



Operational Resources in the Caribbean

June 15, 2016

FY 2015 Report to Congress



Homeland
Security

Under Secretary for Management

Message from the Under Secretary for Management

I am pleased to present the following report, “Operational Resources in the Caribbean.”

This report was compiled pursuant to language in House Report 113-481, which accompanies the *Fiscal Year 2015 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act* (P.L. 114-4).

Pursuant to congressional guidelines, this report is being provided to the following Members of Congress:



The Honorable John R. Carter
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 447-3400 or the Department’s Deputy Under Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, Chip Fulghum, at (202) 447-5751.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RCDeyo". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Russell C. Deyo
Under Secretary for Management



Operational Resources in the U.S. Caribbean

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I. Legislative Language

This report responds to the language set forth in House Report 113-481, which accompanies the *Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act* (P.L. 114-4).

House Report 113-481 states:

Operational Resources in the U.S. Caribbean

The Committee remains concerned about vulnerabilities in border control and high levels of violent crime occurring in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Committee is especially concerned with the pervasively high homicide rates occurring in the U.S. Caribbean and that such crime is directly linked to the smuggling of illegal narcotics and goods into United States Territories. The Committee recognizes the successes to date of Operation Caribbean Resilience, which is a joint initiative of the Department's component agencies launched in 2012 and expanded in 2013 to disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations in and around Puerto Rico. This initiative entailed a short-term, temporary surge of additional Departmental resources and personnel to Puerto Rico to augment local law enforcement efforts, with the principal contributions coming from ICE's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). The Committee believes such surge operations should be replicated, as necessary, to stem the flow of contraband into the United States, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and to counter the reach and growth of organized criminal enterprises throughout the Caribbean basin. The Committee directs the Secretary to report to the Committee not later than December 31, 2014, on the Department's plans to address operational needs in the source and transit zones and throughout the Caribbean basin, specifically in and around Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, either as part of surge operations or on a more permanent basis.

II. Background

The Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands territories and commercial aviation and maritime sectors are targeted by transnational criminal organizations in furtherance of illicit activities. Transnational criminal organizations regularly smuggle narcotics into Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland from the Dominican Republic. The island of Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti), Jamaica, and The Bahamas are utilized by transnational criminal organizations as staging locations for the movement of illicit goods, narcotics, firearms, moneys, and people into and out of the United States. Puerto Rico is an ideal transit location for drugs, illegal immigrants, and illicit cash and monetary instruments due to its close proximity to the southeast United States, its geographical location in the center of the Caribbean, and its proximity to the northern parts of South America, specifically, Venezuela and Colombia.

Operation Caribbean Resilience was initiated to disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations in and around Puerto Rico, and was a joint initiative of the Department's component agencies, launched in 2012 and expanded in 2013. This initiative entailed a short-term, temporary surge of departmental resources and personnel to Puerto Rico to augment local law enforcement efforts, with the contributions coming from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Border Patrol, Ramey Sector. DHS personnel were deployed with officers from the Puerto Rico Police Department. These deployments were based on actionable intelligence indicating the location of subjects that had outstanding arrest warrants issued by a federal magistrate. The teams (in the capacity of co-case agents) assisted with: perimeter security, overwatch with the use of remote surveillance systems, entry and arrest of subjects, evidence handling, and any other tasks as requested by ICE. In addition to Ramey Sector agents, the Border Patrol Tactical Unit was made available to assist upon request from ICE HSI.

Prior to the initiation of Operation Caribbean Resilience, Puerto Rico had a record high number of murders in 2011 at 1,136, and in 2010, Puerto Rico averaged 26.2 murders per 100,000 residents, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. This put Puerto Rico on par with countries like Mexico (23.7) and the Dominican Republic (25).¹ Additionally, the Caribbean region was second in the world, behind South America, in percentage of homicides by firearm. Operation Caribbean Resilience resulted in a marked reduction in gun-related violence and homicides in Puerto Rico.

Following the success of Operation Caribbean Resilience, ICE HSI San Juan launched the Resilience Strike Team in October of 2013. Similar to Operation Caribbean

¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Study on Homicide

Resilience, the Resilience Strike Team harnesses DHS resources as well as other federal, state, and local law enforcement assets into an integrated enforcement approach to proactively support enforcement operations that target specific criminals and their organizations/gangs involved in drug and weapons smuggling/trafficking and the ensuing violent crimes. The Resilience Strike Team utilizes all available intelligence to conduct specific and targeted surge operations jointly with federal, state, and local partners. The Resilience Strike Team is placed and supported under a unified group structure with members of the ICE HSI San Juan Public Safety Group, the Puerto Rico Police Department, the San Juan Police Department, and a specialized team from the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the District of Puerto Rico.

During the operational inception and initial deployment of the Resilience Strike Team in partnership with state and local law enforcement agencies, ICE HSI San Juan noticed the results of its targeted operations, which yielded an immediate reduction in violent crimes and homicides. Furthermore, through the proactive utilization of specialized urban gang response enforcement operations, tactical intelligence gathering and analysis, undercover assignments, specialized evidence gathering and interviewing techniques, among other law enforcement tactics and techniques, the Resilience Strike Team reduced the violent crime rate on the island of Puerto Rico, resulting in mitigation of the national security risk and threats posed by transnational criminal organizations.

The reduction in violent crime can be seen geographically across the Caribbean, but none more evident than in Puerto Rico. From the record high murder rates seen in 2011, the 681 murders in Puerto Rico in 2014 were the lowest in 15 years.² This was a 40-percent reduction in the murder rate. These numbers directly correlate to the introduction of Operation Caribbean Resilience in 2012 and the Resilience Strike Team in 2013. Each year, Puerto Rico saw a reduction in violent crime due to the efforts of DHS and its law enforcement partners.

Since the inception of Operation Caribbean Resilience in 2012, and the transition to the Resilience Strike Team, the following statistics are presented.³

Arrests	Weapons Seized	Ammunition Seized	Body Armor Seized	Currency Seized
1,500	1,015	58,767 rounds	43	\$ 1,076,954

² Puerto Rico Police Department

³ Homeland Security Investigations Cognos

III. Discussion

A. Department of Homeland Security

As DHS Components, ICE, CBP, and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) participate in the Joint Task Forces, Caribbean Border Interagency Group, and the Unified Command. As part of the DHS Unified Command concept, the DHS agencies and the Puerto Rico Police Department have developed joint initiatives and operations in the Puerto Rico area of responsibility. This has led to a marked increase in actionable intelligence for all DHS Components and has greatly streamlined the DHS Components' ability to respond to these threats as one team.

- **Joint Task Forces**

To combat the transnational criminal organization threat more effectively, DHS established joint task forces to integrate intelligence, planning, interdiction, and investigative efforts across CBP, ICE, and USCG, and to prioritize and target threat streams operating in the Southern Border and Approaches region, as well as to combat transnational criminal organization activity and splinter organizations present within the U.S. and internationally. DHS leverages both domestic and international resources and capabilities through intelligence, information sharing, and law enforcement collaboration to weaken and eliminate transnational criminal organizations that pose the greatest threat to border security, while still facilitating the flow of lawful trade, travel, and commerce across our Nation's borders. There are three joint task forces: Joint Task Force-East, Joint Task Force-West, and Joint Task Force-Investigations.

