suspected of drug smuggling may be stopped and inspected on the high seas by Coast Guard law enforcement detachments. In the absence of inspection authority, information regarding the suspect vessel will be passed to the U.S. Customs Service to ensure that a thorough search of the vessel is conducted upon arrival within the U.S. As suspected air targets of interest near transit termination points, refined D&M information is passed to DLEA and transit nation assets from surveillance units to facilitate I&A

operations, commonly referred to as the 'end game.' The weak link in the JTF-4 arena has been end game coordination. I&A assets have not consistently responded to D&M information in a timely manner, allowing suspected drug smugglers to elude apprehension after lengthy and costly periods of surveillance.²³

SOUTHCOM is responsible for the continental theater, including Central and South America from the southern border of Mexico to the southern tip of Argentina. Working through the respective ambassadors and their country teams, SOUTHCOM provides support to host nations in terms of reconnaissance, command and control, D&M, intelligence, logistics and training. SOUTHCOM's operational plan attacks two centers of gravity, cultivation capability and the product itself, and promotes a regional counter-narcotics focus with nations in and around the Andean Ridge as well as within Central American 'transit nations.'²⁴ A number of multilateral counter-drug operations, such as the Support Justice series, have been coordinated by SOUTHCOM which promote cooperation, understanding and mutual support between nations faced with combatting the narco-trafficking cycle. While SOUTHCOM has established a network of radar sites within the South American landmass and serves as the D&M coordination point within its AOR, DOD forces remain in a support role and do not participate in field operations.²⁵ I&A asset response to cueing within this AOR is slower than desired and is frequently inhibited by insurgent control of various geographic regions.²⁶

The average JTF-4 surveillance force, at any given time,

The average JTF-4 surveillance force, at any given time, consists of 9 ships, 22 aircraft and 3000 military personnel. While conducting their surveillance mission, JTF-4 units expend approximately 4000 ship steaming days and 38,000 flight hours annually, about the equivalent of a Mediterranean battlegroup deployment.²⁷ In SOUTHCOM during the past year, personnel from all branches of the service conducted over 1000 separate deployments in 18 of the region's 19 countries, many in support of counter-drug initiatives.²⁸ DOD personnel directly contributed to cocaine seizures of over 100 metric tons(mt) of last year's 280mt seized world-wide.²⁹ The DOD counter-narcotics budget of \$1.1 billion is less than 1% of the total national defense budget, less than 4% of the national narcotics control budget and less than 9% of federal drug control program outlays.³⁰

CHAPTER V

WARFARE PRINCIPAL ANALYSIS

An analysis of the six principals of OOTW provides a framework from which counter-drug operational concepts can be evaluated. The principals include perseverance, security, restraint, legitimacy, unity of effort and objectives.³¹

The importance of mentally preparing to persevere through a protracted struggle in this arena cannot be overstated. The drug war is a form of low intensity conflict that, by definition, equates to a struggle of lengthy duration. Low intensity conflict is defined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) as "Political-Military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war yet above the routine, peaceful competition between states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. Low intensity conflicts range from subversion to the use of armed force. It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. Low intensity conflicts are often localized, generally in the third world, but contain regional and global security implications."³² There are no immediate solutions or quick fixes which will stop the flow of illegal drugs to the U.S. The cartels have spent the last few decades growing into large, sophisticated and powerful organizations that feed an addiction and subculture which has become entrenched throughout both narco-trafficking regions and

American society. Only sustained support for host nation production and processing eradication initiatives, aggressive surveillance techniques and unified effort between all counter-drug entities will lead to success.

As with any successful military operation, extreme importance rests with the maintenance of security. The enemy must not be allowed to acquire the ability to accurately assess exactly when or how interdiction efforts will be implemented. In this particular case, accurate interdiction information and intelligence translate directly into power for the cartels. Unlike a conventional enemy, the cartels are not constrained by some type of synchronized strategy designed to achieve specific objectives nor are they compelled to adhere to any particular timeline. They possess a multitude of smuggling methods and geographic options which cannot all be simultaneously monitored by DOD forces. This is a scenario in which the cartels will actively attempt to buy, coerce, or extort information or protection; only ironclad commitment to mission integrity will suffice in this area.

