

United States Marine Corps
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Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

ENGAGEMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

BY
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AY 2001-02

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 24-04-2002		2. REPORT TYPE Student research paper		3. DATES COVERED (FROM - TO) xx-xx-2001 to xx-xx-2002	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Engagement in the Caribbean: The United States Coast Guard Role in International Training and Security Assistance Unclassified				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Strong, David W. ;				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS USMC Command and Staff College 2076 South Street MCCDC Quantico, VA22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS USMC Command and Staff College 2076 South Street MCCDC Quantico, VA22134-5068				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT APUBLIC RELEASE					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See report.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:		17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON	
		Public Release	58	EM114, (blank) lfenster@dtic.mil	
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified		19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER International Area Code Area Code Telephone Number 703767-9007 DSN 427-9007	
				Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98) Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39.18	

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		FORM APPROVED - - - OMB NO. 0704-0188
public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters services, directorate for information operations and reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis highway, suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the office of management and budget, paperwork reduction project (0704-0188) Washington, dc 20503		
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (LEAVE BLANK)	2. REPORT DATE 24 APRIL 2002	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE ENGAGEMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN: THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE		5. FUNDING NUMBERS N/A
6. AUTHOR(S) LCDR David W. Strong, USCG		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) USMC COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE 2076 SOUTH STREET, MCCDC, QUANTICO, VA 22134-5068		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER NONE
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) SAME AS #7.		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER: NONE
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES NONE		
12A. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT NO RESTRICTIONS		12B. DISTRIBUTION CODE N/A
abstract (<i>maximum 200 words</i>) The Coast Guard should develop a regional engagement strategy for the Caribbean Basin. This strategy should align with Regional Commander and State Department goals while developing the capabilities of Caribbean nations to act as partners in fighting illegal activity. The Caribbean is the Coast Guard's busiest operating area, consuming over half of the cutter deployment days, Law Enforcement Detachment deployments and one third of the Training Assets. The US has been conducting drug and migrant interdiction in the area for over 20 years. Starting in 1997 the Coast Guard has tried to develop a comprehensive regional strategy to better qualify its efforts in meeting national security goals		
14. SUBJECT TERMS (KEY WORDS ON WHICH TO PERFORM SEARCH) Coast Guard, the Caribbean, Regional Engagement Strategy, International training.		15. NUMBER OF PAGES: 55
		16. PRICE CODE: N/A

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Engagement in the Caribbean. The United States Coast Guard Role in International Training and Security Assistance.

Author: LCDR David W. Strong, USCG

Thesis: The Coast Guard should develop a regional engagement strategy for the Caribbean Basin. This strategy should align with Regional Commander and State Department goals while developing the capabilities of Caribbean nations to act as partners in fighting illegal activity.

Discussion:

The Caribbean is the Coast Guard's busiest operating area, consuming over half of the cutter deployment days, Law Enforcement Detachment deployments and one third of the Training Assets. The US has been conducting drug and migrant interdiction in the area for over 20 years. Stemming from the 1997 Bridgetown Barbados summit and the change in the Unified Command Plan, the Coast Guard has tried to develop a comprehensive regional strategy to better quantify and coordinate its supporting efforts in meeting national security goals.

There are five tenets in building an effective regional strategy. The first tenet to a successful Coast Guard regional strategy is alignment with the unified joint forces regional commander and their theater engagement goals. The second tenet to a successful Caribbean engagement strategy is partnering with the Caribbean Nations. The third tenet is providing the training teams and assets to build capabilities within a maritime service. The fourth is constructive engagement. Finally, the fifth tenet for an effective regional strategy is constructive operations. Despite the varying focus of each tenet, one common thread exists in all of them: The Coast Guard needs to build-up the capabilities of the Caribbean Nations through its regional engagement efforts.

Recommendations & Conclusions :

The Coast Guard needs to develop an effective engagement strategy for the Caribbean Basin.

The Coast Guard possesses all of the engagement tools needed to make an effective engagement strategy work in the Caribbean.

The Coast Guard has taken a first step in integrating an engagement strategy by developing the Caribbean Support Tender.

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Preface

I researched the United States Coast Guard role in international engagement and security assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although the Coast Guard is in a supporting role to both the Department of State and Department of Defense, we deploy many assets to the area. We also desire to be the force of choice for the regional Commander in Chief to conduct international engagement in the area.

I would like to acknowledge the large amount of support, in the form of documents, interviews, and time that the Coast Guard International Affairs Division at Headquarters provided. I would also like to acknowledge the time and information provided by the Coast Guard International Training Division.

Introduction

To the majority of the public, the United States Coast Guard conducts Search and Rescue, Maritime Law Enforcement, and Environmental Protection but does not play a part in national security issues or international engagement. Despite this perception, the Coast Guard has a significant, but albeit quiet, role in attaining the U.S. national security goals, especially in the realm of Security Assistance and international training. The core missions of the Coast Guard translate particularly well in this realm as it pertains to the internal and external concerns of developing nations. In testimony to Congress, the Coast Guard Director of Resources summed it up

When a Coast Guard cutter makes a port call over there, and we throw the lines on and put the gangway over, we get the...people coming from the defense ministry, but in addition to that we get the transport ministry, the people that are responsible for environmental programs, the people that are trying to deal with enforcing customs laws, scarce fish stocks, people that are trying to maintain the sovereignty...We have found out that the multi-mission nature of the Coast Guard is a real force multiplier in dealing with emerging nations around the world. And we are becoming the platform of choice of the CinCs around the world as an engagement tool to proactively engage some of these countries...there is a nich[sic] that we occupy that we call being a ‘unique instrument’ of national security...¹

The organization retains its relevance in all missions because of this flexibility. The Coast Guard’s role, as a supporting agency, is clearly necessary as an “unique” instrument of international engagement.

The United States has outlined important foreign relations goals through many congressional resolutions and Department of State policy statements. These are to (a) promote a healthier, open and growing world economy; (b) support peace in key regions;

¹ Testimony of Director of Resources, U.S. Coast Guard, to House Subcommittee on Coast Guard, Washington, D.C., February 4, 1999.

(c) enhance stability; and (d) strengthen democratic institutions worldwide.² These goals are refocused between administrations because of the perceived threat. Nevertheless, despite changes in engagement priorities between administrations, efforts to stop the illegal drug trade within the Caribbean Basin have continued. As a result, the basin is an important part of the US National Security Strategy.

The Caribbean Basin is important to US national security because of its proximity to the United States, its role in supporting trade, and because it is a major source of illegal drug transshipment and illegal migrants. With an economy based heavily on trade, with over \$20 billion in exports to the Caribbean basin alone, the United States needs stable nations and economies in that region to maintain our economy.³ The Caribbean Basin consists of twenty-six countries in close proximity with territorial seas contiguous or nearly contiguous from South America to the United States. Without countries that have effective maritime forces that are willing to cooperate with the United States in promoting stability in the region and countering illegal activity, the Caribbean basin is a difficult area to address National Security issues.

The Caribbean is the Coast Guard's busiest operating area, consuming over half of the cutter deployment days, Law Enforcement Detachment deployments, and one third of the training assets⁴. The US has been conducting drug and migrant interdiction in the area for over 20 years. Stemming from the 1997 Bridgetown Barbados summit and the change in the Unified Command Plan, the Coast Guard has tried to develop a

² From Madeline Albright's address to Congress 8 Feb 2000 on the 2001 budget. Reasons are drawn from 22 USC 1942 Development assistance in Latin America: Congressional declaration of Policy. Similar language is found in National Security for a New Century from December 1999.

³ Griffith, Ivelaw L. "U.S. Strategic Interests in Caribbean Security." Joint Forces Quarterly. Autumn 2000: 64-69.

⁴ Swartz, Peter M. US Coast Guard Support for the CinCs: Current and Future Relationships Overseas. Center for Naval Analysis, Alexandria, VA, December 1999. pg 27-29.

comprehensive regional strategy to better quantify and coordinate its supporting efforts in meeting national security goals.

A Coast Guard regional strategy has gone through many drafts starting in 1997. This paper is based on one of those draft regional strategies, attached as Appendix 1. The strategy has five tenets that will focus the Coast Guard's efforts in achieving national security goals. The five tenets of the strategy are: Partnership with the Unified Commander, Partnership with Caribbean Neighbors, Regional Assistance, Constructive Engagement, and Cooperative Operations.⁵ Despite the varying focus of each tenet, one common thread exists in all of them: The Coast Guard needs to build-up the capabilities of the Caribbean Nations through its regional engagement efforts.

