

Testimony

of

Rear Admiral D. C. Thompson, USCG
Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District

before the

House of Representatives
Select Committee on Narcotics

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF RADM DONALD C. THOMPSON, USCG
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, I AM REAR ADMIRAL DONALD C. THOMPSON, COMMANDER OF THE SEVENTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT. I AM PLEASED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO YOU FOR THIS FIELD HEARING. I ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE SEVENTH DISTRICT IN MAY OF 1982; AND ON 17 JUNE 1983, ALSO ASSUMED THE DUTIES OF COORDINATOR OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SOUTH FLORIDA TASK FORCE AND COORDINATOR OF THE SOUTHEAST REGION OF THE NATIONAL NARCOTICS BORDER INTERDICTION SYSTEM (NNBIS). IN THE PAST 3 YEARS WE HAVE OBSERVED A TREMENDOUS GROWTH IN THE COAST GUARD'S MARITIME LAW ENFORCEMENT MISSION. THE SEVENTH DISTRICT ENCOMPASSES 1.8 MILLION SQUARE MILES OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN, CARIBBEAN SEA AND A PORTION OF THE GULF OF MEXICO. IT INCLUDES THE STATES OF SOUTH CAROLINA, GEORGIA, AND MOST OF FLORIDA, AS WELL AS THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO AND THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS FOR A TOTAL OF 1,600 MILES OF COASTLINE. PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IS THE FACT THAT OUR OPERATIONS, TO VARYING DEGREES, AFFECT OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS WITH 24 SOVEREIGN STATES IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN, INCLUDING COMMUNIST CUBA.

THE PRIMARY RESOURCES I HAVE PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED TO CARRY OUT OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND OTHER MISSIONS ARE, 9 MEDIUM ENDURANCE CUTTERS, 15 OFFSHORE PATROL BOATS, 3 SURFACE EFFECT SHIPS, 46 UTILITY TYPE BOATS, 10 FIXED WING SEARCH AIRCRAFT, 13 HELICOPTERS, AND 20 MULTI-MISSION STATIONS. ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT AND VESSELS ARE MADE AVAILABLE FROM OTHER COAST GUARD DISTRICTS FROM TIME TO TIME, AND ARE PLACED UNDER MY OPERATIONAL CONTROL.

THE SEVENTH DISTRICT HAS THE HIGHEST USAGE OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES WITHIN THE COAST GUARD FOR OUR ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS AND TREATIES (LAW ENFORCEMENT) MISSION. OUR LATEST THREE YEAR FIGURES SHOW THAT CUTTERS UNDER SEVENTH DISTRICT OPERATIONAL CONTROL HAVE ACCOUNTED FOR ABOUT 32 PERCENT OF THE HOURS THE ENTIRE COAST GUARD SPENT ON LAW ENFORCEMENT MISSIONS, AND OUR AIRCRAFT HAVE ACCOUNTED FOR ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF THE SERVICEWIDE TOTAL. OUR PRIMARY LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY IS DRUG INTERDICTION, AND TO A LESSER DEGREE, THE INTERDICTION OF ILLEGAL ALIENS.

AN ESTIMATED 60 PERCENT OF THE MARIJUANA SMUGGLED INTO THIS COUNTRY EACH YEAR IS TRANSPORTED BY SEA. MOST OF THE DRUG TRAFFIC ORIGINATES IN THE CARIBBEAN, GENERALLY ALONG THE NORTH COAST OF COLUMBIA. AS THE SMUGGLERS SAIL NORTH, THEY HAVE TRADITIONALLY PASSED THROUGH ONE OF FOUR CHANNELS. (YUCATAN CHANNEL, WINDWARD PASSAGE, MONA PASSAGE, AND ANEGADA PASSAGE) OR 'CHOKE POINTS', AS WE CALL THEM, AND HAVE THEN PROCEEDED TOWARD THE BAHAMAS, FLORIDA, THE GULF COAST, OR THE NORTHEAST COAST OF THE U.S.. THE CHOKE POINTS ARE AN IMPORTANT GEOGRAPHICAL ADVANTAGE FOR US, BECAUSE THEY CONCENTRATE THE SMUGGLERS, ENABLING OUR CUTTERS ON PATROL TO HAVE A BETTER PROBABILITY OF INTERCEPTING THEM. THE AVAILABILITY OF HELICOPTERS ON MANY OF OUR PATROL CUTTERS GREATLY ENHANCES THEIR INTERDICTION CAPABILITIES ALSO. THE SMUGGLING VESSELS COMING THROUGH THESE CHOKE POINTS ARE GENERALLY 60 TO 200 FOOT MOTHERSHIPS. ONE MOTHERSHIP SEIZURE REMOVES AS MUCH MARIJUANA FROM THE SMUGGLERS

AS WOULD SEVERAL SMALLER SEIZURES CLOSER TO SHORE. THIS APPROACH HAS BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF OUR RESOURCES.

