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MARITIME SECURITY REPORT

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MARITIME SECURITY REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The *Maritime Security Report* is an unclassified quarterly publication prepared to inform the commercial maritime industry, senior Maritime Administration officials, the Secretary of Transportation's Office of Intelligence and Security, and the *Federal Ad Hoc Working Group On Maritime Security Awareness*. The report focuses on international criminal activity and security issues which could pose a threat to U.S. commercial maritime interests and the movement of U.S. civilian cargoes in foreign trade.

The global nature of U.S. trade means that U.S.-flag ocean carriers call on ports in nearly every country, and cargoes owned by U.S. interests may be embarked on ocean vessels of any flag or in any port worldwide. U.S. commercial maritime interests, therefore, can be jeopardized worldwide by a broad range of illicit activities, adversely affecting their competitiveness.

The *Maritime Security Report* is intended to increase awareness of the scope and severity of economic crime affecting U.S. maritime commerce. The Maritime Administration expects increased awareness to contribute toward deterring criminal exploitation of the maritime transportation system, its users and providers.

The *Maritime Security Report* is produced under the authorization of Margaret D. Blum, Associate Administrator for Port, Intermodal, and Environmental Activities. The information contained in the report is based on our research and analysis of recent, significant developments, and is compiled from commercial sources and U.S. Government reports.

Please direct any questions and comments on the information in this report to Thomas Morelli, Coordinator, Maritime Intelligence & Security, or John Pisani, Director, Office of Ports and Domestic Shipping, Maritime Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590, or telephone (202) 366-5473/fax (202) 366-6988.

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Note: The preceding issue of the *Maritime Security Report* is dated April 1997. Issues previous to that are dated: January 1997, September 1996, April 1996, January 1996, and August 1995 (the initial issue of the report). Copies of previous issues are available.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SOUTH AMERICA - Cocaine Smuggling From Bolivia To Atlantic Ports May Exploit Commercial Trade On Mercosur Hidrovia, Lacking A Waterways Management Strategy

Bolivian cocaine production has been increasing, and Argentine traffickers are playing a greater role in the direct exportation of Bolivian cocaine to the United States and Europe. Groups engaged in cocaine smuggling from Bolivia to Europe and the United States include independent Bolivian trafficking organizations which have frequently used Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina as transshipment points. Cocaine smuggling from Bolivia to Atlantic ports may exploit the commercial inland waterway trade.

Development of the Paraguay-Parana river system (*Hidrovia*) into an efficient regional commercial inland waterway route has begun, linking Bolivian and Southern Cone Atlantic ports. In the absence of adequate countermeasures, cocaine shipments smuggled through the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur) place its growing volume of maritime container traffic at risk. A waterways management strategy, implemented on a regional scale, may constrict the use of the *Hidrovia* trade corridor for smuggling cocaine shipments in commercial maritime cargoes.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report describes the cocaine trafficking activities in the Southern Cone as characterized by U.S. counternarcotics enforcement and intelligence organizations. The cocaine smuggling threat to commercial maritime container trades in the subregion and its relationship to European transit countries are outlined. The commercial significance of *Hidrovia* is considered in the context of the potential adverse impacts of drug smuggling and other illicit trades on Mercosur's legitimate commerce and economic development. Finally, the report addresses a U.S. Government strategy for waterways management intended to enhance multilateral efforts to reduce the volume of drugs moved by maritime transport in the source and transit zones.

SOUTH AMERICA - Cocaine Smuggling From Bolivia To Atlantic Ports May Exploit Commercial Trade On Mercosur Hidrovia, Lacking A Waterways Management Strategy

The risk of cocaine smuggling using commercial maritime containers may increase from Southern Cone Atlantic ports. This is due to trafficking patterns emerging in Bolivia and the cargo security vulnerabilities of the region's transport systems. Recent law enforcement operations have been successful in disrupting cocaine production in Peru and Colombia and interdicting northbound shipments from those countries, especially smuggling attempts by aircraft. Correspondingly, smuggling attempts may be displaced to maritime transport. Geographic proximity may make the Pacific seaports of Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia obvious alternative transshipment points. However, cocaine shipments may instead be directed eastward, adding to the volume already transiting ports in Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina destined mostly for Europe and the eastern United States. The percentage of these cocaine shipments being concealed in commercial maritime containerized cargoes may be substantial.