⁵ *USCG Caribbean Regional Strategy*, Author Unknown, Date Unknown. Provided by CDR Barry Smith COMDT (G-CI)

Background.

The United States became involved in the long-term security assistance business after it emerged from World War II. In an address to Congress, President Truman stated “I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure.”⁶ This language was aimed at the Soviet Union and their support of communist uprisings in Greece and Turkey. The \$600 million eventually spent in both countries was the first attempt at containment. The provisions of this assistance set a precedent of sending military trainers or advisors to the countries that received aid. These moves resulted in the Military Assistance Program, which tied security assistance training to arms sales and tied the hands of both politicians and the trainers. Nevertheless, Military Assistance’s lasting impact was to establish a long-term approach of not just supplying arms to the countries but training the military as well.

The United States took its first real step to quantify the importance of international training to national security when President John F. Kennedy issued Executive order 10973 in 1961 and signed into law the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. This law did not require other nations to purchase arms in order to receive training from US forces. Although the act was amended in 1976 with the Arms Export Control Act, the authorized programs under this law have grown to include acquisition of assets, exportable Training Teams, Bilateral Exercises, and long-term training missions. Also, in 1976, the International Military Education Training Program was established and allowed foreign officers to attend US Military training centers.

⁶ Defense Institute for Security Assistance Management (DISAM), *The Management of Security Assistance*, 20th Edition, Washington, D.C., GPO, June 2000.

To achieve engagement goals, both the State Department and Defense Department manage funded programs to train, equip and maintain other nations' military organizations. Within the Caribbean, the Defense Department manages programs such as Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Financing and Excess Defense Articles. Through such programs, the United States is able to equip and provide technical training to foreign military services. Many decommissioned Coast Guard cutters are transferred to other countries through these programs. In addition, Coast Guard training teams and maintenance personnel provide the maintenance packages for the transferred items.

Another Defense Department program designed for education is the International Military Education and Training program. This program funds foreign students to attend schools in the United States. The courses funded through International Military Education and Training range from advanced Professional Military Education and Leadership courses to basic technical proficiency courses. In addition, the outgrowth of the Expanded-International Military Education and Training program allows for training teams to offer exportable courses outside of the United States.

The Defense Department manages their international engagement programs through the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management. The goals of this Defense Institute are to increase military to military contact and to expose foreign military students to the United States way of life and values.⁷ While attending schools in the US, international students are able to travel the country.

The State Department manages a diverse portfolio of international aid funding. Unlike the Defense Department, each embassy has an account per country or region.⁸

⁷ DISAM Handbook 20th Edition, pg. 61-62.

⁸ The US maintains one embassy for the Eastern Caribbean Region in Bridgetown, Barbados.

The embassy security assistance officers have the authority to manage how that money is spent within legislative limits. One source that funds the Coast Guard training team visits, maintenance visits, and materials is the Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. Started in 1978 as the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, the organization helps fight the drug war through diplomatic efforts.⁹ By working with the Caribbean, Latin and South American governments, the Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement hopes to enlist the help of foreign governments in combating the ever-increasing drug trade.

United States involvement in the drug war underscores the importance of international training and cooperation, especially in the Caribbean basin. For over 20 years, the major shipment routes of illegal goods, narcotics, migrants, and guns have been in the Caribbean. Because most nations in this region claim 12-mile limits for territorial seas and are relatively close together, the international waters between them are small or non-existent. Traffickers are able to leave the coast of Venezuela and island hop north until they reached the Anegada Passage between Antigua and the Virgin Islands. They can then dart across during cover of night in an attempt to get onto the eastern shore of Puerto Rico. Because there are no Customs between Puerto Rico and the continental United States, these illegal goods can more easily get to their consumer markets. Other routes include the coast of Central America and through the Yucatan channel, to Cuba and across the Straits of Florida to the US. Both eastern and western routes, although constantly patrolled by Coast Guard assets, provide many safe havens for smugglers because of the unpatrolled territorial seas. Although the US and the Coast Guard have dedicated increasing assets to this area and achieved moderate success in stemming the

⁹ Renamed International Narcotics and Law Enforcement in 1994. Source Department of State.

flow of illicit goods, the lack of international waters along the transshipment lanes has hindered any truly effective effort.

In order to overcome these difficulties in enforcement, the US began talks with Caribbean basin nations as a result of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.¹⁰ What evolved was a six-part model for bilateral agreements¹¹ with Caribbean nations. In attempts to cut the lines farther south, the US negotiated agreements with these island nations which allowed the US to operate in their territorial seas and pursue and detain vessels flagged in these nations. These agreements were focused on two areas of limitations previously placed on U.S. enforcement units. The first, as discussed above, was the use of territorial seas to evade detection and interdiction by law enforcement assets. The second was an attempt to speed up the "Statement of No Objection" process.

The Statement of No Objection process was contrived after President Carter issued the Presidential Directive 27 (PD-27). In an attempt to eliminate international incidents, PD-27 set up requirements for the requesting asset and US Government agency to receive permission to take law enforcement action either inside foreign territorial seas or against a foreign flagged vessel, to include stateless and assimilated stateless vessels.¹² Although politically prudent for retaining good international relations, the statement of no objection process severely restricted the tempo of operations. The level of proof required

¹⁰ From RADM Riutta's Statement to Congress May 13, 1999.

¹¹ RADM Riutta's. The six parts are 1. Board and Search vessels claiming flag of a signatory nation; 2. Embarkation of a coastal state shiprider empowered to authorize patrols, boardings, searches, seizures, and arrests in sovereign waters; 3. Pursuit of suspect vessels into sovereign waters with permission to stop, board, and search; 4. Entry into sovereign waters to investigate suspect vessels and aircraft, also with permission to stop, board and search; 5. Overflight by state aircraft of sovereign airspace in support of counter drug operations; and 6. Authority to relay an order-to-land in the territory of a signatory nation.

for the US to pursue the permission from the flag state is at least reasonable suspicion that the vessel was involved in smuggling.¹³ The on-scene asset provides all available information to the operational commander. The operation command passes the request up the chain of command to the State Department for engagement with the foreign ministers. The cumbersome and time consuming request process took from hours to days, depending on the strength of reported evidence and the willingness of the foreign government. Therefore, it is in the US best interest to speed up the Statement of No Objection process.

By cultivating bi-lateral pre-action agreements, the US eliminated much of the diplomatic red tape that followed many of these requests. Unfortunately, the short-term gain had a longer-term negative impact. The US used the new found powers to operate both vessels and aircraft inside foreign territorial seas without being able to give specific instructions on what the assets could and could not do as with the established process. In addition, vessels flagged in those countries could be detained and taken to US ports, usually in Puerto Rico or Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they would fall subject to US law. In effect, the US had shanghaied the sovereignty of these smaller nations to meet their national security goals for the fighting the drug trade.

To support a legitimate democratic government, professional law enforcement or military organizations must be established and sustained. Much of the US theater engagement focus throughout the last decades has been to train these organizations to foster cooperation on counter narcotics operations within the Caribbean Sea. The small

¹² Stateless or assimilated stateless vessels are from United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). They are vessels that claim no flag state, claim more than one flag state or whose claimed flag state denies their registry. Under UNCLOS, these vessels are subject to laws of all nations.

Caribbean countries all have or desire some type of maritime service to address their national concerns. Unlike the US Navy, these small forces are not force projection assets. They instead have many mission profiles similar to that of the Coast Guard, protecting sovereignty, protecting natural resources, and protecting safety of life at sea.

¹³ Reasonable suspicion is the lowest form level of evidence. Reasonable suspicion exists if a Law enforcement officer has a reasonable articulable suspicion that criminal activity is occurring.

Work with the Unified Commander

The first tenet to a successful Coast Guard regional strategy is alignment with the unified joint forces regional commander and their theater engagement goals. Because the Department of Defense and the regional Commanders in Chief are by law a lead agency in international engagement, the Coast Guard's efforts must also align with Southern Command's Regional engagement plan. To meet the National Security Strategy, Commander, US Southern Command has outlined his regional strategy as "Building regional cooperative security...Developing military roles and missions for the 21st century...Supporting the national counter drug strategy."¹⁴ US Southern Command provides funding for many of the Coast Guard's regional engagement activities. They provide partial funding for the Caribbean Support Tender, for training team visits to Southern Command's area of responsibility, and for formal military schools within the US.

