



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

## THESIS

**USE OF CONVENTIONAL U.S. NAVAL FORCES  
TO CONDUCT FID IN COLOMBIA**

By

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June 2009

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE June 2009	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE : Use of Conventional U.S. Naval Forces to Conduct FID in Colombia.		5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Keith R. Paquin		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) Colombia is the largest recipient of U.S. monetary and military aid in Latin America. As the U.S. enters its sixth year in the war on terror, the U.S Navy has a unique opportunity to support Colombia and redefine maritime security operations. This thesis will discuss shifting conventional naval forces away from traditional roles into the realm of irregular warfare. With the creation of Naval Expeditionary Combat Command, the Navy has an irregular warfare force capable of conducting Foreign Internal Defense (FID). This force, if deployed to Colombia, would re-energize not only U.S. efforts to combat the war on drugs, but also simultaneously support Colombian efforts in counter-insurgency. By analyzing policy, doctrine, and conventional naval forces, this thesis will emphasize the need to expand the role of the U. S. Navy to include FID, thereby reducing the operational burdens of U.S. Special Forces. With three to five years of dedicated emphasis on irregular warfare, the U.S. Navy will have the capability to execute FID in Colombia. This shift to irregular warfare will build Colombian capacity, enhance regional maritime security, combat drugs, and help to fight insurgency in Colombia.			
14. SUBJECT TERMS Conventional Naval Forces, Irregular Warfare, Naval Expeditionary Combat Command, General Purpose Forces, Foreign Internal Defense, Insurgency, Counter Drug Operations, Counter-insurgency Operations, Maritime Security Operations, Riverine, Colombia, Naval Mission, Overseas Contingency Operations.		15. NUMBER OF PAGES 73	16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

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**USE OF CONVENTIONAL U.S. NAVAL FORCES TO CONDUCT FID  
IN COLOMBIA**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Colombia is the largest recipient of U.S. monetary and military aid in Latin America. As the U.S. enters its sixth year in the war on terror, the U.S. Navy has a unique opportunity to support Colombia and redefine maritime security operations. This thesis will discuss shifting conventional naval forces away from traditional roles into the realm of irregular warfare. With the creation of Naval Expeditionary Combat Command, the Navy has an irregular warfare force capable of conducting Foreign Internal Defense (FID). This force, if deployed to Colombia, would re-energize not only U.S. efforts to combat the war on drugs, but also simultaneously support Colombian efforts in counter-insurgency. By analyzing policy, doctrine, and conventional naval forces, this thesis will emphasize the need to expand the role of the U.S. Navy to include FID, thereby reducing operational burdens of U.S. Special Forces. With three to five years of dedicated emphasis on irregular warfare, the U.S. Navy will have the capability to execute FID in Colombia. This shift to irregular warfare will build Colombian capacity, enhance regional maritime security, combat drugs, and help to fight insurgency in Colombia.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This work would not have been possible without the support and encouragement from my family, numerous friends, and colleagues. First, I would like to thank my advisors, professors Douglas Porch and Donald Stoker, whose encouragement, insightfulness, criticism, and patience were instrumental in the completion of this thesis.

A special thanks to my mother-in-law, whose support and editing of my papers during my studies at NPS enabled me to reach my potential.

Finally, without the love, support, patience, and stubbornness of my wife, Jamie, I would have struggled to find the inspiration and determination needed to complete this thesis. I will be forever grateful.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

On March 24, 2009, Marine Corps Gen. James Mattis, U.S. Joint Forces Command Chief, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that American “forces must develop a mastery of the irregular fight on par with our conventional and nuclear capabilities.”<sup>1</sup> General Mattis wants U.S. military officials to build into the general force irregular warfare expertise that “makes them adaptable to however the enemy chooses to fight.”<sup>2</sup> General-purpose forces need to be able to conduct missions currently being accomplished uniquely by U.S. special operators. “We are working closely with U.S. Special Operations Command and the services to export traditional special operations forces expertise to our general purpose forces.”<sup>3</sup>

These statements about using conventional forces to conduct FID were never truer than in Colombia. As Latin America's oldest and most stable democracy, Colombia has experienced civil war, insurgency, and terrorism. Major Christopher Muller describes in his master's thesis, *USMILGRP Colombia: Transforming Security Cooperation in the Global War on Terrorism*:

The current internal security issues have plagued Colombia for more than half a century. They began with the election of a conservative president in 1946 and exploded on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, 1948 with the assassination of a populist liberal politician with presidential aspirations, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. His murder triggered the initial violence which killed 2,000 in Bogotá and eventually claimed 200,000 lives over the next 18 years in what became known as *La Violencia*. Aside from the catastrophic number of deaths, *La Violencia* was also responsible for spinning off the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – FARC*) as a by-product. Subsequently, several other guerrilla groups arose in Colombia. In 1964, the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*

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<sup>1</sup> John T. Bennet, “Mattis: Irregular War Must be a Core Competency,” *Navy Times*, March 24, 2009, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

– *ELN*) mimicked the revolutionary Marxists model created by Fidel Castro in Cuba. In 1974, the M-19, which mirrored the Tupamaros in Uruguay, formed after the former military dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla charged electoral fraud in the presidential election of April 19, 1970. In 1997, various illegitimate paramilitary groups came together to form the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC)*. These groups were originally created in the 1960's to provide security to large landowners and cattle ranchers, while other paramilitary groups provided security for the narco-traffickers.

Since 2002, when Alvaro Uribe became president, the Colombian Military (COLMIL) has taken the fight to the FARC, the ELN, and the AUC. In 2005, FARC strength was estimated at 11,445 fighters (reduced from a previous high of approximately 18,000) and the organization had an annual income of over US\$340 million. The current demobilization of the AUC has theoretically eliminated the once formidable paramilitary organization. However, various criminal organizations have grown from the pre-existing AUC networks and they now resemble a narco-trafficking organization in both organization and function....These three groups are on the U.S. Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) list, the equivalent of America's Most Wanted for terrorist organizations. Their inclusion on this list allows Washington to fund a variety of programs in Colombia that target the activities of these groups.<sup>4</sup>

As the United States marks its sixth anniversary in support of Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), the Colombian government “has been fighting insurgents, international crime and terrorism for the past five decades.”<sup>5</sup> There has never been a better time for the U.S. military to transform itself into an irregular warfare (IW) force than now.

U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel John Mulbury asks in his article, “When should general purpose forces (GPF) conduct foreign internal defense (FID)?” FID is defined by Joint Doctrine as “the participation by civilian and military agencies of government in any action, programs taken by another government or designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion,

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<sup>4</sup> Christopher W. Muller, “USMILGRP Colombia: Transforming Security Cooperation in the Global War on Terrorism” (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2006), 1-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

lawlessness, and insurgency.”<sup>6</sup> U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) is currently conducting all of these missions. Lieutenant Colonel Mulbury argues that while U.S Army SOF should continue to conduct FID during small-scale operations, it is far more important that GPF execute FID for large-scale operations.<sup>7</sup> He notes that an operation such as Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (JTF\_HOA) is an excellent example of a general-purpose role in FID. “JTF-HOA is one example where SOF is not required for successful FID operations.”<sup>8</sup>

However, while Mulbury discusses U.S. Army GPF in FID, this thesis will examine how the U.S. Navy can apply these principles to assist GPF in Colombia. Expanding the role of conventional U.S. Naval forces in FID within the region, and specifically Colombia, would assist in the larger scale of maritime security operations. Assigning units from the Naval Expeditionary Combat Command and allowing those units to conduct FID missions with the Colombian Coast Guard, Navy, and Marine Corps dramatically increase interservice coordination between Colombia and United States.

In addition, it would also bolster U.S. effectiveness in the war on drugs, as increased cooperation would no doubt lead to increased drug seizures. Finally, this would strengthen the Colombian Navy’s abilities to deal with counter-insurgency and terrorism along coastal and inland waterways. The results would be a win-win for both the United States and Colombia.

## **A. RESEARCH QUESTION**

The U.S. Navy must reestablish itself as a global partner in Latin America.

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<sup>6</sup> John Mulbury, “ARSOF, General Purpose Forces and FID: Who Does What, Where and When?” *Special Warfare* 21, issue 1 (2008): 16-21, <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag/assets/08Jan.pdf> (accessed September 15, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

This research will examine ways the conventional U.S. Naval forces can conduct operations in irregular warfare roles, such as FID in Colombia, and redefine maritime security operations in the region.

## **B. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this research is to analyze and explain how conventional U.S. Naval forces could successfully conduct FID in Colombia to support U.S. security interests, relieve the U.S. Special Forces of some operational pressures, and bolster Colombian Navy and Marine Corps efforts against insurgents and drug traffickers.

## **C. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH**

Using conventional U.S. Naval forces to conduct FID in Colombia would remove some of the operational pressures on the U.S. Special Forces<sup>9</sup> and could alter the shape of the Latin American maritime security environment. In this context, this thesis will focus on how and why conventional U.S. Naval forces might be used to conduct FID in Colombia as a means of implementing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower Strategy. If implemented, this would expand the capabilities of U.S. Navy conventional forces, as well as develop a potential partnership with a vital ally in a region where we have few.

## **D. THESIS ORGANIZATION**

This thesis will examine the use of conventional U.S. Naval forces to conduct FID in an effort to slow the flow of drugs and contain the insurgency in Colombia. Chapter II will provide a summary of the security challenges that the Colombians have faced over the past twenty years—specifically, drug trafficking, and insurgents. It will also address the Colombian response to each of these threats. Chapter III will describe the doctrine and policies related to FID, Joint/Combined Exchange Training (JCETS), and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime

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<sup>9</sup> Bennet, "Mattis: Irregular War."

Security strategy. Chapter IV will introduce the concept of irregular warfare and describe the forces and capabilities within Naval Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC). Chapter V will discuss the particular restraints that make conducting FID in Colombia a challenge. Finally, Chapter VI will provide recommendations for the use of conventional U.S. naval forces to assist the Colombian government in conducting counter-drug and counter-insurgency operations. In addition, it will summarize the argument for why NECC forces are uniquely suited to conduct FID.

## **E. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

This thesis will consist of a review of U.S. National Defense Strategy, maritime strategy, U.S. military publications including the Joint Forces doctrine, U.S. Army Special Forces field manuals, U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps instructions in relation to Colombia. The examination of three unrelated Naval Postgraduate School theses help to explain why conventional U.S. Naval forces should be used to assist in the Colombian counter-drug and counter-insurgency campaigns. Research includes interviews and dialogue with U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps personnel in U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) in Miami, Florida. Their experience and expertise in Colombia, along with data from the past two decades of naval missions in the area, have supplied information critical to this research.