Transnational Trafficking Groups in Bolivia. In a June 1996 report on cocaine trafficking in South America, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) outlined a trend toward decentralization of what has been a Colombian-controlled drug trade. The trend is marked by the involvement of trafficking groups from other Latin American countries. They include independent Bolivian, Peruvian, Brazilian, and Mexican trafficking organizations. At the same time, the quantity of Bolivian cocaine produced and distributed has been increasing, precipitated in part by the success of the counterdrug operations in Peru and Colombia.

During 1996, reports indicated that non-Colombian groups were engaging in smuggling cocaine from Bolivia directly to European traffickers, according to the U.S. National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee (NNICC). Argentine traffickers were reported to be playing a greater role in the direct exportation of Bolivian cocaine to the United States and Europe. Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay were frequently used as transit routes for cocaine shipments, according to the NNICC 1997 report, *The Supply of Illicit Drugs Into the United States*. DEA reported that the other trafficking groups continued to depend on Colombians, however, for large-scale distribution (multi-ton shipments) of cocaine from South America.

Smuggling Cocaine to Europe. Commercial maritime containerized cargoes were reported to be a prominent method for smuggling cocaine shipments from Argentina to Europe and the United States, according to NNICC. Some cocaine shipments smuggled to Europe

from South America concealed in commercial maritime cargoes have been routed through U.S. and Caribbean ports as a diversionary tactic. Conversely, some South American cocaine shipments destined for U.S. ports were transshipped through European ports.

Spain has been a key point of entry for cocaine shipments smuggled into Europe. Spanish authorities seized 13.7 tons in 1996, approximately double the 1995 tonnage, according to NNICC. A significant percentage of that tonnage was found in commercial maritime shipping containers.

Italian Cosa Nostra. Italy continues to be a destination for cocaine shipped from Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia by maritime transport, and over land from Spain and France, according to the U.S. Department of State's 1997 *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* (INCSR). As a narcotics transit country, Italy remains at risk from its ethnically indigenous organized crime groups involved in cocaine trafficking -- Cosa Nostra, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta, and Sacra Corona Unita. They have been reported also to operate in South America.

According to the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), Brazil ranks third as an area of activity favored by Italian organized crime, after Italy itself and the United States. Italian and Brazilian police report that Italian drug traffickers in Brazil command a complex distribution and export system for smuggling Colombian and Bolivian cocaine into Europe.

Cultural circumstances in Argentina may be instrumental in Italian cocaine smuggling organizations using it as a transit country. Although Spanish is the dominant language, Italian is commonly spoken, as about half of Argentina's population is of Italian lineage.

BIMCO and World Customs Cooperation. The Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) advises that the increasing incidence of drug smuggling into Europe via commercial maritime transport poses a threat to international trade. BIMCO encourages its members to establish and support close links with the World Customs Organization and individual national customs authorities. BIMCO's United States affiliate, for example, the Houston-based Maritime Security Council, has organized and led an international commercial industry coalition intent on alleviating seaport crime in Brazil and improving the country's cargo security.

BIMCO regards customs authorities to be clearly obligated to work closely with the maritime trades to prevent commercial maritime drug smuggling and related illicit activities. A key outcome of government/industry cooperation is alleviating the additional expense and costly delays smuggling imposes on legitimate

transport operators and their customers. Beneficial cooperative activities include training programs and the exchange of intelligence information.