The year 1997 was a landmark year that fundamentally changed how the Coast Guard conducted the international training mission. The most significant was the change to the Unified Command Plan. The Unified Command Plan defines missions, responsibilities and geographic areas of responsibilities. In 1997, the Unified Command Plan changed, placing Central America and the Caribbean under the command of Southern Command. Southern Command had previously worked with the Coast Guard training teams in building counter narcotics forces throughout South America as well as the Coast Guard cutters deployed for the annual UNITAS multinational exercise.¹⁵ As a result of Southern Command's close working relationship and their assumption of

¹⁴ USSOUTHCOM's Theater Strategy <<http://www.southcom.mil/PA/facts/strategy.htm>>.

¹⁵ UNITAS means unity. It is a multinational exercise held in Central and South America.

responsibility for the Coast Guard's busiest areas of operations, the Coast Guard would become more prevalent in the regional commander's theater engagement plan.

In early February 1997, the National Security Council (NSC) was conducting preparation work for President Clinton's visit to Barbados to attend a Caribbean Basin summit. In response to a general issues for consideration request, the Chief of Coast Guard Atlantic Area Operational Forces forwarded a point paper on 17 February to his superiors.¹⁶ He viewed this summit as a possible springboard for more Coast Guard theater engagement and opportunity to directly influence the new regional commander's engagement strategy.

...reports from [Commandant] are not encouraging regarding SOUTHCOM's appreciation for maritime considerations and the role of the Coast Guard. JIATF-E has made indications through recent activities that they desire to expand their international role, perhaps assuming a principal coordinating role for engagement efforts in the Caribbean.¹⁷

The Chief of Atlantic Area Operations positively endorsed the point paper and advocated the Coast Guard as the primary agency for international engagement within the Caribbean. To achieve an increased engagement role, he also submitted the concept of "an Caribbean International Support Tender to deliver a 'total package' of training, maintenance, and support for international operations."¹⁸ He went on to point out that "This opportunity demands a full-rudder course correction to overcome the fundamental and pervasive obstacles to developing viable maritime counterparts in the Caribbean"¹⁹.

¹⁶ See Appendix 2. Atlantic Area is set up in Divisions, Operations (Ao), C3 (At) and Marine Safety (Am), all with sub-divisions organized functionally.

¹⁷ From CAPT Patrick Stillman's Point Paper of 17 Feb 97.

¹⁸ From LANTAREA(Ao) Point Paper, *Enhancing National Security in the Eastern Caribbean*, 28 Feb 97.

¹⁹ LANTAREA(Ao), 28 Feb 97.

The conundrum was what type of unit would be dedicated to the theater engagement mission. With no new construction a possibility, the asset would have to come from existing stocks. Major cutter assets would not be available for such a mission. The creation of such a unit was also specifically targeted at getting back over 150 cutter days from international training to use towards migrant interdiction and counter-narcotics operations. During this time period, the Coast Guard had been receiving new Juniper class buoy tenders to replace the World War II vintage Balsam class buoy tenders. Many of these aging, but still functional, vessels were being transferred to Caribbean and Central and South American nations under Excess Defense Articles and Foreign Military Sales programs. The Balsam class had many advantages for supporting Caribbean training missions. The Balsam class were relatively cheap to operate; had a simple electronics suite, fuel-efficient engines, large cargo carrying and handling capacity; and relatively shallow draft.

To enforce the need for such a support vessel, the head of the Technical Assistance Field Team Eastern Caribbean conducted a survey of the vessels used by these nations for their Coast Guards, Navies or Marine Police. These teams found most of these craft to be “Death Traps” citing a lack of logistical support, the need for better maintenance procedures, and lack of funding. They also found that as high as 20 percent of these forces’ budgets were spent on shipping of spare parts alone. Because it could fit into most ports in the Caribbean and keep a readily available supply of spare parts for US supplied vessels, the cutter would alleviate the problems of supplying spare parts and maintenance on a haphazard schedule and keep vessels safe and operating.²⁰

²⁰ Most island ports are small with shallow harbors. NIMA Chart Series 25000 & 26000 series.

Before the Coast Guard could legitimately proceed with a new initiative to fix some of the engagement problems within the Caribbean, the international training cutter concept had to be tested. To align with the regional commander's engagement strategies, any new initiative would have to be in addition and complementary to any ongoing engagement missions. Southern Command supported most of its international training for the Regional Security System out of Camp Blizard in Antigua. This camp was a major logistics hub and training center for Security Assistance efforts in the region. Not only do US training teams use the base, but also the British had a British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) that operated from the base.

There were several other ongoing missions throughout the Caribbean. The Coast Guard, through the several Defense and State Department programs, was developing the Haitian Coast Guard. There was an annual exercise with the Eastern Caribbean nations known as TRADEWINDS. Because engagement missions are also designed to build positive relationships with other countries, to interject a new initiative that disrupted ongoing efforts would have been detrimental to those relationships.

In the fall of 1997, Coast Guard Atlantic Area in conjunction with Coast Guard District Seven began preliminary plans for Operation SNOWBIRD, a training operation to be conducted in the eastern Caribbean during January-March 1998.²¹ This time frame for the exercise would be a precursor to the annual Southern Command TRADEWINDS Exercise scheduled for March-April 98. The unit selected was USCGC BRAMBLE in Port Huron, MI, a Balsam class buoy tender, and the USCGC POINT HURON, an 82-

²¹ The Coast Guard Seventh District is headquartered in Miami, FL. Its area of responsibility extends from the NC-SC border to South America.

foot patrol boat. On 01 December 1997, BRAMBLE got underway for what would turn out to be a 125-day trip to the Caribbean.

The Eastern Caribbean Military Liaison Officer (MLO), a Coast Guard Commander, attached to the American Embassy in Barbados faxed a preliminary “Transit, Training and Exchange Itinerary Proposal” on 10 December. Within the proposal, the MLO included the concepts and considerations for the deployment.

Operation Snowbird will be conducted in the Eastern Caribbean region for Regional Security Systems (RSS) nations²² ...Op Snowbird will provide opportunities to basically ‘test’ the Caribbean Support Tender concept and effectively introduce the 82ft patrol boat to the region. ...It will also serve to help regional coast guards fine tune themselves as they approach Exercise Tradewinds 98, the regional maritime phases of which are scheduled for March 1998. Finally it will provide a unique and tailored approach to regional training and joint maritime law enforcement.²³

Part of the concept also identified the need for funding from Southern Command to make the exercise fully functional. The proposed operation would be a litmus test for the support needed from the Southern Command for the whole international training cutter concept. The Atlantic Area Coast Guard took a calculated gamble to propose an internationally crewed vessel as an effective tool for US engagement because the approach lay well outside traditional forms of engagement.

At Southern Command in Miami, FL, the Caribbean Support Tender concept was being reviewed. Although the discussions that occurred there are not readily available, the commander sent a hand written note to his Deputy on 8 December 1997. In quick bullets, he stated “On the face, this initiative appears to have considerable merit. It

²² This is a multinational agreement with participation from Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts-Nevis, Dominica, St Lucia, Barbados, St. Vincent and Grenada. Because of interests in the region, the European Union, Great Britain primarily, and the United States are heavily involved with the RSS.

checks many 'boxes' Joint, Combined, Multilateral, Low cost, Versatile, Hi [sic] pay off, What do you think?"²⁴ On 29 December the Deputy Commander initialed off on the note with a quick "have discussed" and a J3 (operations & training).

Southern Command voiced his support to the Coast Guard in August 1998. In a short letter to the Commandant, he also pledged his assistance in helping the initiative. The regional commander provided this help by writing letters to members of Congress expressing his support. This support reinforced the symbiotic relationship between the Atlantic Area Coast Guard and Southern Command. The Coast Guard is the primary force provider for Southern Command in the form of cutter days, law enforcement detachments, training teams, and community relations visits. In effect, the Coast Guard was offering increased international presence while strengthening the regional commanders security assistance and engagement plan. With the Clinton administration's current attention on fulfilling the pledges from Barbados, any refusal of support could have significant negative repercussions both within the US Government and internationally. Hypothetically, Southern Command only course of action would have to be support despite the beliefs of the commander and his staff. There is no indication that support for the initiative was ever in doubt from the unified regional commander.