- Joint Task Force-East works with DHS components and interagency partners to foster unified intelligence and investigative efforts to prioritize and support targeted operations to identify, disrupt, degrade, and dismantle trans-national criminal organizations operating in the maritime, air, and land domains. Joint Task Force-East's joint operating area includes Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the coastline along the Gulf of Mexico and Florida (excluding the littorals under Joint Task Force-West control), international waters of the Caribbean Sea and the Eastern Pacific Ocean southward to the North Coast of South America, the airspace spanning U.S. territorial land and waters, and international airspace in the approaches.
- Joint Task Force-West works with DHS components and interagency partners to prioritize threat streams impacting the southern border enabling corridors and components to conduct targeted operations that create an environment where transnational criminal organizations are disrupted, degraded, and dismantled without impeding the flow of lawful trade, travel,

and commerce. Joint Task Force-West's joint operating area includes the land border with Mexico from California to the Gulf of Mexico and the land approaches to this border, the littorals in the Gulf of Mexico off of Texas and in the Pacific off of California, and the airspace spanning U.S. territorial land and waters.

- Joint Task Force-Investigations focuses on criminal investigations in support of the geographic Task Forces. A core function for Joint Task Force-Investigations is leading the Homeland Criminal Organization and Network Target prioritization process. The Homeland Criminal Organization and Network Target focuses on criminal networks violating laws that DHS components have primary authority to enforce; for example, human smuggling, drug and weapons smuggling, illicit trade, and fraudulent travel.

- **Caribbean Border Interagency Group**

Under the auspices of the Caribbean Border Interagency Group and the Regional Coordination Mechanism Implementation Plan, DHS components conduct interagency maritime coordination in the Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands areas of responsibility to neutralize transnational criminal organizations that pose a security threat to the United States. These organizations commonly engage in money laundering, narcotics trafficking, human smuggling/trafficking, and weapons trafficking activities that affect the entire Caribbean Basin. Under the Caribbean Border Interagency Group, DHS components work jointly with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of the Virgin Islands, and the Puerto Rico Police Department's Maritime Unit, also known as Fuerzas Unidas de Rápida Acción. To address the maritime smuggling threat in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands further, ICE HSI San Juan and CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch have agreed to assign CBP Office of Air and Marine Interdiction Agents to critical ICE HSI Resident Agent-in-Charge field offices in Fajardo, Puerto Rico; Ponce, Puerto Rico; and St Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. These agents work side by side with ICE Special Agents to investigate and prosecute maritime transnational criminal organizations active in each of these areas of responsibility.

- **DHS Unified Command**

Caribbean Border Interagency Group DHS components operating under the Regional Coordination Mechanism Implementation Plan jointly engage current threats in the Puerto Rico area of responsibility. They currently are targeting the escalating violence and criminal activity in the area of responsibility proposed to operate under the Unified Command concept. The Unified Command was created understanding that a multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional approach is required to

address current threats in the area of responsibility. The purpose is to enhance efforts to expand interagency work across and beyond the maritime environment to include land domains, including airports. Under the Unified Command, the Caribbean Border Interagency Group scope of operations is to bring together all DHS components to ensure complete utilization of all available resources against the threats to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

- **San Juan Border Enforcement Security Task Force – Seaport**

Established in October of 2011, the San Juan Border Enforcement Security Task Force – Seaport mission is to identify, investigate, and dismantle the leadership and supporting infrastructure of local and transnational criminal organizations operating in Puerto Rico. The port of San Juan is the fourth busiest seaport in the Western Hemisphere and is ranked among the top 17 ports in the world in terms of containerized cargo movement and home-based cruise ships.⁴ The San Juan Border Enforcement Security Task Force – Seaport addresses threats posed by drug trafficking organizations using commercial cargo vessels, containerized cargo, and go-fast/pleasure vessels to smuggle contraband into Puerto Rico.

The CBP Office of Air and Marine opened the San Juan Marine Unit, which is co-located with the San Juan Border Enforcement Security Task Force – Seaport, and provides an organic marine interdiction and on-water surveillance capability that has proven to be very beneficial. Since standing this unit up, the San Juan Border Enforcement Security Task Force – Seaport has seen increases in maritime narcotics seizures occurring on the north coast of Puerto Rico and has been more successful in securing the northern approach to the United States southeastern gateway. In addition, with the assistance of the San Juan Border Enforcement Security Task Force – Seaport Office of Field Operations Intelligence Officer, ICE HSI San Juan is able to link individuals, businesses, and cargo and obtain other pertinent information related to targets of investigation. There are 15 full-time, co-located, sworn law enforcement officers, which include ICE Special Agents, CBP Office of Air and Marine Interdiction Agents, U.S Border Patrol, Office of Field Operations Intelligence Officers, Puerto Rico Police Department Task Force Officers, San Juan Municipal Police, and the Puerto Rico Port Authority.

Since the inception of the San Juan Border Enforcement Security Task Force – Seaport, the following statistics are presented to illustrate the effectiveness of the initiative.⁵

⁴ Puerto Rico Public Information

⁵ Homeland Security Investigations Cognos

Arrests	Weapons Seized	Ammunition Seized	Cocaine Seized	Heroin Seized	Currency Seized
812	575	33,170 rounds	7,435 lbs.	164 lbs.	\$5,433,710

- **Airport Investigations and Tactical Team**

In January 2015, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Administration-sponsored Airport Investigations and Tactical Team was established to combat transnational criminal organizations that undermine the Caribbean’s legitimate travel, trade, financial, and immigration systems by exploiting vulnerabilities at the major airports in San Juan. The Airport Investigations and Tactical Team mission is achieved through close collaboration with other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, as well as with industry partners operating at the major airports. The Airport Investigations and Tactical Team, in close coordination with its law enforcement and private partners, engages in diverse operations to target incoming and outgoing flights, with a special focus on internal conspiracies. The strategic goal of these efforts is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle criminal enterprises using air transportation as platforms to move their contraband, illicit proceeds, and illegal weapons. Moreover, the Airport Investigations and Tactical Team has established an outreach and training program for other law enforcement agencies and private companies operating at the airports. This has created a real-time law enforcement information network that serves as a force multiplier for the identification of potential threats and systemic vulnerabilities. The Airport Investigations and Tactical Team operates as a co-located, multi-agency task force. The participating agencies include ICE; CBP; the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); the United States Postal Inspection Service; the Puerto Rico Police Department, the Puerto Rico Department of Justice, the Puerto Rico Treasury Department, and the San Juan Municipal Police.

B. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

ICE HSI Special Agent-in-Charge San Juan (ICE HSI San Juan)

ICE HSI San Juan established the Financial Investigations Research and Support Team, a specialized financial intelligence unit comprised of ICE HSI San Juan intelligence research specialists, financial auditors and analysts, and the Puerto Rico Treasury Department. The Financial Investigations Research and Support Team was created with the purpose of providing a centralized financial component by which intelligence is gathered, stored, shared, and exploited for investigative purposes. The unit supports money laundering and financial crimes investigations by identifying and targeting

criminal organizations operating in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands through the analysis of financial databases and suspicious activities reported by financial institutions. The Financial Investigations Research and Support Team conducts constant liaison activities with the Commissioner's Office for Financial Institutions, the Puerto Rico Police Department, the Puerto Rico Investigations Bureau, the Puerto Rico Treasury Department, the HSI National Bulk Cash Smuggling Center, CBP, and other federal agencies and financial institutions' compliance officials. Additionally, the Financial Investigations Research and Support Team collects, processes, and analyzes financial data and intelligence information to identify assets and schemes utilized by criminal organizations.

Investigations initiated by ICE HSI San Juan based on information from the Financial Investigations Research and Support Team have led to the seizure of approximately \$30 million dollars in currency and assets from various criminal organizations. Additionally, these investigations have led to more than 700 arrests, as well as the seizure of more than 95 firearms and approximately 14,000 lbs. of cocaine.⁶

Due to an increase in the violent crime rate in the U.S. Virgin Islands in recent years, ICE HSI San Juan agents assigned to the Resident Agent-in-Charge St. Croix and Resident Agent-in-Charge St. Thomas Offices initiated operations under the auspices of the ICE HSI National Gang Unit's Community Shield. Through the proactive utilization of specialized urban gang response enforcement operations and tactical intelligence gathering and analysis, ICE works jointly with the Virgin Islands Police Department to identify key members associated with violent criminal enterprises in the St. Croix and St. Thomas jurisdictions. The partnership between ICE and the Virgin Islands Police Department is important to the success of future operations being planned to disrupt and dismantle the criminal enterprises perpetuating heinous acts throughout the territory. ICE HSI San Juan agents assigned to Resident Agent-in-Charge St. Croix and Resident Agent-in-Charge St. Thomas continue to gather intelligence on the patterns used by these gangs/criminal enterprises for the sale of narcotics, the proceeds resulting from those sales, and the use of firearms to carry out those crimes.

HSI Contraband Smuggling Unit – Special Operations

The Contraband Smuggling Unit Special Operations utilizes the U.S. Department of Justice Special Operations Division as an operational support element for ICE investigation and enforcement operations in the Caribbean region, to include Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Contraband Smuggling Unit Special Operations enables law enforcement personnel to identify, deconflict, and coordinate multi-agency criminal communications exploitation efforts that target transnational criminal organizations. ICE

⁶ Homeland Security Investigations Cognos

personnel at Contraband Smuggling Unit Special Operations facilitate the field investigators' use of deconfliction tools and enhanced criminal communications targeting to identify command and control elements operating within transnational criminal organizations that engage in human smuggling and trafficking, narcotics smuggling, illicit financial activities, weapons smuggling, and many other ICE programmatic responsibilities. Contraband Smuggling Unit Special Operations is designed to be an operational and tactical resource for ICE and interagency partners with the goal of enabling a unified U.S. Government effort to identify and dismantle criminal organizations exploiting vulnerabilities at the U.S. border and within the homeland.

ICE HSI International Operations (ICE HSI Caribbean)

In addition to ICE's domestic offices in the Caribbean region, ICE has four Attaché/Assistant Attaché offices in the Caribbean region: the Office of the HSI Attaché – Caribbean (ICE HSI Caribbean), the Office of the HSI Assistant Attaché – Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (ICE HSI Santo Domingo); the Office of the HSI Assistant Attaché – Kingston, Jamaica (ICE HSI Kingston); and the Office of the HSI Assistant Attaché in Nassau, The Bahamas (ICE HSI Nassau). These offices are responsible for representing ICE in these nations and for assisting foreign law enforcement counterparts in criminal matters with a U.S. nexus. The offices provide training to their law enforcement counterparts in their areas of responsibility to include courses on money laundering, arms trafficking, and general smuggling and human smuggling/trafficking. It is ICE's goal to enhance the investigative capacity of their partners in the Caribbean region, as it allows to the United States to virtually extend its physical border further offshore.

- **ICE HSI Caribbean**

ICE HSI Caribbean oversees all of the ICE offices in the Caribbean region. It has direct oversight of all the island nations outside of the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and The Bahamas. The Attaché Caribbean, in conjunction with ICE HSI Nassau, initiated a Bahamas-based firearms trafficking task force that is operated jointly with the Bahamian National Police. ICE HSI Caribbean is in the process of initiating a firearms trafficking initiative in the greater Caribbean region in an effort to stem the rapid escalation of firearm violence within the region. ICE HSI Caribbean also is actively engaged in joint initiatives with partner law enforcement agencies, to include the British National Crime Agency, to identify and prosecute individuals engaging in human trafficking and child sex tourism in the greater Caribbean region.

- **ICE HSI Santo Domingo**

ICE HSI Santo Domingo is responsible for overseeing interests on the Island of Hispaniola, including Haiti. The ICE HSI Santo Domingo Transnational Criminal

Investigative Unit, established in 2005, currently has 25 members, to include representatives from the Dominican National Police, the Dominican Migration Service, the Dominican Attorney General's Office, the Dominican Customs Service, the Army and the Navy. The Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit has realized numerous successful investigations, to include those targeting organizations and individuals engaging in money laundering, human smuggling, narcotics trafficking, and child sex tourism/prostitution. The proximity of the island of Hispaniola to the U.S. border in Florida makes the island an ideal staging location for transnational criminal organizations to move their illicit goods, money, and people to and from the United States. ICE HSI Santo Domingo regularly works in tandem with ICE HSI San Juan in furtherance of criminal investigations, to include narcotics, firearms trafficking, and money laundering investigations.

- **ICE HSI Kingston**

The ICE HSI Kingston Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit currently has seven Jamaican Constabulary Force officers assigned to it. ICE HSI Kingston routinely investigates Jamaican-based transnational criminal organizations in narcotics trafficking, arms trafficking, and money laundering activities. ICE HSI Kingston has realized success in investigating Jamaican telemarketing and lottery fraud organizations. These fraudsters and telemarketing scam organizations are known to target senior citizens residing in the United States. Through the Jamaican Operations Linked to Telemarketing Program, ICE and the Jamaican Constabulary Force have identified and dismantled numerous telemarketing/fraud organizations. In early 2015, ICE HSI and the Jamaican government collaborated to extradite the first Jamaican national to the United States for wire fraud violations committed as part of a telemarketing scam.

