



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

U. S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL WILLIAM P. LEAHY JR., USCG

CHIEF, OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DEFENSE OPERATIONS

ON FEDERAL DRUG INTERDICTION EFFORTS

BEFORE THE

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS ABUSE AND CONTROL

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 20, 1991

**REAR ADMIRAL WILLIAM P. LEAHY, JR.**  
**CHIEF, OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**  
**AND DEFENSE OPERATIONS**  
**UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Rear Admiral William P. Leahy, Jr. became Chief, Office of Law Enforcement and Defense Operations, United States Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC in June 1991. As such, Admiral Leahy is responsible to the Commandant for establishing the program requirements for surface and aviation operations.

Prior to this assignment, Admiral Leahy was Commander Joint Task Force Five, located in Alameda, California. This command's mission is to conduct operations to detect and monitor aircraft and surface vessels suspected of smuggling illegal drugs within the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility.

Rear Admiral Leahy has served aboard many vessels during his career including Coast Guard cutters MCCULLOCH, DUANE, CASTLE ROCK, RESOLUTE, SHERMAN, DALLAS, and COMANCHE. He served as Commanding Officer of cutters DECISIVE and GALLATIN.

His shore assignment include: Commanding Officer of the Long Range Aids to Navigation (LORAN) Station on Marcus Island; Commander, Coast Guard Group Buffalo, New York; Office of Search and Rescue, Washington, DC; Readiness Branch, Coast Guard Atlantic Area; and Commanding Officer of Vessel Traffic Service New York. Rear Admiral Leahy served two tours in Vietnam - first as Division Commander Division 13 in 1970, and later as Senior Coast Guard Officer in 1972. He also served as Chief, Operations Division, and Chief of Staff, Twelfth Coast Guard District in Alameda, California, and as Chief of Staff, Coast Guard Pacific Area Command located at Coast Guard Island.

Rear Admiral Leahy's awards include: Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with Gold Star, Bronze Star medal with combat "V" device, the Meritorious Service Medal with "O" device and Gold Star, the Coast Guard Commendation Medal, the U.S. Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V" device, the Combat Action Ribbon, and the Vietnam Service medal with four Bronze Stars. Rear Admiral Leahy is also authorized to wear the Cutterman Insignia.

Rear Admiral Leahy was born and raised in Worcester, Massachusetts. Upon graduation from Classical High School, he entered the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut and graduated in 1959.

Rear Admiral Leahy is married to the former Margaret P. Peirce of Stratham, New Hampshire. They have three children: Sarah, Mark and Matthew.

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GOOD MORNING MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE. IT IS A PLEASURE TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY TO PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT DRUG TRAFFICKING TRENDS AND TO DISCUSS THE IMPACT OF THE COAST GUARD DRUG INTERDICTION PROGRAM, PARTICULARLY IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN.

I WOULD NOTE THAT DUE TO THE UNCLASSIFIED NATURE OF THE HEARING, SOME OF THE SPECIFICS OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES COMMITTED AND PLANS MUST BE OMITTED. ADDITIONALLY, THE COAST GUARD MUST BE CAREFUL TO PROTECT THE SOURCES OF SOME OF ITS INTELLIGENCE IN THESE MATTERS.

THE COAST GUARD CONSIDERS COCAINE SMUGGLING AS THE PRIMARY DRUG THREAT IN THE AREA. WHILE SOME MARIJUANA SEIZURES ARE STILL TAKING PLACE, MARIJUANA SMUGGLING HAS DECLINED DRAMATICALLY AS A RESULT OF A SUCCESSFUL INTERDICTION PROGRAM AND REDUCED DEMAND. HOWEVER, WE HAVE SEEN SIGNS OF RENEWED PRODUCTION ACTIVITY IN THE CARIBBEAN WHICH WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR. THE COAST GUARD HAS NO DATA TO INDICATE THAT A THREAT OF HEROIN SMUGGLING EXISTS IN THE MARITIME REGION.

BY KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON, WE HAVE REPEATEDLY FORCED SMUGGLERS TO CHANGE MODES AND ROUTES TO AVOID THE RISK OF SEIZURE. AS TRADITIONAL MARITIME SMUGGLING USING LARGE MOTHERSHIPS HAS DECREASED, AIRDROPS TO WAITING FAST BOATS HAS PICKED UP. THE SUCCESS OF INTERDICTION OPERATIONS IN THE BAHAMAS AND TURKS AND CAICOS (OPBAT) GREATLY REDUCED SMUGGLING IN THAT REGION. RECENTLY, WE HAVE WITNESSED FURTHER EXPERIMENTATION WITH NEW MODES AND ROUTES.