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## II. THE COLOMBIAN PROBLEM

### A. DRUGS AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

International drug trafficking is one of the greatest challenges to the security of Central America and the United States. During the past 30 years, drug use has remained either steady or increased in both developing and undeveloped nations. Despite international efforts to slow the distribution and manufacture of illegal drugs, production has responded to an increased demand. Corruption has affected many governments in the Andean region of Latin America as a result of the drug trade. This, in turn, has affected relationships between governments at the international level. The United States has historically been the largest consumer of illegal drugs in the western hemisphere. Illegal drugs processed in the Andes transit through Central America and Mexico on their way to UNITED STATES markets.<sup>10</sup> As Figure 1 illustrates, Colombia is a starting point for drugs bound for the U.S, and the main mode of transportation from Colombia is either small high-speed watercraft, semi-submersibles, or land vehicles.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cecile Marin, Map of Drug Trafficking routes though Central America, <http://mondediplo.com/maps/drugs> (accessed 20 May 2008).

<sup>11</sup> "U.S. Navy Mission in Colombia," *United States Embassy, Bogota Colombia* (February 2009).

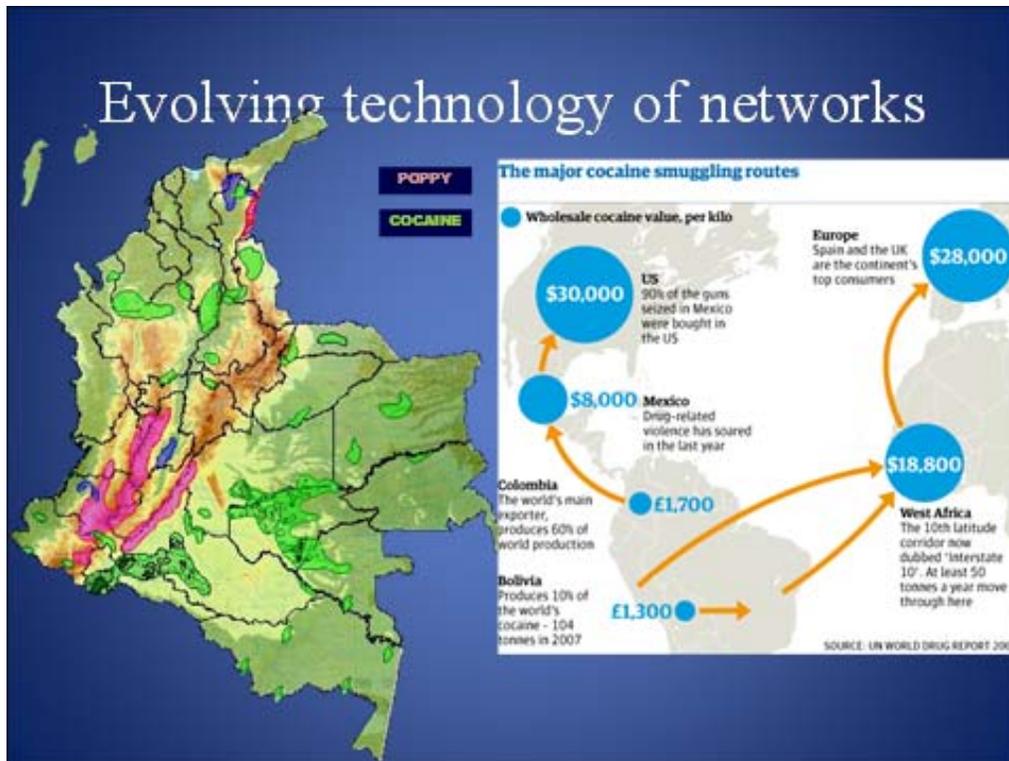


Figure 1. Major drug routes in Latin America (From UN World Drug Report, 2008)

Typically, foreign investors are reluctant to place their money in a country that has corruption, drug problems, an unstable economy, and/or political unrest. Colombia has suffered the impact that drugs and drug trafficking have had on the lack of economic development through foreign investment. The World Bank claims that criminal violence costs Latin America more than \$30 billion a year.<sup>12</sup>

Drug trafficking is much like a global corporation; it has very complex relationships, a high degree of coordination and control, and is very rational in its pursuit of market strategies. Drug traffickers oversee a very dynamic process from the purchase and transportation of raw materials, to the processing and exportation to United States and European markets, and finally to the distribution of profits where the money is then laundered. Despite political conditions, a

<sup>12</sup> Luis Esteban G. Manrique, "A Parallel Power: Organized Crime in Latin America," Real Instituto Elcano, September 28, 2006, 1, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org> (accessed June 19, 2008).

difficult terrain, and vast distances, drug trafficking organizations simultaneously coordinate these activities. In spite of international efforts, legal reforms, and expanding law enforcement agencies, the production of cocaine and other illegal substances has continued to increase.<sup>13</sup> Until better ways can be found to defeat the illegal drug market, there will always be drugs, mainly cocaine, flowing from Colombia to the United States.

## **B. INSURGENCY**

The Colombian government and military have been fighting a counterinsurgency campaign within the borders of Colombia for almost fifty years. While over twenty armed groups have been identified, two are the most prominent, effective, and organized. They are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and National Liberation Army–ELN.

### **1. Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–FARC-EP**

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) originated during a period in Colombian history known as *La Violencia*. *La Violencia*, which started in 1948, was a ten-year war between the Liberals and the Conservatives that resulted in over 200,000 deaths. By 1968, the FARC had approximately 10,000 members and established a Marxist-Lenin ideology under the leadership of Pedro Antonio Marin, a.k.a. Manuel Marulanda. When Marulanda died in 2008, Alfonso Cano replaced him.<sup>14</sup>

By the 1980s, the FARC was responsible for the majority of kidnappings and extortions committed in Colombia, as well as 15% of the 35,000 deaths.<sup>15</sup> The FARC has kidnapped numerous Colombian officials, police officers, and wealthy Colombians, including presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, who was

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<sup>13</sup> Manrique, "A parallel power," 5.

<sup>14</sup> Victoria Garcia, "In the Spotlight: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia," Center of Defense Information, <http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/farc.cfm> (accessed December 15, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

rescued in July 2008.<sup>16</sup> Kidnap and ransom of their prisoners is a both source of income and a form of control over the population. In addition to their success with kidnapping, a large portion of their funding comes from their involvement in the drug trade. The FARC is involved in “every stage of drug trafficking from taxing the cultivators of the coca and poppy plants, to controlling the manufacturing laboratories and even distributing the drugs themselves.”<sup>17</sup> Profits from cocaine and heroin range anywhere from \$100 million to \$1 billion annually and are used to purchase arms, attract new recruits, and fund FARC operations. The profit from the sale of illegal drugs makes the FARC one of the richest insurgent groups in the world.

The government of Colombia has attempted several times to negotiate peace with the FARC the latest attempt occurring between 1998 and 2001, during Colombian President Andrés Pastrana’s administration. President Pastrana granted the FARC a 42,000 square mile “cleared zone” or “despeje,” which was a demand by FARC as a precondition for the talks (see Figure 1). However, the FARC used the ceasefire agreement to rebuild and stage kidnappings, run drug operations, recruit, and train young guerillas. In 2001, after the FARC hijacked an airliner, President Pastrana broke off the talks and ordered the Colombian military to retake the *despeje*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Cable News Network, “Betancourt: Rescue is a 'miracle,’” July 3, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/Americas/07/02/betancourt.scene/index.html> (accessed 15 December 2008),1

<sup>17</sup> Garcia, “In the Spotlight.”

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

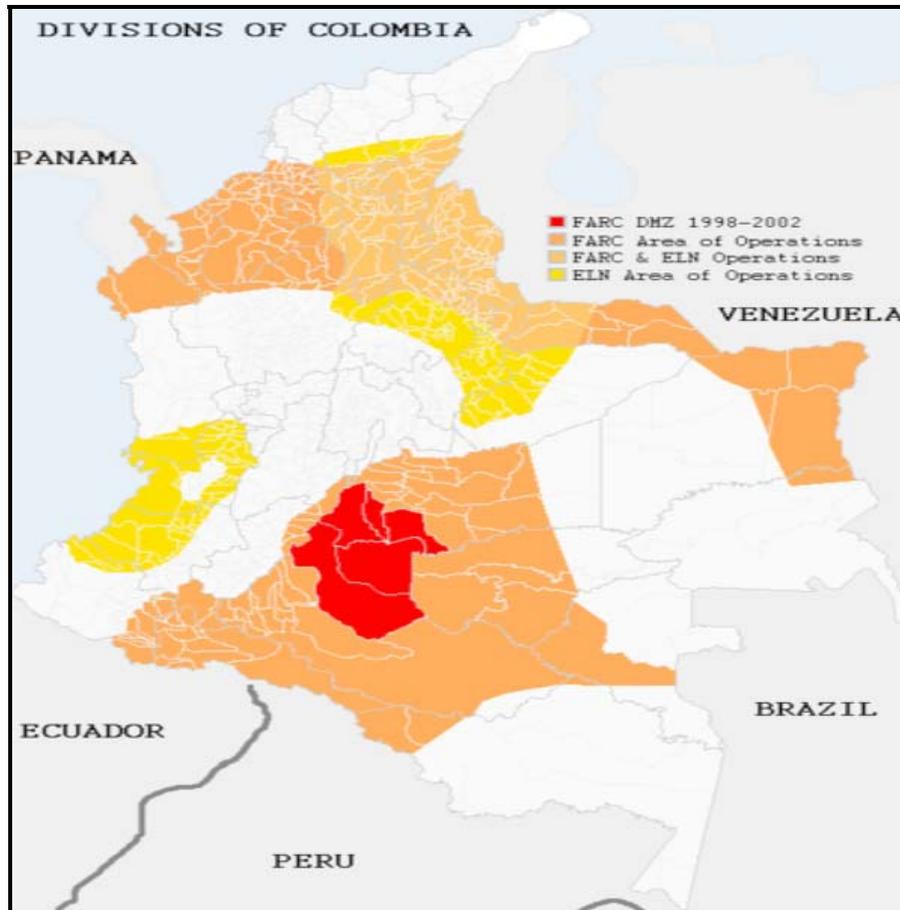


Figure 2. Map of Guerrilla DMZ and Operations (From BBC News, 2008)

## 2. National Liberation Army–ELN

The National Liberation Army (ELN) is the second largest guerrilla group in Colombia and, like the FARC, espouses Marxist-Leninist ideology. In the 1990's the ELN "had evolved from a localized peripheral conflict to one of pervasive violence."<sup>19</sup> At present, ELN forces have an estimated 3,500 combatants, compared to around 10,000 in the FARC. Inspired by the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the ELN formed in 1964, "when a group of students, inspired

<sup>19</sup> Shaw Choy, "In the Spotlight: The National Liberation Army ELN," June 21, 2002, Center of Defense Information, <http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/elc.cfm> (accessed December 15, 2008).

by Che Guevara and led by Fabio Vasquez Castaño, returned from their training in Cuba.”<sup>20</sup> After the death of Fabio Vasquez, Catholic priests led the ELN.