- **ICE HSI Nassau**

ICE HSI Nassau regularly coordinates human smuggling and narcotics trafficking investigations in unison with both the Bahamian law enforcement authorities and ICE HSI Miami. The Bahamas are a de facto staging location for narcotics trafficking and human smuggling organizations that move their illicit cargo and persons into the United States via the Florida border. The Bahamas also have noticed a significant increase in firearms trafficking to the island from the United States. The above-mentioned firearms task force was designed to combat this illicit trafficking and to cull the gun-related violence in The Bahamas.

C. U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Office of Air and Marine

The CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch, operating out of locations across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, has embarked on a whole-of-government approach to target transnational criminal organizations attempting to illegally import goods, merchandise and aliens into the United States through its exposed Caribbean borders of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch works seamlessly with all DHS agencies and other federal and state/local partners through the Caribbean Border Interagency Group, the Regional Coordination Mechanism Implementation Plan, and Operation Caribbean Guard, to name a few. Through these law enforcement partnerships, the Caribbean Air and Marine Branch is effectively able to leverage limited maritime interdiction and investigative aircraft, helicopters surface vessels, and personnel to achieve a greater level of effectiveness. The CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch provides an aviation and maritime interdiction and investigative capability that builds on its unique statutory authority to conduct law enforcement operations on the land, at sea, and in the air. To fully exercise this unique multi-dimensional law enforcement authority, the CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch relies on a cadre of approximately 60 highly seasoned and experienced law enforcement professionals. These pilots and marine captains bring a unique level of subject matter expertise in aviation and marine smuggling tactics, methods, and investigative and interdiction techniques that are indispensable to the success of DHS law enforcement operations and that keep the CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch at the vanguard of Caribbean operations.

The unique makeup of the CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch allows it to be highly flexible and to adapt quickly to changes in methods of operation employed by transnational criminal organizations. Office of Air and Marine agents have unique statutory authority and highly honed skills that permit them to conduct law enforcement interdictions and investigations seamlessly on land, in the air, and at sea. The Caribbean area of responsibility is one that can be classified as having a 360-degree threat that is unique from other border areas. This unique threat requires that the CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch be flexible enough to rapidly bring law enforcement agents to bear on new and emerging threats wherever they may occur. To address a recently identified shift in transnational criminal organizations activity targeting St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, the CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch initiated a 60-day surge operation called Caribbean Saint. Caribbean Saint was planned, funded, and staffed in less than 30 days and recently has begun integrated law enforcement operations in partnership with local ICE, USCG, and U.S. Virgin Islands Police Department personnel. Prior to Caribbean Saint, the CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch conducted similar surge operations designed to target shifting and transient transnational criminal organization patterns in Puerto Rico during operations Caribbean Flex and Operation Circuit Rider. These operations and others in the future will take advantage of the CBP

Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch's unique ability to plan operations and to deploy dedicated law enforcement personnel and resources rapidly to target changes in transnational criminal organization tactics, methods, and operation locations.

The CBP Office of Air and Marine works closely and is integrated with the Joint Interagency Task Force-South to directly counter illicit trafficking, and to seize and disrupt maritime and aviation conveyances used by transnational criminal organizations. CBP is the highest cumulative aviation source provider to the Joint Interagency Task Force-South, which equates to approximately 40 percent of all maritime patrol hours flown for the Joint Interagency Task Force-South's area of responsibility.

The CBP Office of Air and Marine National Air Security Operations stationed from Corpus Christi, Texas, and Jacksonville, Florida, deploy P-3 Orion and unmanned aircraft systems aircraft to various locations regularly throughout the Caribbean, which includes the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Panama, Curacao, and Barbados. The CBP P-3 Airborne Early Warning and Long Range Tracker aircraft are a multi-role and sensor capability utilized routinely to interdict suspect targets within the air and marine environments throughout the Caribbean. The CBP Guardian MQ-9 variant is an unmanned aircraft system that provides extensive intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance coverage of littoral waters and high seas with multiple advanced sensor arrays. Both the P-3 and unmanned aircraft system aircraft can fuse information into a common operational picture via network datalinks and made available to operational commanders. These enhanced capabilities being incorporated into all CBP aircraft serve as a force multiplier, increasing CBP and other partners' overall performance in core security, enforcement missions, and disaster response. Historically, National Air Security Operations aircraft dedicate between 6,000-7,500 hours to transit zone operations that incorporate the Caribbean threat vectors. The P-3 and MQ-9 provide an average return on investment of 20 lbs. of cocaine per flight hour expended. In FY 2014, these assets were credited with interdicting approximately 125,000 lbs. of cocaine.

Some of CBP Office of Air and Marine's other initiatives and partnership efforts are outlined below.

- **Aviation and Maritime Joint Task Force**

The CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch maintains an active and long running partnership with the Puerto Rico Police Department to increase air and maritime security in the Caribbean area of responsibility. This joint partnership sees Office of Air and Marine and Puerto Rico Police Department agents conduct joint air, maritime, and land patrols, interdictions, and intelligence-gathering operations focused on dismantling transnational criminal organizations operating on and attempting to illegally enter Puerto Rico. These operations have

proven highly successful in identifying previously unidentified smuggling operations and in interdicting them before they reach land. During land operations, this task force draws on the unique authorities of the CBP Office of Air and Marine and the Puerto Rico Police Department to identify transnational criminal organizations active in an area and to take the full range of law enforcement actions to dismantle them.

- **Marine Patrol Aircraft Deployments**

In FY 2015, the CBP Office of Air and Marine's Southeast Region completed 26 marine patrol aircraft deployments and 945.6 hours flown to augment the Caribbean Air and Marine Branch. The CBP Office of Air and Marine's Southeast Region also augmented Marine units in the Caribbean with temporary duty personnel for expanded marine coverage. During the 4th quarter of FY 2015, the Office of Air and Marine's Southeast Region funded and augmented a 60-day deployment of marine personnel to St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. This capability will provide surface end game capabilities to deployed marine patrol aircraft and Joint Interagency Task Force-South targets south of St. Croix.

- **International Operations**

Under the auspices of a bilateral agreement with the United Kingdom, the CBP Office of Air and Marine Caribbean Air and Marine Branch has been able to conduct numerous joint maritime operations in the British Virgin Islands. These operations serve to push the threat imposed by transnational criminal organizations away from the United States and also assist the government of the British Virgin Islands in providing a higher degree of security to its citizens. Exercise of this agreement draws on the mutual customs law enforcement experience of both parties and is based on mutually supportive operations conducted over a span of years. These mutual operations such as Shiprider and the ability of British Virgin Islands law enforcement to access law enforcement services and investigative resources found in the U.S. Virgin Islands have resulted to a string of recent interdiction and investigative successes, including multiple recent maritime narcotics seizures and the dismantling of an alien smuggling organization.