IT IS APPARENT THAT THE SMUGGLERS ARE USING MULTI-MODAL METHODS OF SHIPPING DRUGS; MIXING IT, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH LEGITIMATE CARGO. IT CAN TAKE DAYS TO FERRET OUT SMALL AMOUNTS OF COCAINE BEING MOVED IN BULK CARGOS SUCH AS CEMENT. THE USE OF UNDERWATER APPENDAGES ON THE HULL OF SHIPS IS ANOTHER RECENT INNOVATION. SOME OF THIS OCCURS ON COMMERCIAL VESSELS WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MASTER OR CREW.

OF THE DRUG SHIPMENTS WE KNOW OF, SOMEWHAT GREATER AMOUNTS MAY BE ENTERING THE UNITED STATES VIA THE SOUTHWEST BORDER THAN THROUGH MARITIME ROUTES. HOWEVER, SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS OF DRUGS ARE STILL SMUGGLED IN BOTH THE ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC REGIONS. IN THE PACIFIC, AIR CORRIDORS ARE USED TO SMUGGLE DRUGS INTO SOUTHERN MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA FOR FURTHER SHIPMENT OVER LAND. WE RECEIVE PERIODIC REPORTS OF MARITIME SHIPMENTS UP THE PACIFIC COAST AS WELL. DURING A DRUG INTERDICTION OPERATION LAST FALL, THE CREW OF MOTOR VESSEL NORDCAPP SCUTTLED THEIR VESSEL WITH A REPORTED 15 METRIC TONS OF COCAINE ON BOARD. BUT, THE ATLANTIC REGION, AND SPECIFICALLY THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN, IS SECOND ONLY TO THE CENTRAL AMERICA/MEXICO CORRIDOR IN TERMS OF VOLUME.

THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN IS A NATURAL CROSSROADS FOR BOTH LEGAL AND ILLEGAL TRADE. SMUGGLING AND PIRACY IN THESE ISLAND AREAS DATE BACK TO THE DAYS OF EUROPEAN COLONIZATION IN THE AMERICAS. TODAY, THESE AREAS ARE STILL ACTIVE AND ARE KEEPING THE COAST GUARD BUSY, WITH BOTH TRADITIONAL MARITIME SMUGGLING BY VESSELS, AND AIR DROPS OF NARCOTICS TO WAITING VESSELS. THIS AREA IS IDEAL FOR THE SMUGGLERS WHO USE THE UNOBSERVED ISLANDS AND REMOTE COASTLINES TO COVER THEIR MOVEMENTS AND HIDE CONTRABAND. SMUGGLERS USE THE TERRITORIAL SEAS OF OTHER NATIONS AND AIRSPACE OF SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES TO SHIELD OR COVER THEIR MOVEMENTS, AND TO PREVENT OUR INTERDICTION FORCES FROM REACHING THEM. IN THE CASE OF AIRDROPS, IT IS A RELATIVELY SHORT FLIGHT BACK TO SOUTH AMERICA

FROM THE ISLANDS COMPARED TO THE UNITED STATES OR THE BAHAMAS, MAKING NON-STOP FLIGHTS PRACTICAL, AND INTERDICTION OF THE DELIVERY AIRCRAFT VERY DIFFICULT.

PUERTO RICO IS ESPECIALLY ATTRACTIVE TO SMUGGLERS WHO EXPORT THEIR CONTRABAND TO THE UNITED STATES. AS A MAJOR PORT OF ENTRY, THE OPPORTUNITY TO MIX CONTRABAND INTO LEGITIMATE CARGO, ESPECIALLY IN HARD-TO-INSPECT CONTAINERS AND CRUISE SHIPS, MEANS MORE EFFORT WILL BE REQUIRED TO THWART THIS INITIATIVE.