The ELN prefers kidnapping and extortion to the use of drug money for its funding. By 2001, the ELN was holding 800 hostages for ransom. The ELN targets mostly employees of foreign petroleum corporations, blaming them for Colombia’s weak domestic economy, endemic poverty, and severe income inequality.<sup>21</sup> Unlike the FARC, the ELN has shown a greater willingness to negotiate for peace. With the election of Colombian President Andres Pastrana in 1998, the ELN began negotiations with the Colombian government. However, when the FARC peace process failed, “it became harder for the ELN to dictate its demands.”<sup>22</sup>

### **C. COLOMBIA’S RESPONSE TO DRUGS AND INSURGENTS**

Under President Pastrana, the peace process between the Colombian government and insurgents collapsed in 2001. Facing declining political and popular support, an increase in military activities, and human rights abuses by every armed group, President Pastrana signed the Security and National Defense Bill in to law.<sup>23</sup>

This ‘antiterrorist’ measure was passed in part because of growing complaints by the armed forces and their allies that the new human-rights laws and institutions were hindering their ability to prosecute the law.<sup>24</sup>

Chernick notes that the Security and National Defense Bill “strengthened the military justice system, gave judicial autonomy and subordinated civilian officials with specific emergency zones that could be declared to confront

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<sup>20</sup> Choy, “In the spotlight,” 1.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Marc C. Chernick, “Colombia: Does Injustice Cause Violence?” in *What Justice? Whose Justice?*, eds. Susan Eva Eckstein and Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley (Berkeley: University of California Press 2003), 203.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

terrorism.” The passing of the bill led to an outcry from the United Nations and international human rights organizations who declared the law a direct violation of international treaty commitments already in place within Colombia. The failure of the FARC peace process allowed Pastrana’s successor, Alvaro Uribe Veléz, to take a hard line against guerrillas. This was bolstered by Plan Colombia, a \$6 billion upgrade to Colombian military and police capabilities. Alvaro Uribe Veléz, an uncompromising foe of Colombia guerrilla insurgents, was so popular in Colombia that he won an unprecedented first round electoral victory in 2002 by a landslide. Upon taking office, “he declared a ‘State of Internal Commotion,’ which granted him emergency powers that allowed him to give the military the right to arrest, detain, and search people without judicial authority.”<sup>25</sup>

Because the Colombian people were eager for change and progress, President Uribe was able to institute aggressive reform and expansion of the armed forces and police. In June 2003, President Uribe announced the “Policy for Defense and Democratic Security” that became the cornerstone of his plan to establish long-term control of national territory that was currently being controlled by guerrillas or paramilitaries. To fund his policy, President Uribe raised taxes on businesses and wealthy Colombians to the tune of over \$1 billion. These funds supplemented the defense budget, funded the modernization of equipment, and increased salaries for the military and police. He also created the “Soldados de mi Pueblo”, a civil defense force used for local security enforcement, freeing up the military.<sup>26</sup> “The Democratic Security plan called for better coordination of security entities in order to fight “terrorism” and crime, counter illegal drugs, better protect border area, and fight corruption,” notes Colombia expert Peter DeShazo. In short, President Uribe was taking the fight to the guerrillas and paramilitaries. By 2004, overall security in the country began to improve. The Colombian army took the offensive against guerillas and paramilitary groups in occupied areas that had not seen government presence in over two decades.

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<sup>25</sup> Chernick, “Colombia: Does Injustice Cause Violence?” 203.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

Large numbers of FARC and ELN members were killed, forced to surrender, or demobilized, and civilian deaths began to decline. By 2004, every Colombian municipality had at least a nominal police presence.<sup>27</sup>

As guerilla and paramilitary numbers were declining, the Colombian government was also experiencing success with counter-drug operations in the region. *Plan Colombia* funded large-scale aerial eradication of cocoa fields, and in 2002-2003, 15-21% of cocoa was eradicated.<sup>28</sup> There was also a sustained interdiction program, which met with some success. While the centerpiece of *Plan Colombia* focused on counter-drug incentives, a recent article from the BBC news reported that of the \$600 million U.S. dollars Colombia receives each year, most goes toward military aid to fight the insurgency rather than for counter-drug efforts.<sup>29</sup>

## 1. Cerrando Espacios—Closing the Gap

*The mission of the Colombian Navy in the war against narco-trafficking is TO CLOSE THE GAP that the narcoterrorists have opened in our seas, rivers and coast in order to economically eliminate the terrorism that affects the nation.*<sup>30</sup>

The Colombian Navy (COLNAV) and Colombian Marine Corps (COLMAR) have a different force structure than most western militaries. The COLNAV is comprised of approximately 24,000 personnel; however, it includes about 18,000 members of the COLMAR. This often makes it difficult to distinguish between the forces. Simply stated, the COLNAV is responsible for seas and coasts while the COLMAR is responsible for the rivers. The COLNAV has bases in Cartagena, Bahia Malaga, Buenaventura, Puerto Leguizamo, and San Andres where the

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<sup>27</sup> Peter DeShazo, Tanya Primiani, and Phillip McLean, *Back from the Brink Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007: A Report of the Americas Program*, 13, [www.csis.org](http://www.csis.org) (accessed March 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> British Broadcast Corporation, "US Weighs Costs of Plan Colombia," *BBC News*, November 7, 2008, 12:50:26 GMT, (accessed December 14, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> Armada Nacional de Colombia. *Estrategia Naval Contra el Narcoterrorismo*, (Colombia, June 2007). <http://www.armada.mil.co> (accessed September 13, 2008), 3.

majority of its surface and naval air forces are stationed. This provides Colombian maritime security coverage of both the Caribbean and Pacific. The COLNAV uses frigates, patrol boats, and aircraft to conduct maritime security operations. However, constraints on the Colombian defense budget have made it difficult for both services to conduct maritime security operations due to a lack of joint and logistical support. Despite this, both services have made an impact on drug trafficking in the region.<sup>31</sup>

The COLMAR represents 81 percent of the COLNAV. It is also the world's second largest Marine Corps (U.S. Marine Corps being the first) and has the world's largest riverine force.<sup>32</sup> The COLMAR is organized into three Riverine Brigades, one Training Brigade, and a Special Forces Battalion. Despite representing a majority in the COLNAV, the COLMAR receives little support from their Naval Command.<sup>33</sup> Although the COLMAR is subservient to the COLNAV, all three of its Riverine brigades are engaged in counter-drug and counter-terrorism operations. The *Estrategia Naval Contra el Narcoterrorismo* fills in the gaps left by these forces.

Colombia's *Estrategia Naval Contra el Narcoterrorismo (Navy Strategy Against Narcoterrorism)* of June 2007 outlines the navy's plan to deny narco-terrorists the use of maritime, river, and land areas under the responsibility of the Colombian Navy (COLNAV). In the past, narco-terrorists have used these areas to import arms, munitions, and other contraband imported to assist the narcoterrorists in their illegal endeavors. The COLNAV's *Estrategia Naval Contra el Narcoterrorismo* focuses on enhancing their naval presence in Colombia's three main operating areas: the Pacific Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and Colombia's rivers. By focusing its effects on these three environments, the COLNAV will turn the tide on narcoterrorism in Colombia. Through

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<sup>31</sup> "U.S. Navy Mission in Colombia," *United States Embassy, Bogota Colombia, COLNAV Situational Update, FY09 Quarterly brief* (April 2009).

<sup>32</sup> "U.S. Navy Mission in Colombia," *United States Embassy, Bogota Colombia, COLMAR Situational Update, FY09 Quarterly brief* (February 2009).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

modernization, maintenance, and acquisition of naval and air assets, the Colombian Navy seeks to improve its effectiveness in joint and combined operations while enhancing and achieving a robust logistical support system.<sup>34</sup> Between January 2000 and December 2006, the COLNAV captured or killed some 5,641 narcoterrorists in its waters.<sup>35</sup> The COLNAV has also been extremely successful at seizing large amounts of cocaine; in a four-month period in 2007, the COLNAV seized 24.244 kilograms of cocaine estimated to have a value of \$606 million U.S. dollars.<sup>36</sup> These and many other seizures prove that the COLNAV is committed to stopping narcoterrorists by denying them safe refuge and pursuing them to bring them to justice, not just for the security of the Colombian people, but for the security of the region. The size of the maritime security region makes the assistance of conventional U.S. naval forces in the region vital to Colombia's continued success.

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<sup>34</sup> "Armada Nacional de Colombia. *Estrategia Naval Contra el Narcoterrorismo*, (Colombia, June 2007). <http://www.armada.mil.co> (accessed September 13, 2008), 4.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

### III. U.S. DOCTRINE AND STRATEGY

Historically, most Latin American ports have welcomed U.S. naval ships. Port visits offer opportunities to support U.S. diplomacy, host protocol events, allow for navy-to-navy professional engagement, provide crew rest, and assist with humanitarian projects. One should note that while conventionally powered ships are openly greeted in Latin American ports, visits by nuclear powered vessels remain problematic. The most notable incident was in 1986 when the foreign ministry of Mexico approved a port visit for the USS Salt Lake City, without realizing it was nuclear powered.<sup>37</sup> To avoid future controversy, the U.S. Navy has only conducted port visits with conventionally powered vessels since this incident. Port visits have been highly successful and achieved with minimal expense. At sea exercises include entering and leaving port, in port training, and multi-ship maneuvers. Once in port, ships often conduct community relations projects that establish positive public support, but it is only sustained for a few days or weeks. In some cases, it may be months or years before another U.S. Naval vessel visits the region.<sup>38</sup>

#### A. U.S. NAVAL MISSION IN COLOMBIA

The U.S. Naval Mission (NAVMIS) in Colombia is responsible for coordinating all U.S. Naval services to support, train, equip, and advise the COLNAV, COLMAR and Colombia Coast Guard (COLCG) in all areas of naval operations. These include maritime interdiction, riverine and littoral warfare, aviation, submarine warfare, naval intelligence, special warfare, and oceanography.<sup>39</sup> The NAVMIS primary focus is support of riverine operations

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<sup>37</sup> Margaret D. Hayes, Richard D. Kohout, Patrick H Roth, and Gary Wheatley, *Future Naval Cooperation with Latin America: Program Descriptions and Assessments*. 32.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37.

