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Addressing the Southwest Maritime Border: An Interagency Task Force

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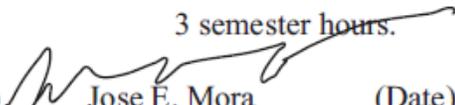
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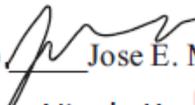
An Interagency Task Force

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Addressing the Southwest Maritime Border:

An Interagency Task Force

A Master Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

American Public University

by

Keith Charles Robinson

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Of

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife whose encouragement and patience helped me fulfill this program.

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I wish to thank all of the border security professionals that I worked with while I served in the Coast Guard along the Southern California coast. The professionalism, dedication, and imagination used by the men and women working along the Southwest Maritime Border sparked my interest in drawing attention to the growing threat and identifying ways to institutionalize the coordination that these men and women are creating at the regional levels. I also wish to thank my colleague, Mr. Chad Carlough, for providing me with policy level insight into the border security problems surrounding the Southwest border region.

I would be remiss if I did not mention my father, John Robinson, and my wife Jennifer who read and re-read this thesis and provided invaluable feedback. Their advice helped me to make sense of my own ideas and convey those ideas to the reader.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Addressing the Southwest Maritime Border:

An Interagency Task Force

by

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Charles Town, West Virginia

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The United States has a border security problem along the Southwest border. National attention is focused on securing the 2,000-mile land border but the Southwest maritime border (SWMB) along the California coastline is generally neglected. This thesis presents an exploratory study to determine what is necessary for the United States to secure the SWMB. Because any efforts to secure the land border are insignificant if the maritime domain is easily exploited, the SWMB requires national attention. National strategies charge border security agencies with creating a whole-of-government approach to their missions but do not provide the legislative mandates or fiscal support necessary to enhance interagency coordination. This thesis proposes using the successes of the Joint Interagency Task Force-South and lessons from the Goldwater-Nichols Act to create an Interagency Task Force along the SWMB. As maritime smuggling increases, the SWMB presents an opportunity to generate the collaboration needed to secure the border.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Experts believe the Southwest border has now become the greatest threat of terrorist infiltration into the United States

--Committee on Homeland Security, *A Line in the Sand*

A porous international border is extremely dangerous to the security of a nation. All immigration, customs, and border controls are for naught if illicit materials are easily moved across the border outside of official channels. A secure border between the United States and Mexico remains an elusive goal for American homeland security and national security agencies. Historically narcotics smuggling and illegal immigration posed the most significant national security border threats. Today, narcotics and illegal immigration are still considerable threats but terrorist exploitation of the border is an added concern. Political ramifications, financial burdens, and the resolve of those smuggling illicit materials into the United States play significant roles in combating the border threat. The federal government expends considerable resources to securing the border but its focus lies on the land border between the two nations. The maritime border, despite its importance in the past, does not receive the same national attention as the land border and therefore has not received the same resources and political interest needed to combat the maritime smuggling threat.

Spanning over 2,000 miles, the expansive Southwest land border (SWB) is nearly impossible to secure physically, resulting in opportunities for people to enter the United States outside of official and regulated points of entry. Drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) take advantage of the porous border to smuggle narcotics and people into the

United States and to expand their criminal enterprises. While both illegal immigrants and illegal narcotics present security concerns, the potential for terrorist organizations to take advantage of gaps in border security or to utilize the infrastructure established by DTOs to smuggle terrorists or weapons of mass destruction into the United States is of equal or greater concern. In part because of the terrorist nexus, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) directed broad security resources and agencies to counter the threat, which lies primarily along the land border.

A “squeeze of the balloon” effect suggests that the crackdown on smuggling along one section of the border will shift the illicit activity to another area. As security efforts succeed along the land border, smugglers will adapt their tactics and smuggling routes, likely into the maritime domain. Maritime smuggling is not a new phenomenon and was historically, until influenced by enforcement measures, the primary method for bringing contraband into the United States. A government-wide interagency effort to stem the flow of drugs through the maritime domain, however, pushed the smugglers toward the land border. Once enforcement efforts along the SWB squeeze smugglers back toward the maritime domain, the hundreds of miles of coastline will become increasingly exploited for illicit activity. This leads to the following research “puzzle:” can the United States successfully secure the maritime border along the California coast? This is not a new question, just a generally neglected one. As maritime smuggling along the Southwest coastline increases, national attention will shift toward the maritime domain but the United States will have lost an important opportunity to be proactive in securing the maritime border.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this thesis is to examine what steps must be taken by the United States to ensure the security of the California coastline, also referred to as the Southwest Maritime Border (SWMB). Protecting against such an extensive threat requires resources from various federal, state, and local agencies. This thesis focuses therefore on the cooperation between these disparate agencies and whether they can be streamlined to provide better security to the SWMB. Through an examination of historical smuggling and counter-smuggling tactics, national strategies, agency roles, and the structures, functions, and capabilities of the various border security agencies, this thesis adapts previously successful interagency government frameworks to propose a new interagency task force to increase the effectiveness of coastal border security agencies, specifically along the SWMB.

Smuggling routes in the maritime domain have long been exploited to bring people and contraband into the nation undetected. Smugglers historically utilized the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico to penetrate the southern borders of the United States. In response, the United States created comprehensive security reform to mitigate the threat. Maritime border security efforts pushed smugglers to the land borders of the United States and Mexico. Increasing resources and support for border security agencies along the SWB, the federal government risks forcing the path of least resistance further west to the maritime border between Mexico and California. Addressing this potential, this thesis addresses the specific research question: what steps are necessary to enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement operations along California's SWMB? Two specific arguments are relevant to answering this question. First, the threat along the

SWMB must be appreciated and addressed at the national level and second, the frameworks and legislative mandates of the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF)-South and the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986* (Goldwater-Nichols Act) must be tailored to the SWMB.

A proactive interagency strategy to secure the maritime border begins with an acknowledgement of the threat. In general, however, the United States' border security measures are reactive and defensive. Funds and resources flow toward the most immediate threats and thus the focus of attention remains along the vast stretches of unsecured land border. In the maritime domain, a proactive approach to securing the border does exist but is not yet sufficient for the threat. JIATF-South is an interagency working group led by the Department of Defense (DOD) to interdict narcotics as far away from American shores as possible. While this mission is vital to keeping narcotics from reaching American streets and is important in combating the drug trafficking industry, it does not directly increase the physical security of the borders. JIATF-South does not address the littoral smuggling threat along the SWMB. The United States Coast Guard (USCG), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and many state and local agencies devote resources to this near-shore threat but lack the interagency mandate and coordination of JIATF-South.

Once the SWMB threat is understood and acknowledged at a national level, support might become available to reform and optimize the limited maritime border security resources. Successful interagency reform is not without precedent. The interagency structure of JIATF-South and the DOD reorganization mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act are examples of successful coordination and legislation that can

be tailored to increase the effectiveness of agencies along the SWMB and thus the overall security of the border. National policymakers must support similar reforms along the SWMB to streamline relevant missions and resources and secure the border from potential exploitation.