THE COAST GUARD HAS BEEN ABLE TO OCCUPY THE CHOKE POINTS IN AN INCREASINGLY EFFECTIVE MANNER. WHEN WE EXPANDED OUR ACTIVITY IN THE CHOKE POINTS IN THE FALL OF 1980 WITH THE ADDITIONAL CUTTERS AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CUBAN EXODUS, WE WERE ABLE TO GREATLY INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SEIZURES DURING OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1980. A TOTAL OF 69 VESSELS WERE SEIZED, AND 347 PERSONS ARRESTED DURING THAT PERIOD. TOTAL VESSEL SEIZURES WITHIN THE SEVENTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT HAVE RISEN FROM 101 IN CALENDAR 1980 TO 126 IN 1981, TO 145 IN 1982. WE HAVE SEIZED 98 VESSELS SO FAR THIS YEAR. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED HAS RISEN FROM 485 IN CALENDAR 1980 TO 582 IN 1981 TO 762 IN 1982. ARRESTS TO DATE IN 1983 NUMBER 344. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE AMOUNT OF MARIJUANA SEIZED HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT. IN 1980, 1,548,421 POUNDS WERE SEIZED BY THE COAST GUARD IN THE SEVENTH DISTRICT, IN PART DUE TO THE AVAILABILITY OF ADDITIONAL CUTTERS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE CUBAN EXODUS. STANDDOWN FROM THIS OPERATION RESULTED IN FEWER COAST GUARD RESOURCES IN THE AREA DURING EARLY 1981. YET THE SEIZURE TOTAL INCREASED TO 1,634,873 POUNDS THAT YEAR. INCREASED COAST GUARD PRESENCE IN THE CHOKE POINTS, ENHANCED BY THE VERY EFFECTIVE AND COOPERATIVE INTER-AGENCY EFFORTS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE ADVENT OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA TASK FORCE, RESULTED IN THE SEIZURE OF 1,859,319 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA DURING THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1982 - MORE THAN DURING THE ENTIRE YEARS OF 1980 AND 1981. IN ALL DURING 1982, 2,380,041

POUNDS OF MARIJUANA WERE SEIZED BY THE COAST GUARD IN THE SEVENTH DISTRICT. A MOST SIGNIFICANT FEATURE OF THIS INCREASED SEIZURE TOTAL IS THAT IT WAS MAINLY ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF THE YEAR. SINCE THEN THE AMOUNTS OF MARIJUANA SEIZED HAVE DROPPED STEADILY FROM A HIGH OF 401,842 POUNDS IN JANUARY 1982 TO A LOW OF 29,735 POUNDS IN JULY 1982. SO FAR IN 1983, WE HAVE SEIZED 1,111,435 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA. IN LIGHT OF INCREASED INTERDICTION RESOURCES AND IMPROVED AND COORDINATED INTERDICTION INTELLIGENCE, THIS REDUCTION IN SEIZURES IS STRONGLY INDICATIVE OF REDUCED ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN THE CHOKe POINTS, A SITUATION SUPPORTED BY OUR INTELLIGENCE. THIS REDUCED TRAFFIC IS MOST PROBABLY CAUSED BY:

- (1) A REALIZATION ON THE PART OF THE DRUG TRAFFICKERS OF THE INCREASED RISK.
- (2) DRAMATIC INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF MARIJUANA GROWN WITHIN THE U.S.
- (3) THE USE OF ALTERNATIVE ROUTES OR TRANSPORTATION MODES TO CIRCUMVENT OUR ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS.
- (4) THE NEED TO CONVERT VESSELS FOR THE TRANSPORT OF MARIJUANA IN HIDDEN COMPARTMENTS.
- (5) THE RELATIVELY SMALL 1982/83 MARIJUANA HARVEST.

TWO SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES TO THE COMBINED COAST GUARD/TASK FORCE/NNBLS EFFORTS HAVE EMERGED. FIRST, NEW TRAFFIC TRENDS, IN ADDITION TO THE TRADITIONAL CHOKe POINT ROUTES, HAVE DEVELOPED. A TRAFFIC PATTERN HAS BEEN NOTED EASTWARD THROUGH THE ANEGADA PASSAGE AND WINDWARD/LEEWARD ISLANDS AND THEN NORTHWESTWARD ALONG

THE EASTERN EDGE OF THE BAHAMAS. DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC HAS BEEN NOTED TO TAKE A NORTHERLY ROUTE AFTER THE ANEGADA/WINDWARD/LEEWARD TRANSIT, WITH ULTIMATE DESTINATIONS BEING THE MID-ATLANTIC AND NEW ENGLAND STATES. THIS, IN PART, RESULTED IN THE CREATION OF NNBIS. BY REPROGRAMMING RESOURCES AND MODIFYING OUR TACTICS THE COAST GUARD INITIATED CHANGES TO COMBAT THESE TRENDS. BUT WE RECOGNIZE THAT SIGNIFICANT REMOVAL OF OUR EXISTING RESOURCES FROM THE CHOKE POINTS WOULD MOST PROBABLY RESULT IN A QUICK RETURN OF TRAFFICKERS TO THESE MORE CONVENIENT CONVENTIONAL ROUTES. WE ARE AWARE OF COUNTER SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS AGAINST OUR SURFACE UNITS BY OUR OPPOSITION.

THE SECOND SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE HAS BEEN THE RECENT MARKED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF VESSELS WHICH CARRY MARIJUANA CONCEALED IN LARGE HIDDEN COMPARTMENTS. AGAIN, AS IN THE CASE OF THE NEW TRAFFIC PATTERNS, WE HAVE TAKEN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS TO COMBAT TRANSPORTATION IN HIDDEN COMPARTMENTS; AND SEVERAL MAJOR SEIZURES HAVE RESULTED. BOTH THE USE OF HIDDEN COMPARTMENTS AND THE NEED TO RESORT TO ADDITIONAL, LONGER TRAFFIC ROUTES ARE A STRONG INDICATION OF THE INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS OF COAST GUARD INTERDICTION EFFORTS IN THE CHOKE POINTS. THE LONGER ROUTES, THE NEED TO TRANSFER CARGO AT SEA, AND THE NEED FOR SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED VESSELS ARE COSTLY AND DISRUPTIVE TO THE SMUGGLING COMMUNITY. MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE VIEW THIS AS A STRONG AND ACCURATE PERCEPTION ON THE PART OF THE TRAFFICKERS THAT THE COAST GUARD MAY FIND THEM AT ANY PLACE AND AT ANY TIME.