<sup>39</sup> "U.S. Navy Mission in Colombia," *United States Embassy, Bogota Colombia*, (February 2009).

and maritime interdiction. To date, the NAVMIS has supported riverine operations by enhancing communications, assisting with spare parts acquisition, establishing a “train the trainer” program, developing infrastructure such as piers and barracks, and developing a Regional Training Center for Riverine, Jungle and Irregular Warfare (IW).<sup>40</sup> In maritime interdiction, the NAVMIS has been instrumental in assisting the COLNAV and COLCG by providing training and equipment necessary to interdict illegal drugs at sea. Some of this equipment includes hidden compartment detection kits, chemical narcotic identifications kits, handheld Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR), and other law enforcement equipment. This is essential to make forces more effective in stopping drugs and other contraband in the region.<sup>41</sup>

## **B. FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE (FID)**

*Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government...to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness and insurgency.*<sup>42</sup>

The Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (JTTP) for FID is the governing document for all FID operations in the U.S. military. It states that FID is the ultimate instrument of U.S. national strategy, and it directs all FID activities by supporting U.S. national interests. FID operations use diplomatic, informational, military, and economic means to support the internal security efforts of any host nation requesting U.S. support. In order for other security efforts to be effective, whether diplomatic, informational, or economic, the use of the military is often necessary to ensure a safe and secure environment within a

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<sup>40</sup> “U.S. Navy Mission in Colombia,” *United States Embassy, Bogota Colombia, COLMAR Situational Update, FY09 Quarterly brief* (February 2009).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Joint Staff (2004). *Joint Pub. 3-07.1: JTTP for Foreign Internal Defense*. Norfolk: Government Printing Office, x.

host nation.<sup>43</sup> U.S. military provides *Direct Support (Not Involving Combat Operations)* (see Figure 1) when host nation security threats are such that it cannot sufficiently provide for its own security needs.<sup>44</sup> It is in the role of *Direct Support* that using conventional forces over U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) is of greater utility, especially while the U.S. military is conducting OCO globally.

### **1. Direct Support (Not Involving Combat Operations)**

Direct Support of host nations means that U.S. forces have direct interaction with the military and civilian populations of the nation. This support includes arms and equipment transfers, civil military operations, intelligence sharing, and logistical support. It is important to note that despite the U.S. transfer of arms and equipment, the training to use those systems does not necessarily involve U.S. forces.<sup>45</sup> Direct Support operations can involve several different types of military operations simultaneously. These operations include Civil Military (CIVMIL), Psychological (PSYOPS), military training, and logistics.

CIVMIL operations are any military related civic action such as foreign humanitarian assistance, humanitarian and civic assistance, or reconstruction in support of the host nation's internal defense. PSYOPS involves engaging the local population to support the host nation's desires by accounting for the emotions and attitudes of the locals.<sup>46</sup> The objective of PSYOPS in FID is to convince the population "to take actions favorable to the objectives of the United

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<sup>43</sup> U.S. Joint Staff (2004). *Joint Pub. 3-07.1: JTTP for Foreign Internal Defense*. Norfolk: Government Printing Office, ix.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, I-11.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

States and its allies.”<sup>47</sup> It is in these roles that conventional U.S. Naval forces could be used to support the COLNAV and COLMAR in Colombia; this will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

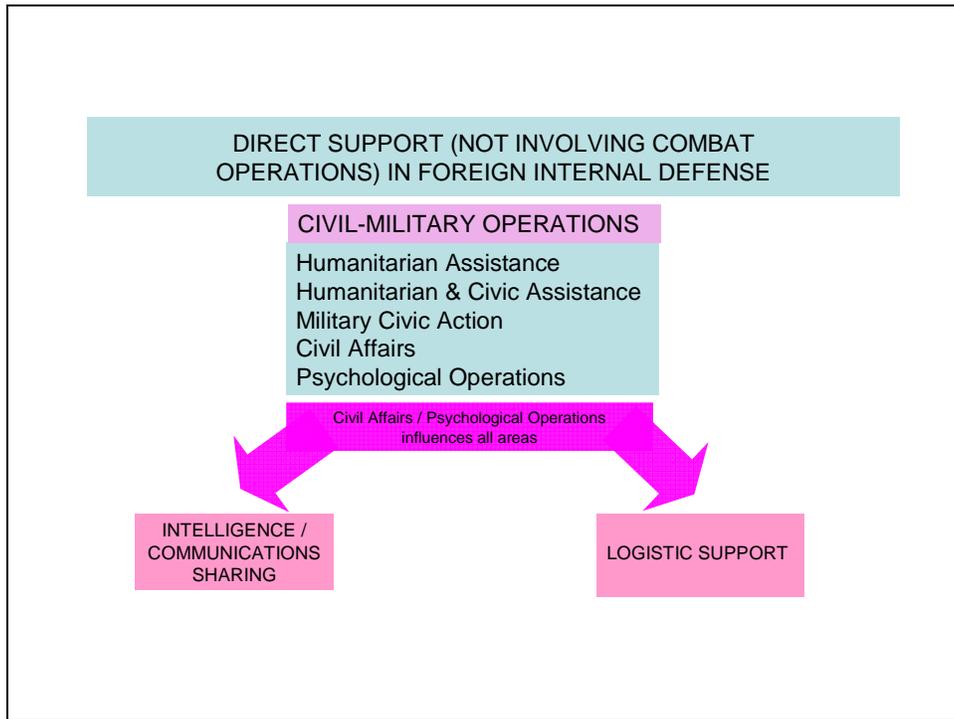


Figure 3. Direct Support (Not Involving Combat Operations) (After *JTTP3-07.1 for Foreign Internal Defense*, 2004)

## 2. Conventional Forces

*Although U.S. Special Operations Command is legislatively-mandated to conduct FID, which it does as a core task, other designated DOD conventional forces may contain and employ organic capabilities to conduct limited FID indirect support, direct support, and combat operations.*<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Joint Staff, *Joint Pub. 3-53: Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations* (Norfolk: Government Printing Office, 2003), xxi.

<sup>48</sup> U.S. Joint Staff, *Joint Pub. 3-07.1: JTTP for Foreign Internal Defense* (Norfolk: Government Printing Office, 2004), V-4.

It is this provision of the JTTP that allows the U.S. Navy actively expand its role in FID. This expansion could support U.S. SOF and host nations simultaneously. In future OCO, FID will be in high demand, and the need for conventional U.S. Naval forces to execute these missions when ordered requires the U.S. Navy to begin training personnel now.

### **C. JOINT COMBINED EXCHANGE TRAINING**

The U.S. SOF community uses Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) programs to improve the combat and humanitarian capabilities of both a host nation and U.S. forces.<sup>49</sup> In 1991, the U.S. Congress created section 2011 of U.S. Code title, and JCET's became law. This law allows the Special Operations Command to deploy and train U.S. SOF with foreign security forces and grants the authority to pay for any expenses that the host nation cannot afford. These expenses can include, but are not limited to rations, fuel, ammunition, and any transportation costs. JCETS have historically consisted of a relatively small number of U.S. SOF, numbering 12-100 personnel. Their training packages consist of SOF mission essential tasks that provide training for both the U.S. and the host nation.<sup>50</sup> These tasks normally focus on combat readiness. However, they are directly related to regional stability efforts in the theater in which they are being executed. JCET training also includes humanitarian assistance, disaster relief operations, civil affair projects, and FID.<sup>51</sup>

JCETS are very flexible and effective because U.S. SOF personnel possess the technical, language, and cultural skills necessary to provide detailed training missions to the host nation. These skills allow SOF to create common unit integrity between host nations and U.S. forces and establish higher

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<sup>49</sup> George C. Saner and Dan J. Poulos, "JCETS in the Pacific," <http://www.specialoperations.com/Focus/jcet.html>. (accessed 27 April 2009), 2.

<sup>50</sup> John Rudy and Ivan Eland, "Special Operations Military Training Abroad and Its Dangers." CATO Institute, 22 June 1999, no. 53., <http://www.cato.com> (accessed 27 April 2009), 2.

<sup>51</sup> Saner and Poulos, "JCETS in the Pacific," 3.

professional standards for all parties concerned.<sup>52</sup> As U.S. Army Lt. Col. Saner and Sgt First Class Poulos noted in their article, *JCETS in the Pacific*:

JCETs act as a force multiplier in support of a host nation's capabilities to react to situations requiring exceptional sensitivity, including non-combat operations such as humanitarian assistance, security assistance, and peace operations.<sup>53</sup>

JCET missions are very popular in many nations around the world; over 100 nations have taken part in the JCET program.<sup>54</sup> These missions are very appealing because they offer professional training and support with little or no cost to the host nation. JCET mission packages are the ideal starting point for conventional U.S. Naval forces to begin conducting FID and implementing the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*.

#### **D. U.S. 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY**

U.S. Naval Forces have a long tradition of conducting expeditionary and Irregular Warfare (IW) missions around the world. *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* highlights the U.S. Navy's ability to merge traditional capabilities with non-traditional or irregular capabilities to combat emerging threats. It states that *strategic imperatives* can be accomplished through the regional focus of concentrated maritime forces with credible power or mission tailored combat forces. This strategy outlines and highlights traditional and irregular capabilities and mission areas:<sup>55</sup>

- Limit regional conflict with forward deployed, decisive maritime power.
- Deter major power war
- Win our nation's wars
- Contribute to homeland defense in depth

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<sup>52</sup> Saner and Poulos, "JCETS in the Pacific," 3.

<sup>53</sup> George C. Saner and Dan J. Poulos, "JCETS in the Pacific," 4.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> U.S. Navy, *Maritime Strategy: A Cooperative Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*. Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, DC: 2007. [www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil) (accessed July 28, 2008).