Demonstrating the extent of the problem, many experts do not agree on what constitutes effective border security. Much of this debate relates to political considerations of immigration and drug policy reform and how these reforms will impact both America's security and economic interests. From the simple perspective of physical control over the borders, however, political decisions regarding immigration and narcotics policy have little impact. The first step in streamlining the various agencies is defining their common mission, border security. This thesis is limited to national policy that impacts security efforts and defines security without regard to social policy. Border security is defined here as the ability of the United States to prevent illegal smuggling into the United States. While this is an impossible goal, the border must be secure enough to make any smuggling attempts into the United States too risky. This requires an in depth look at the history of smuggling and recent discussions of the threat.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The homeland security enterprise extends far beyond DHS and the federal government. A key part of the enterprise includes working directly with law enforcement, state and local leaders, community-based organizations, and private sector partners to counter violent extremism at its source, using many of the same techniques and strategies that have proven successful for decades in combating violent crime in American communities.

--Department of Homeland Security, *Implementing 9/11 Commission Recommendations*

Border Security Concerns

Discussions of border security have varied over the last several decades. This is due in large part to the evolutionary nature of the smuggling threat. As the threat changes, so do the prevailing opinions about the threat and how to counter it. The history of smuggling and counter-smuggling, therefore, is important to any discussion of their present or future. Current and historical national strategies, congressional hearings, and information published by law enforcement are the primary sources for border security discussions. Since the recent focus of border security has been on the land border, there is considerable information available about land-based threats but less data is available on the evolving nature of the maritime border threat along the SWMB.

The history of security along America's southern border shows a westward geographical trend of smuggling routes away from law enforcement efforts. From the 1970s to the early 1990s, narcotics smuggling routes into the United States flowed primarily through the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. As enforcement efforts succeeded in interdicting illegal contraband in these waterways, DTOs adapted their

tactics and shifted significant traffic inland to exploit the thousands of miles of land border between the United States and Mexico. Over the past decade, however, the United States implemented many border security enhancements to better secure the land border and to halt the smuggling efforts into Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

As smugglers continue to move toward the path of least resistance, the maritime domain between Mexico and California presents an underutilized and under-protected smuggling avenue. Since 2007, border security agencies detected a significant increase in smuggling activity along the SWMB. Whether the increase in smuggling efforts in the SWMB is due to a “squeeze of the balloon” effect, in which counter-smuggling successes along other areas of the border push traffic toward the coast, or to an overall increase in smuggling efforts from Mexico and South America, the increasing maritime threat remains generally unacknowledged.

Border security along the land border is a national concern. The enormous quantities of narcotics and persons illegally smuggled across the SWB draw the attention of the nation to border security. Terrorist networks, however, use the same infrastructure that supports narcotics and human trafficking (U.S. Congress 2012a). While the known extent to which terrorists actually exploit the border is relatively minor, this threat could quickly escalate. Terrorists can cooperate with DTOs or use existing tactics, techniques, and procedures to infiltrate the United States. Terrorism is therefore an important aspect of border security literature.

However, terrorism is often left out of discussions about border security effectiveness. Most sources that discuss the effectiveness of border security do not

address successes in terms of the vast array of threats. Statistics furnished by the federal government and border security agencies portray an increasingly secure land border but the actual level of security along the border is subjective and subject to disagreement. Regardless, the federal government provides significant resources to combat the threat. These resources inevitably establish greater physical security along the land border. In 2012, DHS reported that 44 percent of the border is physically secure (U.S. Congress 2012a, 2).¹ This represented a significant increase in physical border security and even as DTOs continued to exploit the remaining 56 percent of the border to transport their products into the United States, they searched for new ways to succeed. Consequently, trends indicate an increase in maritime smuggling along the California coastline.

The SWMB presents a potential new path of least resistance. The federal government must therefore take steps to secure the maritime border; and, as with any government objective, interagency collaboration is an important part of the discussion. Virtually every government strategy or after-action-report addresses the need for better cooperation between agencies. The Goldwater-Nichols Act serves as an important precedent to creating a “joint” atmosphere and is therefore an oft-used example for how to improve cooperation throughout the federal government. Because other federal agencies do not follow the same structure as the armed forces, however, the Goldwater-Nichols framework cannot simply be superimposed onto the federal government in its entirety. This thesis presents an exploratory discussion of how to use the Goldwater-

1. This measure of security draws many questions, which are discussed later in this thesis, but provides an important indicator of the DHS assessment in 2012.

Nichols Act, and lessons from other successful interagency efforts such as JIATF-South, to address the growing maritime threat along the SWMB.

The Evolution of Border Security

The Southern Maritime Border

The long and varied history of smuggling remains a challenge for governments around the world. Perhaps because it is constantly changing, the smuggling threat and its national security implications are not fully understood. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and as recently as the 1990s, the maritime domain was the primary realm for narcotics smuggling into the United States; DTOs smuggled contraband through the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico into Florida and the Gulf Coast states. In his history of maritime smuggling from 1970-1990, Fuss (1996, 44) stated, “by the late 1970s there was a great deluge of marijuana flowing into the United States.” Using coastal freighters and mother ships to transfer narcotics to smaller vessels for delivery into the United States, maritime smuggling boomed.

According to Fuss, the United States responded slowly to this growing threat in the late 1970s and early 1980s until President Reagan made the fight against drugs a significant part of his administration and, in 1983, created the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System (NNBIS). Prior to the creation of the NNBIS,

the fragmented drug interdiction strategy had been defensive and reactive. Agencies deployed their resources to meet drug smuggling threats; there was little interagency planning or coordination. NNBIS brought the direction and staff necessary to organize and implement sustained offensive operations against international drug traffickers. (Fuss 1996, 121)

The NNBIS served not as a command center but as a coordination center, which brought together the multiple counter-smuggling agencies. This collaboration sparked a proactive

approach to combat smuggling and led to many large multi-agency operations such as Operations Hat Trick and Blue Lightning, which significantly curbed the use of mother ships to transport marijuana through the Caribbean. In other border security operations such as Operation Border Shield, a 1987 multi-agency surge operation in the Caribbean, and Operation Panama Express a similar operation in the Pacific Ocean, law enforcement agencies restrained smuggling efforts in the maritime domain in the 1980s and 1990s (Office of Drug Control n.d.; Thomas 2011). Under the direction of Vice President George Bush, the NNBS successfully coordinated the various counter-smuggling agencies until it was disbanded in 1989 and its responsibilities were passed to the new Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Even though the head of the ONDCP reported directly to the administration, the political importance of drug smuggling declined as tensions arose in the Middle East before the first Gulf War and agencies began to recall their personnel assigned to other agencies in preparation for war (Fuss 1996, 272-3).

Legislative change accompanied the shift to the ONDCP. An updated Posse Comitatus Act provided the Navy limited authority to assist in counter-smuggling and in 1989, the authorization act for the military services identified the DOD as the primary agency for detecting and tracking maritime smugglers (Fuss 1996, 234). Under the auspices of the DOD, Joint Task Forces (JTFs) were established in Key West, Florida and Oakland, California. The JTFs were designed to take over the coordination role of the NNBS. “JTFs would detect and pass on identified targets to Coast Guard or civilian enforcement agencies . . . [but the JTF model] assumed a free flow of information between the different agencies, which seldom happens voluntarily” (Fuss 1996, 272).

While NNBS curbed the marijuana flow through the Caribbean, the new JTFs saw a change in smuggling techniques and an increase in maritime cocaine smuggling.