DURING EARLY OCTOBER 1982, THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SOUTH FLORIDA TASK FORCE DEVELOPED AN OPERATING CONCEPT DESIGNED TO IMPROVE BOTH INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION AND INTERDICTION RESULTS. THE CONCEPT INCLUDED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERDICTION OPERATIONS INFORMATION CENTER (IOIC). THE IOIC WAS CREATED IN THE MIAMI FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING, WITHIN COAST GUARD SPACES, MAINLY FOR REASONS OF SECURITY. THE IOIC WAS CONSTRUCTED AND WAS READY TO OPERATE BY THE END OF OCTOBER.

THE MISSION OF THE IOIC IS THREEFOLD:

- (1) TO MAINTAIN THE BEST PICTURE OF ALL FEDERAL FORCES WHICH COULD POSSIBLY BE BROUGHT TO BEAR AGAINST A LAW ENFORCEMENT PROBLEM.
- (2) TO MAINTAIN THE BEST PICTURE POSSIBLE OF ALL VESSELS WHICH ARE SUSPECTED OF BEING INVOLVED IN THE ILLICIT TRADE OF DRUG SHIPMENT.
- (3) TO MATCH THESE FEDERAL FORCES AGAINST SUSPECT VESSELS TO INTERDICT DRUG SHIPMENTS.

THE IOIC IS A MULTI AGENCY ENTITY, UNDER COAST GUARD SUPERVISION, STAFFED BY USCG, USCS, USN, USAF, USMC, AND DEA PERSONAL. IT HAS OPERATED SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, 24 HOURS A DAY, SINCE 1 NOVEMBER 1982. IT IS NOT A COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER. IT ANALYZES THE SURFACE PICTURE AND PUTS TOGETHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEILLANCE AND INTERDICTION ACTIVITY AND SUBMITS THESE TO THE RESPONSIBLE COMMAND AND CONTROL ELEMENT OF EACH PARTICIPATING AGENCY FOR RESOURCE ACTION.

TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT THE IOIC HAS DONE, I WOULD LIKE TO RELATE AN ACTUAL CASE SCENARIO. THE IOIC RECEIVED INFORMATION REGARDING A SUSPECT VESSEL NEAR THE BAHAMAS. A NEARBY DEA AIRCRAFT WAS REQUESTED TO INVESTIGATE. THAT AIRCRAFT CONFIRMED ILLICIT ACTIVITY. ON THIS BASIS A COAST GUARD CUTTER WAS DIVERTED. BEFORE THE CUTTER WAS ABLE TO ARRIVE ON SCENE THE DEA AIRCRAFT WAS FORCED TO LEAVE DUE TO LOW FUEL. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS SURVEILLANCE, A USN AIRCRAFT WAS DIVERTED AND A CUSTOMS AIRCRAFT LAUNCHED TO COVER THE GAP BEFORE THE USN AIRCRAFT GOT ON THE SCENE. WHEN THE CUTTER ARRIVED, ONE VESSEL WAS SEIZED WITH MARIJUANA ABOARD AND ANOTHER LOAD WAS DISCOVERED TO HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO A BAHAMIAN ISLAND. BAHAMIAN FORCES WERE ALERTED TO INVESTIGATE THIS STASH.

SINCE THE IOIC COMMENCED OPERATIONS IT HAS RECEIVED INFORMATION ON 1340 SUSPECT CRAFT. OF THIS NUMBER, SUFFICIENT INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE TO TARGET 265 OF THEM. AN ADDITIONAL NON-TARGETED 30 VESSELS HAVE BEEN INTERDICTED AND SEIZED. IN ALL, IOIC EFFORTS HAVE RESULTED IN THE INTERCEPTION OF 138 TARGETTED CRAFT (INCLUDING 5 AIRCRAFT) AND THE SEIZURE OF 83 OF THESE. THIS TRANSLATES INTO AN OVERALL INTERCEPTION RATE OF 52.0% OF TARGETTED VESSELS, AND A SEIZURE RATE OF 31.3%. THE TOTAL OF ALL IOIC RELATED SUCCESS IS 129 VESSELS, 5 AIRCRAFT, AND 1,746,600 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA SEIZED, AND 569 PERSONS ARRESTED.

I HAVE BEEN PLEASED WITH THE IOIC. WHILE IT HAS NOT YET REACHED ITS FULL POTENTIAL BECAUSE PERMANENT PEOPLE ARE ONLY NOW BEING ASSIGNED, AND THE COMPUTER SYSTEM AND NETWORKING LINKS ARE NOT YET COMPLETED, IT IS WORKING WELL AND CONSTANTLY INCREASING ITS EFFECTIVENESS AS MORE AND MORE RAW INFORMATION IS RECEIVED AND CONVERTED INTO COHERENT LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS. THE BRINGING TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE OF THE EXPERIENCE AND INTERESTS OF ALL AGENCIES WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND AGENCIES WITH RESOURCES WHICH CAN POSSIBLY ASSIST IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORT IS A SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARDS INSURING THE MOST EFFECTIVE RESOURCE UTILIZATION. THE COAST GUARD HAS TAKEN THE INITIATIVE IN FURTHER IMPROVING THE IOIC BY ESTABLISHING SIX BILLETS AS OUR PART OF A PERMANANT STAFF. THE IOIC'S FUTURE EFFECTIVENESS DEPENDS UPON SUCH DEDICATED MULTI-AGENCY PARTICIPATION. BOTH THE TASK FORCE AND THE IOIC SUCCESSES AND HAVE SERVED AS MODELS FOR THE FORMATION OF A NATIONWIDE SYSTEM OF SIMILAR REGIONAL CENTERS - THE HEART OF THE NATIONAL NARCOTICS BORDER INTERDICTION SYSTEM (NNBIS).