Intelligence on Containerized Shipments. Drug shipments in commercial maritime cargoes complicate smuggling investigations by obfuscating the links between the illicit consignment and the traffickers. To further avoid being traced, smugglers in the drug source and transit zones often place drugs in a container after it leaves the shipper while in transit by truck to the port for export. At the destination, the container may be accessed in port or again while in transit -- perhaps under the guise of a cargo theft incident -- in order to extract the drug consignment. Internal conspiracies, including accomplices infiltrated into various aspects of the shipping cycle, frequently facilitate commercial maritime smuggling in source, transit, and arrival zone ports.

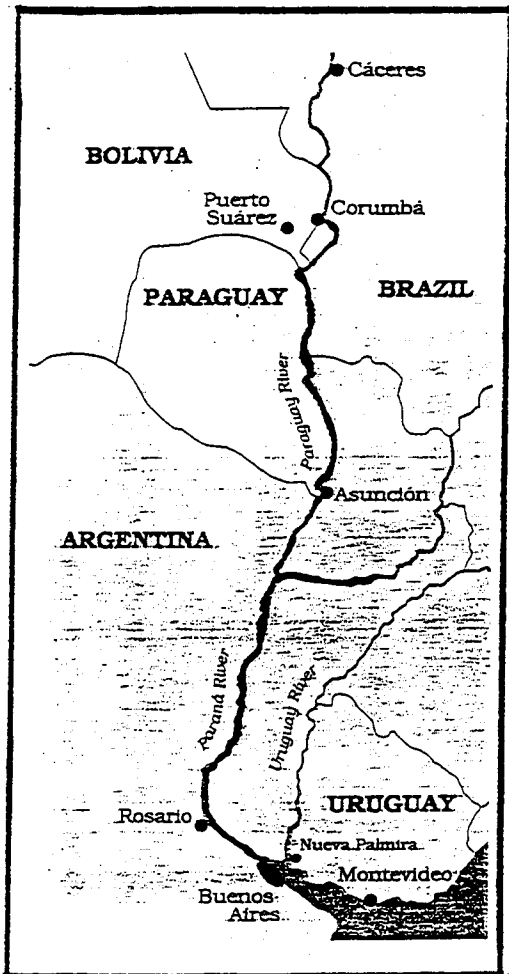
The U.S. Customs Service (USCS) provides assessments on drug smuggling risk levels around the world to maritime shipping lines participating in its Sea Carrier Initiative Program. The assessments rate areas as low, medium, or high according to the likelihood of drugs being smuggled aboard commercial vessels or in their cargoes.

As maritime container traffic volumes increase, random inspections become statistically less likely to detect concealed narcotics shipments. Review of shipping documentation by customs investigators, although an increasingly effective tool, is somewhat also limited by the volume of container traffic. Predictive operational intelligence can provide explicit information usable at the tactical level. Information of this quality can increase the probability of container inspections resulting in drug seizures and arrests.

Investigations involving the use of freight containers for drug smuggling depend heavily on explicit intelligence provided by informants. Labor intensive searches of containers based on random selection is less productive than inspections prompted by prior intelligence information. During 1996, intelligence information was a contributing factor in 48% of all cocaine seizures by the U.S. Customs Service (USCS) in which shipments had been concealed in commercial cargo.

In a recent report, entitled *Customs Service: Information On Southwest Border Drug Enforcement Operations*, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) made recommendations to Congress for improving U.S. international counternarcotics efforts. GAO cited the need to enhance support for the increased use of intelligence information and technology by the U.S. and other nations to reduce the supplies of and interdict illegal drugs.

Cocaine Smuggling in the Paraguay-Parana Basin. The Paraguay-Parana river system (map, this page) has been used to smuggle cocaine shipments from Bolivia into Paraguay, southeastern Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, according to INCSR. As much as 1,500 kilograms (kg) of cocaine are estimated to transit Paraguay monthly, mostly from Bolivia, according to law enforcement and intelligence reports. Cocaine seizures in Paraguay in 1996 were approximately 56 kg.