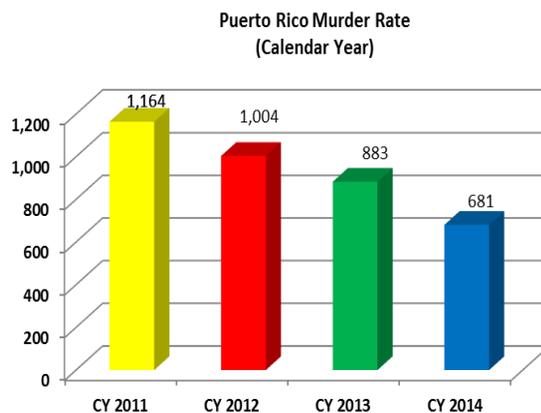
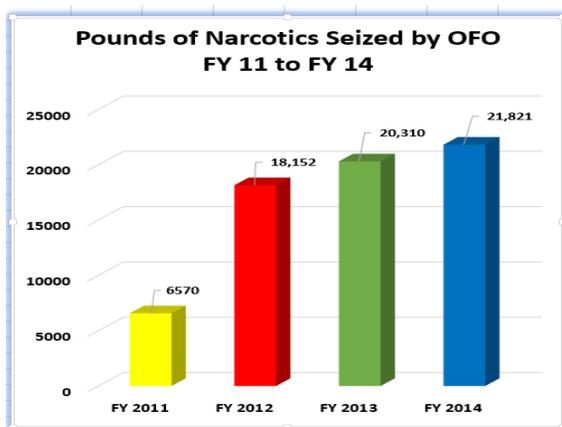
CBP San Juan Field Operations

In addition to the ICE HSI San Juan initiatives already discussed, CBP San Juan Field Operations implemented a series of enforcement operations to supplement these efforts. San Juan Field Operations developed five intensified enforcement initiatives to address narcotics and weapons smuggling at the ports of entry into Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, which were refined and expanded to leverage authorities of other DHS, federal, state, and local non-DHS law enforcement agency partners. These operations began in FY 2012 and are still in place. The names of the enforcement operations are:

Operation Can Opener, Operation Pigeon Carrier, Operation Flying Home, Operation Transit Stop, and Operation International Mail.

All of these operations were part of Operation Caribbean Guard. Operation Caribbean Guard was established to serve as a DHS interagency planning process to develop, coordinate resources, and implement joint enforcement operations in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Operation Caribbean Guard participants consist of the Caribbean Border Interagency Group Caribbean Border Interagency Group members: CBP's Office of Air and Marine, Office of Border Patrol, and Office of Field Operations; ICE HSI; the Transportation Security Administration (TSA); and USCG. The Incident Command System was implemented for the purpose of planning and executing with the Caribbean Border Interagency Group members serving as the Unified Command.

At the end of FY 2014, San Juan Field Operations conducted a follow-up analysis to determine the effectiveness of the five enforcement operations implemented. While a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the high crime rate in Puerto Rico and the level of drug availability on its streets could not be established, DHS has started to see a sharp reduction in the murder rate when compared to the pounds of narcotics seized. Data analyzed by San Juan Field Operations showed that there was an increase in drug seizures between FY 2012 and FY 2013 of 11.85 percent, and an increase of 7.44 percent between FY 2013 and FY 2014. During that same period of time, there was a decrease in murders of 12.05 percent between FY 2012 and FY 2013, and a 24-percent decrease between FY 2013 and FY 2014.

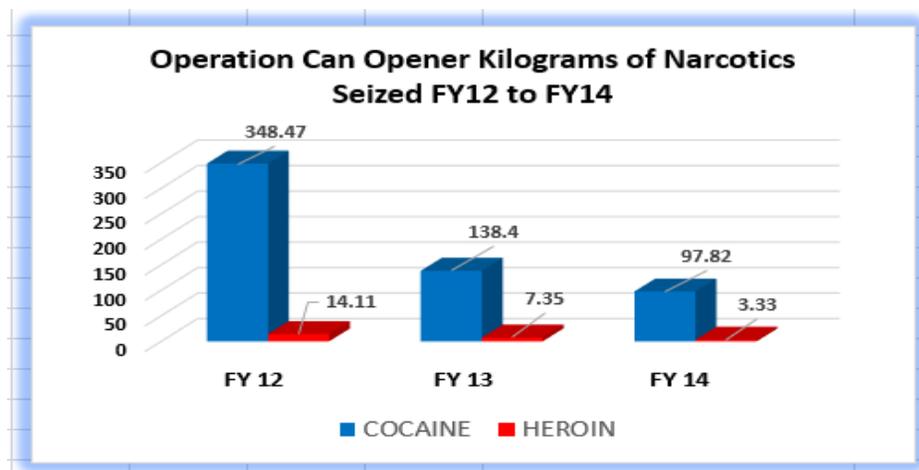


- **Operation Can Opener**

Operation Can Opener is a CBP enforcement effort to interdict drug smuggling attempts arriving in containerized cargo into Puerto Rico from the Dominican Republic and other known drug-trafficking source countries. San Juan Field Operations has increased enforcement operations on all inbound foreign cargo

transported in containers, performed container seal verifications, utilized nonintrusive inspection equipment, and conducted canine sweeps as part of this operation. The operational objectives included: interdiction of inbound drugs and other contraband through commercial cargo; providing viable leads and intelligence information to officers in the field; and coordination of controlled deliveries with ICE HSI when warranted.

As reflected in the table below, more than 700 kilograms of narcotics have been seized during Operation Can Opener. However, since the inception of this enforcement strategy, seizures performed at San Juan Field Operations under this initiative have decreased steadily. That decline can be attributed to many factors such as changes in drug-trafficking organizations' modus operandi, routes, the use of go-fast vessels to transport the drug shipments, the increase of mixed ventures (illegal immigrants and drugs) arriving to our shores, and the dismantlement of local drug-trafficking organizations operating inside the maritime ports of entry, as well as other factors.



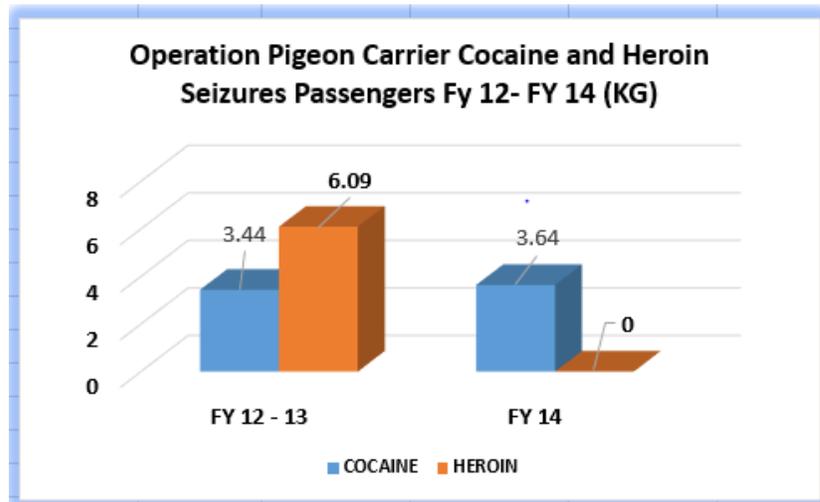
Investigations reveal that some of the stevedores, crane operators, and private contract security guards working at the maritime ports of entry are active members of drug-trafficking organizations or are assisting these organizations in their criminal activities. These individuals are very familiar with the way that law enforcement agencies operate at the seaport terminals and act as lookouts, couriers, and spotters providing detailed information to the drug-trafficking organizations. Recognizing this, the San Juan Field Operations officers alongside agents from the San Juan Border Enforcement Security Task Force – Seaport conducted surveillance during the implementation of special operation Can Opener. Those actions resulted in the dismantlement of a major drug-trafficking organization operating in the San Juan seaport environment. The breakup of this