THE ADVENT OF NNBIS HAS PROMPTED THE CREATION OF THE INTERDICTION INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION CENTER (IICC) TO SUPPLEMENT THE EFFORTS OF THE IOIC. LOCATED ADJACENT TO THE IOIC AND PERMANENTLY STAFFED BY USCG, USCS, FBI, DEA AND ATF PERSONNEL, THE IICC IS UNDER CUSTOMS SERVICE SUPERVISION. THE MISSION OF THE IICC IS TO RECEIVE, COLLECT, ANALYZE AND DISSEMINATE TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE IN A TIMELY MANNER TO TASK FORCE/NNBIS AND OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT UNITS AS APPROPRIATE. THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE

IICC WILL BE THE PRODUCTION OF TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE TO SUPPORT CURRENT OPERATIONS. A BY-PRODUCT OF THIS OBJECTIVE WILL BE THE PERIODIC PRODUCTION OF STRATEGIC ANALYSES TO SUPPORT PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND LONG TERM OPERATIONS. TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE INTELLIGENCE DERIVED OR PRODUCED WILL BE SHARED THROUGH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF PARTICIPATING AGENCIES. A BASIC TENET OF THE IICC CONCEPT IS TO USE TO THE FULLEST MEASURE, EXISTING DATA BASES, FILES AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE RESOURCES TO MEET THE IICC'S OBJECTIVES. THE IICC WILL STRIVE TO BECOME A VIRTUAL CLEARINGHOUSE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION BEARING ON THE MISSION OF THE SOUTHEAST NNBIS REGION. THE EFFORTS OF THE IOIC AND IICC ARE SYNERGISTIC AND ILLUSTRATE THE BENEFITS OF THE EFFECTIVE INTERAGENCY COOPERATION THAT HAS RESULTED FROM THE CREATION OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA TASK FORCE AND NNBIS.

OVER THE LAST YEAR THE INCREASE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S COOPERATIVE SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL DRUG INTERDICTION EFFORT HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT. I RECOGNIZE THAT OUR SISTER SERVICES IN DOD HAVE AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AND RESOURCE INTENSIVE PRIMARY MISSION OF NATIONAL SECURITY. NONETHELESS GREAT STRIDES HAVE BEEN MADE TO UTILIZE THEIR ASSETS FOR DRUG INTERDICTION SUPPORT. OF PARAMOUNT SIGNIFICANCE HAS BEEN THE HELP PROVIDED BY THE U.S. NAVY. WHILE THE NAVY HAS BEEN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THE LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM SINCE 1978, THE CLARIFICATION OF THE POSSE COMITATUS STATUTE LAST YEAR CLEARLY OPENED THE DOOR TO MORE EXTENSIVE ACTIVITY. SINCE THEN THE NAVY HAS INCREASED ITS

PARTICIPATION IN SIGHTING REPORT ACTIVITIES, PROVIDED TOW AND ESCORT SERVICES FOR SEIZED VESSELS, PROVIDED BOTH DEDICATED AND NON-DEDICATED P-3 AIRCRAFT SURVEILLANCE FLIGHTS, PROVIDED REFUELLING AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO COAST GUARD CUTTERS ON PATROL, AND PROVIDED USN VESSELS FOR COAST GUARD BOARDING PARTIES. THIS HEIGHTENED ACTIVITY WAS FACILITATED BY A USN/USCG OPERATIONS ORDER (OPORDER) WHICH WAS CONCEIVED AND IMPLEMENTED IN AUGUST OF 1982. THIS DOCUMENT GOVERNS NAVY PARTICIPATION IN COAST GUARD LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES. I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT EACH ASPECT OF NAVY SUPPORT ADDRESSED IN THAT OPORDER HAS BEEN EXERCISED AS OF THIS DATE. THESE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE NAVY HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN MANY OF THE SUCCESSES OF THE MARITIME LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM. TO ASSIST IN THE TRAINING OF NAVY PERSONNEL IN LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT MISSIONS AUTHORIZED BY THE OPORDER, THE SEVENTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT HAS ORGANIZED AND DEPLOYED A SPECIAL TACTICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TEAM (TACLET) TO CONDUCT BRIEFINGS AND BOARDINGS. THIS TEAM IS COMPOSED OF HIGHLY TRAINED, EXPERIENCED COAST GUARD OFFICERS AND PETTY OFFICERS. SPECIFIC NAVY PARTICIPATION HAS INCLUDED:

- (A) TEN SHIP DEPLOYMENTS WITH TACLET AND FIVE SHIP DEPLOYMENTS WITH SMALLER COAST GUARD LAW ENFORCEMENT DETACHMENTS. DURING ONE SUCH DEPLOYMENT THE M/V RECEIFE, A 90 FOOT VESSEL WITH 11 CREW AND 50,650 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA WAS SEIZED BY OUR TACLET OPERATING FROM THE USS MISSISSIPPI (CGN-40). ON ANOTHER DEPLOYMENT THIS PAST JULY, THE M/V RANGER WAS SEIZED BY A TACLET OPERATING FROM THE USS KIDD (DDG-993). THIS

SEIZURE RESULTED IN THE ARREST OF 9 PEOPLE AND CONFISCATION OF 57,600 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA. THIS CASE SET A PRECEDENT AS USS KIDD HAD TO USE DISABLING GUNFIRE TO STOP THE M/V RANGER.

- (B) THREE DIFFERENT NAVY VESSELS ENGAGED IN TOWING/ESCORT OF SEIZED VESSELS FROM THE HIGH SEAS TO U.S. PORTS, THEREBY PERMITTING PATROLLING COAST GUARD CUTTERS TO REMAIN ON STATION TO ACTIVELY PURSUE THEIR LAW ENFORCEMENT MISSION.

