**Counter-Drug Plan for El Salvador – Fiscal Year 2014**

**Introduction**

This plan for the Department of Defense counter-drug support for the Government of El Salvador in the amount of $1,320,000 is submitted in accordance with paragraph (h) of Section 1033 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998, as amended. This plan was developed by United States (U.S.) Southern Command in coordination with representatives of the federal departments and agencies at the U.S. Embassy to El Salvador.

**(1)** **Security Assessment (1033 (h)(1))**

El Salvador is a transit country for South American-produced illicit drugs. Transit occurs along the Salvadoran coastline via go-fast boats and commercial vessels, as well as across land along the Pan-American Highway. The country has experienced increased rates of crime and illicit trafficking. Drug trafficking organizations continue to abuse this key shipment corridor to facilitate movement of illicit drugs, arms, contraband, and people into the United States. Narcotraffickers exploit the sea, air, and unguarded areas along Salvadoran land borders. The Salvadoran police/judiciary, unfortunately, are notoriously undermanned, poorly trained, and ill-equipped to handle the current problem of crime and trafficking proliferation. Faced with insufficient numbers of effectively trained police, lack of funds to augment the size and quality of civilian police forces, and public frustration with corruption and rising violence, President Mauricio Funes has called for the El Salvadoran Armed Forces (ESAF) to increase its participation in joint patrols with police units. These Salvadoran military units, however, often similarly lack resources to effectively conduct operations to control the country’s territory.

Counter-drug operations in El Salvador are principally conducted by units of the Salvadoran National Civilian Police, in concert with the ESAF. U.S. Department of Defense support focuses on assisting the Government of El Salvador’s ability to halt the flow of illegal drugs and drug money within and across its littorals and borders via support to these units.

**(2)** **Evaluation of Counter-Drug Operations (1033(h)(2))**

As of July, 2013 totals reported by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) for actions by the National Civilian Police Anti-narcotics Unit (with the assistance of the ESAF) include the seizure of 57 kilograms of marijuana, 976.34 kilograms of cocaine, 1 kilogram of heroin, 3,400 kilograms of precursor chemicals, $991,091 cash seized, $1,238,423 assets seized and 86 arrests for significant seizures.

Historically, a severe lack of government presence in remote areas along land borders and in territorial waters allowed drug traffickers to operate in these areas with virtual impunity. In response to President Mauricio Funes’ call for increased involvement of the ESAF in counter-drug operations, Joint Group Cuscatlán (JGC), a law-enforcement-led interagency task force focused on Counter-Transnational Organized Crime (C-TOC, which incorporates counter-drug operations) was established in October 2012. JGC is comprised of two Salvadoran law enforcement and two Salvadoran military elements. The Law Enforcement piece consists of a 20 man element from the Departmento Anti-Narcotics (DAN) which covers the investigation aspects of CTOC. They work with and receive training from US Government agencies. The other civil police portion of the JGC is a 10 man element from the Grupo Reaccion Policia (GRP). This unit is similar to a Police SWAT team and has arrest authorities that the military arms of the JGC do not currently possess. The land-based Military arm of the JGC is a 30 man team from Destacamento Militar Cuatro (DM4, aka Mountain Commandos). They primarily are responsible for terrestrial interdiction in remote inland areas and borders. The maritime based military arm of the JGC is a 30 man team from the Seccion de Reconociemiento (SdR, Reconnaissance Section), sourced from the Salvadoran Marines. They specialize in coastal and littoral operations. Both military elements work jointly with the law enforcement units to handle any arrests. All members of JGC, military and police, train together. On July 18, 2013, JGC seized 468 kilograms of cocaine in a single event.

The ESAF is hospitable and open to coordination with U.S. Government agencies in the battle against narcotics trafficking and associated gang activity. Despite increased efforts by the ESAF via JGC, a noteworthy narco-trafficking presence still exists in El Salvador. Supplemental manpower, equipment, training, and other resources are required to enable significant improvements in ESAF counter-drug operations. The ESAF face challenges of austere budget allocations, aging weapons systems, rapidly deteriorating infrastructure, and a lack of training. Paucity of funds for maritime fuel hamper the Salvadoran Navy, which is the primary branch of service involved in drug trafficking interdiction. As a result of acquiring eight maritime interceptor boats as of July 2013 (four funded by Enduring Friendship/CARSI, four by 1033), as well as transforming the Salvadoran Marines into a professional organization with a counter-narcotics response unit (the SdR), the Salvadoran Navy’s operational readiness has increased – but it will require continued maritime equipment assistance to sustain progress. The Salvadoran Air Force is primarily tasked with air mobility missions but does provide some rotary-wing capability to the military’s counter-drug mission in support of JGC (national police provide rotary wing support to JGC at this time). Counter-drug success by Salvadoran units will depend on persistent training engagements with U.S. instructors, networked intelligence capability throughout the interagency, increased mobility, and upgrade or replacement of deteriorating infrastructure.

**(3) Monitoring of Past and Current Assistance (1033(h)(3))**

The Government of El Salvador has established adequate procedures to ensure all equipment provided under this section of law will be used for the purpose intended. The United States will have access to the equipment provided to ensure appropriate use of such assistance.

**(4) Centralized Management and Coordination (1033 (h)(4))**

The United States Ambassador to El Salvador is responsible for U.S. activities conducted within El Salvador, including development and implementation of this plan and coordination among U.S. Government agencies carrying out counter-drug cooperation with the Government of El Salvador. The Department of Defense coordinates with the Department of State to carry out these responsibilities with respect to the Government of El Salvador. The Department of Defense also coordinates with U.S. law enforcement agencies which are responsible for counter-drug activities.