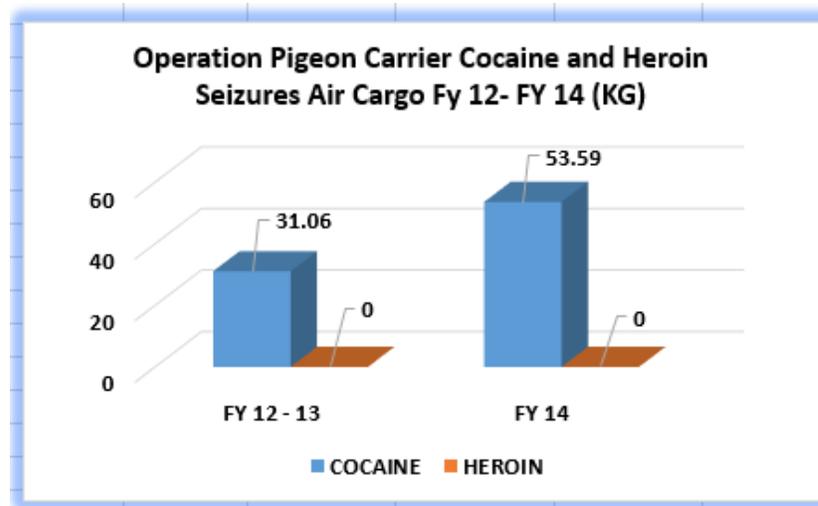
drug-trafficking organization is one of the major contributors of the decrease of seizures during FY 2014 compared to FY 2012 and FY 2013.

- **Operation Pigeon Carrier**

Operation Pigeon Carrier is aimed at interdicting drug smuggling by increasing the inspection and examination of commercial passengers and cargo flights arriving in Puerto Rico from high-risk drug source countries. San Juan Field Operations has increased its law enforcement posture by augmenting inspection of passengers, baggage, and cargo arriving from foreign destinations. The operational objectives included: interdiction of inbound drugs and other contraband attempted through the air environment; increase in the number of aircraft searches performed upon arrival; increase in the number of air cargo inspections upon arrival; providing viable leads and intelligence information to officers in the field; and coordination of controlled deliveries with ICE HSI when warranted.

During FY 2014 there was a 29-percent increase of narcotics seized as a result of Operation Pigeon Carrier when compared to FY 2012-2013. Seventy-nine percent of the narcotic seizures during the period were recorded in the air cargo environment and the drug of choice seized during FY 2014 was cocaine.





There also has been a possible shifting of the smuggling of narcotics from the international air environment to the sea environment. The use of go-fast and yola-type vessels to transport drug shipments into this area of responsibility could be affecting the amounts of drugs being seized in the airport environment under Operation Pigeon Carrier. This is corroborated by the increase of seizures reported in the maritime environment by other law enforcement agencies during their enforcement operations and the increase of maritime ventures arriving to our shores.

- **Operation Flying Home**

Operation Flying Home focuses on conducting special operations in regularly scheduled commercial passenger and cargo flights outbound to the continental United States from Puerto Rico. San Juan Field Operations has broadened its authority by establishing a partnership with the Puerto Rico Police Department to increase inspection of luggage, parcels, and freight transported in flights. CBP and the Puerto Rico Police Department joint teams perform canine nonintrusive examinations of domestic luggage and cargo. The operational objectives include: interdiction of drugs and other contraband destined to the continental United States; increased interaction with other federal and local law enforcement partners; providing viable leads and intelligence information to officers in the field; and coordination of controlled deliveries with federal and state law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction when warranted. In the event of detections in these operations, a search warrant is required before proceeding to the next step.

Locally based drug-trafficking organizations are capable of transporting thousands of cocaine kilograms to the shores of Puerto Rico on a monthly basis to supply the local market, but the majority of these narcotics are destined to the continental

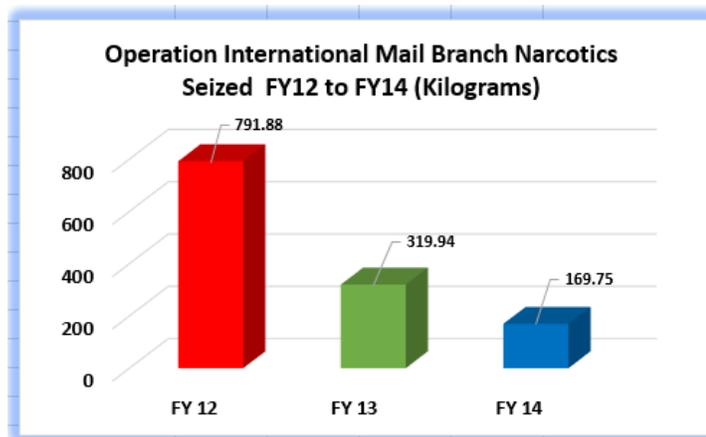
United States. San Juan Field Operations has seized approximately 357 kilograms of narcotics since the implementation of Operation Flying Home. Due to the success of this operation, ICE created the Airport Investigations and Tactical Team at the San Juan International Airport, described in an earlier section.

- **Operation Transit Stop**

Operation Transit Stop was designed by CBP and the USCG to interdict drug smuggling in containerized cargo outbound to the continental United States from Puerto Rico. By leveraging associated authorities from federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, San Juan Field Operations envisions increasing the interdiction of drugs bound for the continental United States by coordinating with the continental United States Office of Field Operations ports of entry that receive sea cargo from Puerto Rico. The operational objectives include: interdiction of drugs and other contraband destined to the continental United States; increased interaction with other federal and local law enforcement partners; providing viable leads and intelligence information to officers in the field; and coordination of controlled deliveries with ICE when warranted.

- **Operation International Mail**

Operation International Mail dedicates significant CBP resources to increase the examination and inspection of parcels, priority, and express mail consignment letters and packages arriving and departing on flights to and from the continental United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The operation is designed to interdict and/or deter the inbound and outbound smuggling of illicit narcotics, weapons, and currency via the air environment using the Office of Field Operations' Border Search Authority in the outbound environment.



A total of 1,281.57 kilograms of narcotics, currency, and several weapons have been seized by San Juan Field Operations officers participating in this operation since it was implemented. Those numbers only include seizures made under this

operation by officers located in Puerto Rico from packages arriving and departing on flights to and from the continental United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Similar enforcement efforts are taking place in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The most intercepted contraband during Operation International Mail was marijuana. The large majority of those shipments seized originated in the states of California, Arizona, Texas, Florida, Georgia, and New York.