- (C) TWO OTHER INSTANCES OCCURRED IN WHICH THE U.S. NAVY SUPPORTED COAST GUARD CUTTERS IN MAKING SEIZURES. ON BOTH OCCASIONS THE NAVY VESSELS INVOLVED PROVIDED REFUELING AND LOGISTICAL SERVICES. IN ONE OF THESE CASES, MERE NAVY PRESENCE IN THE FORM OF A GUIDED MISSILE DESTROYER AND AIRCRAFT IS CREDITED AS BEING A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN GETTING THE SUSPECT VESSEL TO STOP SO IT COULD BE BOARDED BY A SMALLER COAST GUARD UNIT.

- (D) P-3 FIXED WING AIRCRAFT SURVEILLANCE HAS BEEN CONDUCTED ON A REGULAR BASIS. 250 HOURS OF DEDICATED FLIGHT TIME AND AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER APPROXIMATELY 2,173 HOURS OF NON-DEDICATED TIME HAS BEEN PROVIDED.

- (E) USN SURFACE VESSEL SIGHTINGS HAVE LED TO 8 SEIZURES RESULTING IN THE ARREST OF 54 PEOPLE AND CONFISCATION OF 264,800 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA.
- (F) NEW NAVY HYDROFOILS, PHMS AQUILA AND TAURUS, ON THEIR FIRST PATROL WITH A CG LAW ENFORCEMENT DETACHMENT ONBOARD INVESTIGATED A VESSEL SUSPECTED OF CARRYING CONTRABAND. THIS VESSEL WAS INTENTIONALLY SCUTTLED BY ITS CREW AND SANK. THE 3 PEOPLE ON BOARD WERE RESCUED FROM A RAFT BY THE PHMS.
- (G) AS A RESULT OF THESE NAVY EFFORTS, A TOTAL OF 13 VESSELS HAVE BEEN SEIZED, 145 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, AND 474,487 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA HAVE BEEN CONFISCATED.

OTHER AREAS OF NAVY COOPERATION INCLUDE:

- (A) NUMEROUS VISITS OF NAVY OFFICIALS TO THE SEVENTH DISTRICT TO BECOME MORE ACQUAINTED WITH OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES. AMONG THESE OFFICIALS ARE ADM MCDONALD (CINCLANT), AND MR. J. RONALD DENNY, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS.
- (B) A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE NAVY HAS BEEN SIGNED RECENTLY WHICH PERMITS TEMPORARY STOWAGE OF SEIZED VESSELS AND THE TEMPORARY TRANSFER OF PERSONS TO

A NAVY FACILITY AT GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA. THIS WILL SHORTEN CONSIDERABLY THE AMOUNT OF TIME A PATROL VESSEL WILL BE ABSENT FROM HER WINDWARD PASSAGE STATION.

(C) SINCE EARLY NOVEMBER 1982, THE NAVY HAS CONTINUALLY PROVIDED 3 OR 4 PEOPLE TO ASSIST IN THE OPERATION OF THE IOIC.

DURING DECEMBER 1982, WE MADE INQUIRIES TO THE U.S. ARMY, SEEKING AIR SURVEILLANCE SUPPORT. WE IDENTIFIED A SPECIFIC MARITIME AREA WHICH WAS WITHIN THE RANGE OF ARMY AIRCRAFT AND HAD A COAST GUARD CUTTER SCHEDULED TO PATROL THAT AREA. THE ARMY RESPONSE WAS POSITIVE IN THAT, CONCEPTUALLY, THEY WERE WILLING TO HELP. WHILE WE ARE STILL WORKING TO ACQUIRE REGULAR ARMY ASSISTANCE, THE ARMY HAS AUTHORIZED THE GEORGIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD TO FLY SURVEILLANCE MISSIONS. WE HAVE FOUND THE GEORGIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD ENTHUSIASTIC, AND THE GROWING RELATIONSHIP IS PROVING FRUITFUL FOR BOTH SERVICES. THE GEORGIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD NOW FLIES REGULARLY IN SUPPORT OF COAST GUARD LAW ENFORCEMENT. A VISIT BY THE DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, JOHN W. SHANNON, DURING JANUARY 1983 FOCUSED ON THESE EFFORTS. WE RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM MR. SHANNON THAT HE WOULD TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO FACILITATE ARMY SUPPORT TO THE LAW ENFORCEMENT MISSION. I AM EXTREMELY -GRATEFUL FOR THIS COMMITMENT.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE AIR FORCE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT MATTERS BEGAN IN MID-OCTOBER OF LAST YEAR WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IOIC.

OUR NEED WITH RESPECT TO AIR FORCE ASSISTANCE WAS TWO FOLD: AIRBORNE SURVEILLANCE ASSISTANCE AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO PARTICIPATE IN IOIC ACTIVITIES. THE AIR FORCE RESPONDED POSITIVELY AND PROVIDED PEOPLE FOR THE IOIC. EARLY ON IN THIS EFFORT, POSSE COMITATUS QUESTIONS SURROUNDING AIR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT MISSION SURFACED. THESE WERE AND STILL ARE BEING ADDRESSED TO INSURE AIR FORCE PARTICIPATION IS ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH POSSE COMITATUS. DURING THE ENSUING PERIOD, NUMEROUS MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN COAST GUARD AND AIR FORCE PERSONNEL HAVE TAKEN PLACE BOTH LOCALLY AND IN WASHINGTON IN AN EFFORT TO FAMILIARIZE THE AIR FORCE WITH THE COAST GUARD LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM AND RESOLVE THE POSSE COMITATUS ISSUES. THROUGH AIR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN IOIC WE ARE GAINING SIGHTING INFORMATION FROM AIR FORCE FLIGHTS. WE RECOGNIZED THAT AIR FORCE RESOURCES ASSIGNED OVER WATER MISSIONS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO OBTAIN SIGHTING INFORMATION, AUGMENTING OUR INFORMATION BASE. THE OPERATING UNITS THAT WE HAVE CONTACTED WILLINGLY ASSIST IF RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE. IN JULY A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE COAST GUARD AND AIR FORCE WAS SIGNED. THIS DOCUMENT FORMS THE BASIS FOR AIR FORCE SUPPORT TO THE MARITIME LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORT.