**(5) Roles, Missions, and Coordination (1033(h)(5))**

The El Salvador Ministry of Defense, via the ESAF, is the principal Government of El Salvador agency to receive assistance under this program. The mission of the ESAF is to coordinate with the National Civilian Police to conduct counter-drug operations in the maritime, ground, and border domains with a view to decreasing illicit trafficking to and through the El Salvador. Under the provisions of this section, the Ministry of Defense is the nation’s authority to certify the terms and conditions of the support under this section. In addition, the Ministry of Defense will report to the U.S. Government the status of the use, storage, and conservation of the equipment provided under this provision of law. The Ministry of Defense is fully supportive of the plan and sees this support as an opportunity to integrate efforts and improve the quality and quantity of the El Salvador’s counter-drug activities.

**(6) Department of Defense and Department of State Resources (1033(h)(6))**

The Department of Defense support planned for fiscal year 2014 will focus on provision of equipment, operational support, training, and infrastructure, intended to enhance El Salvadoran Armed Forces maritime interdiction, ground mobility/reaction, and border security capabilities, primarily through assistance to Fuerza Naval and JGC. This Department of Defense support – provided under Section 1033 – includes: nonlethal protective and utility personnel equipment and patrol boat packages. Complimentary 1004 support includes fuel/lubricants/parts, other expendables, nonsecure communications equipment, as well as counter narcotics-related training courses and events.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Major Categories of FY14 1033 Support** | **Amount Planned**  **($K)** | **Supported Agencies** |
| Patrol Boats | $1,200 | El Salvador Navy |
| Nonlethal Specialized Equipment: Patrol Boat Components | $47 | El Salvador Navy |
| Nonlethal Protective and Utility Personnel Equipment: Safety, Scoping, and Office Devices | $71 | El Salvador Navy, El Salvador Army |

Note: Proposed transfers of defense articles, under Section 1033, which are also on the U.S. Munitions List, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, will also comply with export control laws and International Traffic in Arms Regulations and will be carried out in compliance with the Act.

**(7) Establishing and Sustaining the Program (1033(h)(7))**

United States Southern Command – in coordination with each partner nation’s lead governmental counter-drug units and U.S. Security Cooperation Office – strives to design holistic programs that cross-cut both USC 1004 and 1033 authorities to build critical Partner Nation counter-drug capabilities. Beyond provision of equipment under USC 1033, complimentary 1004 support such as infrastructure, communications, and training ensure that Partner Nation counter-drug forces are furnished not only with the means to address short-term material gaps, but also to maintain and sustain those materials – and the augmentation in quality and quantity of counter-drug operations this support engenders – over the long-term.

The Government of El Salvador has received equipment pursuant to USC 1033 since 2009. Initial objectives of support were to increase the Salvadoran Navy’s high-speed maritime intercept capability, improve command and control/communications, and assist the integration of Salvadoran Marines and Army operations. With the arrival of four 37’ and four 33’ maritime interceptors and training provided to the Salvadoran Fuerza Naval and Marines via mobile training teams and exchanges, Salvadoran military maritime operational capability has increased. Similar advances have been made by the Mountain Commandos (DM-4), who trained extensively with U.S. military and law enforcement teams. Sustainment of support to these units will further increase operational effectiveness throughout the country.

**(8) Reporting Measures of Effectiveness (1022(h)(7))**

The U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics & Global Threats *2011 Strategic Plan* dictates that, “Geographic Combatant Commands, Military Departments, and Defense Agencies will design CN&GT program frameworks that convey the implicit cause and effect linkages between Central Transfer Account-funded activities, theater-level objectives, and CN&GT strategic goals.” With this requirement - and the 2012 CN&GT performance metrics system SOP – in mind, United States Southern Command has established mechanisms through which each country's Security Cooperation Office (SCO) reports relevant Building Partner Nation program measures. In order to collect data for and verify accuracy of reported measures, the SCO also coordinates with Partner Nation counter-drug units directly responsible for conducting measured operations.

In addition to these Building Partner Nation program measures, utilization of tools such as the JIATF-South Consolidated Counterdrug Database (CCDB) and inputs from similar Detection & Monitoring program will strive to provide a holistic picture of the impact of both USG asset and Partner Nation contributions to CN operations throughout the SOUTHCOM Area of Responsibility.

**(9) Relation to the U.S. National Drug Control Strategy:**

This counter-drug plan supports the U.S. National Drug Control Strategy by:

* Reducing the level of illicit drug production and trafficking in key source and transit nations;
* Disrupting the activities of major drug trafficking organizations;
* Strengthening the democratic and law enforcement institutions of partner nations threatened by illegal drugs;
* Encouraging and promoting the counternarcotics operations of other countries in the region; and
* Reducing the underlying financial and other support that drug trafficking provides to international terrorist organization.

This plan represents a coordinated program with priorities and measured results to meet El Salvador’s and U.S. drug control objectives. The plan complements other elements of U.S. counter-drug operations, and includes ongoing evaluation on the plan’s effectiveness. This plan’s technical, materiel, and training assistance is focused in areas of greatest immediate need, and in areas where there is an ability to absorb, utilize, and sustain the resources provided. This plan reflects a balanced approach to support El Salvador’s goal of increasing the overall operational reach of its forces and the ability to employ, maintain, and sustain the capabilities provided effectively.