By virtue of the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act, which prevents military forces from acting as law enforcement bodies, restraint is a fact of life in DOD counter-narcotics efforts. DOD's multitude of assets are excluded from direct participation in interdiction and apprehension operations and are limited to detection and monitoring and logistics support roles. Restraint in the types of interdiction and cultivation capability

eradication efforts supported may be directly linked with public opinion. Attacking the cartels' cultivation capability by spraying or "chemically burning" cocoa leaf planting fields may, in the near term, prevent some cocaine from turning up on American streets, but in the long run, it destroys the fields' capacity to produce any crops for a number of years and tells the peasants who cultivate the cocoa fields that they are once again having their meager means of existence removed by an authoritarian force -- only this time the force claims righteousness under the cover of democracy and the international drug control effort. Conversely, replacing cocoa leaf fields through government sponsored crop substitution programs may provide some influence that a democratic government of the people can make a difference. Only a keen sense of restraint and discipline will successfully lead to the execution of an operational plan that targets only those consciously involved in, and responsible for, the production and export of illegal narcotics to North America. In a region whose history is laden with unfortunate acts of police brutality and human rights violations, excesses of force, in the name of stopping the drug trade, risks damage to the very spirit which must be engendered in the South American populace to permanently eliminate illicit drugs from society.

The legitimacy of counter-narcotics operations must be retained by working with and through host nation governments via the respective U.S. country teams. As discussed in the preceding

paragraph, conducting eradication and surveillance operations in concert with legally constituted host nation entities, in a manner that promotes the welfare of the population, makes the counter-narcotics effort something that not only can legally be done, but something that is internationally recognized as the right thing to do. However, lending American support for bilateral or multi-lateral activities that fail to respect sovereignty, human rights or legal processes, begs for anti-American propaganda and strengthens the position of both the cartels and insurgent organizations. For the fight against drug smuggling to be successful, in both in a political and military sense, legitimacy must dovetail with restraint to keep U.S. interests on the moral high ground.

An all encompassing sense of unity of effort and purpose must exist to accomplish the counter-narcotics mission. Internally, military forces must be focused on counter-narcotics operations as a primary mission that is engendered through training and preparation long before arrival in theater. The operational commander must insist that unit commanders arrive on station with their entire command and control/operations/combat systems organizations ready to contribute to mission accomplishment. In a larger sense, unity of effort extends beyond national force boundaries, underlining the necessary fusion between military and political mechanisms. Within host and transit countries and maritime contiguous zones, the operational plan must provide support, as coordinated by the

country teams, to enable surveillance and interdiction forces to most efficiently apply their capabilities. Strengths and weaknesses of drug law enforcement agencies and foreign national forces charged with carrying out I&A roles must be fully understood by military surveillance units while those empowered to make arrests must be prepared to swiftly apply and act upon D&M information received. Surveillance and interdiction are interdependent operational endeavors which mandate a unified focus and commensurate level of execution between military forces, drug law enforcement agencies and host and transit nations to achieve quantifiable success. Superb surveillance information is virtually worthless if there are insufficient means to apprehend the perpetrators.

Ideally, every military operation should be driven by objectives that are clearly defined, decisive and achievable. Strategic guidance should be issued to the operational commander from higher authority containing a "...balanced blend of ends (objectives), ways (concepts), and means (resources)..." from which a mission, operational plans and associated measures of effectiveness are derived.³³ While the counter-narcotics mission is clear, the accomplishment of objectives assigned to military forces involved in the counter-narcotics effort has been an item of intense debate, particularly in the current era of military force restructuring and limited fiscal resources. Arguably, there are no definitive measures of effectiveness from which force levels/associated operating costs can be directly

correlated with objective accomplishment. Those skeptical of positive military impact in the drug war contend that the DOD continues to increase force operating tempo, and consequently incur higher costs, without an accurate means of assessing counter-narcotics force effectiveness. In a September 1993 report to Congress, the U.S. Government Accounting Office (USGAO) asserted that the nation was not receiving a satisfactory return on its military force investment in counter-narcotics operations, specifically citing a 300% increase in operating tempo expenses since 1989, with no measurable decrease in estimates of cocaine cost, flow rate or availability.³⁴ Officials within the Clinton Administration have indicated that, based on the negligible indications of drug supply reductions, funding for interdiction efforts may be decreased in deference to domestic demand control programs.³⁵ However, the cocaine cartels do not present a traditional nor statistically cooperative target. The nature of DOD's primary counter-narcotics missions -- surveillance and support -- are not conducive to any standard means of assessment. Drug traffickers control the selection of timelines and trafficking routes, possess virtually unlimited resources and work to avoid confrontation. An effective detection and monitoring network may deter drug traffickers from completing certain planned smuggling evolutions thus achieving counter-narcotics goals, despite having no tangible means of recording that victory. Since formal counter-narcotics missions were assigned to military forces in 1989, DOD-assisted seizures of