I HAVE DISCUSSED THE IMPORTANCE OF COAST GUARD LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS TO DATE AND THE COOPERATION MADE POSSIBLE BY THE EFFORTS OF THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL SOUTH FLORIDA TASK FORCE, NNBIS, AND THE ASSISTANCE OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE RESOURCES. JUST AS IMPORTANT IS THE CONTINUING COOPERATION WITH STATE AND LOCAL LAW

ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, WHICH IS ENHANCED BY BOTH THE TASK FORCE ACTIONS AND THE RECENT CREATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEES (LECC'S) BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

IN TERMS OF THE COAST GUARD'S COMMITMENT, I AM PLEASED TO LIST A FEW OF THE NEW RESOURCES OBTAINED BY THE SEVENTH DISTRICT AND THOSE PLANNED FOR THE NEAR FUTURE.

- (A) THE 210 FOOT MEDIUM ENDURANCE CUTTER (MEC) DECISIVE WAS PERMANENTLY TRANSFERRED FROM NEW ENGLAND TO ST. PETERSBURG IN JULY 1982.
- (B) THE 210 FOOT MEC RELIANCE WAS PERMANENTLY TRANSFERRED FROM VIRGINIA TO PORT CANAVERAL IN AUGUST 1982.
- (C) THREE NEW SURFACE EFFECT SHIPS (SES) HAVE BEEN ADDED TO OUR FLEET AND ARE HOMEPORTED IN KEY WEST. TWO, THE SHEARWATER AND SEAHAWK, ARRIVED LAST NOVEMBER. THE THIRD, CGC PETREL, WAS COMMISSIONED THIS PAST SUMMER. THESE VERSATILE SHIPS ARE WELL SUITED FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS, AND ARE CAPABLE OF IMPROVED DASH SPEEDS ESSENTIAL FOR SOME INTERDICTION CASES. THEY ARE ALSO CAPABLE OF OPERATING IN THE CHOKE POINTS IN COMPANY WITH A MEDIUM ENDURANCE CUTTER. SINCE 29 JANUARY 1983, WHEN SEAHAWK MADE THE FIRST SES DRUG SEIZURE, THESE SPEEDY NEW VESSELS HAVE MADE A TOTAL OF 9 DRUG SEIZURES.

(D) FUNDING HAS BEEN APPROPRIATED FOR EIGHT NEW OFF-SHORE PATROL BOATS. WE HOPE THE FIRST OF THESE VESSELS WILL BE OPERATIONAL DURING 1985.

(E) SIX NEW HU-25 FALCON JETS HAVE BEEN DELIVERED TO COAST GUARD AIR STATION MIAMI. TWO MORE WILL BE DELIVERED TO OUR AIR STATION IN BORINQUEN, PUERTO RICO IN NOVEMBER.

THE INCREASED NUMBER OF ARRESTS AND SEIZURES OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, WHICH I PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY AN INCREASE IN THE RATE AT WHICH COAST GUARD CASES ARE ACCEPTED FOR PROSECUTION AND AT WHICH CONVICTIONS ARE OBTAINED. IN 1981, THE PROSECUTION RATE FOR COAST GUARD CASES WAS 70%. IN 1982, THE PROSECUTION RATE FOR CASES INVOLVING SIGNIFICANT QUANTITIES OF MARIJUANA WAS ALMOST 80%. THUS FAR IN 1983, THE RATE IS 100%. THIS IMPROVEMENT IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE INCREASED EFFORTS OF THE U. S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, INCLUDING THE ONE IN MIAMI WHERE MOST CASES ARE TRIED. WHERE NECESSARY, THE U.S. ATTORNEYS HAVE BROUGHT IN ADDITIONAL PROSECUTORS. WE CAN ALSO SEE THE FAVORABLE IMPACT OF THE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND VIGOR BROUGHT TO THE CRIMINAL PROSECUTION OF DRUG CASES BY THE TASK FORCE. IT HAS PROVIDED ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATIVE RESOURCES WHICH HAVE ALLOWED US TO PURSUE SEVERAL CASES WHICH MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED FOR PROSECUTION. OF THE 79 MULTI-DEFENDANT CASES TRIED AS A RESULT OF COAST GUARD SEIZURES IN 1982, CONVICTION OF AT LEAST ONE DEFENDANT OCCURRED IN 95% OF THE CASES (COMPARED TO 92%

IN 1981). AS OF 31 DECEMBER 1982, 427 DEFENDANTS WERE TRIED AS A RESULT OF SEIZURES MADE IN 1982; OF THESE, 391 (OR 92%) OF THE DEFENDANTS WERE CONVICTED COMPARED TO 78% FOR 1981. IN 1983, 143 DEFENDANTS HAVE BEEN TRIED, AND 122 (OR 85%) HAVE BEEN CONVICTED. IN ADDITION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMPROVED PROCEDURES TO GATHER AND PRESERVE ADMISSIBLE EVIDENCE, ONE OF THE MAJOR REASONS FOR THIS INCREASED CONVICITION RATE IS THE JUDICIAL RULING THAT PUBLIC LAW 96-350 (21 USC 955A), AS IT APPLIES TO STATELESS VESSELS ON THE HIGH SEAS, IS JURISDICTIONALLY AND CONSTITUTIONALLY SOUND. THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT, IN U. S. VERSUS MARINO-GARCIA, SO HELD IN JULY 1982. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT RULING SINCE 24% OF THE ACQUITTALS OR DISMISSALS IN 1981 CASES WERE THE RESULT OF TRIAL COURT FINDINGS THAT 21 USC 955A WAS UNCONSTITUTIONAL AS APPLIED TO FOREIGN CREWMEN FOUND ON STATELESS VESSELS.