²³ *Transit, Training and Exchange Itinerary Proposal for Operations Snowbird* (Draft). Paper itself was undated. Drafted by CDR Louis Orsini, USCG. Military Liaison Officer to Eastern Caribbean in 1997.

²⁴ Note was found in G-CI working file. Although by itself at the time, the CinC SouthCom letter head used also had several routing symbols on it and appears to be used as a cover sheet to the proposal sent to SouthCom.

Work with Our Caribbean Neighbors

Aligning the Coast Guard's efforts to meet Southern Command's engagement goals is only part of a greater Caribbean engagement strategy. The second tenet to a successful Caribbean engagement strategy is partnering with the Caribbean Nations. US Ambassadors are the primary tool for partnering with these nations. The United States government policy recognizes that "training, advice and assistance to developing countries' militaries are critical instruments of our national security policy."²⁵ In order to meet the national security goal of building stronger relations, the US must be willing to provide what the Caribbean countries envision for their maritime forces. By building professional maritime forces in the Caribbean, the US promotes the stability of the Caribbean governments, increases the region's ability to combat illegal activity, and builds stronger bonds between the US and the Caribbean nations.

Unfortunately, many Caribbean government leaders believed that their nations were being used in the drug war with little attention from the US. Although the Caribbean nations realized that the narcotics trade had a derogatory effect on their governments through corruption and crime, they also had sovereignty, economic and legal concerns that were more pressing. In effect, the Caribbean community believed that their concerns were being ignored by the United States.²⁶

While US military responsibilities for the area were changing, pressure was building from the region itself for increased attention. By 1997, the Caribbean governments were growing weary of being used by the US as tools in the drug war and tired of sacrificing their sovereignty without receiving credible support in return.

²⁵ From Federation of American Scientists "US International Security Assistance Education and Training." <<http://www.fas.org>>.

Spearheaded by the Prime Minister of Antigua, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) called for the Barbados Summit. In exchange for their cooperation in combating illicit goods and illegal immigration, the Caribbean nations demanded training beyond counter-narcotics from the US.

As a result, the Barbados summit in 1997 changed the security assistance focus on the Eastern Caribbean significantly. The concerns of the Caribbean Community nations are protecting their sovereignty, trade and natural resources. They also look to suppress illegal activity that can undermine the legitimate governments through crime and corruption. The Caribbean countries realized that corruption and the illegal trade in migrants, guns and money were a significant threat to their stability. At the Bridgetown summit, the US delegation presented the idea of an international training and repair ship. As with Southern Command, the Caribbean countries agreed with the concept.

At the beginning of fiscal year 1999, the Senate and House passed legislation authorizing "...the establishment, operation, and maintenance of maritime training vessels.." ²⁷ The Caribbean Support Tender's mission outlined the need for routine visits to Caribbean and Latin American countries to help maintain equipment and train their forces. In addition, State Department money was to be identified for mission training, mission maintenance, and repair support costs.

USCGC GENTIAN (WIX 290) was commissioned in September 1999. The Caribbean Support Tender deployed with an international crew for the first time on October 9, 1999. The development and deployment of the Caribbean Support Tender has filled out the more focused approach to international training. The unit marries funding

²⁶ From E-mail interview with Mr. Louis Orsini, COMDT (G-OPL) 9 Jan 02.

²⁷ Title IV Sec 401 (3) (b). Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act. Voted on 28 September 1998.

from both Southern Command and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement to accomplish the engagement goals for the region. The cutter hauls equipment and spare parts to Caribbean nations purchased with State Department funding. These spare parts are used by Coast Guard training teams funded by International Military Education and Training. The training teams instruct international students on equipment purchased through Foreign Military Sales or Excess Defense Articles. In addition, the Caribbean Support Tender provides a base of operations for the training team members.

Beyond the pragmatic training platform, the GENTIAN has also become a diplomatic tool. Having US ships visit foreign ports is an effective diplomatic tool in the US international engagement efforts. Coast Guard cutters make port calls throughout the Caribbean to “show the flag”. While in port, the cutters may host dignitaries, the US ambassador, or military leaders. Unfortunately, cutter visits to foreign ports are not consistent nor guaranteed. Current operations drive the scheduling of cutter port calls. A cutter scheduled to attend the Independence Day for one Caribbean country may be diverted to an ongoing illegal migrant case and forgo the engagement opportunity. The Caribbean Support Tender’s ability to keep to its port of call schedule provides a more consistent and constant presence in Caribbean countries. In the past three years the GENTIAN has made forty port visits to twenty different countries in the Eastern Caribbean and Central and South America.²⁸

Although the Caribbean Support Tender is an important tool for diplomacy, it is not the first line of theater engagement. The Coast Guard maintains thirteen Military Liaison Officers, Security Assistance Officers, and Attaches throughout the Caribbean

²⁸ Source: CGC GENTIAN informational Powerpoint presentation as of 19 Jan 02.

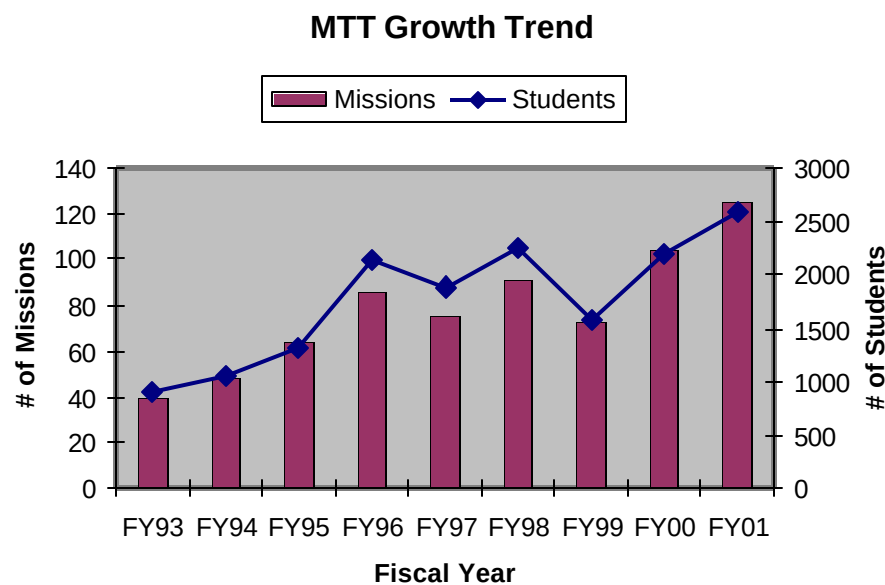
and Latin America.²⁹ These are the individuals that are the first line of engagement for Coast Guard training missions. The liaisons work closely with the Department of State and each nation's internal ministers to develop the appropriate training and support packages that help prioritize the deployment of Coast Guard Training Team and ship visits. They also coordinate sending international students to attend resident courses at Coast Guard training facilities.

The Coast Guard has had an important impact in meeting the US regional goals by providing engagement assets to the Caribbean nations. The Coast Guard offers training teams, hosts foreign students at Coast Guard training commands, and provides many excess defense articles to help equip Caribbean forces. In addition, Coast Guard cutters routinely visit Caribbean ports while deployed. The Coast Guard already possesses the assets to meet US engagement goals. However, the training teams, ship visits, and formal training efforts have not traditionally been focused toward a common goal. To develop the Caribbean nations' capabilities, the Coast Guard needs to develop comprehensive capability development packages.

²⁹ Source Coast Guard International Affairs Directorate. <<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-ci/intl.htm>>.