TWO STRATEGIC CHOKEPOINTS, THE MONA AND ANEGADA PASSES, ARE LOCATED ON EITHER SIDE OF PUERTO RICO. OUR NEARLY-CONTINUOUS PRESENCE IN THE FORM OF SEA-BASED AEROSTATS, AIRCRAFT, MAJOR CUTTERS AND PATROL BOATS HAS CAUSED MARIJUANA SMUGGLING ACTIVITY THROUGH THE CHOKEPOINTS TO DIMINISH GREATLY. COCAINE, WELL-SECRETED IN HIDDEN COMPARTMENTS, IS STILL A PROBLEM, BUT MOST SMUGGLERS ARE AVOIDING THE MONA AND ANEGADA PASSES. THERE WERE FOUR VESSEL SEIZURES IN THIS AREA IN MARCH THROUGH MAY OF THIS YEAR: THREE WERE FOREIGN, AND ONE U.S.-FLAGGED. THE DANIELA I, OF COLOMBIA WAS THE LARGEST SEIZURE, WITH 2,422 POUNDS OF COCAINE. THE ANTIPODES III OF THE UNITED KINGDOM WAS SEIZED WITH 462 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA, SHOWING THAT WHILE MARIJUANA SMUGGLING HAS DECLINED IN IMPORTANCE, IT IS STILL BEING SMUGGLED.

I WOULD BE REMISS IN NOT MENTIONING THAT THE CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF MANY OF THE NATIONS IN THE AREA, SUCH AS HAITI AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, HAVE ADDED SEVERE ECONOMIC REFUGEE PROBLEMS TO THE LIST OF MISSIONS FOR OUR CUTTERS. THE MOVEMENT OF CUBAN POLITICAL/ECONOMIC MIGRANTS HAS ALSO SHOWN A DRAMATIC RISE IN THE PAST YEAR. GIVEN THE DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK, I DO NOT SEE AN END TO THIS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. DRUG SMUGGLERS CAN USE PERIODS OF UNREST TO DIVERT ATTENTION AWAY FROM THEIR ACTIVITIES.

TURNING NOW TO THE SUBJECT OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES, LET ME SAY THAT THE COAST GUARD MAINTAINS A SIGNIFICANT CARIBBEAN PRESENCE IN THE FORM OF CUTTERS,

AIRCRAFT, SHORE UNITS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT DETACHMENTS (LEDETS) WORKING FROM NAVY SHIPS. OUR SEVENTH DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS, LOCATED IN MIAMI, HAS OVERALL OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF COAST GUARD CUTTERS PATROLLING THESE WATERS. TACTICAL CONTROL, IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN, IS NORMALLY DELEGATED TO THE COAST GUARD'S GREATER ANTILLES SECTION (GANTSEC), WHICH IS HEADQUARTERED IN SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO. GANTSEC HAS SEVEN PATROL BOATS IN PUERTO RICO AND ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS, WHICH ARE DEPLOYED THROUGHOUT THE ANTILLES ISLANDS TO DETER SMUGGLING AND ENFORCE ALL APPLICABLE LAWS. GANTSEC MAINTAINS SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES FOR COAST GUARD FORCES IN THE AREA, AND KEEPS CLOSE TIES TO ALL THE FEDERAL, LOCAL, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT GROUPS IN THE AREA.

LARGER CUTTERS FROM THROUGHOUT THE ATLANTIC AREA ARE DEPLOYED NEAR PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS TO CONDUCT DOD COORDINATED OPERATIONS. NAVY SHIPS WITH COAST GUARD LEDETS, UNDER THE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF JOINT TASK FORCE FOUR (JTF4) IN KEY WEST, FREQUENTLY TRANSIT THE AREA. JTF4 AND THE COAST GUARD SEVENTH DISTRICT WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER TO ENSURE THE OPERATIONS CENTER AT GANTSEC IN SAN JUAN HAS THE BEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

SHIPRIDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS HAVE PROVED TO BE VERY SUCCESSFUL IN BUILDING TRUST AND COOPERATION. THESE AGREEMENTS ALLOW OUR CUTTERS TO PATROL WITHIN THE TERRITORIAL SEAS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY AS LONG AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT IS ABOARD. THIS GREATLY INCREASES THE AREA WE CAN COVER, AND EFFECTIVELY DENIES THE SMUGGLER SANCTUARY IN FOREIGN WATERS. WE SUPPORT DEPARTMENT OF STATE EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE SIMILAR AGREEMENTS WITH THE FRENCH, DUTCH AND OTHER EASTERN CARIBBEAN GOVERNMENTS.