- Foster and sustain cooperative relationships with more international partners
- Prevent or contain local disruption before they impact the global system

It is the last four strategic imperatives: winning our nation's wars (including OCO), contributing to homeland defense, fostering cooperative relationships with international partners, and preventing or containing local disruptions that found the basis of Irregular Warfare (IW) and are supported by FID operations. The *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* will prevent or contain local disruptions that represent unique challenges in IW. U.S. Naval forces could be tailored to any of these specific operations in an IW campaign. These naval forces exist today in the U.S. Naval Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC). However, the U.S. Navy must develop and optimize these IW forces to meet current and emerging threats and increase its competency advantage in an IW campaign.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Each of these missions, doctrines, and strategies is intertwined and culminates with the implementation of the U.S. *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*. This comprehensive strategy focuses on not only classic naval missions, but also embraces the role of irregular warfare in the realm of modern naval warfare. In addition, it paves the way for conventional U.S. Naval forces to conduct full-scale FID operations and support the Colombian Navy and Marine Corps in non-combat roles. The next chapter will introduce the concept of Irregular Warfare (IW) and describe the forces and capabilities within Naval Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) uniquely suited to conduct FID in a non-combat role in Colombia.

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## IV. U.S NAVY'S IRREGULAR WARFARE FORCE

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) defines irregular warfare (IW) as:

A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will. It is also referred to as IW.<sup>56</sup>

IW encompasses all of the capabilities and concepts indentified as key elements for which the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* was developed.<sup>57</sup> Its core missions include: forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, maritime security, and humanitarian/disaster response.

In July 2008, the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations stated in NAVADMIN 212/08, "the establishment of the Navy Office of IW and chartered this office to institutionalize all U.S. Navy efforts in IW missions of counter-terrorism (CT), Counter-Insurgency (COIN), and supporting missions of Information Operations (IO), Intelligence operations, FID, and unconventional warfare as they apply to CT and COIN." With the establishment of Naval Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC), the U.S. Navy has adapted to address the missions of IW. Coordination with U.S. Combatant Commanders about these capabilities with NECC is uniquely suited to coordinate and meet the requirements for combating terrorism and counterinsurgents and highlights the opportunities for the U.S. Navy to contribute abroad. <sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military Terms*, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/index.html> (accessed 1 April 2009).

<sup>57</sup> U.S. Navy message, NAVADMIN 212/08, [www.npc.navy.mil](http://www.npc.navy.mil) (accessed 1 April 2009).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

## A. NAVAL EXPEDITIONARY COMBAT COMMAND (NECC)

Established in June 2006, NECC consolidates and integrates all the U.S. Navy's expeditionary capabilities under a single command.<sup>59</sup> This alignment of NECC units represents a dynamic group of forces that are illustrated in Figure 4. This organization is responsible for all expeditionary forces and is capable of supporting the following missions: waterborne & onshore anti-terrorism force protection, theater security cooperation and engagement, and humanitarian or disaster relief.<sup>60</sup>

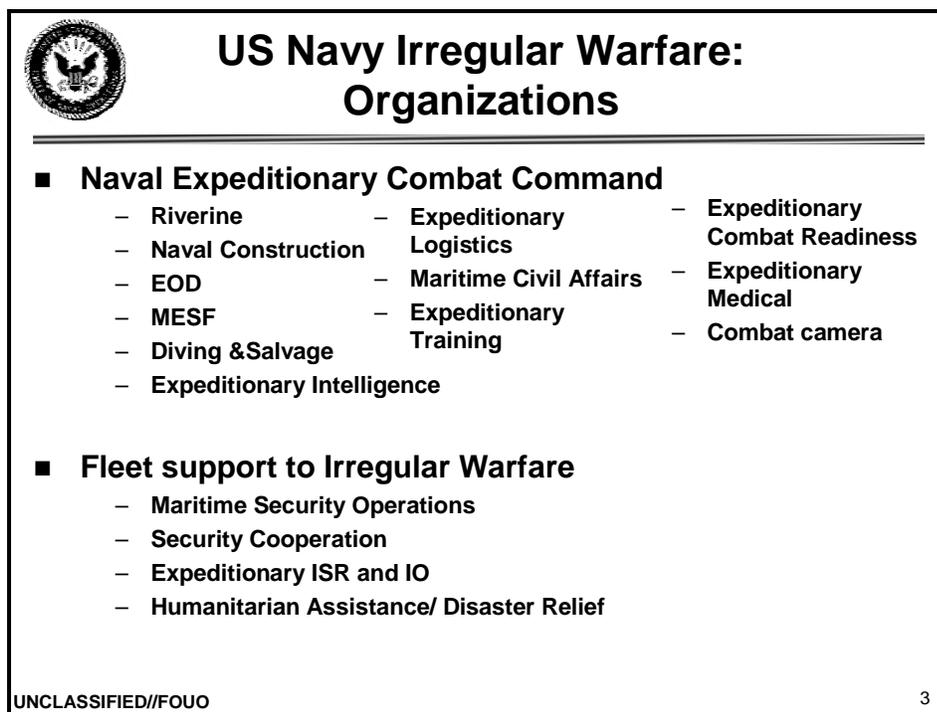


Figure 4. U.S. Navy Irregular Warfare Organization (From Irregular Warfare Working Group Outbrief, n.d.)

As Figure 5 on the next page illustrates, NECC provides U.S. Combatant Commanders with rapidly deployable expeditionary forces that have an array of capabilities to support expeditionary and irregular warfare operations globally.

<sup>59</sup> U.S. Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, *Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil> (accessed April 4, 2009).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

NECC forces operate in areas where the Joint Force Maritime Competent Commander (JFMCC) and the Joint Force Land Component Commander (JFLCC) battle spaces overlap: in the littorals, inland waterways and rivers, and inland near shore regions of the battle space or area of interest. NECC forces provide a greater spectrum to the war fighter in support for Combat Arms (Riverines), to Combat Service (EOD, NCF, MESF) to Combat Service Support (MCA, NAVELSG, etc.) and provide partner nations training in a variety of maritime disciplines to include riverine, EOD, and security, as seen in Figure 5.<sup>61</sup>

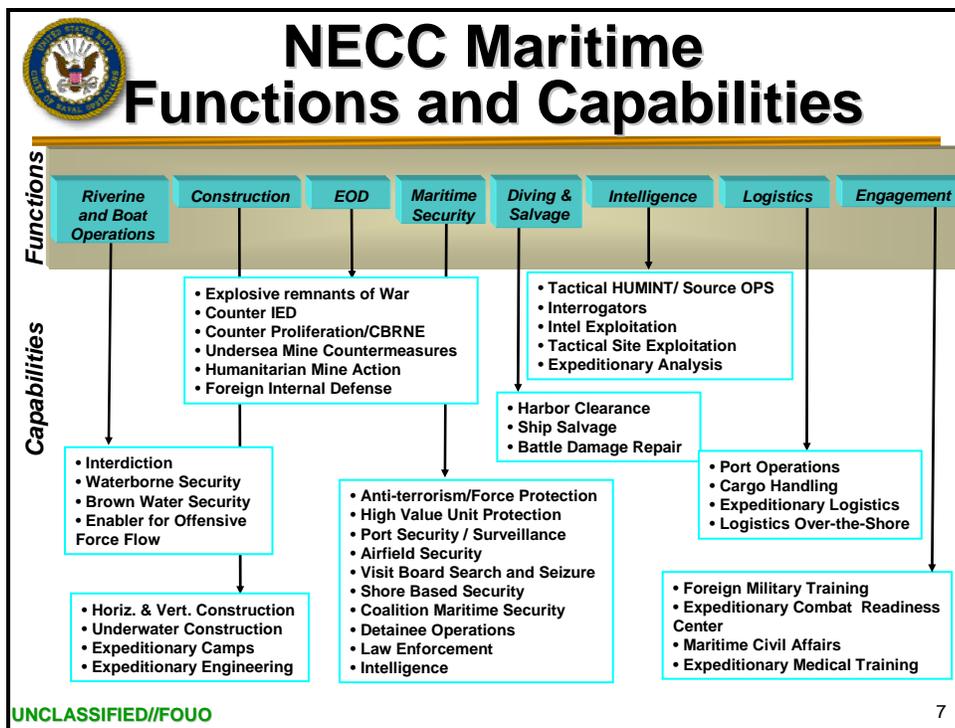


Figure 5. NECC Maritime Functions and Capabilities (From Irregular Warfare Working Group Outbrief, n.d.)

NECC forces are divided into unique functional areas within the U.S. Navy that allow Combatant Commanders to specifically tailor forces for IW missions in their area of responsibility. These units can deploy as a self contained and self-

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, <http://www.necc.navy.mil> (accessed April 4, 2009).

supporting entity or as a task force. This adds to a commander's ability to influence a multitude of security missions within a host nation. This flexibility makes NECC units uniquely qualified to conduct FID within the U.S Navy because commanders can employ the number of sailors necessary to complete mission requirements.

## 1. Riverine Force

*Navy Riverines are the Navy's premier force for patrolling the gaps in the seams of Maritime security. We operate along inland waterways projecting combat force when necessary and providing persistent presence as part of the Navy's support to Irregular Warfare operations and the Long War on Terror.<sup>62</sup>*

Activated on 25 May 2006, Riverine Group 1 (RIVGRU) and Riverine Squadron 1 (RIVRON 1) became the foundation for providing NECC an offensive component to brown water operating areas.<sup>63</sup> Since 2006, two additional Riverine Squadrons (RIVRON 2 & 3) have been supporting maritime security and joint operations around the globe. A Riverine Squadron consists of three detachments, each with its own combatant watercraft, tactical vehicles, and other maritime systems that can be configured to operate in a hostile riverine environment. The riverine watercraft has multiple crews for near continuous operation and has the ability to carry small tactical units for waterborne insertion and extraction on the river.<sup>64</sup> These specially designed riverine craft (Figure 7) allow the riverine squadrons to adapt to a wide variety of missions. A headquarters element also provides organic command, control, communications, computers and intelligence (C4I), force protection, and logistics.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> NECC – Riverine *Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil> (accessed April 4, 2009).

<sup>63</sup> The author has first-hand experience within Riverine Squadron 1, serving as an Assistant Officer-in-Charge from its establishment and deploying to Iraq in 2007 on the first deployment of U.S. Riverine forces in 30 years.

