

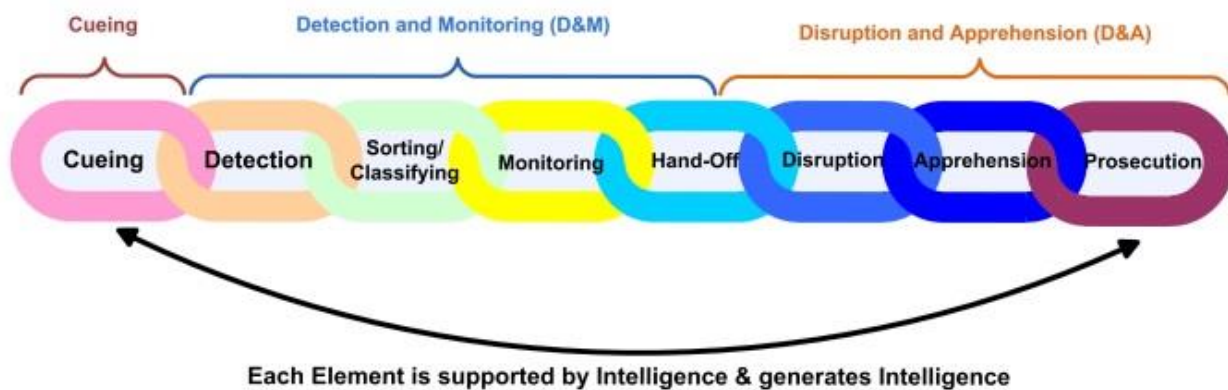
# Interdiction Committee

The Interdiction Committee (TIC) supports the President's National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS). It develops, in coordination with the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator, interagency recommendations for integrating detection, monitoring, and law enforcement with interdiction efforts to more effectively disrupt illicit drug trafficking systems. TIC principals meet to discuss and resolve issues related to the coordination, oversight, and integration of international, border, and domestic drug interdiction efforts in support of the NDCS. TIC provides advice to ONDCP on activities and threats posed by all drug trafficking activities that threaten the United States and the Western Hemisphere. TIC also advises on the operational adequacy, integration, and utilization of interdiction assets, as well as other matters that may bear on the accomplishment of operational interdiction objectives. Day-to-day TIC efforts are managed by an Executive Directorate, which is comprised of national security professionals detailed from the interagency.

## TIC Charter

### Information on Other Transit Zone Operations

Illicit drugs coming to the United States from South America pass through a seven million square-mile area called the Transit Zone, roughly twice the size of the continental United States. The Transit Zone includes the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the eastern Pacific Ocean. While patrolling this vast area, U.S. forces rely on international partnerships to closely coordinate enforcement operations with the interdiction forces of many Western Hemisphere and European nations in order to deny drug traffickers the use of air and maritime routes. Transit Zone interdiction is a team effort that relies on the successful execution of several steps in an interdiction continuum, including the collection and dissemination of actionable intelligence, the detection and monitoring of suspect vessels, and the physical interdiction of those vessels.



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The national interdiction goal, as set forth by the *National Drug Control Strategy*, establishes a removal rate of 40% of the documented flow of cocaine destined for the United States by FY2015. The target for FY10 was 30%, with an annual incremental increase of two percentage points through FY15. In FY2010, the Consolidated Counterdrug Database (CCDB) documented 804 metric tons of primary cocaine movement through the Western Hemisphere Transit Zone (WHTZ). Interdiction forces removed 244 metric tons in FY10, yielding a 30% (244/804) removal rate and meeting the national target. Although this represents a six percentage point increase from the FY06-FY09 average removal rate of 24%, this figure should be tempered by the year's anomalous CCDB documented movement. At 804 metric tons, this represents a 34% decrease when compared to the 1228 metric tons that moved in FY2009, and a 46% decrease compared to the 1494 metric tons that moved in FY2008 - a clear reminder of how strongly our data is impacted by our counterdrug awareness in the transit zone.

Typically, in the eastern Pacific, fishing vessels carrying multi-ton loads of cocaine depart Colombian and Ecuadorian Pacific coast ports for delivery points along the Central American or Mexican coast. In the Caribbean, high-speed go-fast vessels, hauling as much as two metric tons of cocaine at a time, leave Colombia's north coast for delivery points in the eastern Caribbean, or hug the Central American coastline in their track north to points along the Central American and Mexican coastlines. A fishing vessel operation can last up to six weeks, while go-fast operations run normally one or two days. The number of go-fast boats involved in smuggling has increased substantially in the past few years. Such craft are small, very fast, nearly invisible to radar, and difficult to see in daylight. To counter the go-fast threat, the U.S. Coast Guard has acquired new equipment and developed capabilities to use armed helicopters, over-the-horizon cutter boats, and non-lethal vessel-stopping technologies.