WITH REGARD TO AVIATION RESOURCES, WE HAVE A LARGE AIR STATION AT BORINQUEN, ON THE WEST SIDE OF PUERTO RICO, WHERE FOUR HH65 SHIPBOARD-CAPABLE HELICOPTERS AND THREE LONG-RANGE C-130 SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT ARE PERMANENTLY

BASED. THESE C-130 AIRCRAFT HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FITTED WITH THE APS-137 SURFACE SEARCH RADAR WHICH HAS GREATLY EXPANDED THEIR CAPABILITY TO ASSIST IN DETECTION OF SURFACE TARGETS. AIRCRAFT FROM OTHER AIR STATIONS, INCLUDING E-2C AEW AIRCRAFT AND HU-25 INTERCEPTORS, ARE CONSTANTLY STAGING IN THIS AREA TO PARTICIPATE IN AIR INTERDICTION OPERATIONS, CONDUCTED UNDER THE TACTICAL CONTROL OF C3I EAST OPERATIONS CENTER IN MIAMI. THESE AIRCRAFT COMPLEMENT THE SURFACE EFFORT, AND THE E-2C, IN PARTICULAR, PROVIDES A DETAILED PRESENTATION OF THE SURFACE PICTURE TO LINK EQUIPPED SHIPS IN THE AREA. THIS CAPABILITY HAS HELPED ALLEVIATE THE CONFUSION SURROUNDING MOST AIRDROPS IN THAT MULTIPLE FIXED AND ROTARY WING LAW ENFORCEMENT AIRCRAFT CAN BE VECTORED TO THE SMUGGLING AIRCRAFT, AND VESSELS, AND VARIOUS POLICE UNITS, CUTTERS AND OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES CAN BE DIRECTED TO THE SCENE TO EFFECT APPREHENSION. CURRENTLY, U.S. AUTHORITIES HAVE NO LEGAL MEANS TO COMPEL COMPLIANCE TO LAND. HOWEVER, ON JUNE 18, THE ADMINISTRATION TRANSMITTED THE "DRUG SUPPLY REDUCTION ACT OF 1991," WHICH PROPOSES SUMMARY REVOCATION OF PILOTS CERTIFICATES AND AIRCRAFT OWNERS' REGISTRATIONS, AND WILL PROVIDE FOR A CRIMINAL PENALTY FOR THOSE AIRCRAFT THAT FAIL TO OBEY AN ORDER TO LAND. THE COAST GUARD SUPPORTS THESE EFFORTS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) HAS ADDED NUMEROUS RESOURCES TO THE EQUATION, INCLUDING AWACS AIRCRAFT, WHICH HAVE PROVED VERY HELPFUL. COORDINATION BETWEEN JTF4 AND THESE RESOURCES, AS WELL AS BETWEEN AIRCRAFT AND CUTTERS WORKING IN THE GANTSEC AREA, HAS BEEN EXCELLENT. SURFACE DETECTION AIRCRAFT, INCLUDING NAVY P-3C'S AND MARINE CORPS OV-10 BRONCOS, HAVE ALSO BEEN UTILIZED TO GOOD EFFECT. IN THE AFTERMATH OF OPERATION DESERT STORM, WE LOOK FORWARD TO DOD RESOURCES REFOCUSING THEIR EFFORTS ON DETECTION AND MONITORING, SO THAT OPTIMAL CUEING FOR OUR TACTICAL ASSETS CAN TAKE PLACE.

THE AIR INTERDICTION "PROBLEM" SPANS A MUCH GREATER THEATER THAN JUST PUERTO RICO AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. THERE ARE ENFORCEMENT SUCCESSES IN THE NORTHERN CARIBBEAN AND BAHAMAS THAT MAY HAVE IMPACTS ON PUERTO RICO. THE OPBAT SITE AT GREAT INAGUA, BAHAMAS, IS NOW OPEN, AND THE COAST GUARD IS ACQUIRING THE HH-60J JAYHAWKS WHICH WILL PUSH THE AIR SMUGGLER FURTHER FROM THE SOUTHERN BAHAMAS. THE TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT WITH THE BAHAMAS AND TURKS AND CAICOS, IN WHICH THE POLICE OF THESE NATIONS WORK AND RIDE WITH THE U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (DEA) IN COAST GUARD HELICOPTERS, HAS BEEN A MODEL PROGRAM. WHILE OUR INCREASED PRESENCE IN THE NORTHERN BAHAMAS MAY PUSH THE PROBLEM SOUTH, THE CURRENT OPBAT RESOURCES ARE VERY TRANSPORTABLE; IN FACT, WE HAVE USED THEM SUCCESSFULLY DURING OPERATION VIPER IN PUERTO RICO AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS IN 1990.