<sup>64</sup> NECC – Riverine *Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil>, (accessed April 4, 2009).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

Riverine Squadrons missions include, but are not limited to the following:

- Theater Security Cooperation
- Humanitarian Assistance in riverine areas of operations
- Conducts Maritime Security Operations (MSO), providing riverine area control and denial through protection of critical infrastructure, preventing the flow of contraband, and disrupting movement of enemy forces or supplies on rivers and waterways
- Enables power projection by providing fire support through either direct fire or coordination of supporting fires and insertion/extraction of joint and coalition ground forces



Figure 6. U.S. Navy Riverine Craft (From U.S. Navy Riverine Force: Capabilities Brief, 2008)

The modern U.S. Riverine Force has the ability to conduct FID, COIN, maritime security, non-combat, and combat operations against small tactical, waterborne and unconventional warfare units in a riparian (brown water) environment.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> NECC – Riverine *Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil>, (accessed April 4, 2009).

## **2. Maritime Expeditionary Security Forces (MESF)**

The Maritime Expeditionary Security Force (MESF) is responsible for protecting and defending the green water operating area for NECC and the Navy.<sup>67</sup> MESF is an adaptive force that allows commanders to deploy units to provide security for naval and logistical forces from the maritime domain onto land.<sup>68</sup>

The main mission of MESF is force protection. These units provide security for strategic shipping and naval vessels operating in the inshore and coastal areas, anchorages and harbors. They can also conduct Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations against vessels suspected of carrying contraband, and when enlarged into Maritime Expeditionary Security Groups (MESG), can provide intelligence and communications allowing MESF units to protect maritime assets worldwide.<sup>69</sup>

## **3. Naval Construction Forces (Seabees)**

Although not an irregular warfare force, Seabees are a force provider for irregular warfare units. Seabees have the organic capability to provide military construction assets in support of operating forces by building roads, bridges, bunkers, airfields, and logistics bases in remote regions of the world. Seabees can also provide support for disaster preparation and recovery. The most important role Seabees can have in FID is completing civic action projects that complement nation-building programs, such as hospitals, clinic, wells, and schools. Seabees are also trained in infantry style tactics this allows them to protect both their projects and themselves should the security environment call for it.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> In joint planning Blue water = open ocean, green water = littorals or inshore and brown water = rivers.

<sup>68</sup> NECC – MESF *Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil> (accessed April 4, 2009).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> NECC – Seabee *Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil> (accessed April 4, 2009).

#### **4. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)**

U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) is recognized for countering Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and all bomb disposal type missions. EOD detachments are capable of operating around the world and are some of the most highly trained sailors in the U.S. Navy.<sup>71</sup> The EOD community is capable of supporting forces worldwide. Allowing EOD personnel to share their expertise and experience at the Colombian Anti-Explosive School in Montes de Maria would benefit the COLMAR.<sup>72</sup> EOD personnel working with the COLMAR in a supporting role would undoubtedly save Colombian lives, both military and civilian, from the threats of land mines laid by the FARC.

#### **5. Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Group (NAVELSG)**

Navy Expeditionary Logistics Support Group (NAVELSG) provides all the organic logistics capabilities for Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) and the U.S. Navy within the maritime environment. Like all units in NECC, NAVELSG has the ability to adapt to mission requirements as directed by the combatant commander.<sup>73</sup> This agility allows NAVELSG to meet the unique requirements of FID missions and remain adaptable to new requirements that may evolve.

#### **6. Maritime Civil Affairs (MCA)**

Maritime civil affairs (MCA) forces “provide assistance with the restoration of local infrastructures in the aftermath of military operations or natural and man-made disasters, and participate in regional engagement activities intended to

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<sup>71</sup> NECC – EOD *Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil> (accessed April 4, 2009).

<sup>72</sup> “U.S. Navy Mission in Colombia,” United States Embassy, Bogota Colombia, COLMAR Situational Update, FY09 Quarterly brief (February 2009), 1.

<sup>73</sup> NECC – NAVELSG *Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil> (accessed April 4, 2009).

build support for the U.S. government.”<sup>74</sup> These units are comprised of the Maritime Civil Affairs Group (MCAG) and two Maritime CA Squadrons (MCAS), each with a command staff, and Maritime Civil Affairs Teams (MCAT) capable of fulfilling their functional roles both afloat and ashore. There are also eight reserve MCATs for each squadron.<sup>75</sup>

**NECC Force Mission Areas**

- **Maritime Civil Affairs**
  - Assess, plan and coordinate civil/military operations in the maritime environment
    - Major combatant and non-combatant evacuations
    - Maritime operations
    - Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
    - Refugee operations
  - Regionally aligned and focused
  - Host nation interagency coordination
  - U.S. Country Team coordination

[Link](#)

**Civil affairs enhance security and stability**

NECC Adaptive, Responsive, Relevant, Expeditionary

Figure 7. Maritime Civil Affairs (From NECC brief, 2007)

Maritime civil affairs squadrons support 16 core functional skills and 3 maritime specific areas.<sup>76</sup> Figure 7 above summarizes these function areas:

- |                       |                            |                          |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Public Administration | Public Works and Utilities | Emergency Services       |
| Public Education      | Public Communication       | Environmental Management |
| Public Safety         | Food and Agriculture       | Cultural Relations       |

<sup>74</sup> NECC – MCAG *Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil> (accessed April 4, 2009).

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

Civilian Supply            Dislocated Civilians            Public Health  
Public Transportation    Economic Development        Civil Information  
International & Domestic Law

The three maritime specific functional areas are as follows:

Port Operations  
Harbor, Channel Construction and Maintenance  
Marine & Fisheries Resources

The MCA is the most critical part of FID operations and their functionality would represent ‘center of gravity’ for NECC forces conducting FID within a host nation. This single unit’s ‘soft power’ influence on the local population within the host nation would undoubtedly be very well received. Especially in areas of Colombia where government control is weak or non-existent, an MCA presence could bolster local support for the Colombian government and turn the tide against drug lords’ and insurgents’ control of a region.

## **7. Expeditionary Diving and Salvage**

The Diving and Salvage community represent by the far the smallest community of active duty personnel within NECC, with a number of divers just under 500.<sup>77</sup> Navy expeditionary divers are divided into two distinct groups, Mobile Diving and Salvage Units and Underwater Construction Teams. Both groups are manned with highly trained and technical proficient personnel whose missions include; harbor clearance, underwater salvage and recovery, underwater ship repair and maintenance, search and rescue, submarine rescue operations and hyperbaric medicine.<sup>78</sup> NECC divers are also trained to conduct diving operations in any conditions from the tropics to the arctic.

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<sup>77</sup> NECC. *Diving Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil> (accessed 4 April 2009), 2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

**a. Mobile Diving and Salvage Units (MDSU)**

MDSU divers are primarily trained to conduct underwater rigging and other salvage techniques that would allow them to raise heavy objects from the depths. These divers use a mixed gas breathing system of helium and oxygen that allow them to work at seawater depths of 300 feet in order to recover objects from the ocean floor.<sup>79</sup>

**b. Underwater Construction Teams (UCT)**

The UCT community has approximately 150 Seabee personnel who serve in two UCTs, with Naval Construction Regiments and other Navy commands.<sup>80</sup> UCTs continue the Naval Construction mission below the waterline. UCTs are capable of conducting inspections and maintenance on piers, mooring systems, wharfs, bridges, and construction on any facilities that have contact with the water. UCTs allow Seabees to “bring organic underwater construction capabilities and equipment to both conventional and Special Operation force in the battlefield.”<sup>81</sup>

**8. Engagement**

Every aspect of FID involves engagement with the host nation, in this case, Colombia. Engagement is a main objective of FID operations and cannot be underestimated or taken for granted. NECC’s engagement capabilities involve not only the forces mentioned but also include the Foreign Military Training Center, Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center, and Expeditionary Medical Training. All of these units combined are key elements of foreign military training and will strengthen relations with and the capabilities of the Colombian maritime forces. However, before these units set off on advising missions with Colombia, the U.S. Navy must first establish adequate doctrine and training that

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<sup>79</sup> NECC. *Diving Fact Sheet*, <http://www.necc.navy.mil> (accessed 4 April 2009), 2.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

applies to Naval Advising. This Naval Advising doctrine must be specifically tailored to FID missions that involve naval forces.

While the NAVMIS in Colombia has been limited to training and advising, it is the scale of NECC's involvement that will enhance the COLNAV and COLMAR capabilities. It can accomplish this by simultaneously providing *Direct Support* to multiple security issues. Riverine training (combat water survival, riverine tactics, boat handling, etc.), MESF harbor security and interdiction training, EOD training, NAVELSG logistical support and training, and Seabees working military and civilian construction projects in remote locales while engaging the population with MCAGs, are all areas where the Colombian military requires assistance. By conducting FID, NECC forces will be assisting in the expansion of Colombian capabilities and creating the capacity for them to operate within their own borders to combat drugs and insurgency in the maritime environment.

## **B. CONCLUSION**

Allowing NECC forces to assist the Colombian Navy and Marine Corps in training and logistical roles would expand the boundaries of Colombian maritime security. By closing the gaps in Colombian training and combat support roles, NECC forces would play an active part in Colombian maritime strategy, thereby enhancing the Colombian effort against drugs and insurgents. Initially, NECC forces would be conducting FID in a *Direct Support* role, supplementing U.S. Special Forces personnel in their traditional role as advisors before conducting FID independently.

Thus far, the use of conventional U.S. Naval forces to conduct FID has been discussed only theory. In reality, the U.S. Navy must address several restraints before conventional forces can conduct FID and NECC support to Colombia becomes a reality. The next chapter will discuss the particular restraints that would prevent conventional U.S. Naval forces from conducting FID in Colombia.

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## V. PARTICULAR RESTRAINTS

### A. INTRODUCTION

From a military standpoint, using conventional U.S. Naval Forces in FID missions would only require an order to start moving forces in that direction. However, numerous restraints would prevent conventional U.S. Naval Forces from executing this mission. The first restraint deals strictly with the U.S Navy and involves manning the units and finding personnel, mission specific training, cultural awareness, and language training. The second restraint is the legacy of human rights abuses in Latin America associated with the military. Third, is U.S. law, specifically the *Leahy Amendment*, enacted to promote human rights issues in return for U.S. sponsored military assistance. The fourth restraint deals with the use of JCETS based on U.S. Army SOF experiences and the challenges they have encountered.

#### 1. U.S. Naval Force Manning and Personnel Structure

With the exception of EOD, Seabees and NAVELSG have separate officer career paths that allow for easy transfer between similar units within specialties. The remainder of NECC units: Riverine, MESF, MCA, etc., are staffed with Surface Warfare Officers (SWO), naval designator code 1110, who volunteer to execute a tour of duty outside their traditional career path. In a Riverine Squadron, for example, there are 14 SWOs, with ranks from Lieutenant junior grades (O-2) through Commander (O-5).<sup>82</sup> The average tour length is from 18 to 24 months, and during this time, an officer receives training in mission planning, expeditionary combat skills, and other mission specific training depending on

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<sup>82</sup> Ensign's (O-1) are not assigned to Riverine or MESF directly upon commissioning and must report to a surface combatant to complete their initial qualifying tour prior to reporting. Also officers assigned within Surface nuclear power community are not assigned to NECC units as junior officers.