Paraguay-Parana River Basin. Source: IDB

Brazil continues to be a major transshipment point for cocaine produced in Bolivia and other Andean countries, destined for export to U.S. and European markets. Smugglers exploit Brazil's virtually uncontrolled ports and inland waterways. Brazilian police and some U.S. authorities estimate that between 10-20 tons of cocaine are smuggled through Brazil annually. Brazilian federal police seized about three tons in 1996.

Smuggling cocaine from Bolivia across Uruguay's riverine border with Argentina remains relatively easy, although dramatic increases in drug seizures have occurred along Uruguay's northern land borders. The large volume of containerized cargo passing through the Port of Montevideo may facilitate cocaine shipments, although none had been seized as of early 1997, according to INCSR.

The use of Argentina as a drug smuggling transit country for cocaine destined for Europe is a growing problem and has increased over the past few years.

During the first nine months of 1996, Argentine authorities seized nearly 2,000 kg of cocaine, according to INCSR. Law enforcement investigations of Bolivian cocaine traffickers in Argentina are complicated by the estimated 200,000 Bolivians living in Argentina as undocumented economic migrants. They reside mainly in Buenos Aires, according to Bolivian diplomatic sources.

Diversión of Essential/Precursor Chemicals in Bolivia. Most chemicals required to process coca leaf into cocaine are not manufactured or used in legitimate industrial applications in Bolivia. Typically, cocaine traffickers divert legally imported chemicals from more industrialized South American countries and smuggle them to production sites in Bolivia. Precursor and essential chemicals also have been imported into Bolivia legally and then diverted to cocaine processing operations.

In 1996, chemicals essential to the production of cocaine were smuggled into Bolivia on the river networks from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Chile, according to NNICC. Although Bolivia, Chile, and Brazil have made progress controlling the production and transport of precursor chemicals and interdicting their illicit use, the smuggling continues. Brazil's large chemical industry may still be a key supplier of precursor chemicals to Bolivia.

Mercosur - Southern Cone Common Market. Mercosur, formed in 1991, consists of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay as full members, and Bolivia and Chile as associate members. Common market integration is predicated on economic and political stability, open trading markets, export-based economic growth, and inexpensive hydroelectric power. Improvement in transport links and customs procedures and standardization and reduction of its trade regulations are key outcomes planned by Mercosur.

By 1995, intra-Mercosur exports had increased an average of 26% a year. Exports to the rest of the world had increased by nearly 14%, while its total trade volume with the rest of the world had improved by an average of 6% a year. The nations of the North American Free Trade Agreement had increased their exports to Mercosur by nearly 35%, while the rest of the Western Hemisphere nations recorded an increase of more than 31%.

Mercosur's trade development strategy aims to exploit the growth, scale, and specialization of its emerging agricultural and mining industries, and its diversified and modernized manufacturing sector. Mercosur plans to gradually achieve full implementation of its customs union and free-trade area by 2005. Because consumer tastes and distribution systems differ, there are still hundreds of internal products exempt from tariff-free trade, and a less-than-common tariff applied to external imports continues.

The Hidrovia Trade Corridor. The *Hidrovia* is an inland waterway project to develop the Paraguay-Parana river system into a low-cost and reliably navigable commercial maritime transportation route to link the interior of South America with the Atlantic Ocean. The *Hidrovia* route is 2,800 kilometers (km) in length. It extends from the ports in eastern Bolivia and southwestern Brazil through Paraguay to the confluence of the two

rivers and south to the Rio de la Plata Estuary, on which are located the ports of Montevideo and Buenos Aires. Improvements will make shallow-draft ports at the northern end of the system more accessible by vessels trading with deep-draft ports.

The *Hidrovia* project is an important element in increasing Mercosur exports of primary products and manufactured goods. It is administered by the Intergovernmental Committee of the Paraguay-Parana Waterway, composed of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, and is planned for completion in 2005.

Infrastructure Improvements. Infrastructure development emphasis is on improving navigation aids on the waterway, deepening channels, building new port infrastructure, and modernizing existing facilities. Each country is responsible for funding improvements in its segment of the *Hidrovia*. Private firms operating the infrastructure and benefiting from its use are also providing funding.