Regional Assistance

The third tenet to an effective regional strategy is providing the training teams and assets to build capabilities within a maritime service. To build an effective strategy that not only satisfies military and diplomatic strategic goals, the Coast Guard now deploys a more comprehensive training package to build small nation's capabilities. By aligning



Number of Missions conducted and Students trained by Coast Guard Training Teams
Figure 1

with both military and diplomatic engagement goals, the Coast Guard's training teams are in high demand. As shown in figure 1, the demand for Mobile Training Teams world wide has grown

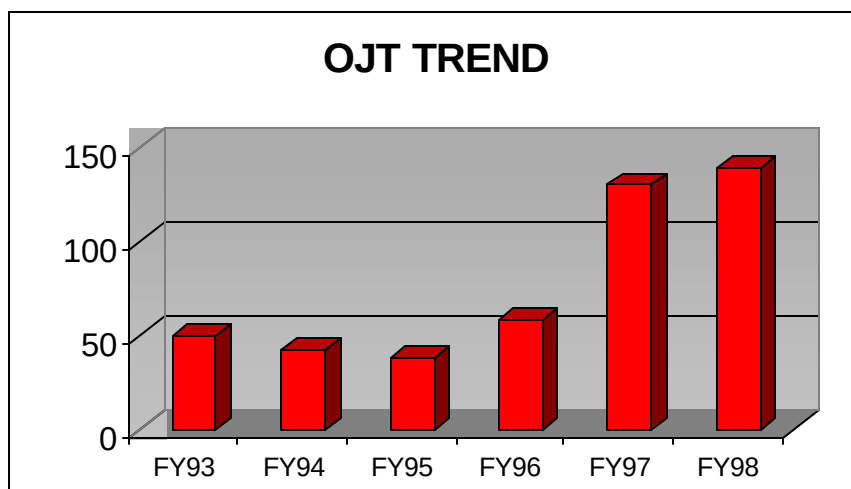
substantially in the previous decade.³⁰ Within the Southern Command Area, the number of missions and students has nearly doubled to close to fifty percent of all Mobile Training Team visits.³¹ In addition, the number of students trained and countries visited has increased substantially. This increase is directly attributed to the change in the 1997

³⁰ Coast Guard Headquarters International Affairs Directorate (G-CI). *International Training Excel Spreadsheet* G-CI. Accessed 27 Feb 02.

³¹ G-CI. Accessed 27 Feb 02.

Unified Command Plan, where Southern Command gained responsibility for an additional twenty-two nations.

Because Caribbean national maritime forces are small, the organizations cannot afford to send a large portion of their senior petty officers to school in the US for extended periods. The amount of On the Job Training (OJT) provided to international students grew rapidly in the late 1990's. In fact by 1997, the number of students had doubled from 1996 and Figure 2 shows the trend increasing.³² On the Job Training is conducted with a small number of students onboard Coast Guard units working on Personal Qualification Standards (PQS) that are approved by the International Military and Education Program (IMET). On the Job Training is used to reinforce formal training



On the Job Training for Foreign Students
Figure 2

or in lieu of attending formal schools. This type of training is to gain final qualification at mission specific watch stations such as underway

Officer of the Deck or Law Enforcement Officer.

An example of how on the job training helps in the training process comes from the Coast Guard's internal qualification standards. To become qualified as a Law Enforcement Boarding Officer in the Coast Guard, there are several training objectives a

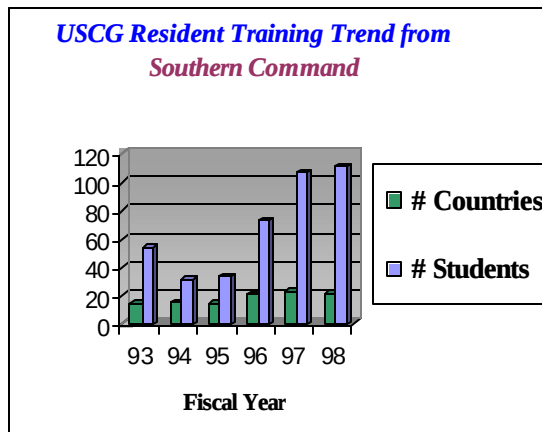
trainee must accomplish. The objectives are a thirty-five day basic course, ability and proper judgment in the use of firearms, practical experience under instruction and finally the full faith and confidence, expressed in a qualification letter, of the unit Commanding Officer. This qualification, along with many search and rescue ratings, requires constant hands on applications and practice to maintain even a moderate level of competency.

The Coast Guard relies on its International Training Division to meet the growing demand for exportable training. This organization consists of fifty-nine personnel both civilian and military. The International Training Division was formed in 1996 from four separate Coast Guard engagement and training organizations. Although a division of Coast Guard International Affairs Directorate, International Training Division relies almost exclusively on Defense and State Department programs for operating funds. In return, they support international engagements throughout the world. Within the Caribbean and Latin America, the Coast Guard is a large part of the security assistance engagement provider for Southern Command. There are thirty exportable courses in operations, law enforcement, engineering, marine safety, search and rescue, and leadership and management.

Mobile training teams are only part of the equation for the Coast Guard's involvement in international engagement. As part of a whole training and professional development package for the Caribbean nations, the Coast Guard also provides a large number of formal schools at their training centers throughout the US.³³

³² G-CI Accessed 27 Feb 02.

³³ G-CI. Accessed 27 Feb 02.



Students Attending Coast Guard Formal Schools and Countries represented.

Figure 3

One course that is primarily designed for foreign students is the International Maritime Officers Course. Going beyond the basics of navigation, engineering and law enforcement, this course is in line with professional military education. Because of the size of many of the Caribbean nations, mid-grade officers are usually one or two

promotions away from becoming heads of a service or major service component in their own countries. This course focuses on the management of these forces beyond day-to-day operations. The students learn long term planning and organization.

This type of education has paid dividends beyond the professional development of the officers attending the course. The foreign students gain a substantial view into the inner workings of the Coast Guard and exposure to the US way of life in general. As a result, the US develops closer ties between the current and future leaders of Caribbean national governments and maritime services and the US Coast Guard. The goal of providing leadership and management training is to influence the entire organization.

In fact, a study conducted by the Institute for National Strategic Studies found that students from International Military Education and Training courses were more comfortable when dealing with the US on many levels. In addition, those graduates of US military courses better understood the US perspective on many issues.

...Washington also considers these international officer graduates, and now civilian professionals, to be an important investment in U.S. security by virtue

of the roles they will play in establishing or sustaining local and regional stability...³⁴

Beyond the International Maritime Officers Course, the Coast Guard has over one hundred courses in technical skills, search and rescue, law enforcement operations and maritime safety and security. Ten nations from the Lesser Antilles have sent students to the Coast Guard courses within the US.³⁵ These students, in many cases, will return to work with Coast Guard forces or work on former Coast Guard assets.

The Coast Guard provides legal and subject matter expert teams to help develop the maritime service codes for developing nations. The Coast Guard not only fills the role of a law enforcement agency, but is also the primary regulator/inspector for maritime facilities and vessels. Because of this large role, the organization maintains an inherent expertise in maintaining these large volumes of regulations that cover the maritime industries in the United States. As the United States is the largest trading partner with many of these countries, the maintenance of minimum standards for operating vessels and stowage of materials is required to facilitate more open, free trade with these nations.

The Coast Guard in conjunction with the International Maritime Organization set these minimum standards for vessels and merchant mariners. This commonality of standards allows for a more free flow of shipping, where vessels are not constantly inspected for hazards. The development of appropriate laws, regulations, and policies regarding illegal activity, trade and tourism is important to maintain free flowing commerce. Additionally the need for interoperability between domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies is crucial to foster closer relations between the US and its

³⁴ Institute for National Strategic Studies. *McNair Paper Number 44, Chapter 6*. October 1995.

³⁵ United States Coast Guard International Affairs Directorate. *United States Coast Guard International Affairs*. Washington: GPO.

neighboring countries. The Report on Crime and Security in U.S. Seaports of 2000 specifically noted the need for the training of responsible personnel at ports of embarkation of goods destined to the United States. This conclusion was echoed in a paper presented by Dr. Stephan Flynn at the Organization of American States Inter-American Committee on Ports in 1999. He noted that "...port security must be pursued in a regional context."³⁶

Despite the capabilities that the Coast Guard possesses to build the skills of Caribbean maritime forces, it has not historically put an entire training package together to develop capabilities within the Caribbean countries.

³⁶ Flynn, Dr. Stephan, *Port Security in an Era of Open Economies and Open Societies*, Organization of American States, 12 October 1999.

Constructive Engagement

The fourth tenet of a regional strategy is constructive engagement. Although developing a nation's capability appears straight forward, there are several factors that make such a process more difficult. In cases where the US has successfully built effective forces, the key component was time and commitment of the host country. To execute the organization's missions effectively, the Coast Guard needs partners in the Caribbean. The heavy investment of time, equipment and money into the Caribbean Nations needs to lead to an end-state. Because the Coast Guard's efforts have not always been focused, countries have been equipped and trained but not always developed into effective partners.