TWO OF THE THREE PLANNED LAND BASED AEROSTATS IN THE BAHAMAS ARE OPERATING: "CARIBAL I" AT HIGH ROCK (FREEPORT), AND "CARIBAL II" AT GEORGETOWN. THE THIRD AEROSTAT AT GREAT INAGUA SHOULD BE OPERATIONAL IN JUNE, 1992. ADDITIONALLY, THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO IS PLANNING TO CONSTRUCT AN AEROSTAT. WHILE NOT A COAST GUARD PROJECT, THIS ASSET SHOULD CERTAINLY HELP IN DETECTING SMUGGLERS THAT FLY WITHIN ITS AREA OF COVERAGE.

INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND DISTRIBUTION ARE IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE DRUG INTERDICTION PROCESS. THE BENEFIT OF INTELLIGENCE CAN BE DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY. INTELLIGENCE ALLOWS RESOURCES TO BE DEPLOYED TO THE CORRECT LOCATION AT THE BEST TIME TO EFFECT AN INTERDICTION. WE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN THIS AREA. A GAO STUDY, CONDUCTED IN AUGUST 1990, FOUND THAT, OF THE COAST GUARD SEIZURES SAMPLED, USE OF INTELLIGENCE WAS INVOLVED IN 90 PERCENT OF THE DRUGS SEIZED. THIS IS A RESULT OF COOPERATION AMONG LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CONTRIBUTIONS AND OUR OWN INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS. IN THE POST-DESERT

STORM PERIOD, WE LOOK FORWARD TO AN INCREASED FOCUS OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ASSETS ON DRUG INTERDICTION. THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE IMPROVEMENT IN THIS AREA. THE COAST GUARD PARTICIPATES ON NUMEROUS COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS TO IMPROVE DATA ACCESS, INTER-OPERABILITY AND RAPID SHARING OF INTELLIGENCE. AS THE WORKING RELATIONS OF OUR VARIOUS INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATIONS MATURE, THE QUANTITY AND TIMELINESS OF ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE RECEIVED BY OUR OPERATING UNITS WILL ENABLE THEM TO BE EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE.

WITH REGARD TO WHAT IS ON THE HORIZON, LET ME SAY THAT OUR FISCAL YEAR 1992 BUDGET REQUEST AGAIN EARMARKS MORE RESOURCES FOR DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT THAN ANY OTHER PROGRAM, ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF OUR OPERATING BUDGET, AND IS DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CURRENT AIR AND MARITIME INTERDICTION PROGRAMS. IN ADDITION, OUR FY-92 BUDGET REQUEST WILL CONTINUE ONGOING MODERNIZATION PROGRAMS FOR HIGH ENDURANCE CUTTERS AND 210' MEDIUM ENDURANCE CUTTERS, AND UPGRADE THE COMMAND, CONTROL, AND COMMUNICATIONS (C3) SYSTEMS OF THESE VESSELS. IT WILL CONTINUE THE HH-60J HELICOPTER PROCUREMENTS FOR THE OPBAT PROGRAM. THE C3 SYSTEMS WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TACTICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION PROVIDED TO FIELD UNITS AND WILL ALSO IMPROVE THE COAST GUARD'S ABILITY TO INTERCEPT, TRACK, AND APPREHEND SMUGGLERS. ADDITIONALLY, OUR FY-92 BUDGET PROVIDES FOR OPERATING NEW LAND-BASED AEROSTATS LOCATED AT GREAT INAGUA, BAHAMAS, VENICE, FLORIDA, AND MATAGORDA, TEXAS. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS REQUESTED IN THIS BUDGET, WILL FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGIES TO MAKE EXISTING OPERATING UNITS MORE CAPABLE. THE COAST GUARD INTENDS TO CONTINUE MANAGING OUR RESOURCES UTILIZATION TO ENSURE THAT THE BEST POSSIBLE RETURN IS RECEIVED FOR OUR INTERDICTION INVESTMENT.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF COAST GUARD DRUG INTERDICTION EFFORTS. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS AT THIS TIME.