THE FEW CASES OF INDIVIDUALS ACQUITTED IN 1982, OR WHOSE CASES WERE DISMISSED, FELL INTO TWO CATEGORIES; ABOUT HALF WERE BASED ON THE DEFENDANTS BEING FOREIGNERS ON FOREIGN VESSELS WHEN THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF INTENT TO IMPORT INTO THE U. S.; HALF WERE BASED ON THE MERE PRESENCE OF THE DEFENDANTS ABOARD A DRUG-LADEN VESSEL. IN 1983, THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY 21 PERSONS IN 4 CASES ACQUITTED, AND THESE WERE BASED ON THE MERE PRESENCE DEFENSE. -IN THE FUTURE, WE ANTICIPATE A CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN THE PERCENTAGE OF ARRESTEES BROUGHT TO TRIAL AND CONVICTED. WE ARE LOOKING INTO CHEMICAL ANALYSIS AND OTHER TECHNIQUES TO REFUTE THE MERE PRESENCE DEFENSE.

THE AVERAGE SENTENCE RECEIVED BY CONVICTED FEDERAL DEFENDANTS IN 1982 WAS ABOUT 2.2 YEARS IN FLORIDA, 2.0 YEARS IN PUERTO RICO, AND 4.5 YEARS IN SOUTH CAROLINA. THUS FAR IN 1983, 83 DEFENDANTS HAVE BEEN SENTENCED. WE ARE SEEING STIFFER SENTENCES FOR PRINCIPAL ACTORS AND RECIDIVISTS. THE LOW LEVEL DECKHANDS ARE TYPICALLY RECEIVING ABOUT 6 MONTHS IN PRISON. THE SENTENCE AVERAGE IS 1.2 YEARS.

ON JANUARY 25, 1983, IN THE U. S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO, THE JURY RETURNED VERDICTS OF GUILTY AGAINST THE ELEVEN DEFENDANTS WHO WERE ARRESTED ON BOARD THE M/V RECIFE BY THE COAST GUARD TACTICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TEAM (TACLET) OPERATING FROM USS MISSISSIPPI ON NOVEMBER 20, 1982. THIS CASE WAS THE FIRST BOARDING AND SEIZURE OF A VESSEL, AND SUBSEQUENT PROSECUTION OF CREWMEN, AS A RESULT OF ACTION TAKEN BY COAST GUARD PERSONNEL OPERATING FROM A NAVY VESSEL. PRIOR TO THE TRIAL ON THE MERITS, THE DEFENDANTS MADE A MOTION TO DISMISS THE CASE FOR VIOLATION OF THE POSSE COMITATUS ACT. THEIR CONTENTION WAS THAT IT WAS UNLAWFUL FOR A NAVY SHIP TO SERVE AS A PLATFORM FOR A COAST GUARD BOARDING PARTY. THE U. S. DISTRICT COURT IN ITS MEMORANDUM OPINION FULLY ADOPTED THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION AND HELD THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THERE WAS FULL COMPLIANCE WITH ALL LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN REGARD TO POSSE COMITATUS.

THE RECIFE CASE HAS ALREADY SERVED AS PRECEDENT IN THE U. S. DISTRICT COURT OF PUERTO RICO WHERE, ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1983, THE

M/V RANGER CASE WAS SUCCESSFULLY PROSECUTED AND ALL DEFENDANTS WERE CONVICTED DESPITE A MOTION BASED ON POSSE COMITATUS. THE HIGH PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH SUCH CASES ARE PROCESSED HAS WELDED THE VARIOUS FEDERAL AGENCIES CLOSELY TOGETHER. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COAST GUARD, DEA, CUSTOMS, U. S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE AND OTHER AGENCIES IS EXCELLENT. WE CONSTANTLY MEET AND COMMUNICATE, FREQUENTLY ON A DAILY BASIS. I ATTEND MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH ALL FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY HEADS. MY LEGAL STAFF MEETS ALMOST DAILY WITH THE VARIOUS ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEYS PROSECUTING COAST GUARD SEIZURE CASES AND ATTENDS THEIR WEEKLY CASE REVIEW MEETINGS. THAT ELEMENT OF MY LEGAL STAFF DEDICATED TO PROVIDING SUPPORT AND LIAISON TO THE U. S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, HAS BEEN INCREASED. SUCH CLOSE COOPERATION EXISTS NOT ONLY AT THE AGENCY HEAD LEVEL, BUT CONTINUES DOWN TO THE WORKING LEVEL AS I HAVE DESCRIBED. CURRENTLY WE ARE WORKING TOGETHER UNDER A BASIC MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN COAST GUARD, CUSTOMS, DEA, AND THE U. S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, BEFORE CONCLUDING MY FORMAL REMARKS, I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE SOUTH FLORIDA TASK FORCE AND NNBIS. THE SUCCESS OF THE TASK FORCE WAS, IN PART, RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CREATION OF NNBIS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT IN MARCH 1983. NNBIS WAS ESTABLISHED AS A PERMANENT PROGRAM TO PROTECT OUR BORDERS, OPERATING IN EVERY REGION OF THE NATION. IT UTILIZES THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND THE MOST SUCCESSFUL INTERDICTION TECHNIQUES OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA TASK FORCE IN ORDER TO BUTTRESS OUR NATIONAL DRUG DETERRENT

EFFORT. THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TASK FORCE AND THE SOUTHEAST NNBIS REGION CAN BEST BE CATEGORIZED IN TERMS OF MISSION AREAS AND LIMITS OF GEOGRAPHIC RESPONSIBILITY.