Hidrovia vs. Land Transport. The land transport systems in Mercosur countries have developed over the years as national systems with few cross-border routes to facilitate international trade. Incompatible railway gauges in Argentina and Brazil, for example, cause freight trade by railroad between the two countries to be transshipped at the border. Highway networks in the region are low capacity, poorly maintained, and congested. Resulting in-transit delays add expense to the cost of goods and create opportunities for smugglers to access cargoes.

In the absence of competitive inland waterway commerce, trucking has become the dominate means of inland regional freight transport, despite its impediments. The majority of international cargoes moved between the interior of South America and, for example, the ports of Buenos Aires and Montevideo are transported by truck. *Hidrovia* aims to capture much of that export/import market share by providing a competitive waterborne freight alternative to costly and inefficient highway and rail transport.

Commercial and Economic Benefits. In the near-term, anticipated benefits of *Hidrovia* include a reduction in the cost of the region's agricultural exports and increased use of the waterway for trading manufactured goods produced in the region. In response to market demand, a Buenos Aires-based shipbuilding company, Tandanor, for example, plans to construct 300 barges of 2,000-ton cargo capacity. The rapid growth in the domestic and foreign merchandise trade being experienced by Mercosur countries offers potentially significant increases in containerized cargo traffic moving on the *Hidrovia* and handled by its ports.

Commercial Shipping on the Hidrovia. At the northern extent of the *Hidrovia*, on the Rio Paraguay, is the Brazilian barge port of Corumba, in Mato Grosso state, 2,770 km north of the Port of Buenos Aires. About 11 km west of the Port of Corumba, located on the Bolivian side of the river, are the Ports of Puerto Suarez and the Puerto Aguirre barge terminal. They are linked to the river by the Canal Tamengo, which is reportedly dredged and equipped with navigation aids. The transit time from these ports to the Rio de la Plata Estuary is reported to require 14 days. A barge company operating from Puerto Aguirre since 1996 claims that dredging and navigation improvements enabling 24-hour use of *Hidrovia* could reduce transit times on the waterway by half.

Puerto Aguirre, Bolivia. The Puerto Aguirre inland waterway terminal provides Bolivia direct access to barge shipping and, through feeder service, transshipment to ocean ports and the international maritime trades. Established in September 1988, Puerto Aguirre operates as a freight transshipment and storage terminal for mainly export cargoes bound for Argentina and Uruguay. Annual throughput exceeds 200,000 tons, consisting mainly of bulk grains but including breakbulk cargoes suitable for containerization. Puerto Aguirre is a private enterprise owned by the Guirre family, whose international trade operations include a commercial and industrial free trade zone at nearby Puerto Quijarro, which was established in February 1991.

Reliable water depth is about 2.5 meters most of the year, and current in the river runs between two and five knots, according to commercial reporting. Single barges of 1,800-ton capacity, and tows of up to eight vessels, negotiate the port and its approaches. Farther north, the Rio Paraguay reportedly can accommodate only single barges under 500-ton capacity.

Port of Asuncion, Paraguay. The Port of Asuncion is located on the lower Rio Paraguay, approximately 1,630 km north of the Port of Buenos Aires. Vessels with a capacity of 70-120 containers, in twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU), are reported to call on the port. Vessel operators such as the Paraguayan-registered Lineas Feeder line of the Murchison Group provide feeder service to deep-water ports to the south. Water depth accommodates ships up to 3,400-ton capacity during about half the year, or during additional months if partially laden.

Although Paraguay historically has depended heavily on river transportation for commercial trade, trucking currently dominates transportation of the country's exports and cross-border access to ports in Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. For example, nearly all of Paraguay's agricultural production for export is transported east by truck to the Brazilian Port of Paranagua, south of Santos.