cocaine have increased annually, non-commercial narco-trafficking flights directly to the U.S. from South America have ceased and overall drug smuggling methodology has been forced to change. In the JTF-4 area alone, a letter from the Joint Staff states that DOD's \$250 million annual expenditures for counter-drug operations are estimated to have cost narco-trafficking organizations approximately \$5 billion in seizures, asset confiscations and disruptions, equating to a 20 to 1 investment ratio.³⁶ In this particular scenario, objectives do not have purely empirical measures of effectiveness. An assessment of all factors and indications is necessary to determine force effectiveness.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS

Successful disruption of the narco-trafficking cycle that has become so entrenched in society is a complex proposition that will require great perseverance and resolve. The enemy is rich and ruthless, and the mechanics of his narco-trafficking machine are uniquely suited to the political and societal climate found within both source and transit nations. To maintain credibility and continue to gain popular support, counter-drug forces must attack the cartels' centers of gravity the 'right way,' from both a legal and moral perspective. National sovereignty of countries involved must be observed and basic human rights respected. In order to be effective, the counter-narcotics effort must be unified in focus and action. The capabilities of law enforcement agencies and host and transit nations' forces to process and respond to surveillance information must be commensurate with the level of cueing provided.

Operational plans in both the LANTCOM and SOUTHCOM AORs target appropriate centers of gravity and effectively employ assets assigned to disrupt the cocaine trafficking cycle. Military forces work through the respective Ambassadors and their country teams preserve the legitimacy of the ongoing international drug control effort and engender regional commitment. With DOD support, significant progress has been made by host nations in their quest to take back control of their

countries from the cartels. Through multi-lateral operations such as Support Justice, nations throughout the Andean Ridge area are working together to solve the narco-trafficking problem as never before. However, the response to issues raised in two critical areas may threaten ultimate mission success. The first problem area deals with unity of effort, specifically, noted limitations in I&A response capability. Without responsive I&A assets throughout the transit region, many costly and time consuming surveillance efforts are wasted. While the U.S. cannot dictate national priorities for the law enforcement assets of other sovereign nations, security assistance programs specifically geared to assist host and transit nations respond to D&M information should be intensified. C3I networks to alert DLEAs and transit nation authorities should be optimized and DOD/DLEA advisors should be integrated with transit nation forces to assist in end game coordination efforts.

The second area of debate concerns the assignment of measurable objectives to DOD counter-narcotics operations. Both detractors and advocates of DOD involvement in the counter-narcotics effort point to an array of statistics from which subjective conclusions, favorable to their own points of view can be drawn. From a purely statistical basis, there are no decisive measures of effectiveness for DOD's counter-drug role, which suggests, based on the principals of OOTW, that this may not be an appropriate mission assignment. However, the nature of DOD's restrictive taskings, the unconventional characteristics of the

enemy, and the cumulative chain of events which are inherent to successful interdiction operations, overshadow traditional guidelines. DOD efforts cost less than 4% of the national drug control budget yet it influences virtually all cocaine seizures other than those made within the continental U.S. or those made within nations not aligned with or supported by bi-lateral or multi-lateral agreements with the U.S. I contend that without DOD personnel denying the cartels direct smuggling access to the U.S. or forcing the cartels to into more costly narco-trafficking methodologies, their level of activity and criminal influence within the U.S. would be considerably greater. Bottom line: DOD personnel are effectively executing, and should continue to pursue, the counter-narcotics mission.

General George A. Joulwan, then CINCSOUTH, succinctly stated during an April 1993 address to the Senate Armed Services Committee, "Now is the time to build a counter-drug strategy based on the successes and failures we have learned from the past. But it must be a total strategy with clear-cut goals and objectives -- not a strategy dominated by one agency or department, but rather one based on the total threat we face."³⁷ General Joulwan's emphasis on a total strategy, with forces unified in a legitimate international counter-narcotics effort, designed to win a protracted struggle against an evolved, unconventional enemy, lends itself directly to the operational framework required to successfully prosecute the war on drugs. DOD's surveillance and interdiction support efforts must be

aggressively sustained throughout the theater of operations, allowing the cartels no safe haven or secure narco-trafficking routes. Will military forces play a decisive role in the demise of the cocaine trade? With an eye on the **total threat**, and application of the principals of operations other than war within the context of operational art, I believe they will.

NOTES

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