“In the late 1990s ‘go-fast’ boats began to replace airplanes as the main means for moving cocaine through the Caribbean, the primary trans-shipment zone of the day” (Maritime Security Conference 2012). As law enforcement succeeded in interdicting coastal freighters and fishing boats, go-fast vessels (GFVs), which are fast-moving, low profile boats loaded with contraband and extra fuel, became the smuggling vessel of choice. Law enforcement agencies established tactics to stop GFVs, such as developing a policy for airborne use of force in which snipers shooting from helicopters disable the vessel by shooting out its engines (Keeter 2007, 5). DTOs adapted yet again and designed self-propelled, semi-submersible submarines (SPSSs) to move their product (Thomas 2011). While extremely effective, SPSSs, still do not completely protect the contraband from detection and DTOs evolved to the use of fully submersible vessels, which are nearly undetectable by sensors currently in use (Lichtenwald, Steinhour and Perri 2012). Fully submersible vessels, however, are extremely expensive investments and are not known to be widely used.

The Land Border

In the early 2000s, as maritime smuggling became more difficult and costly, the expansive land border became increasingly exploited. According to Chairwoman Candice Miller (R-MI) of the Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security (CHS-BMS), “ground zero for illegal migration centered in California and Texas until the Border Patrol devised new campaigns, like Operation Gatekeeper and Operation Hold the Line . . . [when] Border Patrol surged capability to

meet a specific threat” (U.S. Congress 2012b, 1). Understanding that ad hoc capabilities designed to meet individual threats did not efficiently use resources, Congress and policymakers discussed how to control the land border. Arizona Senators McCain (R-AZ) and Kyl (R-AZ) introduced a ten-point plan, which dramatically increased the number of personnel along the border, increased resources to border security agencies, and increased funding for border security operations (McCain 2011).

The number of United States Border Patrol (USBP) agents more than doubled, border security agencies created Border Enforcement Security Teams (BESTs) to foster collaboration, and legislators took a greater interest in securing the land border (Department of Homeland Security n.d.; U.S. Congress 2013a). According to DHS, the USBP— an agency within CBP — is “better staffed today than at any time in its 88-year history” (Department of Homeland Security n.d.) increasing from 9,100 to 18,500 agents since 2001. Between 2005 and 2012, BESTs opened over 7,500 cases, made over 9,000 criminal and over 6,000 administrative arrests, and seized hundreds of thousands of pounds of drugs and ammunition (U.S. Congress 2012a, 44-45). The BEST concept is the most effective interagency model in the current counter-smuggling effort along the land border. Congress also increased personnel along the border by activating the National Guard. The National Guard, paid by the federal government but controlled by individual states, filled gaps along the border under its homeland defense authority (Mason, 2013, 2).

Increased resources, especially enhanced technology, paid dividends along the SWB. DOD technology and resources returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq serve as force-multipliers along the border. Designed to track Taliban fighters, the

Vehicle Dismount and Exploitation Radar (VADER) is “sharp enough to detect and track individuals on foot from a Predator [drone] five miles overhead.” It is not effective “near border towns and areas where migrants and smugglers can quickly load into a car and blend in with traffic” (Bennett 2013) but it provides important situational awareness along the remote parts of the border. In a November 2013 hearing, CHS-BMS called on all relevant agencies to increase resources along the border (U.S. Congress 2013c). But, some experts argue that the resources simply create a “resource-heavy approach” (Chen and Kim 2013, 1) without an appropriate goal. Chen and Kim (2013), for example, question how many resources are actually necessary to meet the security needs. A cost-effective approach that is sustainable and adaptive to changing threats is important because surges in resources “create a balloon effect, where a surge in one area just displaces the flow of drugs and migrants” (U.S. Congress 2012b, 1).

A “Squeeze of the Balloon”

Recently the smuggling threat along the California coastline dramatically increased. This trend is similar to the response to counter-smuggling efforts in the Caribbean in which smugglers not only changed tactics but also shifted smuggling routes westward to the land border between Mexico and the United States. Just as in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico in the 1970s and 1980s, many techniques exist to smuggle contraband through the maritime domain into California. Smugglers use fishing vessels, pangas,² and recreational vessels that blend in with legitimate vessel traffic in busy harbors to smuggle narcotics and migrants into California. According to Chairwoman

2. “Pangas” are similar to the GFVs used in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. They have a low freeboard which makes the difficult to detect and are often outfitted with multiple engines and extra fuel tanks to make them more effective smuggling vessels.

Miller of CHS-BMS in a November 2013 hearing, “on average, there is now a known Panga event every four days, and of course, those are just the ones that we know about” (U.S. Congress 2013c). In the same hearing, Coast Guard Rear Admiral William Lee, testified that the USCG “patrols over 95,000 miles of coastline while exercising jurisdiction over 4.2 million square miles of ocean” and General Alles of CBP testified that “1,728 enforcement and support personnel” work with CBP’s Office of Air and Marine interdiction (OAM) (U.S. Congress 2013c). While the number of OAM personnel represents an increase over the past several years, compared to the personnel along the land borders, it comprises an especially small force responsible for a vast geographical area. It is therefore no surprise that smuggling events are becoming more common in the maritime domain.

Unlike the smuggling shift to the land border, an increase in national attention has not yet accompanied the SWMB threat. Maritime operations such as the USCG’s Operation Baja Tempestad and CBP’s Operation Blue Tempest address the threat along the California coastline (U.S. Congress 2013b). Baja Tempestad and Blue Tempest are not, however, the comprehensive multi-agency operations of the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, resources are only slowly becoming available in the maritime domain. While the continued emphasis on the land border leads to increased resources and security along the maritime border, the tactics and procedures necessary to patrol the two regions are different. To a limited extent, resources are interchangeable; for example, the BESTs operate effectively in the maritime domain. Implementing other programs such as the use of enhanced technology and sensors however, presents different challenges in the maritime domain than it does over land.

Along the land border, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) provide awareness to USBP and CBP agents. The Predator drone mounted with special surveillance radar, for example, provides important awareness to border security agents (Norris 2010, 54). Along the maritime border, however, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has stringent safety regulations placed on unmanned aircraft and the large number of airports along the California coast creates significant commercial air traffic in the area (U.S. Congress 2013c). When the FAA's safety concerns are satisfied, UAVs along the maritime border can provide great awareness, frequently referred to as maritime domain awareness (MDA). UAV's cannot, however, provide a way to stop the smuggling action or enforce the law. Rear Admiral Lee stated in testimony before CHS-BMS that "all the MDA in the world will be of little use unless we have an endgame in place" (U.S. Congress 2013c). Combining resources and working together, therefore, is especially important to address the variety of threats along the border.

The Terrorist Threat

While smuggling concerns most often relate to narcotics or illegal immigration, the threat expands also to terrorism. The Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management (CHS-OIM) prepared a report which states "experts believe the Southwest border has now become the greatest threat of terrorist infiltration into the United States" (U.S. Congress 2012a, 4). The CHS-OIM report discusses the growing terrorist concern in the Tri-Border Area – the intersection of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil – and the increase in activity by Hezbollah and other Islamic extremists in the region. Specifically, the report outlines three incidents of concern: the smuggling of Said Jaziri into the United States, the Ahmed

Dhakane Human Smuggling Operation, and the Anthony Joseph Tracy Human Smuggling Operation. Said Jaziri is an Islamic extremist who was smuggled into the United States from Tijuana in the trunk of a car. The Ahmed Dhakane Human Smuggling Operation was a large scale operation that smuggled Somalis associated with Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (AIAI), an Islamist militant group, into the United States. Similarly, the Anthony Joseph Tracy Human Smuggling Operation assisted Somali extremists in entering the United States through Mexico (U.S. Congress 2012a, 5-8). The terrorist threat from porous borders must not be ignored and any efforts to secure the border must not focus solely upon interdicting narcotics and illegal immigrants.