Seaports in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. Significant growth has been forecast in maritime freight feeder services between the inland ports of the northern *Hidrovia* and the seaports of Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and Santos. The two largest ports in immediate proximity to the *Hidrovia* are Buenos Aires and Montevideo. The Port of Santos is nearly 900 nautical miles north of Montevideo.

Weekly liner service using 1,000-TEU containerships is increasing -- such as German-registered Columbus Line -- from ports in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, according to commercial reporting. The approximate 1996 annual TEU container handling volumes achieved by these ports are: Buenos Aires/780,000, which handles nearly all of Argentina's container traffic; Montevideo/165,000; and Santos/850,000. Much of this traffic is traded between ports on the east coast of the United States.

The volume of container traffic is expected to increase significantly. One estimate, for example, is that annual container traffic demand at the Port of Santos will reach two million TEU by the year 2000. The Brazilian ocean liner company, Transroll Navegacao, has forecast that the total volume of maritime container traffic handled by the ports of South America's east coast could reach nearly eight million TEU by the year 2004.

These ports have been rapidly expanding their capacity to handle greater volumes of transoceanic container traffic. The Port of Montevideo, which experienced a 21% increase in container traffic during the 1991-95 period, has plans to increase cargo handling capacity to accommodate anticipated growth in trade with Bolivia and Paraguay. At the Port of Buenos Aires, recent modernization has actually created excess container handling capacity. Recently privatized management of the Port of Santos' main container terminals may improve cargo handling efficiency, but high costs may constrain profitable operations for some time.

The extensive port privatization plans underway in these ports are shifting the responsibilities for management of cargo handling terminals away from the government port authorities to private industry operators. There is concern, however, that the urgency to facilitate trade and expedite the processing of cargo may result in a relaxation of cargo security scrutiny and less effective cocaine interdiction efforts.

Customs Corruption. Corruption has a measurably negative effect on both investment and economic growth, according to a private sector study commissioned by the World Bank for its *World Development Report 1997*. Corruption flourishes where government policy and regulatory practices provide the opportunities and

where the government fails to prevent private or public interests from taking illegal advantage of those opportunities.

In Argentina, for example, integrity problems in the customs service raise the vulnerability of the ports to drug smuggling. Internal investigations into the country's National Customs Administration (ANA) uncovered severe and high-level corruption last year. In October 1996, Argentina's president, Carlos Menem, announced new national initiatives to combat the problem. Organized fraud schemes were exposed that involved evasion of customs duties and manipulation of computer data bases intended to conceal such transactions. For example, inbound freight containers were marked as in-transit to other countries, but cargoes were diverted instead to warehouses and documented as domestic cargo. In some cases, shippers acted in collusion with customs officials, paying bribes for duty-free release of imported cargoes. On other occasions, schemes were intended simply for the theft of cargoes.

Customs fraud, official corruption, and widespread informal trade create vulnerabilities in the legitimate freight shipping cycle of commercial trade corridors. These circumstances facilitate drug smuggling and other transnational criminal activities such as contraband and alien smuggling, money laundering, and cargo theft. A well organized and sustained institutional framework of countermeasures is necessary in order to constrain these illicit activities. It is imperative that alleviating the adverse impacts of drug smuggling and other illicit trades on legitimate commerce and economic development in the region be included among target outcomes.

An Engagement Strategy for Port and Waterway Management. The U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) stresses that bilateral and multilateral agreements, intelligence sharing, and combined operations with allies are important components of an effective counterdrug strategy. ONDCP and other U.S. drug control agencies have recognized the need to develop U.S. policy and guidance for engaging with South American countries on the subject of port and waterways management.

In response, a Waterways Engagement Strategy was developed in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) under sponsorship of the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator. The strategy was originally intended for application in Peru. U.S. officials there have stated that without the strategy, developing an adequate force to counter the expanded use of rivers by drug smugglers could take as long as ten years.

Essential to effective implementation of the strategy for port and waterway management is the participation of host-nation coast

guard, customs, port security, national police, and military. In addition, the cooperation of the commercial maritime trade and shipping communities is required. To ensure that, the strategy calls for a range of relevant resources, training, and support provided to host nations through various direct and indirect U.S. assistance programs and commercial industry outreach initiatives.