Operational International Mail has improved the relationship between CBP Officers assigned at the International Mail Branch and Postal Inspectors. This has resulted in significant arrests and prosecution of individuals in the continental United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands based on the Office of Field Operations' assistance in identifying subjects and addresses as previously mentioned.

- **Operation Ferry Dust**

In FY 2014, CBP introduced a new operation, "Operation Ferry Dust." This is an enforcement effort aimed at intensifying searches of passengers and conveyances arriving on the ferry from the Dominican Republic, targeting the interdiction and deterrence of smuggling narcotics, undeclared currency, and weapons through Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The operational objectives include: interdicting aliens, drugs, and other contraband through the sea environment; increasing the number of vessel searches performed; increasing the number of vehicle searches performed; providing viable leads and intelligence information to officers in the field; and coordinating controlled deliveries with ICE when warranted.

One marked success immediately following Operation Ferry Dust resulted from extending enforcement on the ferry to an outbound operation which, on September 29, 2014, yielded a seizure of more than 2 million dollars. The outbound operation was attempting to smuggle the money out to the Dominican Republic onboard the ferry.

CBP's Partnership with the Caribbean Community

CBP maintains an office in Barbados in partnership with the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, Joint Regional Communication Centre. CBP and the Joint Regional Communication Centre conduct targeting and analysis activities on Advance Passenger Information System data from flights and vessels traveling within 10 Caribbean Community member states (Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana, Barbados, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Lucia). CBP Caribbean Community conducts Advance Passenger Information System analysis to identify passengers who pose a

potential border security threat. When positive targets are identified, the information is shared with the receiving member state's border authorities and applicable U.S. agencies for appropriate action. The Bahamas and Suriname are currently working toward enacting legislation to join the Caribbean Community program.

- **CBP Caribbean Air and Marine Operations Center**

The Caribbean Air and Marine Operations Center is responsible for strengthening enforcement activities in the general aviation environment within the Caribbean Region in furtherance of CBP's border security mission. The Caribbean Air and Marine Operations Center sorts and identifies general aviation aircraft traveling within the region's airspace and conducts research, and exploits data proactively to target and disrupt narcotics trafficking, money laundering, weapons smuggling, and National Criminal Information Center fugitives in the general aviation environment. The Caribbean Air and Marine Operations Center identifies targets, creates lookouts, establishes rule hits, and coordinates with Air and Marine Operations Center-Riverside and ports of entry on necessary actions. The Caribbean Air and Marine Operations Center handles special requests from multiple law enforcement partners and collaborates with other government agencies, both foreign and domestic.

- **Dominican Republic**

Under an established agreement with the Dominican Republic, CBP has access to Advance Passenger Information System data on flights arriving to and departing from the Dominican Republic that do not have a nexus to the United States. Screening of the flight manifest began on May 29, 2015, and the program continues to develop. Information on travelers who are identified as having possible connections to terrorism is shared with ICE and the Terrorist Screening Center.

National Targeting Center Cargo Targeting Operations

The National Targeting Center works closely with ICE and other Caribbean partners to detect, deter, and disrupt the flow of illegal narcotics. One of the initiatives, "Operation Tropic Snow," involves working with ICE's New York, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, and North Carolina offices to target cocaine shipments sent via express air courier (DHL) from Panama to locations within the states of New York, South Carolina, and North Carolina. To date, Operation Tropic Snow has resulted in two arrests and the seizure of 173 kilograms of cocaine.

- **Operation Coco Loco**

Another collaborative effort, "Operation Coco Loco," entails the targeting of cocaine in maritime shipments from the Dominican Republic destined to Miami,

Florida. The National Targeting Center, in conjunction with local CBP and ICE assets, actively targets shipments of fresh produce and has been successful in interdicting large amounts of cocaine concealed within the commodity and/or the flaps of the cardboard shipping boxes. A total of eight seizures consisting of 606.8 kilograms of cocaine has been seized in support of this operation. The National Targeting Center has performed comprehensive post-seizure analysis of Operation Coco Loco and has linked these seizures/shipments to other seizures/shipments originating from the Dominican Republic and Ecuador.

- **National Targeting Center Collaboration with Joint Interagency Task Force-South**

The National Targeting Center also works closely with the Joint Interagency Task Force-South, most notably in the maritime environment. The Joint Interagency Taskforce-South is a multi-agency taskforce that conducts counter-illicit trafficking operations and intelligence fusion in order to detect, monitor, and handoff suspected illicit trafficking targets to the appropriate authorities in the Atlantic/Caribbean theater. A full-time National Targeting Center targeter has been detailed to the Joint Interagency Taskforce-South to help with these efforts. The National Targeting Center targeter acts as a liaison and adjudicates numerous requests each week by assisting the Joint Interagency Taskforce-South and its partners with the identification and tracking of maritime shipments throughout the world.

Container Security Initiative

Announced in 2002, the Container Security Initiative addresses the threat to border security and global trade posed by the potential for the terrorist use of a maritime container to introduce weapons of mass effect or weapons of mass destruction. The Container Security Initiative currently is operational in 60 ports in 32 countries. Approximately 80 percent of containerized maritime cargo destined for the United States originates in, or transits through, a Container Security Initiative port. The Container Security Initiative currently maintains a presence in the following Caribbean basin countries: The Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Honduras. The Container Security Initiative currently does not have any plans to expand beyond these locations within the Caribbean.

Preclearance

CBP Preclearance improves CBP's ability to protect the American homeland by extending our borders and preventing terrorists, terrorist instruments, and other national security threats from gaining access to the United States. Preclearance relieves congestion at U.S. "gateway" airports, reduces airline delays, and offers a 'domestic-style

arrival' at U.S. airports that provides a more efficient transfer for travelers. Additionally, Preclearance protects U.S. agricultural infrastructure from foreign pests, disease, and global outbreaks; fosters cooperation with foreign (host) authorities in diplomatic, law enforcement, and international security issues; and supports economic interests by improving travel and commerce with the United States. The ICE HSI Nassau office covers incidents occurring in the CBP Freeport, The Bahamas, port of entry. The preclearance ports of Aruba and Bermuda work in conjunction and collaboration with the Attaché Caribbean office located in Miami, Florida, on incidents occurring within the respective ports of entry. The CBP ports of entry maintain open communication with ICE offices in furtherance of protecting the homeland.

D. U.S. Coast Guard

USCG is recognized for its ability to perform a broad range of maritime missions across a large area of responsibility. For counterdrug operations, USCG is the lead federal agency for maritime law enforcement, including drug interdiction on the high seas, and shares the lead for drug interdiction in U.S. territorial seas with CBP. USCG is able to leverage a broad array of authorities, capabilities, competencies, and partnerships that are vital to successful mission execution.