Appreciation of the Threat

The threat of terrorism brought attention to the highly publicized security gaps along the land border. Congress proposed bills to increase the security of the border and policymakers tend to agree that border security presents a national security challenge. *The Border Security Enforcement Act of 2011* and the ten-point plan proposed by Senators McCain and Kyl to secure the border, however, make no reference to the maritime domain (McCain 2011). More recently, the *Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act* introduced by Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) and passed by the Senate in 2013, also overlooks the maritime domain. While the bill was not passed into law, its failure to address the maritime domain demonstrates the lack of appreciation for maritime smuggling as a border security threat (U.S. Congress 2013d).

The *Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act* also demonstrates the political aspects of the border security debate. As the title of the

act suggests, the physical security of the border is only a part of the legislation. Of greater political concern are immigration reform and the violence and economic impacts associated with illegal immigration. There is significant pressure in Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform, which would potentially mitigate many of the threats along the border. President Obama's immigration plan, as outlined on the official White House website, would "[build] a smart, effective immigration system that continues efforts to secure [U.S.] borders" (Obama 2013). While the immigration discussion is a social policy matter and does not relate directly to the border security measures discussed in this paper, its importance demonstrates that border security without a social policy focus will not likely have the political support to succeed. As discussed by Gorman and Krongard (2005), 'jointness' throughout the government requires the support and political capital of high-ranking members of the government. Whether or not that support exists determines the success of any potential policy reform.

Interagency Reform

Strategically, the multiple agencies protecting the border are not integrated in the many aspects of their operations. To a limited extent, task forces like the BESTs are successfully integrated with various federal, state, local, and tribal agencies that have border security functions. According to the ONDCP Office of Public Affairs (n.d.),

BEST teams incorporate personnel from [Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE)], CBP, and the U.S. Coast Guard within DHS; the [Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)], Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and U.S. Attorney's Offices with the Department of Justice; as well as other key federal state, local, and foreign law enforcement agencies to leverage federal, state, local, tribal, and foreign law enforcement resources to combat transnational crime.

Other officers and agents working within these same agencies, but not specifically detailed to a BEST, however do not have formal interagency contacts. In 2013, the ONDCP released the *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*, which instructs federal law enforcement agencies to create a “whole-of-government approach” (2013, 25) to secure America’s borders. After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, establishing interagency coordination became a frequent charge to government agencies. The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (2004) reviewed the failures that led to the terrorist attacks. The commission found significant failures of coordination and information sharing, primarily within the Intelligence Community. The Intelligence Community underwent substantial reform to increase collaboration but the reform was limited to the intelligence function of government. Overcoming interagency obstacles however, became important for every agency and is a primary objective of DHS (Department of Homeland Security 2011, 48). Thus far, however, the successes in integrating various agencies came only through small task forces and therefore leave the majority of employees within border security agencies unable to effectively liaise with others.

Overarching interagency cooperation, however, is not without precedent. In the 1980s, the Department of Defense underwent significant change with the passing of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Among the aspects of this act were specific mandates that forced cooperation and joint doctrine between the military services; the law required joint duty assignments and established joint combatant commands (Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986). While similar legislation, such as the *Interagency Personnel Rotation Act of 2011*, was considered to “create a new generation of joint security thinkers” (Biesecker 2011),

no legislation was passed. In a discussion of interagency legislation, Martin Gorman and Alexander Krongard state that a “government-wide Goldwater-Nichols Act that relies on the lead agency concept would most likely fail in the absence of ‘joint’ organizations throughout the Federal Government” (2005, 51-52); the authors claim that such a change requires “high ranking government officials dedicated to jointness.” Gorman and Krongard do not rule out a piecemeal approach to interagency reform but claim that the 9/11 Commission recommendations were not effective because they were too focused upon the Intelligence Community and not the overarching interagency process. JIATF-South, on the other hand, “provides a model of an interagency construct that fuses military, law enforcement, and intelligence operations into a unified organization under one leader” (Gorman and Krongard 2005, 55). By creating reform through the mission as a whole and not within each individual mission requirement, interagency reform is achievable.

What is Missing?

Because border security is an important aspect of national security, a plethora of ideas on how to secure the border are frequently discussed. The President, the DHS, and various members of Congress and Congressional committees show significant interest in securing the border between the United States and Mexico; but, what is missing is a thorough discussion of the maritime domain. Legislatively, CHS-BMS recently expressed concern about the maritime threat but made no significant progress toward better securing the hundreds of miles of exposed coastline. The need to create better interagency working relationships and professional cooperation is essentially a strategy

without a plan. The SWMB lacks the attention and the interagency reform necessary to effectively secure the border.

As shown in the preceding paragraphs, a lot of information exists about the border threat and there are many promising ideas to combat the threat. Still needed, however, is a comprehensive collaboration of these various discussions. The existing research and national security plans that provide strategies to combat the land border do not directly transfer to the maritime domain. Even tactics such as the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, which could presumably be utilized over land and maritime smuggling routes, present unique concerns when used in the maritime domain. Existing interagency organizations like JIATF-South are also not sufficient to protect the hundreds of miles of exposed coastline.

The existing literature simply does not yet go far enough. This thesis draws upon past interagency and border successes and adapts them to fit a changing threat environment. First, the analysis of the changing smuggling trends and threats begins the discussion of a need for updated tactics and policies. Even in this unclassified forum, the analysis of smuggling trends indicates a reasonable threat that must receive national attention and establishes the importance of tailoring lessons learned from previous interagency successes to border security agencies along the SWMB. No current literature exists on comprehensive and effective interagency reform designed specifically for agencies along the SWMB. This thesis therefore helps fill this important gap in literature and increase discussion on this important aspect of America's national security.

CHAPTER III

Research Framework and Methodology

Federal agencies will continue to place particular emphasis on enhancing and expanding partnerships with each other and with state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies.

-- Barack Obama, *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*

Framing the Research

This is a qualitative study of public documents, congressional hearings, and a review of literature and case studies on the history of border security and evolution of smuggling and counter-smuggling in recent decades. Comparing historical border threats with the evolving threat along the California coastline provides a framework from which to view the current border situation. While the lessons and best practices learned in previous operations and reforms do not universally transfer to the California coastline, they provide a good starting point to address maritime smuggling and to create a framework for potential interagency reform along the maritime border.

The first step in developing this framework is exploring the importance of the SWMB threat and the factors necessary to cultivate a greater appreciation of the threat. The second step is gaining insight into a working collaborative counter-smuggling organization through analysis of the structure and effectiveness of JIATF-South. Finally, an analysis of the Goldwater-Nichols DOD reform provides a framework around which to develop a new model for maritime border security. This thesis examines the factors that led to the success of both the Goldwater-Nichols reform and JIATF-South against the

historical and current contexts of border security, specifically along the California coastline, to propose a forward-looking solution.

Without a proposed interagency solution, this thesis simply identifies a problem. However, by adapting previous successes to the current threat, this thesis also proposes a possible interagency solution. The factors that led to the success of both JIATF-South and the Goldwater-Nichols Act are used to identify what is needed for a new interagency organization to succeed. Based upon the JIATF-South and Goldwater-Nichols frameworks, the proposed interagency solution stems from a historical basis, which enhances its legitimacy and its probability of success.