In response, drug traffickers have used new and innovative methods to transport drugs to the United States, including the development and enhancement of low-profile, fully-submersible and fully submersible vessels. The production quality and operational capabilities of these vessels has allowed traffickers to move more product with greater stealth. The distances these vessels can travel without support are allowing traffickers greater flexibility when planning potential drop locations.

## **What Is Being Done**

The interdiction effort in the Transit Zone is coordinated by the [Joint Inter-Agency Task Force South](#) (JIATF-South), a national asset located in Key West, Florida. The Task Force is responsible for the detection and monitoring of vessels and aircraft transporting illicit drugs through the Transit Zone. A subordinate of the U.S. Southern Command in Miami, Florida, JIATF-South is composed of representatives from the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Department of

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Justice and Department of State. Participating agencies include the DEA, FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), all five military services, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, the National Drug Intelligence Center, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office and the U.K.'s Serious and Organized Crime Agency (SOCA). Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Spain provide ships, aircraft, and liaison officers. A number of South and Central American countries have also assigned liaison officers to JIATF-South. Canada periodically provides ships and aircraft, and assigns temporary liaison officers during the deployment of these assets.

A typical JIATF-South interdiction operation involves the application of actionable intelligence to determine the location of a suspect drug trafficking vessel. This is combined with detection and monitoring by CBP, Defense Department, U.S. Coast Guard, or partner nation maritime patrol aircraft (MPA). The MPA will then vector in a nearby U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, or allied surface asset which, with assistance from a U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment, will seize the illicit cargo and arrest the crew.

Partner nations' interdiction contributions continue along their coastlines and within their borders, making a significant impact on counterdrug efforts in the WHTZ. Although total Source Zone removals decreased from 194 metric tons in 2009 to 177 metric tons in 2010, countries like Brazil and Peru demonstrated a marked increase in 2010. Good diplomatic relations and longstanding bilateral cooperation agreements facilitated increased removals throughout Central American countries as well. Panama was a case in point, increasing 14% in removals from 42 metric tons in 2009 to 48 metric tons in 2010.

The pace of seizures in the Transit Zone remains intense, and in 2010, these seizures combined with a number of different factors to result in a historic decrease in the availability of cocaine across the United States. The weakness of the dollar against the Euro, along with increasing European demand, made European markets more appealing to cocaine traffickers than in the past. Additionally, record eradication in the Source Zone and record removals in the Transit Zone, when combined with unprecedented intra-cartel violence within Mexico and historic pressure brought to bear on drug trafficking organizations by the Calderon Administration, all disrupted the cocaine market in a demonstrative way. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration's System to Retrieve Information on Drug Evidence, the average price per pure gram of cocaine in the United States increased by 44 percent; from \$95.35 per pure gram in January to \$136.93 per pure gram in September of 2007. This increase in price was accompanied by a 15 percent reduction in the average purity of cocaine.

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## Looking Ahead

Illicit trafficking by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) poses a significant threat to hemispheric security and citizen safety. The current security situation in Mexico and, to an increasing extent in Central America, is the result of ongoing TCO efforts to control the highly lucrative trade in drugs and other illicit products. A comprehensive effort is required to address this threat. The Merida Initiative, the Central American Regional Security Initiative and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative are ongoing interagency initiatives to coordinate a whole of government approach with our regional partner nations. Transit Zone interdiction will play a prominent role in this effort. Preventing illicit cargo from reaching the shores of our hemispheric partners reduces the threat and will help stabilize their security and social systems, and ultimately our own as well.

## Additional Interdiction Information:

Learn more about the [Interdiction Committee](#) or consult the [International Narcotics Control Strategy Report](#) (INCSR), issued by the State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). Other relevant web sites include the [DEA](#), [Department of Homeland Security](#), [U.S. Coast Guard](#), [ICE](#), and [CBP](#). For a look at the U.S. military's role in stemming the flow of drugs into America, consult the [United States Southern Command Web site](#). For information on the latest trends in cocaine smuggling through the Western Hemisphere Transit Zone--and worldwide--consult these ONDCP reports on cocaine smuggling:

- [Cocaine Smuggling in 2013](#)
- [Cocaine Smuggling in 2012](#)
- [Cocaine Smuggling in 2011 \(also available in Spanish and Portuguese\)](#)
- [Cocaine Smuggling in 2010](#)