- (1) NNBIS IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH THE INTERDICTION OF NARCOTICS BEING SMUGGLED ILLEGALLY ACROSS OUR BORDERS. IN THIS EFFORT NNBIS WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S TWELVE ORGANIZED CRIME DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCES (OCDEF), WHOSE PRIMARY GOAL IS TO BRING TO JUSTICE THE MEN AND WOMEN AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF DRUG AND OTHER CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS. THE GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITS OF THE SOUTHEAST NNBIS REGION EXTEND FROM THE MARYLAND-DELAWARE BORDER TO THE WEST COAST OF FLORIDA TO ABOUT APPALACHICOLA AND INCLUDES THE CARIBBEAN.

- (2) THE SOUTH FLORIDA OCDEF IS CONCERNED NOT ONLY WITH NARCOTICS INVESTIGATIONS, BUT ALSO WITH MONEY LAUNDERING, ILLEGAL FIREARMS SMUGGLING, ILLEGAL MIGRANTS AND CONSPIRACY CASES INVOLVING ANY OR ALL OF THESE. THE GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITS OF TASK FORCE EFFORTS HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN THE CARIBBEAN AND THE STATE OF FLORIDA.

- (3) COAST GUARD MISSIONS RELATED TO THIS EFFORT INCLUDE THE INTERDICTION OF BOTH NARCOTICS AND ILLEGAL MIGRANTS. THE BOUNDARIES OF THE SEVENTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT, AS I HAVE NOTED PREVIOUSLY, INCLUDE THE CARIBBEAN AND THE

STATES OF FLORIDA, GEORGIA, AND SOUTH CAROLINA. I THEREFORE WORK VERY CLOSELY WITH THE COMMANDER, FIFTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT (NORTH CAROLINA, VIRGINIA, MARYLAND), IN CARRYING OUT MY NNBIS DUTIES. I FEEL VERY COMFORTABLE WITH MY VARIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES AND BELIEVE THAT OUR EFFORTS ARE WELL COORDINATED AND EFFECTIVE. MUCH HAS BEEN DONE TO IMPROVE OUR EFFORTS TO INTERDICT THIS ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFIC. HOWEVER, MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE. UNDER THE SOUTH FLORIDA TASK FORCE AND NNBIS WE HAVE ESTABLISHED MECHANISMS TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE MARITIME SMUGGLING SITUATION. A MULTI-AGENCY EFFORT WHICH INCLUDES THE USCS, USN, USAF, DEA, US ARMY, USMC, ATF, FBI, AND USCG IS UNDERWAY. WE ARE WORKING TO IMPROVE OUR EXCHANGE OF INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION AND OUR JOINT COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY. WE ARE CURRENTLY CONDUCTING A NUMBER OF JOINT OPERATIONS WITH DEA, CUSTOMS, THE TASK FORCE, AND NNBIS. EACH SUCH OPERATION HAS A SYNERGISTIC EFFECT, IMPROVING THE ABILITY OF ALL OUR AGENCIES TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM BOTH ON THE INDIVIDUAL AGENCY LEVEL AND AS PART OF THE JOINT FEDERAL EFFORT. IN THE FUTURE WE WILL CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE SUCH JOINT OPERATIONS IN ALL AREAS OF THE INTERDICTION PROGRAM INCLUDING STRATEGY, TACTICS, INTELLIGENCE, AND FIELD OPERATIONS. INCREASINGLY, PLANS ARE BEING MADE TO INCLUDE THE U. S. NAVY AND OTHER DOD RESOURCES AS WELL AS STATE RESOURCES SUCH AS THE FLORIDA MARINE PATROL IN THESE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS.

WHILE RECENT CONGRESSIONAL AND ADMINISTRATION INITIATIVES HAVE INCREASED OUR EFFECTIVENESS IN DRUG INTERDICTION, PROBLEM AREAS CONTINUE WHICH MAY BE RESOLVED BY FUTURE LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATION. FOR INSTANCE: THE PROSECUTION OF STATELESS VESSEL CASES IS FREQUENTLY HAMPERED BY THE NECESSITY OF OBTAINING, THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS, VESSEL REGISTRY STATUS. THIS IS REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH THE FLAG STATUS OF THE VESSEL IN RESPONSE TO FREQUENT SPECIOUS CLAIMS WHICH ARE UNSUPPORTED BY DOCUMENTATION. CONSTRAINTS CURRENTLY IMPOSED BY THE FORFEITURE PROCESS ALSO DETRACT FROM THE EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION OF SEIZURES. THE CUSTOMS SERVICE SPENDS \$425,000 ANNUALLY ON THE STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE OF VESSELS AWAITING FORFEITURE, AND SINCE SUCH PROCEEDINGS ARE CUMBERSOME AND TIME-CONSUMING, THE VESSELS SERIOUSLY DETERIORATE IN THE INTERIM.

IN MY JUDGEMENT IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL IF OUR EFFORTS HAVE RAISED THE DETERRENT LEVEL TO THE POINT WHERE LONG TERM PATTERNS OF MARITIME DRUG SMUGGLING HAVE CHANGED. HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT OUR EFFORTS ARE HAVING AN IMPACT. DRUG SMUGGLERS ARE BEING FORCED TO RESORT TO MORE DEVIOUS AND COMPLEX STRATEGIES, INCLUDING MUCH HIGHER PAY FOR THEIR CREWS AND USE OF HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO ELUDE US. AS WE CONTINUE TO SUCCEED IN INTERDICTING AND PROSECUTING MORE AND MORE OF THESE VESSELS AND THEIR CREWS, OUR DETERRENT EFFECT WILL INCREASE. PERHAPS SOMEDAY MARITIME DRUG SMUGGLING WILL BECOME TOO RISKY TO BE PROFITABLE.

THAT CONCLUDES MY PREPARED TESTIMONY, MR. CHAIRMAN, I WILL BE
HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU OR THE OTHERS MAY HAVE.