Hypothesis and Variables

This thesis takes a qualitative and exploratory approach to the California maritime border threat. The threat is explored through the hypothesis: through a greater appreciation of the maritime threat, an interagency organization tailored from JIATF-South and the Goldwater-Nichols Act will improve the effectiveness of border security efforts along the SWMB. This hypothesis breaks the discussion into two independent factors, or variables, which influence border security.

The dependent variable in the study is border security, which is a difficult term to define. For many years, DHS defined border security in terms of operational or physical control of the border. The term “operational control” stems from section two of the *Secure Fence Act of 2006*, which defines it as “the prevention of all unlawful entries into the United States.” As of 2011, however, the United States no longer uses the term “operational control” in part because it implies that it is possible to secure one hundred percent of the border (Rosenblum 2012, 23). Rather than defining security as

“operational control,” this thesis discusses border security through the concept of “situational awareness.” The Committee on Homeland Security (CHS) presented the “situational awareness” concept in the proposed *Border Security Results Act of 2013*, H.R. 1417 (U.S. Congress 2013a). Defining border security in terms of situational awareness creates a measurable variable and provides insight into how to best use border security resources. It also does not limit the definition of border security to narcotics or illegal immigration but evaluates the totality of illegal border incidents. While the use of situational awareness as a measure of border security does not currently extend to the maritime border, the concept of awareness is as equally relevant to the maritime domain as it is to the land border.

This thesis examines two independent variables to evaluate border security. The first variable is the appreciation of the maritime threat. This variable is addressed through an examination of the views of the general national security community as well as through political interest. These factors are vital because they are necessary to create change; without an appreciation of the SWMB, political capital will not be spent on securing the threat. The second variable is interagency coordination; evaluating interagency coordination through the lens of JIATF-South and the lessons learned from the Goldwater-Nichols Act addresses the feasibility and significance of interagency reform.

National Visibility of the Threat

An overview of the history of smuggling and a thorough discussion of the current border security situation set the stage to analyze the first variable – the appreciation of the threat – by establishing the threat and the importance it plays in the overall national

security picture. This overview provides insight into the challenges that must first be overcome before any actual reform or legislative changes can be appropriately applied. In the 1990s and 2000s, trends indicated a smuggling shift from the southern maritime border (Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico) to the Mexico – U.S. land border. While the primary shift in smuggling has not moved to the SWMB, there are indicators that a significant shift to the SWMB may lay in the future. An appreciation of the overall threat and an acknowledgement of the difficulties in the maritime domain will allow the national security community to make informed policy decisions. Whether the SWMB threat is of sufficient concern to the national security of the nation will remain debatable but policy must be guided by a clear presentation of the threat. The analysis of the appreciation and visibility of the SWMB threat provides an otherwise unpublished viewpoint that the threat exists and must be proactively addressed.

An Interagency Solution

Simply acknowledging and analyzing the SWMB threat are not helpful to those charged to counter the threat. Using the precedents of JIATF-South and the Goldwater-Nichols Act, however, provides a solid foundation from which to view the second independent variable, interagency coordination along the SWMB. The current border security enhancement strategy, which revolves around increasing resources, is not sufficient to combat the threat. Providing money, personnel, equipment, and various other resources will likely increase security, but will not go far enough. A comprehensive strategy that coordinates the increased resources and optimizes capabilities however provides a lens through which to view a border security solution.

Successful coordination, however, requires addressing the many facets of this interagency lens.

Any solution must optimize the available resources and streamline interagency procedures. If left to their own devices, agencies will fight to retain their autonomy and mission sets. Agencies view any influence to share their mission or their expertise as an attempt to lessen the power and influence of the agency itself. Any model that seeks to streamline resources and the interagency structure must overcome this organizational nature; the model must therefore be accompanied by legislation. Interagency reform is an oft-cited solution to many government-wide problems but is not often implemented; when it is implemented, such as at the direction of the 9/11 Commission, it is not comprehensive enough to have the desired effects (Gormon and Krongard 2005, 54). This thesis, therefore, establishes an interagency model gleaned from JIATF-South, grounded in the successes of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, and implemented throughout the range of mission sets required to combat the threat.

Limitations

As with any exploratory study, this thesis is bounded by the unknown. First, this thesis develops a solution to combat a threat that is not fully in existence. While a significant increase in smuggling is visible along the California coastline, the extent to which that threat fully develops is unknown. Similarly unknown is what the threat will look like if and when it does develop. The threat is currently identified in pangas, recreational boats, and fishing vessels. The threat can easily change, however, to the mother ships of the 1970s and 1980s, the SPSSs of the 1990s and 2000s, the fully submersible submarine being used today, or a completely new maritime threat. Because

the threat is constantly evolving and it is smugglers – and not the authorities – which initiate changes, the United States will always be in a reactive role in border security efforts. While this is a limitation to the study, it is also indicative of why extensive reform is necessary. Enhanced interagency coordination ensures agencies are better prepared to respond to the evolving threats.

This thesis is also limited to unclassified and open source information. While much is known about border smuggling in an unclassified forum, smuggling along the SWB and SWMB is a current law enforcement problem and not all of the relevant information is available in the public domain. This limitation does not impact the validity of this thesis because the study does not focus on specific law enforcement operations. The thesis draws conclusions from successful interagency designs, Congressional discussions, and high-level border security policy decisions. While classified or law enforcement sensitive information is important to fully understand the threat and what is being done to counter it, the first step to combating this threat is general acknowledgement and the political willingness to compel and fund the changes necessary to keep the border secure.

CHAPTER IV

The SWMB Threat

The U.S. maritime border is vast and very challenging. The Coast Guard's fleet patrols over 95,000 miles of coastline, while exercising jurisdiction over 4.2 million square miles of ocean.

--William Lee, *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security*

The requirements of border security evolve constantly. Smuggling is, and always has been, lucrative and people will always pay for forbidden products or for entry into a forbidden place. The drug trade itself is a multi-billion dollar venture and the demand for drugs of all types in the United States is high. Because smuggling is so profitable, smugglers have the upper hand. The resources expended by the United States to counter smuggling operations do not create revenue for the nation. This does not diminish the importance of the counter-smuggling operations; the security of the nation is arguably the most important role of the federal government. The government, however, does not have unlimited money and resources to counter the wealthy and prosperous DTOs that bring people and contraband across the borders illegally.

Smugglers expand their operations through significant and replenishing resources. If, for example, a smuggler spends millions of dollars on a new vessel to smuggle contraband into the United States, the money is simply an investment and might pay dividends to the smuggling enterprise. If the United States, however, spends millions of dollars on a specific counter-smuggling technique, the smuggler will likely change tactics and render the government's investment obsolete. It is thus important for the government

to proactively acknowledge indicators of change and leverage its resources to prepare for the future.

Squeezing the Balloon

As previously discussed, the history of smuggling is long and varied. In America's infancy, smuggling was used as a way to avoid paying taxes. In fact, smuggling was such a significant problem that Alexander Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, commissioned the Revenue Cutter Service – what is now the modern day Coast Guard – to combat smuggling along the coastline and at the entries to seaports. During the Prohibition, smuggling alcohol was prevalent in both the maritime domain and throughout the nation. In the 1970s, drug smuggling began to pose a threat to the United States. In the post-9/11 setting, the threat of terrorists smuggling people or weapons across the border concerns the nation. Smugglers continue to skirt around taxes and bring drugs and people undetected into the United States but the threat is evolving. As long as there is demand for something to be smuggled, the border will not be completely secure.

