

PREPARED STATEMENT
OF
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COMMANDANT, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
BEFORE THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
NARCOTICS ABUSE AND CONTROL

MARCH 18, 1987

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, it is a pleasure to appear before you today to provide an overview of the Coast Guard's efforts pursuant to the provisions of the "Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986"

The ACT included \$89M for the Coast Guard's acquisition, construction and improvement account to procure law enforcement assets and \$39M in operating expenses to increase the Coast Guard active duty strength for fiscal year 1987, and to operate two C-130s and five patrol craft. In addition, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 established a United States-Bahamas Drug Interdiction Task Force, authorized a Bahama Drug Interdiction Docking Facility and separate Boat Lift Facility to be located in the Bahamas, codified Navy support of Coast Guard law enforcement detachments (LEDETs) on Navy vessels in 10 USC 379, modified the Mansfield amendment which authorized maritime law enforcement action in a consenting nation's territorial seas, provided additional funding for enhanced communications and surveillance capabilities, and improved 21 USC 955a, making it a more effective law enforcement tool.

MANSFIELD AMENDMENT

Prior to the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, the Mansfield Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act (22 USC 2291(c)(1)) provided that "no officer or employee of the United States may engage in any direct police arrest action in any foreign country with respect to narcotics control efforts." This provision prevented our direct involvement with foreign law enforcement personnel in drug arrests within foreign waters. This had often prevented us from providing direct assistance to our Caribbean neighbors when they have asked for it and has limited training opportunities when the possibility of

actual law enforcement existed. Section 2009 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 provided that maritime law enforcement in a consenting nation's territorial sea was excluded from the Mansfield restriction. Since the exclusion for maritime law enforcement has been implemented, the Coast Guard has responded to requests from the Bahamas, Panama, and the Dominican Republic to engage in cooperative efforts within their territorial sea to suppress illicit drug trafficking.

21 USC 955a

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 provided significant improvements to the prohibition against drug trafficking, codified at 21 USC 955a. In 1980, Public Law 96-350 referred to as the "Biaggi-Gilman Bill", closed a loophole in the law by establishing a substantive offense against drug trafficking. While this legislation was extremely effective in increasing prosecution and conviction of traffickers, it contained provisions which raised new difficulties for prosecutors unrelated to the merits of the case. Jurisdictional language concerning stateless and foreign vessels had frequently become the major issue in a case. These problems have been corrected through the amendments of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 which allows the Department of State to certify existence of a suspected vessel's claim of foreign registry. If a vessel is not certified as having legitimate foreign registry by the Department of State, it may now be assimilated as stateless and subject to U.S. law for the purpose of charging a violation of 955a(a), possession with intent to distribute.

TACLET/LEDET

Embarking CG personnel aboard Navy vessels for law enforcement purposes was codified by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 in Title 10 USC Section 379. I am very pleased with the performance of our law enforcement detachments aboard Navy vessels. Smugglers must now avoid all Navy as well as Coast Guard units since they do not know whether the Coast Guard TACLET/LEDET is aboard. The Navy is fully committed to the interdiction of drugs at sea. Since October 1986, the Navy has assisted in seizing 7 vessels including the arrest of 54 smugglers and the interdiction of 144,325 pounds of marijuana and 50 pounds of cocaine, with an estimated value of over \$151M.

In FY 1986 and FY 1987, 500 additional billets were provided for Law Enforcement Detachments. When not on a Navy deployment, these personnel augment Coast Guard stations conducting law enforcement operations, an important flexibility just authorized for this program. Because personnel filling these billets require a high level of training, the Coast Guard was unable to immediately deploy 500 qualified personnel but began a concerted recruiting and training effort in FY 1986. However, based on our experience and the availability of suitable Navy ships, a level of 300 people is adequate. The President's FY 1988 Budget proposes that this 300 level be made permanent (vice Navy reimbursed) in the FY 1988 Coast Guard Budget. As of early 1987, 84% of the 300 billets were filled and I expect all 300 to be filled by July.

CURRENT OPERATIONS

Starting in the fall of 1984 with Operation Wagonwheel, the Coast Guard's portion of Hat Trick I, interdiction activities were taken right to the doorstep of the primary source countries of the Caribbean basin. Operation Hat Trick was the first of several multiagency, international operations of recent years employing maximum resources and flexibility to complement the anti-drug operations being carried out by foreign forces in-country, both ashore and afloat. These operations have been an extremely effective adjunct to our own ongoing interdiction programs. Of the \$39M provided in the Drug Supplemental Appropriations Act, \$22.1M is being used to offset fuel reductions mandated last year during budget cuts. This has allowed the current level of operations to continue. In addition to the Navy assisted seizures, the Coast Guard has seized 52 vessels and made 209 arrests; interdicted over 420,000 pounds of marijuana; 6,000 pounds of cocaine, and 13 gallons of hashish oil with an estimated value of over \$639M. The Coast Guard has assisted other agencies in 5 additional seizures, including the interdiction of 1,154 pounds of cocaine and 10,350 pounds of marijuana. As an outgrowth of the winter operations and the revision to the Mansfield Amendment, many Caribbean basin nations have come forward and are engaged in varying degrees of cooperation.

ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS

Operational security surveys have consistently pointed out communications security is necessary to protect planning and execution of Coast Guard drug enforcement operations. While District offices, communications stations and major cutters (WMEC and larger) have traditionally been outfitted with cryptographic systems to protect law enforcement information, smaller Coast

Guard units have lacked effective means to protect this information. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 authorized \$11M for enhanced secure communications. I expect a \$5M contract for secure VHF-FM equipment to be awarded in early April. The remaining \$6M is divided into \$3.5M for Tactical Command, Control and Communications, \$1.5M for aircraft secure communications, \$.5M for shipboard satellite communications and \$.5M for long-range HF communication upgrades.

AIR INTERDICTION

Federal efforts against drug trafficking cannot succeed without proportional pressure placed on all modes of trafficking. However, it quickly became apparent that while surface maritime trafficking is being greatly reduced during our winter operations, air trafficking continues virtually unabated. Cocaine and other narcotics arriving from over the maritime region by air, being airdropped to waiting boats, or transhipped through the Bahamas by use of fast boats into the United States, has grown into a major problem. This was one of my highest priorities when I became Commandant and I had my staff devise a concept of operations that would efficiently provide Coast Guard assistance to other federal air interdiction efforts. I am coordinating this plan with the National Drug Enforcement Policy Board and several working groups.

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 has provided Coast Guard assets for air interdiction in the maritime region. \$8.6M of the \$39M Appropriations Supplemental Funding is being used to operate two E-2C's, with operating cost of the airplanes at \$7M and personnel cost at \$1.6M. Operation of the two E-2Cs we received commenced last month and our HU-25A aircraft are flying

daytime intercepts in support. As a result, the Coast Guard has already assisted in the seizure of 528 pounds of cocaine, the seizure of an aircraft, and the arrest of 6 smugglers in the first 12 operational flights of our E-2Cs. Eight HU-25As will become even more effective interceptors when sensors can be installed. These early operations, however, have impressed on me the importance of a Southeast maritime region control, communication and intelligence (C3I) center under Coast Guard command for air interdiction. To be most effective, all air interdiction assets must be controlled from a centralized location that will maintain the "big picture".

SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITIES

I have implemented \$38M of the \$89M AC&I funding to procure two C-130 aircraft. I expect delivery of the two aircraft in December of this year. Another \$35M was transferred to the Navy on 10 February and awarded on 25 February as part of an existing Navy contract for procurement of five new patrol boats. \$1.8M of the \$39M Drug Supplemental Funding has been allocated for pipeline training for the crews of the 5 new patrol boats and C-130 crews. \$3.5M of the \$39M Drug Supplemental Funding will be used to purchase new equipment including night vision devices, surveillance cameras, and aircraft life support systems.

BAHAMAS INITIATIVES

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 authorized \$5M for construction of a drug interdiction docking facility in the Bahamas to facilitate Coast Guard and Bahamian drug interdiction operations, and to establish a maintenance and boat lift facility usable by Coast Guard and Bahamian vessels. We have moved quickly to implement these facilities. As requested by the government

of the Bahamas, a boat lift facility will be established at the permanent Bahamian Defense Force base at Coral Harbor, Providence Island. The Coast Guard has already awarded the contract for a travelift to be purchased for the site. The Seventh Coast Guard District in Miami is proceeding with engineering plans for the proper pier and facility support for the travelift.

To establish the drug interdiction docking facility, several sites in the Bahamas have been studied. The Coast Guard has identified two promising sites in the southern Bahamas: the first being Crown property located on Stocking Island across from Georgetown, Great Exuma, and the other being a former U.S. Navy seaplane facility located approximately 2 miles west of Georgetown. Negotiations with the Bahamian Government for either of these properties is on going under the auspices of the Department of State.

Coast Guard drug interdiction efforts in the Bahamas includes support of Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos (OPBAT). One Coast Guard HH-3F helicopter has been providing daytime support, and I plan to provide 24 hour Coast Guard support by October, 1987. In February I entered into an agreement with the United States Customs Service to provide Bahamas helicopter and communications support authorized in the Anti-Drug Abuse Act. I agreed with the Customs Service to provide the helicopter and communications support in the Bahamas. The Customs Service transferred \$8M of the funds authorized to them in the 86 Act for this purpose.

To assist in these initiatives from within the Bahamas, the U.S. Ambassador to the Bahamas requested the assignment of a Coast Guard Liaison Officer (CGLO) for her staff. The CGLO will be the primary point of contact and coordinator for narcotics interdiction matters relating to these and other similar initiatives. An officer has been identified and will be in place by April 1987.

The Coast Guard has been working closely with the Department of State on all efforts related to the Bahamas. As indicated in the Act, the Coast Guard has received concurrence by the Secretary of State when carrying out programs authorized by the Act. I anticipate continued progress in these important issues regarding interdiction efforts in the Bahamas.

The Coast Guard is moving rapidly to implement fully the Anti-Drug Abuse Act. As we bring new assets and responsibilities from the Act on line, we are continuing to put forth the maximum effort with our existing resources. Because of the complexity of the illegal drug threat to this Country and the need for a comprehensive drug education program, I cannot promise that the "war" will be won soon. However, through close cooperation with other agencies and your support of the President's initiatives, we hope to reduce greatly the flow of illegal drugs into our country.

This concludes my prepared testimony, I will be happy to answer any questions.