USCG uses a maritime trident of cutters, boats, and aircraft in a layered approach to combat transnational crime organization networks as they transport illicit goods from the source zone⁷, through Central America and Caribbean islands, into the United States. This approach increases border security by confronting the threat beyond the U.S. land borders, beyond Mexico, and beyond Central America on the high seas where traffickers are most exposed and vulnerable to interdiction and prosecution by the United States. This layered approach begins overseas, spans the offshore regions, and continues into our territorial seas and our ports of entry.

USCG Operations “Unified Resolve” and “Southeast Watch,” along with the tri-part Operation “Bahamas, Turks and Caicos,” combat illicit narcotics and migrant smuggling throughout the Caribbean Basin.

USCG also maintains counterdrug and migrant interdiction bilateral agreements with nearly all Caribbean nations, and has liaison officers and attachés assigned to Cuba, Haiti, The Bahamas, Dominican Republic, and Jamaica. USCG attorneys are embedded in United States Attorneys’ Offices in Miami and San Juan to assist with indictment and

⁷ Source Zone: The area of primary growing and/or processing of illicit drugs; where international distribution begins. The geographic area that is the original source of the illicit drug; i.e., where they are produced. This area normally encompasses the growth of required agricultural components and much or all of the processing required, either from synthetic or agricultural components, to create the consumable product. (National Interdiction Command and Control Plan of 2010.)

prosecution of smugglers operating in the Caribbean, particularly the Dominican Republic and The Bahamas.

In 2014, the USCG initiated and hosts the annual Maritime Multilateral Interdiction and Prosecution Summit. The Maritime Multilateral Interdiction and Prosecution Summit joins maritime counter-drug professionals from the operational and legal communities representing various U.S. agencies and 15 partner nations from across the central and eastern Caribbean to discuss and implement joint efforts to deter, detect, and disrupt transnational organized criminal networks, prosecute those who operate them, and improve citizen security and the national stability of key regional partners.

E. Transportation Security Administration

Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service

The Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service has an Assistant Federal Security Director for Law Enforcement assigned to Puerto Rico. The Assistant Federal Security Director for Law Enforcement performs outreach and liaison to all federal, state, and local law enforcement in the region to coordinate joint operations, investigations, and TSA's security initiatives throughout Puerto Rico's transportation sector. The Assistant Federal Security Director for Law Enforcement actively cooperates in law enforcement operations and criminal investigations with our law enforcement agency partners, including ICE, CBP, USCG, DEA, FBI, and state/local law enforcement.

The Assistant Federal Security Director for Law Enforcement and TSA's Office of Security Operation's Federal Security Director, serve as TSA's representatives within the Caribbean Border Interagency Group and the DHS Unified Command. As TSA's representatives to these groups, joint operations are coordinated and follow-up/review is performed regarding incidents with a nexus to transportation security.

The Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service Assistant Federal Security Director for Law Enforcement assigned to the U.S. Virgin Islands cooperates with all ICE and CBP initiatives involving illegal weapons and illegal narcotics investigations at the St. Thomas and St. Croix airports. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, many of these initiatives are coordinated through the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program, and include ICE, CBP, ATF, DEA, and the Postal Inspection Service.

TSA International Operations

TSA has four TSA representatives that work with the governments of the Caribbean. The TSA representative based in Nassau covers Cuba, Haiti, The Bahamas, Bermuda, and Turks & Caicos. A TSA representative in Panama City covers the Dominican Republic

and the Central American countries. Two TSA representatives based in Miami cover the remaining Caribbean countries, Venezuela, and Guyana. Their duties are to interface with the countries' respective governments on matters of transportation security. Additionally, TSA has a team of transportation security specialists, based in Miami, to assess foreign airports with last point of departure service to the United States to measure these airports' compliance with the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization. The transportation security specialists also inspect air carriers that fly into the United States as against TSA regulations and security programs. Lastly, three TSA international industry representatives serve as liaisons with the air carriers in the region that fly into the United States.

IV. Conclusion

Due to the vast maritime territory in the Caribbean region and the manifold airports located in the region, it is a constant challenge for law enforcement agencies to contain transnational criminal activity in the region. To identify, disrupt, and dismantle the transnational criminal organizations most effectively, DHS, through its Joint Task Forces and component organizations, will continue to pursue collaborative efforts with other federal law enforcement agencies and local police forces in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as maintain a close working relationship with its foreign law enforcement counterparts in the Caribbean nations. Forward-leaning DHS programs such as Operation Caribbean Resilience, the Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit program, the Jamaican Operations Linked to Telemarketing program, the Bahamian Firearms Task Force, and the Joint Task Force Homeland Criminal Organization and Network Target designation process, therefore will become vital vehicles for DHS in its effort to stay ahead of and contain organizations looking to exploit the commercial sector and territorial vulnerabilities in the Caribbean region.

Operation Caribbean Resilience and other law enforcement efforts have successfully reduced the gun violence and homicides that were occurring in Puerto Rico. Operation Caribbean Resilience will continue to be employed to target individuals and organizations engaging in arms trafficking, narcotics trafficking, human smuggling/trafficking, and money laundering activities in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The four ICE offices in the Caribbean (ICE HSI Caribbean, ICE HSI Nassau, ICE HSI Kingston, and ICE HSI Santo Domingo) have common, as well as unique, challenges in their areas of responsibility with regard to combatting transnational criminal organization activity. The Transnational Criminal Investigative Units in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica are force-multipliers with regard to ICE law enforcement efforts in those nations, and allow ICE HSI Santo Domingo and ICE HSI Kingston to disseminate actionable information rapidly to their law enforcement counterparts. It is anticipated that ICE HSI Caribbean and ICE HSI Nassau's current anti-firearms trafficking initiatives in The Bahamas and larger Caribbean region will have a positive impact in reducing the volume of firearms trafficking from the United States to the Caribbean islands. This should have a correlated effect in reducing gun violence in specific Caribbean nations.

There is concern that Cuba could become a greater law enforcement challenge in coming years, as commercial and tourism relations with the United States are re-established. Territorially, Cuba is a much larger nation than either the Dominican Republic or The Bahamas. Because of this and the fact that Cuba is much closer to the Florida border, there could be a commensurate increase in human smuggling/trafficking activities and

narcotics trafficking activities in Cuba, with the ultimate destination for the people and narcotics being the United States. In 2010, 2013, and most recently in January 2015, USCG conducted technical maritime law enforcement exchanges with the Cuban Border Guard regarding illicit trafficking trends and information sharing. In March 2015, an ICE, CBP, and USCIS team participated in the first law enforcement professional exchange with the Cuban government. The Cuban government requested this exchange due to its concern about illicit migration and document fraud activity occurring on its territory and its anticipation that such activity will increase significantly in the coming years as travel restrictions between the two nations are lifted. It is believed that within a few years after commercial travel and commerce between the United States and Cuba are fully re-established, Cuba will surpass the island of Hispaniola as the primary Caribbean staging point for transnational criminal organization activities that target the United States.