While smuggling in the United States goes back centuries, the threats along the SWB are relatively new. Drug smuggling from South and Central America began in earnest in the 1970s. Throughout the next several decades, the United States made significant organizational and operational changes to address the illegal drug threat plaguing the nation. In the 1980s, President Reagan made the “war against drugs” an important part of his administration's agenda and dedicated significant national resources to stop the flow of narcotics coming through the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico onto American shores. By 1989, major maritime smuggling slowed dramatically. In fact,

according to Fuss (1995, 280), “by the end of 1990, as much as 70 percent of the coke entering the United States was coming across our Mexican border.” The large-scale maritime counter-smuggling operations, coordinated between the various agencies by the NNBIS, stemmed the tide of the maritime threat.

The demand for narcotics, however, continued unabated. With maritime smuggling routes no longer available, smugglers shifted their efforts to Mexico. To border security experts, this concept became known as “squeezing the balloon.” Friesendorf (2005, 35) provides a description of the concept in a discussion of the cocaine and heroin industry in South America;

it has become a truism in drug policy research that the illicit cocaine and heroin industry resembles a balloon filled with air or water. If this ‘balloon’ is squeezed by law enforcement, the air or water, i.e. the coca or opium poppy fields, cocaine and heroin production sites, and trafficking routes, simply shift elsewhere.

As the balloon squeezed along the maritime border, Mexico offered a prime staging ground to prepare narcotics to cross along the land border into the United States. Consisting of thousands of miles, much of which is uninhabited due in part to its treacherous terrain, the land border was a vulnerable point in America’s borders. DTOs implemented a range of techniques to smuggle contraband. In some cases, illicit cargo was hidden in vehicles and on people and processed through border control checkpoints. In other cases, however, smuggling took place between these checkpoints. DTOs dug and controlled elaborate tunnels, established smuggling routes through desolate regions, and trained their members in paramilitary tactics and techniques (Durbin 2013, 21-25). Smuggling along the land border increased and its impacts became of national concern. Drugs became more available, violence increased, and local economies were impacted by

an influx of illegal immigrants. By the late 1990s and early 2000s the border security focus centered on the two thousand miles of land between the United States and Mexico.

With federal attention focused on the land border, resources and support for agencies along the SWB increased. According to DHS (n.d.), the USBP is “better staffed today than at any time in its 88-year history.” The federal government also funded and established various other programs to strengthen the border. The El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), for example, is now the intelligence fusion center for all border security intelligence collected between the disparate border security agencies (Office of Public Affairs 2013). So much success has been made that in 2011, Secretary of Homeland Security Napolitano stated, “the border is better now than it ever has been” (Condon 2011). While the actual security level of the SWB is still a very debated topic, the significant border security success along the land border is an indicator that smuggling routes may shift again in the near future.

In fact since 2008, smuggling events increased dramatically along California’s maritime border. Smugglers use pangas to move contraband up the coast. Pangas are very stable open-construction boats that sit low in the water, are very difficult to detect and are often outfitted with several powerful outboard engines to increase their speed and distance. In 2008, the maritime smuggling threat existed mostly along the San Diego coastline just north of the border. By 2009, however, pangas made longer voyages working their way into Orange and Los Angeles Counties. By fiscal year 2010, “a total of 121 boats were intercepted in San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara counties” and only two years later in fiscal year 2012, “ a total of 210 such events took place in all the counties listed above plus Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties”

(Lambert 2012). Table 1 shows the increase in known smuggling incidents across the entire SWMB and the percentage increase each fiscal year. This demonstrates a “fourfold” increase between 2008 and 2012 (Lovett 2012) and the numbers continue to rise. The increase in the number of pangas found in northern counties and further offshore, also indicates that maritime smuggling is not just a Southern California concern. The entire California coastline is vulnerable.

Table 1. Known SWMB smuggling incidents by fiscal year since fiscal 2008

| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Number of known smuggling incidents | 45 | 70 | 121 | 183 | 210 | 243 |
| % increase vs. previous year | | 56% | 73% | 51% | 15% | 16% |

Source: Data from Fountain 2012; Lambert 2012; Lovett 2012; Perera 2013; Potter 2012.

Although it has not yet become the primary smuggling threat along the SWB, the maritime threat is expanding. Even with the increase in maritime smuggling, coastal border sectors account for a much smaller amount of smuggling than the land border (United States Border patrol n.d.). DTOs continue to exploit the vulnerabilities of the land border and will likely continue to do so as long as their tactics remain effective. The increase in smuggling along the coastline, however, indicates that the maritime domain provides smugglers with a working back-up plan. To ensure the security of America’s borders, border security agencies must expand their abilities to combat the current maritime threat and be prepared to deal with increased maritime smuggling if and when the threat shifts from the land border.

Bringing Attention to the Threat

While maritime smuggling still comprises only a small fraction of total border smuggling, recent factors brought the maritime threat to national attention. In December 2012, smugglers killed a law enforcement officer while he conducted maritime border

security operations along the California coast. As the year drew to a tragic close, the maritime smuggling threat made headlines beyond the local Southern and Central California news outlets in national newspapers such as the New York Times (Lovett 2012). As the national media began to see the problem, so too did national level policymakers. CHS-BMS, the primary congressional subcommittee on border and maritime security, held a hearing in November 2013 titled *What Does a Secure Maritime Border Look Like?* (U.S. Congress 2013c). The federal government and decision makers in general, however, still have not recognized the role that maritime smuggling plays in the overall border security threat.

As evidence of successful smuggling events and sightings of possible smuggling vessels increase, local authorities lobby the federal government for greater support and resources to combat the threat. In San Luis Obispo County, maritime smuggling is only recently becoming prevalent. A recent article by the local newspaper, however, expresses the plight of the local sheriff in combating the threat.

Searching for pangas is painstaking, time-consuming work. Sheriff Ian Parkinson asked for federal assistance about a year ago, and the department received a federal grant that it has used to increase coastal patrols in search of panga boats. However, that funding doesn't begin to cover the expenses of patrolling the county's long coastline, much of it in remote areas that are difficult to access, Parkinson said last month. So he's pushing for more money to help stem the tide. (Tanner 2013)

San Diego County, on the other hand, was at the forefront of maritime smuggling into California and has dealt with the expanding threat for several years. The San Diego County Sheriff Department, however, is quoted as saying that "financing from a federal grant that had helped [the] department apprehend maritime smugglers had been cut every year since 2009. And those shrinking finances must be shared with more and more

counties” (Lovett 2012). The federal government provides grants to help local agencies keep the border secure, but the limited resources provided are not coordinated efficiently between the various regions and agencies. The smuggling threat transcends county lines and borders and so too must the response to the threat.

The Importance of the Maritime Domain

The maritime domain is extremely important to border security yet is often overlooked. Perhaps this is because coastal borders do not connect directly to foreign territory. It is easy to imagine a person walking across a land border but much less obvious that they might set out in a boat and travel hundreds of miles when the land border is so readily exploitable. The maritime border is, however, quite vulnerable and easily exploited. As the land border becomes more secure and contraband is squeezed westward, the coastline will likely continue to become a primary avenue for smuggling between Mexico and the United States.

The federal government expends billions of dollars and a vast amount of resources to secure the SWB. Funneling resources to the land border is reasonable because the land border accounts for the majority of smuggling activity into the United States from South and Central America. Even if border security efforts secured one hundred percent of the land border, a physically unattainable goal, DTOs and terrorists looking to smuggle contraband into the United States would still pose a threat because the Pacific Ocean offers alternate smuggling routes. Security along the land border, therefore, is for naught without security along the maritime border.