Another reason for only one off track tour is a shortage of officers at the mid-grade level (LCDR (O4) and above) to fill critical Surface Warfare billets ashore (Figure 10). Experienced NECC officers who chose to remain in the IW force are not considered to be serving in critical Surface Warfare assignments. Although IW assignments are important, they represent a lower priority because they are outside the Surface Warfare mainstream.<sup>85</sup>

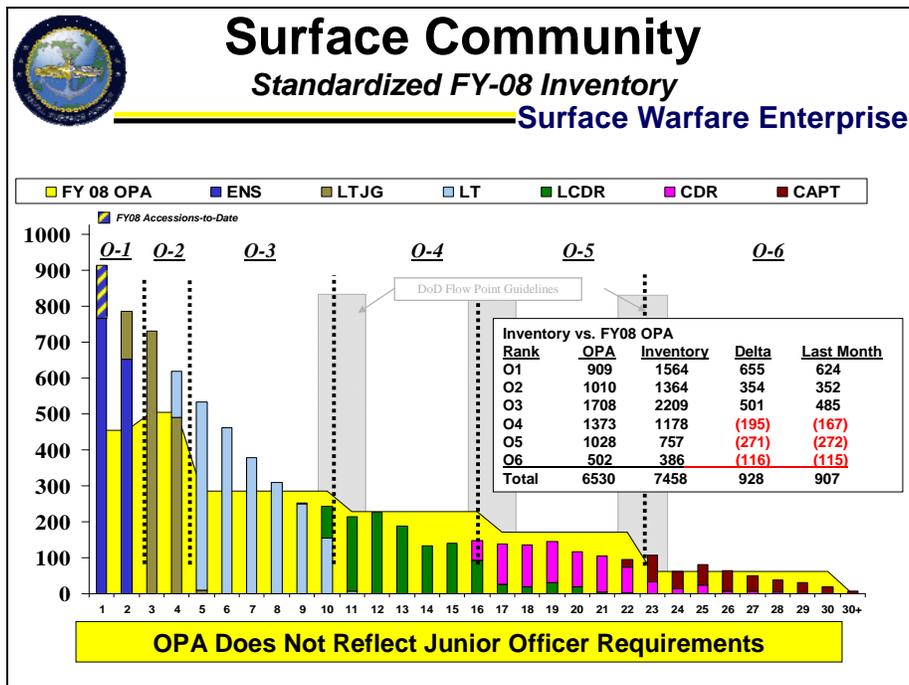


Figure 9. SWO Community Shortfalls (From Surface Warfare Officer Community Brief, 2008)

If conventional U.S. Navy forces are going to successfully execute FID missions in Colombia, the U.S. Navy must find a way to maximize an officer's training and experience as well as retain qualified officers in NECC commands. While not perfect within the junior to mid-grade enlisted ranks, E-1 through E-6, the U.S. Navy does achieve minimum tour maximization. Enlisted personnel that

<sup>85</sup> "Surface Warfare Officer Community Brief," www.npc.navy.mil (accessed May 8, 2008).

are assigned to NECC units for three to five years and have the opportunity to train and deploy at least twice, using previous experiences to improve their skills and enhance unit readiness.

**a. Culture and Language Training Shortfalls**

Officer and enlisted personnel assigned to IW forces conducting FID will essentially be advisors, just like their SOF counterparts, but in a conventional sense. As U.S. Army LtCol. Mark Grdovic notes, an “advisor’s success is in his ability to achieve ‘an unnoticed influence’ for the ultimate purposes of furthering the...national security objectives of the advisor’s government.”<sup>86</sup> Grdovic argues that advisors assisting a host-nation must establish a “rapport, credibility, and perception by the host-nation forces of the continued value of the relationship.”<sup>87</sup> This will not happen overnight, as SOF advisors have been operating in Latin America and Colombia for decades. This is new territory for conventional naval forces. While conventional U.S. naval forces have a long tradition of operations with foreign navies, the situation is quite different on the ground. Many of the challenges that NECC forces will encounter are intangible, in naval circles, and require naval leaders to be very flexible and able to face unfamiliar events. As Grdovic states, “an advisor must possess knowledge beyond that of a normal soldier, in this case sailor, in order to be effective...but also possess skills needed to impart his advice to a foreign counterpart in order to achieve the desired effect.”<sup>88</sup> This can only be effective if conventional U.S. Naval forces receive culture and language training prior to arriving in Colombia. General Mattis’ stated that cultural training would take at least three years, but this in fact is a very aggressive statement.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Mark Grdovic, “The Advisor Challenge,” *Special Warfare* 21, issue 1 (2008) <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag/assets/08Jan.pdf> (accessed September 15, 2008).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Bennet, “Mattis: Irregular War Must be a Core Competency.”

Actual cultural training could be achieved in as little as one month. However, it is the ability to master the native language and effectively communicate ideas that will lead to success CT or CI environments. This training is essential, but takes time, thus delaying the success of any mission. Only by addressing the shortfalls in language training will IW forces be effective. For example, the basic Spanish language course at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, CA, is six months long. Based on the fiscal year 2009 schedule, DLI offers five classes, with an average of 30 students per class. Assuming training started with the first class of the year, and we selected only one of three Riverine Squadrons to attend, every seat would be filled for all the class quotas for an entire year. This also assumes that no other NECC units will need to receive language training and every other service is willing to give up their quotas. Achieving the basic language skills to function as advisors in Colombia will take at least five years, assuming personnel remain assigned to NECC units after training.<sup>90</sup>

## **2. Human Rights Abuses**

The 2008 Amnesty International Report, *'Leave Us in Peace': Targeting Civilians in Colombia's Internal Armed Conflict*, remarks that "Colombia's internal armed conflict has pitted the security forces and paramilitaries against guerrilla groups for more than 40 years. It has been marked by extraordinary levels of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law (IHL), with civilians by far the principal victims." The Amnesty International report estimates that some 700,000 civilians have been killed, some 30,000 have disappeared, 20,000 have been kidnapped, and over 4 million people have been forcibly displaced in the past 40 years of Colombia's internal conflict.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> U.S. Joint Staff (2003), *Language and Regional Expertise Planning*, CJCSI 3126.1, January 23, 2006, chap. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Amnesty International Report, *'Leave Us in Peace!' Targeting Civilians in Colombia's Internal Conflict*, Amnesty International Publications, (2008), 6-7, <http://www.amnestyinternational.org> (accessed April 24, 2009).

The perception in Latin America will be such that while conducting FID missions, the training provided could lead to increased human rights abuses within the host nation.<sup>92</sup> Despite the best intentions of conventional U.S. Naval forces, any human rights violations committed by Colombian security forces will reflect badly on the U.S. mission. This issue must be counteracted when discussing U.S. military training of any foreign military. Inevitably, the media will fuel the fear that U.S. military training is aiding human rights abuses and atrocities. This is especially true when training involves a Latin American nation.

### **3. School of the Americas (SOA)**

The School of the Americas (SOA) was founded after World War II in Panama and relocated to Fort Benning, Georgia, in the early 1990s.<sup>93</sup> Countries from all over Latin America have sent officers to the United States for training and some of those officers had “less than stellar human rights records,” according to Amnesty International.<sup>94</sup>

At the time, the U.S. argued that Latin American countries suffering from human rights abuses and lacking mechanisms of civilian control were in need of what was called “military professionalization.” Katherine McCoy notes “SOA was considered to be a premier school for Latin American forces on the road to professionalization.”<sup>95</sup>

In the 1970s and 1980s, several newspapers in Latin America claimed that SOA was teaching torture techniques and that students were practicing their skills on homeless people in their nations, resulting in the media referring to the SOA as the School of Coups.<sup>96</sup> The negative publicity the SOA received was

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<sup>92</sup> Katherine E. McCoy, “Trained to Torture? The Human Rights Effects of Military Training at the School of the Americas,” *Latin American Perspectives*, 32, no. 6 (2005), 49.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>95</sup> All direct quotes are taken from McCoy, “Trained to Torture?” 49.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

due in part to a few members of its alumni who were responsible for and later charged with human right abuses in their countries. This stigma, which continues to this day, ultimately left the United States in an awkward position. While the school did not condone human rights abuses, it was perceived by the public, both in the United States and Latin America, to be a school that graduated future dictators and human rights abusers. In fact, they conducted training in professional military ethics, rules of law and war and taught courses in human rights.<sup>97</sup> SOA was renamed Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) in 2001 and reinvented itself as a military educational institute offering effective training on democracy, ethics, and human rights in keeping with the democratic principles of the charter of the Organization of the American States (OAS).<sup>98</sup>

In an additional effort to mitigate the U.S. military's involvement in what has been seen as support for spreading human rights abuses through U.S. military training, the U.S. Congress started investigating and as a result enacted the Leahy Amendment.

#### **4. Leahy Amendment**

The Leahy Amendment of 1998 is a U.S. Congressional provision that makes aid to countries conditional on their bringing renegade members of the security forces to justice. In 1997, Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy sponsored legislation prohibiting U.S. military assistance to foreign military units that have violated human rights.<sup>99</sup> This legislation has become a powerful legal method for promoting human rights in order to receive U.S. security assistance. The Leahy Amendment initially applied only to counter narcotics programs but was expanded in 1997 to include all security assistance programs, specifically training

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<sup>97</sup> McCoy, "Trained to Torture?" 49.

<sup>98</sup> WHINSEC, *Democracy, Ethics and Human Rights at the Western Hemisphere Institute of Security Cooperation*, 1.