According to INL, operational phases of the strategy are implemented in sequence over time. Initial priorities consist of establishing control and development of the maritime jurisdiction. This is followed by effective management of the maritime jurisdiction in the furtherance of social and economic development priorities.

Contained within the operational phases of the strategy are elements intended to detect, disrupt, and deter narcotics transport as well as its production. Other elements include facilitating legitimate maritime commerce while denying uncontested illicit traffic and activity. A constituent link to both of these elements is a focus specifically on deterring the use of commercial ports and waterways for trafficking of precursors, essential chemicals, and narcotic substances.

Anticipated benefits for participating nations include enhanced maritime trade, an increase in governmental revenues from customs collections, and a reduction in smuggling of drugs and contraband. For Latin American nations engaged in applying the strategy, it represents an opportunity to enhance multilateral efforts to reduce the volume of drugs moved by maritime transport in the source and transit zones. The following are examples of successful U.S.-multilateral assistance mechanisms applicable to the strategy's implementation.

U.S. Coast Guard Assistance. The International Training Division (ITD) of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Reserve Training Center has a key role in the implementation process of the strategy. In collaboration with USCG International Affairs Staff, ITD Mobile Training Teams work with host nations and the respective U.S. embassies to customize assistance. Training is provided in, for example, maritime security/waterways management, risk assessment and seaport security, maritime law enforcement, and narcotics interdiction. ITD also provides training in maritime commerce control and infrastructure development for countries with waterway law enforcement programs.

Business Anti-Smuggling Coalition. The U.S. Customs Service (USCS) has identified containerized commercial cargo at seaports as its primary narcotics detection requirement. As part of its response to this problem, USCS established a business-led alliance in 1996, called the Business Anti-Smuggling Coalition (BASC). It is intended to significantly deter the use of

legitimate commercial shipments as narcotic smuggling conveyances by examining the entire process of manufacturing, packaging, and shipping merchandise to the U.S. from foreign countries. It also addresses the growing problem of internal conspiracies at cargo handling and intermodal freight interchange points.

BASC complements the long-standing USCS Sea Carrier Initiative Program which emphasizes deterring narcotic smuggling onboard commercial ocean carriers. Like the Initiative program, BASC is voluntary and without Customs-imposed mandates, relying instead on the international commercial industry to set standards.

Port Security Training. Training of commercial port security personnel is also a key component in an integrated and comprehensive strategy for establishing secure trade corridors in international maritime commerce. The port security function is complementary to coast guard, customs, and police roles and missions -- but sufficiently different -- to warrant specialized training. A general overview of recommended standards and practices is included in *Port Security: A National Planning Guide*, produced by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) and USCG.

Port security is a major goal of the Organization of American States (OAS) as expressed in its recently published *Guidelines for An Inter-American Port Policy*. Training has previously been conducted on a limited basis for OAS countries under the sponsorship of OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission and MARAD and funded by the U.S. Department of State. Its funding has been approved for MARAD to organize training courses for commercial port security officials from member countries, beginning in 1998.

COMMENT: The trends in South American cocaine production and distribution raise the probability that Mercosur countries will be used increasingly in the near term as transit routes for cocaine destined for the United States and Europe. In the absence of effective countermeasures, the *Hidrovia* is vulnerable to being exploited as a riverine smuggling corridor for cocaine shipments from Bolivia concealed in commercial maritime cargoes.

The politico-economic geography of the *Hidrovia* is conducive to a comprehensive waterways engagement strategy. The strategy has the potential to improve the capabilities, effectiveness, and coordination of government/industry efforts to counter smuggling and related forms of cargo crime, such as cargo theft and money laundering. Successful implementation of a strategy to manage port and waterway commerce may result in a subregional deterrent to drug smuggling and improved cocaine source interdiction operations and U.S. efforts in the transit zones.

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