Since 1997, the demand on Coast Guard training and engagement assets has grown substantially. Within the Caribbean, nations expect more than just haphazard training missions. Although Caribbean nations have received a large portion of the Coast Guard's international training effort, there are very few that can be considered truly capable partners in regional security.³⁷ No longer is the Coast Guard simply expected to provide training; it is expected to build capabilities and effective forces. Studies of historical examples reveal that the only effective method for building capabilities is long-term focused effort that include training, equipment and maintenance. There are two examples of deploying a whole training package to develop capabilities. One example is from the Marine Corps efforts to develop the Colombian Marines in effective riverine operations.

³⁷ Assessment from CDR Barry Smith and Mr. Gary Palmer from Coast Guard International Affairs.

Colombia

The US Marine Corps had a long-standing training mission for Colombian Marines in riverine operations starting in 1989 with the Andean Initiative. The training efforts encompassed a “whole package” training plan. The US Marines, US Navy International Programs Office (IPO), and Defense Department standardized equipment, provided quotas to formal schools within the Navy’s education and training system, and maintained a constant presence with training teams in country for five years. Their goals were not only to develop a professional force in riverine operations, but also to make that force self-sustaining. This would mean once the large investment of time and money was complete that the Colombian Marines would have established training programs to keep up the adequate level of skills without constant attention from the U.S. In effect the Colombians would take “owner-ship” of the program and maintain it.

The 1995 Center for Naval Analysis study of the program found many important lessons learned and conclusions that should be considered for any future endeavors. The study concluded that full-scale training teams were imperative to build the professionalism of the force to acceptable levels. Once that had been reached and training programs were in place, the host countries could sustain the program with smaller teams on an as needed basis. The study also stated “Program success is possible, even at operating levels that are below U.S. standards.” Additionally it found that good will and promotion of positive trends in human rights and civilian-military relations often began at “the tactical level of fostering military professional development.”³⁸

³⁸ Gonzalez, Iris M. *The Colombian Riverine Program: A Case Study of Naval International Programs and National Security*. Center of Naval Analysis. March 1995.

Although the training effort with the Colombian Marines was not a Coast Guard training program, it shows the effort and time needed to develop any type of effective capability set within an organization. The training effort also shows what level of expectation should be set for achieving an effective force. The next well documented whole training package effort was conducted in Haiti after the return of Haitian President Aristide. From independence in 1803 to the present day, Haiti has rarely had a stable form of government.

Haiti

When Haitian President Aristide was restored to power in 1995, the Haitian government disbanded all branches of the Haitian Armed Forces. In its stead, the US Government working with Haiti began the formation of the Haitian National Police (HNP). The goal of the Haitian government, as well as US agencies engaged in Haiti, was to establish a professional civilian force focused on law enforcement and internal security. In Haiti's history the two most recent forces that possessed that mission were the Tonton Macoute and the Army. The Tonton Macoute had been the force that kept the Duvalier dynasty in power and was disbanded after Jean Duvalier was ousted from power. The Haitian army assumed primary responsibility for security under the new Haitian Government. The army led a coup that forced President Aristide to flee the country. Both of these organizations were well known for human rights abuses and reconstituting either one would significantly impact the legitimacy of the newly elected democratic government.

Unfortunately, the only trained individuals available to start the new national police force were former armed forces members. In the case of forming the maritime arm of the national police (Haitian Coast Guard), the Haitian Navy had not been a

significant factor in the coup of 1991. According to a Coast Guard Military Liaison Officer (MLO), the navy was not associated with the human rights violations and using former navy personnel for the police force was acceptable for both the Haitian government and the US.³⁹

The reinstatement of the Haitian Coast Guard is an example of a whole training package delivered to a country. With constant attention to the formation, training and development of the force, the Haitian Coast Guard became an effective maritime law enforcement arm. The Haitian Coast Guard is also a reminder that operational success in building a force still plays servant to the political whims of the US.

The Haitian Coast Guard started with seven former Haitian navy personnel, with no working equipment, a thoroughly looted base at Killick,⁴⁰ and \$1M in funds from the now defunct Military Assistance Program in addition to \$167K from the International Military Education and Training program⁴¹. The Military Liaison Officer began buying equipment and sent the first seven members of the Haitian Coast Guard to school at the Coast Guard Training Center, Yorktown, Virginia, for leadership, management and technical schools. Despite numerous set backs in the training and maintenance programs, the Coast Guard Training Teams, in conjunction with a Canadian Coast Guard team, continued the slow and frustrating process of building the professional force.

Between 1996 and 1999, the US, through security assistance programs, invested \$4.6M into the Haitian Coast Guard. These funds purchased equipment and paid for the constant presence of Long Term Training Teams, formal training at Coast Guard training

³⁹ CDR David Forslund USCG, Military Liaison Officer to Haiti, interview with author 5 Dec 2001.

⁴⁰ a Suburb of Port-au-Prince

⁴¹ Forslund, CDR K. D., *A Comprehensive Report on the Haitian Coast Guard Development Program*, June 1999.

facilities and operational testing. For that investment, the Haitian Coast Guard with US assistance seized 14 narcotics trafficking vessels, prosecuted 3 major search and rescue cases, seized 3600 kilos of illegal narcotics, arrested 38 people and rescued over 300 people.⁴²

In late 1999, due to significant political impasses involving elections and abuses by other portions of the Haitian National Police, the US Congress stopped all aid to Haiti in 2000.⁴³ Because funding stopped, all security assistance personnel were pulled out of Haiti and ongoing training missions were put on hold. With that, the US trainers were not able to get to a level of internal sustainment within the Haitian Coast Guard that the C.N.A. study of the Colombian Riverine Project had found critical to success.

There are many lessons to be learned from the Haitian Coast Guard experience. However not all apply to the rest of the Caribbean Basin. The training teams in Haiti were able to manipulate some of the more critical personnel decisions for leadership positions. With the Coast Guard as part of the National Police, the Liaison Officer and training teams were able to convince the overall police commissioner to reassign some of the more troublesome members. They also lost trained members while attending training in the US. The Training Team leader estimated that half of the Haitian CG members that went to the US for training failed to return to Haiti.⁴⁴ These problems were more unique to the Haitian students than to engagement with countries in the Caribbean Basin.

The development of the Haitian Coast Guard is a tactical success despite the political impasse and subsequent withdrawal of US support. The whole package approach

⁴² Forslund, pg. 25-27.

⁴³ Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act 13 July 2001 H5975 Sec 558.

⁴⁴ Davies, BMCS William, Short History of the Haitian CG.

to building the Haitian Coast Guard succeeded in the creation of a professional force that the GAO found it to be “one of the best police units in terms of the capabilities of its staff.”⁴⁵ Although phase five, titled “Sustain” planned on a reduction of training personnel in outlying areas, there was no long-range transition strategy to a self-sustaining force.

The Caribbean

While the Coast Guard was engaged in Haiti, USCGC BRAMBLE completed their deployment and forwarded a full report on the successes and shortcomings of Operation Snowbird. Operation Snowbird validated many of the assumptions that had gone into the original Caribbean Support Tender concept. The BRAMBLE delivered 60,000 lbs of cargo and trained 371 students in engineering, damage control, search and rescue, seamanship and maritime law enforcement. Many of these validations came from the Commanding Officer’s criticisms of the operation. In his lessons learned from the operation, he stated that the four areas in need of improvement were “preparation, time, materials and continuity”. He noted lack of facilities and time to thoroughly conduct the training requested and the need for the right equipment, specifically engineering equipment and supplies. Finally, “a long term progressive training program must be enacted in order to build and improve upon skills taught during previous years. Otherwise, future operations like SNOWBIRD will become redundant and ineffective.”⁴⁶ The CO, in his report, had pointed out many of the shortcomings in the international

⁴⁵ Foreign Assistance: Any Further Aid to Haitian Justice System Should be Linked to Performance Related Positions. GAO-01-24, October 2000.

⁴⁶ USCGC BRAMBLE, Operation Snowbird After Action Report, Annex J. 29 April 1998.

engagement in the Caribbean that had frustrated the Regional Security System Country leadership, namely the need for ongoing constructive engagement.