Less protected than the land border, the maritime border draws significantly less national attention but brings with it significant challenges for both smugglers and border

security agencies. The vastness of the Pacific Ocean is daunting for both sides. Maritime smuggling routes along the California coastline exist within over a hundred thousand square miles of ocean. Compared to the two thousand miles of land border between the United States and Mexico, this area presents enormous challenges. The physical coastline between the border and San Francisco is only slightly over 500 miles but the thousands of miles of unpatrolled open-ocean provide ample opportunity for a smuggling vessel to rendezvous with an apparently legitimate vessel, which can enter port without suspicion. The importance and the challenges of the maritime threat along the California border therefore must not be ignored.

The Current Strategy and Need for Reform

Many members of the United States Congress, which appropriates funds for all federal agencies, consider border security a high priority national topic. In local border communities, smuggling causes increased crime rates and economic impacts from illegal immigration. The nation as a whole feels these effects but the local communities and congressional districts along the border are hit the worst. The severity of these issues brings the border security spotlight to these communities and with the spotlight comes the attention and resources of the nation.

Senator McCain felt so strongly about border security that he attempted to delay the confirmation of Jeh Johnson as Secretary of Homeland Security until he was confident that his concerns about the border would be addressed after Johnson was confirmed (U.S. Congress 2013d). Senator Schumer from New York felt strongly enough about the situation along the SWB to introduce new legislation, which would send billions of dollars to border security agencies (U.S. Congress 2013d). CHS, the

primary committee for border security in the House of Representatives, also stressed the importance of sending resources to combat the border security threat (U.S. Congress 2013c). What is missing, besides allocating resources in the maritime domain, is a plan in which to effectively implement and coordinate the various resources provided.

One of the biggest influxes of resources is the refitting of DOD technologies for use along the SWB. As DOD resources return from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, some are allocated for border security operations. The predator drone with its VADER technology, for example, is very successful along the SWB (Bennett 2013). Despite their usefulness, however, resources are distributed without a system to control and optimize the utility of each resource. An integrated task force would provide the necessary insight and coordination through direct knowledge of the threats, agency relationships, and border security operations.

On a small scale, interagency coordinating bodies exist along the SWB. BESTs, for example, combine agents from all of the border security agencies. The BEST concept is perhaps the most effective interagency border security model in use; however, it exists only at a small and insufficient scale. Interagency cooperation requires more than creating task forces of agents that can work together at the operational level. To establish an effective level of joint coordination requires support from each of the disparate agencies. A border security agent on patrol should have a coordinating organization to contact should he or she require assistance. That coordinating organization must then coordinate the best asset available at the time, regardless of agency, to respond to the threat. It is this coordinated approach that will help the United States defend against the smuggling threat.

Protecting U.S. borders is by definition a defensive operation. Border security agencies must use intelligence and enforcement capabilities to identify and prepare for future threats but it is naïve to believe that every threat to the border can be prevented. Some offensive operations can combat border security threats but the simple fact is that the borders will always need protection against external, and often unknown, threats. Because such threats are inevitable, border security operations must be sustainable. In its current state, the huge influx of resources and personnel to the SWB is not sustainable. While more resources are still necessary, there must be a plan in place to optimize those resources to ensure that they are being effectively and appropriately integrated and used for the good of the nation. Previous successful interagency reforms help derive the principles of such a plan.

CHAPTER V

Evaluating the Joint Interagency Task Force

The JIATF – South experience justifies several observations. First, the United States *can* do interagency, or whole-of-government, operations.

--Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, *Joint Interagency Task Force – South*

Exploring JIATF

The JIATF structure evolved from the interagency successes of counternarcotics missions beginning with the implementation of the South Florida Task Force (SFTF) created by President Reagan and overseen by Vice President Bush. In the early 1980s, the SFTF gave way to the newly created NNBIS, which “brought direction and staff necessary to organize and implement sustained offensive operations against international drug traffickers” (Fuss 1995, 121). The NNBIS coordinated counternarcotics forces until 1989 when the National Defense Authorization Act designated DOD as “the lead agency for detection and monitoring” (Fuss 1995, 234) of smuggling vessels. DOD’s new legislative mandate changed the course of interagency coordination with the establishment of three JTFs – JTF-4 in Key West, JTF-5 in Alameda, and JTF-6 in El Paso. In part because they were adapted to the Navy’s established Joint Task Force model, DOD played a central role in the new coordination effort.

Coordination, however, is not as simple as combining agencies. The agencies must align in all aspects of policy and operations. Even the missions of the disparate agencies, such as those involved in countering narcotics, do not always align. “DOD wants to terminate its involvement as soon after detection as possible” while “law enforcement [agencies] want to see where drugs go and who is involved” to better

dismantle entire drug smuggling enterprises (Munsing and Lamb 2011, 13). This incongruence in mission led to disagreement in operational tactics and a loss of trust between agencies. The NNBIS did eventually establish interagency trust, but it had to be completely rebuilt under the new JTF structure. Because of the increased support and resources that DOD brought to the drug war trust and cooperation slowly returned (Munsing and Lamb 2011). Counternarcotics coordination, however, quickly evolved again.

In the Clinton administration, the national attention on the drug war waned. A 1993 National Security Council counterdrug review “led it to conclude that the drug war should be fought closer to the source countries” (Munsing and Lamb 2011, 16). With this advice in hand, President Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive 14 (PDD-14) shifting counternarcotics efforts further from American shores. PDD-14 also led to Executive Order 12880 which strengthened the ONDCP by providing it oversight responsibility for all international counternarcotics policy. With this new responsibility, the ONDCP released the first Interdiction Command and Control Plan, which transformed the three JTFs into new Joint Interagency Task Forces (Munsing and Lamb 2011). Similar to when the JTFs were created, the JIATFs lacked the trust and resources that had been slowly cultivated by their predecessors. To succeed, the JIATFs would have to cultivate an organizational culture conducive to creating interagency trust and cooperation.

Over the next several years, the JIATFs struggled to effectively enhance their organizational effectiveness. In 1999, JIATF-South, which was established in Panama, merged with JIATF-East – previously JTF-4 in Key West – when the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) left Panama (Munsing and Lamb 2011, 22). The interagency counternarcotics organization now revolved around two

coordinating bodies, JIATF-South and JIATF-West. In 2004, JIATF-West relocated to Honolulu to align with the DOD United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) unified command, which shares its area of operations (AOR). This relocation also moved JIATF-West to the center of the Pacific and the middle of the Asia-Pacific threats that consumed its resources. JIATF-South remained responsible for the narcotics smuggling from South and Central America.

Smuggling from South and Central America presents the majority of the SWB and SWMB threats. Since the maritime marijuana smuggling era of the 1970s and 1980s, DTOs have capitalized on the demand for other drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamines. Not only are these drugs dangerous to United States citizens but violent crime is also associated with drug trafficking; counternarcotics is therefore a dramatically important national security function. JIATF-South plays an important role in fulfilling that function. Donna Miles (2012) quoted USCG Rear Admiral Charles Michel, stating that JIATF-South is “the most effective and efficient counter-illicit trafficking, detection, monitoring and law enforcement organization the planet has ever known.” These are proud words from the previous director of the organization and they are not without merit. JIATF-South is frequently hailed as one of America’s best interagency organizational successes. Unfortunately, while the United States government frequently calls for greater interagency and “whole-of-government” approaches to security problems, few efforts are made to implement the lessons from JIATF-South to other areas of national security.