<sup>99</sup> Limitations on Assistance to Security Forces, 1.

programs sponsored by the Department of Defense (DOD).<sup>100</sup> In 2001, the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act (Sec. 563 of P.L. 106-429) stated that:

None of the funds made available by this Act may be provided to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible evidence that such unit has committed gross violations of human rights, unless the Secretary determines and reports to the Committee on Appropriations that the government of such country is taking effective measures to bring the responsible members of the security forces to justice.<sup>101</sup>

This provision was extended to include the DOD Appropriations Act of 2001, as the DOD was responsible for training and assistance foreign country security forces. The Appropriations Act stated:

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to support any training program involving a unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of Defense has received credible for the Department of State that a member of such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights, unless all the necessary corrective step have been taken.<sup>102</sup>

However, the DOD version of the Leahy Law allows the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) to waive this provision. The SECDEF must submit a detailed report to Congress and disclose any information regarding human rights violations.<sup>103</sup> The Leahy Law resulted in a vetting process that reviews the backgrounds of units and personnel that receive U.S. security assistance training. This process is managed and monitored by every U.S. embassy in the world. In Colombia's case, the Leahy Law is strictly enforced, and anyone who fails to meet the requirements is removed from the program.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Limitations on Assistance to Security Forces, 1.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

The Leahy Law represents a special challenge to U.S. Military forces training and advising Colombian military forces. As conventional U.S. Naval forces start conducting FID, the Leahy Law will be tested. With legal restrictions such as the Leahy Amendments, military forces in Colombia are restricted to advising and training in a non-combat role only after every single Colombian Service member is screened and cleared. It could take several years to investigate and screen the Colombian personnel before training could start.

## **5. JCETS – Only a Temporary Solution**

Once the decision is made to use conventional U.S. Naval force to conduct FID, the responsibility for training and approving IW forces will undoubtedly involve U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), which is solely responsible for all FID operations conducted by U.S. forces. To that end, once designated U.S. Naval personnel or units from the IW forces have been trained and qualified, the next logical step is for those personnel to be included in a JCET.

As John Rudy and Ivan Eland note, the JCET program “allows the military to pursue an almost independent policy, free of congressional or presidential limitations that apply to every other military aid and training program.”<sup>105</sup> While the U.S. Embassy in a host nation is responsible for screening host nation personnel receiving training, it often includes missions involving JCETS despite DoD assurances that vetting of personnel is taking place.<sup>106</sup>

When conventional U.S. Naval forces are added to JCETs in larger numbers, their presence will draw attention to loop holes in the program and require a response. Congressional oversight concerning conventional U.S. forces conducting FID will come under scrutiny, and Congress could see this as an

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<sup>105</sup> Rudy and Eland, “Special Operations Military Training Abroad and Its Dangers,” 5.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

opportunity to reign in the SOF community and require SOF to do more reporting on its activities.<sup>107</sup> Another program will have to be created in order to include IW forces in any FID missions.

## **B. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has identified five constraints on the use of U.S. Navy in FID in Colombia. These include U.S. Naval Force manning and personnel, Human Rights abuses, the Leahy Amendment and the use of JCETS. Of these constraints, the one that will be most difficult to overcome is manning and personnel because it will require a radical restructuring of U.S. Naval Forces to include assignments, promotions and career paths for both officers and enlisted personnel.

The final chapter will provide common ground recommendations on how successful FID operations can be conducted despite the particular restraints to U.S. forces and assist the Colombian government in strengthening its security efforts.

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<sup>107</sup> Rudy and Eland, "Special Operations Military Training Abroad and Its Dangers," 9.

## **VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. CONCLUSIONS**

While the restraints noted in Chapter V represent unique challenges to conventional U.S. Naval forces conducting FID, they do not completely prevent IW forces from taking on this critical mission. As stated earlier, General Mattis is correct; we should be conducting FID. It will take some time before conventional U.S. Naval forces could be adequately trained; however, the current force structure for the U.S. Navy invalidates General Mattis' remarks. Human capital and lessons learned must be maximized in order for FID to be successful. The only way to achieve long-term success is to transform the current U.S. Naval force structure.

### **B. RECOMMENDATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**

#### **1. Establish an NECC Community**

The U.S. Navy must fully embrace IW, acknowledge its critical role in the National and Maritime Strategy, and establish NECC as a stand-alone force within the Navy. NECC must be given control over personnel, equipment, its budget—similar to the aviation or submarine communities. Once IW is recognized as a combat arm of the naval service, NECC can develop career paths and appropriate IW training of officers and enlisted personnel to ensure qualified personnel are assigned to FID missions in Colombia. With a focus on FID missions, NECC can ensure that personnel receive language, culture, and technical training and are held to the highest standards. This will allow NECC to take full advantage of its human capital by leveraging the experiences and capabilities of its personnel and units, capturing lessons learned, and ensuring that FID missions are conducted to maximize both U.S. and host nation capabilities.

## 2. Establish a Regional Affairs Section within NECC

Within NECC, a Regional Affairs Section should be created and modeled after the U.S. Army Special Forces Groups with each having a specific geographic area of responsibility: Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia (Figure 10). However, unlike the Special Forces version, NECC Region Sections should not have tactical control of IW forces. Rather, they should act as regional subject matters experts and have administrative control over force operation within their designated areas. Each Regional Affairs Section should be led by a Navy Captain (O-6) or senior Commander (O-5), manned appropriately to coordinate regional activities, and be responsible for engagement with the U.S Embassies. They should also track current operations within nations in their section and assist IW forces working with host nations. Coordination with other agencies, embassies, and non-governmental organizations will be a critical part of FID operations. Maritime security efforts with host nations must be deconflicted and coordinated to avoid duplication or hampering of other organizations' efforts.

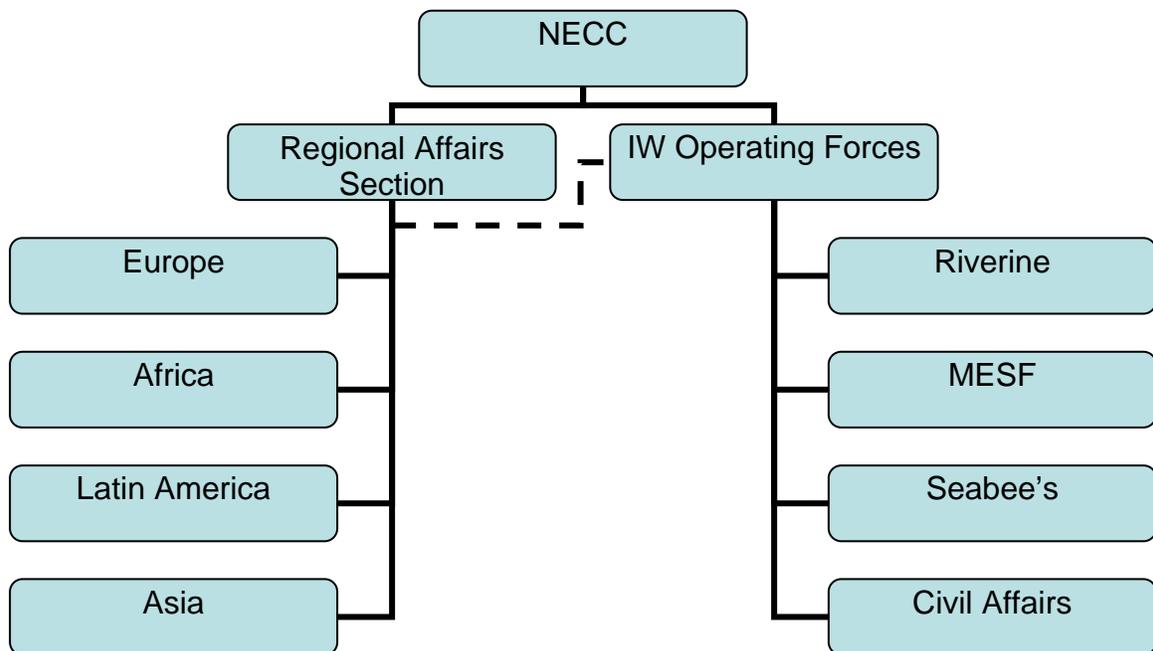


Figure 10. Proposed Regional Affairs Section

The Regional Affairs Sections could also track and monitor personnel requirements within NECC in order to maintain adequate levels of regional experts with language, cultural training, and regional experience. Regional Affairs sections could also establish requirements and standards for future regional missions and develop requirements for the NECC commander.

### **3. Engage the U.S. Congress Early**

The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) should begin preparing members of Congress with briefs on how IW forces will be used compared to conventional forces. The CNO should identify areas such as manpower, human rights considerations, and training for both U.S. and host nation forces. These briefs should also address Congressional concerns by asking for a JCET type program that will allow IW forces to work jointly with SOF and host nation security forces. This will ensure that training objectives are met while maintaining the highest standards in order to prevent human rights abuses.

### **4. Develop a Joint Irregular Warfare Doctrine**

Before conventional U.S. Naval forces embark on FID operations, a comprehensive joint doctrine for IW should be drafted and published. The U.S. Navy should take the lead on developing the concepts, terms, and means of employment for IW forces in order to avoid mission creep and confusion among the services.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS: COLNAV AND COLMAR FORCES**

The COLNAV and COLMAR forces in Colombia continue to ‘close the gaps’ in their naval strategy. U.S. IW forces could best assist the Colombians by filling in the gaps in logistical, training, and headquarter roles within the Colombian military. Both U.S. and Colombian personnel benefit by allowing NECC personnel to fill these critically needed positions (in non-combat roles). Both the COLNAV and COLMAR would have the opportunity to focus on

executing their roles in the naval strategy while simultaneously receiving training and support from U.S. personnel. The training, logistics, and support provided by IW forces could strengthen Colombian efforts against drugs and insurgency, thus greatly bolstering security in the region.

#### **D. RECOMMENDATIONS: U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

##### **1. Crawl, Walk, Run—Include NECC Forces into SOF JCETS**

Special Forces will always work in conjunction with conventional forces in modern conflict as part of a larger campaign. Integration of both IW forces and SOF in FID should be no different. By allowing NECC forces to “bolt on” to JCET missions and provide extended support to host nations while allowing Special Forces teams access to the unique capabilities of NECC, units will accomplish a broader spectrum of FID. Not every JCET will need IW force integration, but in the cases where a host nation has a need to strengthen their maritime capabilities, introduction of IW forces would be beneficial. JCETS can also be used by SOCOM as an evaluation mechanism to ensure that IW forces are conducting FID missions in a format keeping with SOCOM standards. This evaluation process could take multiple successful deployments of IW forces to achieve. However, it affords SOCOM and the U.S. Navy time to assess the effectiveness of conventional naval forces and provide an avenue for corrective action as necessary.

Conventional U.S. Naval forces have a foundation from which to start operating as an independent force. However, in order to establish a competent core of IW forces capable of working within host nations, these recommendations should be considered. These recommendations cannot be implemented in series, but must occur in parallel if FID missions conducted by IW forces are going to be successful.

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