During the first 3 years of the Caribbean Support Tender's operations, the crew and the program conducted a critical review of the operation. Many of the initial planning concepts for the program were short sighted and did not mold well into the actual use of the concept. Although initially targeted at the Eastern Caribbean nations involved in the Regional Security System, the cutter has found its best customers elsewhere. Currently, Trinidad and Tobago and Panama have gained the most from the program. This is largely because of the equipment of the countries, their willingness to participate and their existing maritime services. Both Trinidad and Tobago and Panama have four former GENTIAN crewmembers working in their maritime forces. These crewmembers either serve on former Coast Guard vessels or work in Operations command centers. Both maritime forces are considered to be very capable effective forces within the Caribbean basin.⁴⁷

The Coast Guard should take lessons learned from the development efforts in Haiti and create a model for developing capabilities within foreign countries. These capabilities need to be developed in order to build stronger relations and force multipliers within regions, specifically the Caribbean Basin, where the US has vital strategic interests.

There are currently ongoing long-term training efforts in Costa Rica, Panama and Antigua with large growth in training team deployments.⁴⁸ The Director of Coast Guard International Affairs estimates that requests for Coast Guard training have risen 500-600

⁴⁷ Capt Garry Palmer USCG, Deputy Director for Coast Guard International Affairs, interview with author, 27 Feb 2002.

percent in recent years.⁴⁹ The problem with long term training teams is that the hosting countries will constantly rely on that training resource instead of becoming self-sufficient. Rapid growth of demand for Coast Guard deployable training and a limited number of trainers available require that the Coast Guard develop a transition strategy for long term training missions to elevate capable forces to a peer relationship. Developing a transition strategy for a long term training project is a difficult process. Definitions of self-sustaining, effectiveness and mission success are open to liberal interpretation. Despite these difficulties, developing a comprehensive transition strategy is imperative to maintain the availability of limited training team personnel. There is no single model for a transition strategy. Such a strategy is a curious mix of understanding the political will of a country and the leadership of the maritime forces, developing measures of effectiveness for the training program, creating a long-term engagement plan and defining a clear meaning of “success”.

The goal of all the training efforts and the focus of any transition strategy should be to build a peer relationship with Caribbean national maritime services. To build upon all their training, and to reinforce a peer relationship, the Coast Guard should work with these forces in continuous real world operations.

⁴⁸ Coast Guard International Training Division. *Limited Training Team Country Overview*. 30 Oct 2000.

⁴⁹ Mr. Gerard Yoest. Director for Coast Guard International Affairs, interview with author 27 Feb 2002.

Constructive Operations

The fifth tenet for an effective regional strategy is Constructive Operations. While building the forces and capabilities is important to the US regional strategies, building stronger relationships between the US and Caribbean nations is an important long term goal, because "when you need a friend it is too late to make one."⁵⁰ The Coast Guard does not have the resources to cover the entire Caribbean. The United States will have to rely on regional partners to meet its strategic goals. For the Coast Guard missions, the organization needs regional partners to help curb illegal activity in the Caribbean. In an operational perspective, the Coast Guard needs to develop the ability to operate on an equal basis with Caribbean nations maritime organizations at all levels.

Although the US stated that they wanted full partners in the region for combating illegal activity, the lack of meaningful engagement or comprehensive training provided did not convey that message. The Commanding Officer of BRAMBLE found that the baseline training was "...ill received and almost counter productive." The TAFT report also found many students "over trained" having attended engineering schools at US facilities but lacking the parts and tools to put their skills to use.

Of all the tenets of an effective Caribbean engagement strategy, operating in conjunction with Caribbean maritime services is where the Coast Guard could make up the most ground. Although international exercises occur every year, there is very little close continuous operations involving multi-national forces. The US Military shows a tendency to believe their own press clippings. The Coast Guard is no exception,

⁵⁰ Capt Palmer, Deputy Director, Coast Guard International Affairs, interview with author 27 Feb 02.

marketing itself as the world's premier maritime service.⁵¹ The belief in this vision is well founded in that the organization is in high demand throughout the world in training and advisory roles. The challenge with such arrogance is allowing other countries to play important roles. As seen with the Colombian Marines, a force can be effective within their mission areas even if they do not operate up to the US standards. Including Caribbean maritime forces in long term efforts as team mates and not apprentices is important not only to constructive engagement but to success in the overall engagement package.

The Caribbean Support Tender has made significant inroads to developing regional teammates. While developing the concept behind the Caribbean Support Tender, Atlantic Area suggested that the crew be international. In the Chief of Operations view, an international crew would create a sense of "ownership, foster teamwork, and encourage information sharing."⁵² While the training cutter would make more frequent port calls on these small nations, they would also provide one third of the crew for the vessel. These members would attend schools in the US and serve a full year as crewmembers onboard. Additional members would spend shorter terms onboard for specific deployments.

Having international students onboard would not be enough to show a thorough commitment to these countries if the international crew were only junior enlisted members learning shipboard basics. The mix would have to encompass all ranks of the maritime services with sixteen international billets from Lieutenant to Seaman Apprentice. Coast Guard personnel working side by side with the international

⁵¹ Coast Guard Commandant's Vision 2020, pg. 3.

⁵² From LANTAREA(Ao) Point Paper, *Caribbean International Support Tender*, 28 Feb 97.

crewmembers has the greatest potential to achieve the “team mate” relationship. Within the US military, the trust developed between commanders has a greater impact on working together than directed command relationships. Such an axiom holds true with relations between US and foreign services as well. By cultivating trusted relations between mid-grade officers, the Coast Guard is sowing the seeds for future closer relations with Caribbean Maritime services and continuous constructive operations allows these seeds to grow.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Coast Guard needs to develop an effective engagement strategy for the Caribbean Basin. Any engagement strategy needs to be comprehensive in addressing US strategic goals through alignment with the regional command. A regional engagement strategy should focus on developing regional capabilities to effectively combat illegal activity in the Caribbean. Finally the Coast Guard's regional engagement strategy should focus on long-term engagement and building true regional maritime partners.

The Coast Guard possesses all of the engagement tools needed to make an effective engagement strategy work in the Caribbean. Because the Coast Guard plays only a supporting role in international engagement, its efforts are subject to the changing priorities of regional commanders and the State Department. However, by taking an initiative to influence and respond to both Defense and State Department priorities, the Coast Guard can work within these confines to develop effective regional partners to meet National Security Goals.

The Coast Guard has taken a first step in integrating an engagement strategy by developing the Caribbean Support Tender. The USCGC GENTIAN is an excellent asset to carry out US theater engagement strategies, to provide training and maintenance, and to build stronger relations with Caribbean countries. Although the concept has carried a large amount of support from the State and Defense Department, the actual platform has a limited life span. Currently there is no plan to replace the GENTIAN with a newer platform once the ship reaches the end its serviceable life. To lose this valuable tool would weaken the US presence throughout the Caribbean.

APPENDIX 1.

USCG CARIBBEAN REGIONAL STRATEGY

Consistent with the National Security Strategy, the U.S. Coast Guard supports vital U.S. national interests in the Caribbean by:

- Promoting stable, democratic governments
- Supporting protection
- Preventing the flow of drugs through the area and
- Deterring migrants from illegally leaving their shores for ours.

The USCG is uniquely qualified to operate effectively in the region, and best perform these missions because we have:

- The core competencies necessary;
- Effective links with other government agencies and NGOs;
- Established strong regional rapport with Caribbean nations; and
- Maintained a persistent presence throughout the Caribbean region.

Establishing a pattern of sustainable economic development for the Caribbean island nations requires safe effective marine transportation and the maintenance of a healthy marine environment. Coast Guard has the skills and experience necessary to assist these nations in creating a favorable economic climate by:

- Strengthening their ability to enforce fisheries and migration laws, diminishing the corruptive influences of drug trafficking and other forms of smuggling, and supporting the protection of life and the preservations of property at sea;
- Assisting Caribbean nations in developing legal frameworks which enable the ratification and implementation of relevant international conventions dealing with marine safety, environmental protections and narcotics suppressions; and
- Assisting these nations in developing maritime administrations capable of enforcing international and national standards associated with both flag state and port responsibilities.

We must also assert ourselves in the counterdrug arena in our capacity as the lead U.S. agency for maritime interdiction. To do this, the Coast Guard is following a campaign plan that:

- Applies properly equipped and overwhelming force to deny a high threat drug trafficking route; then
- Moves to the next targeted trafficking route; while
- Leaving behind a sufficient covering force to prevent re-emergence.

This multi-year plan calls for partnering with other agencies and countries in the region. The demonstrable success of Operations Frontier Shield has validated this approach. As we mount the next major operation, we will need strong support from DOD, other law enforcement agencies, Department of State, and the cooperation of nations in the area.

The Coast Guard's broad access to people and organizations within the region, and our core competencies enable us to effectively organize and efficiently deliver the maritime training and maintenance support needed by these nations to operate independently and cooperatively. We must continue to assert this role for ourselves where our efforts can have the most effect, and where our engagement investment can pay substantial operational dividends.

Our ready access to key Caribbean nations and our demonstrated ability to build and sustain long-term trusting relationships with our international counterparts are the cornerstones of the Coast Guard's Caribbean strategy. Enhancing our existing engagement stronghold in the Caribbean is the right thing for the Coast Guard to do, and it meshes synergistically with SOUTHCOM's hemispheric engagement strategy. This will produce a mutually beneficial arrangement with SOUTHCOM which will translate into stronger support for our engagement role in the wider Caribbean, and provide access to other opportunities and funding sources. With US, European and UN attention focused on the Caribbean Basin, we can cement our position as leaders and role models for emerging maritime services. Our proposed course is outlined below.

Our Caribbean Strategy consists of five guiding principles:

Cooperative Operations – We will strengthen and enhance Coast Guard missions in the region through aggressive and cooperative operations. We will fulfill Coast Guard obligations and responsibilities, coordinating interests of both the U.S. and Caribbean nations. Specifically, we will:

- Execute USCG law enforcement responsibilities;
- Promote standardization and interoperability with regional counterparts; and

- Facilitate development of marine safety programs to assist nations in meeting their needs and requirements of international conventions.

Regional Assistance/Role Modeling – We will foster the development of regional multi-mission maritime organizations modeled on the US Coast Guard. Standardization and interoperability with USCG and Unified Commander will enhance joint and combined operations. Coast Guard assistance capabilities extend to Law Enforcement, Search & Rescue, Marine Environmental Protection, Port State Control, Marine Safety and other areas of mutual benefit. Specifically, we will:

- Act in consultation with US diplomatic missions;
- Continue efforts in key regional States including the Bahamas, Haiti, and Dominican Republic;
- Sustain USCG operations in east Caribbean; and
- Continue appropriate USCG training (INCONUS & OCONUS) for regional forces.

Constructive Engagement – Our efforts in the Eastern Caribbean will serve as the centerpiece for engagement activity throughout the Caribbean Region. These efforts provide a firm foundation for expansion into the wider Caribbean as we build upon our successes. Our reputation as the world’s premier maritime service and these increased opportunities improve our ability to build long term, trusted relationships, which is in keeping with the Unified Commander’s goals and the Declaration of Bridgetown. Specifically, we will:

- Systematically expand operations such as Frontier Shield and HALCON;
- Conduct regional cooperative engagement missions to improve USCG interaction, foster interoperability and invite emulation;
- Seek opportunities to engage nations more frequently in northern South America, and Central America;
- Continue involvement with transition of the Panamanian SNM from a naval force to a maritime law enforcement service;
- Continue to provide support and expertise in response to oil spills, natural disasters, and search and rescue incidents;
- Seek and exploit opportunities to place USCG personnel in key positions of influence outside the Coast Guard organization;

- Develop appropriate means to help Caribbean nations maintain their forces in high readiness status; and
- Engage with Cuba across a broad spectrum of issues at the earliest opportunity, consistent with national interests.

Partnership with the Unified Commander – The Coast Guard will serve as a force multiplier for the Unified Commander. We will help SOUTHCOM attain their goals in the region by promoting a secure environment for economic development and political stability through the suppression of the drug trade, and being a role model as a military force with a peacetime mission. Specifically, we will:

- Conduct joint and combined military, other agency and regional exercises and/or joint operations;
- Increase Coast Guard participation in CINC activities; and
- Make effective use of Coast Guard cutters for the port visit program to enhance CINC and USCG regional initiatives.

Partnerships with Caribbean Neighbors – We will build upon our existing unique relationships with other governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations to coordinate and leverage resources for the benefit of the region. Specifically, we will:

- Expand our Caribbean Marine Safety program, and transfer existing Marine Safety technologies;
- Expanding Coast Guard participation in REMPEITC-Carib (Curacao) to fully support all relevant IMO conventions (MARPOL, SOLAS, OPRC);
- Support the entry into force of the Special Area Status for the wider Caribbean under Marpol Annex V;
- Encourage professional development, cooperation and interoperability for all Caribbean SAR and law enforcement organizations;
- Invigorate and support fulfillment of bilateral, regional and sub-regional agreements, conventions and initiatives that further our goals; and
- Support implementation of European Union/Regional Security System maritime Cooperation Study.

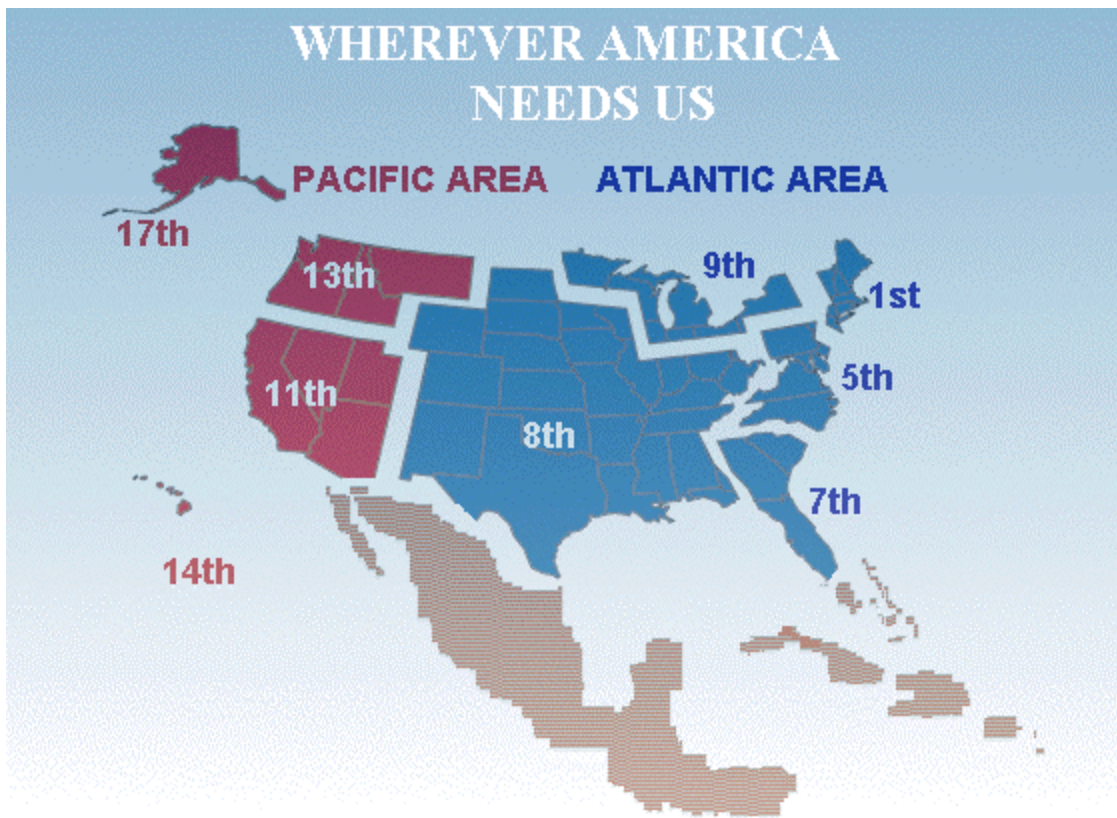
APPENDIX 2- Coast Guard Geographic Organization

The Coast Guard is organized into two areas, Atlantic and Pacific, that oversee 9 districts.

There are two sections that are responsible for US territories.

The Seventh District overseas Greater Antilles Section in San Juan Puerto Rico

The Fourteenth District overseas Marianas Section in Guam.



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⁵³ Source US Coast Guard. < <http://www.uscg.mil/units.html> > Accessed 12 Apr 02.

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