Lessons from JIATF-South

The success of JIATF-South is not due to any single factor. In a comprehensive evaluation of JIATF-South, Munsing and Lamb (2011) outline ten variables that lead to the organization’s success. These variables are split into three

levels: organization variables, team variables, and individual variables. All three categories are essential to implementing successful interagency coordination. In order for JIATF-South as an organization to succeed, each individual agency or team must succeed. Similarly, for an agency to succeed, its individuals must succeed.

Conversely, the individual relies upon the support of a successful agency, which relies upon the support of the organization as a whole. If any of the levels fail, the overall coordination effort suffers.

From an organizational perspective, Munsing and Lamb (2011) develop three variables leading to JIATF's success: purpose, empowerment, and support. Well-defined goals are essential to any organization. "A strong sense of purpose unifies a team and provides direction" (Munsing and Lamb 2011, 34) but purpose is more than a defining mission statement. The organization as well as each of its agencies and individual members must internalize the organization's purpose or mission. Once a commonly defined mission is accepted by all of its members, the organization must empower its agencies to complete the shared goals. JIATF-South empowers its agencies in various ways. First, agencies retain administrative and operational control over any assets assigned to the JIATF. JIATF-South also works without written agreements between agencies. These factors empower the agencies to work toward a commonly defined purpose without the micro-management that often accompanies coordinating tactics. Finally, the organization provides support to the individual teams and agencies. This support stems from legislative and executive support for the mission as well as more direct tactical and resource level support for individual operations. JIATF-South exists to support and coordinate agencies and their resources and does not take credit for their individual successes. These organizational

factors garner trust and cooperation from the agencies and individuals that compose JIATF-South.

Four of Munsing and Lamb's (2011) variables relate to the success of the team: structure, decision-making, culture, and learning. JIATF-South's structure is organized by function such as intelligence or operations and is led by a small command. Because the command is limited in size, decisions are made at various levels in the organization. Joint directorates, for example, create daily plans that account for and optimize the day's available resources. These plans are reviewed and approved by the organizational leaders. Once the plan is approved, the watch supervisors are given decision-making authority. Spreading this authority not only empowers the various levels of the organization but also ensure that decisions are made quickly in tactical situations. The trust to delegate these decisions is an important part of JIATF-South's culture. Developing a shared culture is important to creating trust between agencies and to establishing a shared vision for the organization. A strong culture, however, can make new members feel out of place and overwhelmed. Continuous learning, therefore, is especially important. Agencies and individuals must learn from the experiences of others but also must have specific training, which prepares teams and members to work within the organization. To meet this objective, JIATF-South requires all new members attend a weeklong indoctrination class to ensure they are prepared for their responsibilities within the organization. Successfully bringing these members together, however, requires individual-specific factors.

The individual variables of JIATF-South are composition, rewards, and leadership (Munsing and Lamb 2011). The composition of the team is essential. Bringing together high-performing but diverse organizations and members provides

the team with increased insights and analytical ability. Rewarding teams and individuals ensures that high-performing individuals are willing to leave their own organizations to work or liaise with other agencies. Ensuring that joint assignments are highly regarded and attractive career opportunities goes a long way in rewarding individuals. Finally, the diversity of individuals also ensures that various types of leadership exist within the organization. Within JIATF-South, the different agencies provide different leadership styles. DOD, for example, typically provides a formal leadership model while civilian law enforcement agencies provide shared leadership to the organization. Thus, by diversifying the workforce, various other aspects of the organization are diversified, which helps create a joint atmosphere.

Tailoring JIATF-South to the SWMB

Examining these variables provides insight into how another organization can leverage its own interagency partnerships and create unity of effort within other areas of national security. JIATF-South's primary mission is to prevent cocaine from entering the United States by interdicting the contraband as far from the borders as possible. While preventing narcotics from entering the United States is an important aspect of border security, it is only a small part of what is needed along the SWMB. Border security also requires preventing other illicit contraband, weapons, or unauthorized persons from crossing the border. Along the SWMB, border security agencies also do not typically have the luxury of stopping smugglers hundreds of miles before they reach the border. The capabilities of JIATF-South, therefore, do not fully protect America's borders. Evaluating the performance variables of JIATF-South, however, provides a stepping-stone to create a whole-of-government approach along the SWMB.

Within the ten performance variables discussed by Munsing and Lamb (2011), two primary factors stand out as vitally important; these factors are trust and availability of resources. Trust is perhaps the hardest factor to establish because it must be earned at every level in the process. Trust must flow freely between the organization, the agency, the individual, partner nations, and everyone involved in operations. Without trust, agencies will not provide resources, individuals will not perform at their best, the organization will not empower its teams and employees, and the general system will fail. Not surprisingly, Rear Admiral Michel refers to trust as the number one requirement for JIATF-South (Miles 2012). Unfortunately, trust is a difficult attribute to establish and can be quickly lost. Munsing and Lamb (2011, 55) refer to trust as a “bubble” because it can be so quickly destroyed. It is especially difficult to establish trust within a large agency but in smaller groups, it can be established more quickly. For example, along the SWB, BESTs are the most effective interagency model. The BESTs consist of members from a number of agencies but are relatively small groups and thus trust grows quickly. What the BEST lacks, however, is extensive resources.

With its comprehensive interagency network, JIATF-South coordinates resources from various agencies and across several nations. All five armed services, the National Guard and reserves, various federal law enforcement agencies, the intelligence community and several partner nations provide personnel, information, or interdiction assets to JIATF-South. According to Rear Admiral Michel, however, the availability of resources is still one of the top two challenges for JIATF-South (Miles 2012). As a coordinating agency, JIATF-South does not have its own operational assets and must rely upon other agencies to provide resources. The success of JIATF-South, therefore, is its ability to coordinate other resources in such a way that other

agencies and nations actually want to participate. By adapting its structure, empowerment, culture, and rewards systems, JIATF-South is a successful organization that others want to assist.

Why Not Use an Established JIATF?

The current JIATF AOR is synchronized with the DOD unified command structure. JIATF-South, therefore works alongside USSOUTHCOM while JIATF-West operates in the USPACOM AOR. In the past, these respective AORs ensured continuity of command through various operations. As the smuggling threat moves to the SWMB, however, the threat splits between the two JIATFs. The 120-degree West longitudinal line separates the two AORs. Figure 1 shows the 120-degree West longitudinal line and its relationship with the maritime border between San Diego and San Francisco. This can create territorial issues between the two agencies. Robert Remsing (2003, 13-14) describes an operation skirting between the AORs of JIATF-East and JIATF-West, which had disastrous interagency results:

JIATF-East requested the JIATF-West ship to disengage and allow the Guatemalans to intercept the target. JIATF-West did not comply and proceeded with the intercept. As the target crossed the JIATF AOR boundary, the JIATF-West vessel intercepted first. JIATF-East requested a joint boarding, JIATF-West denied the request and effectively eliminat[ed] the Guatemalans [sic] role in the operation. The end result—while JIATF-West seized 2.4 metric tons of cocaine, the Guatemalans were quite angry over the incident and questioned the U.S. ability to keep to their agreements. Although the operation was a tactical success, it was a political failure and resulted in the Guatemalans withdrawing from joint counterdrug operations.

The fact that the primary smuggling routes along the SWMB straddle the AOR boundary, therefore, has the potential to cause significant confusion and frustration.

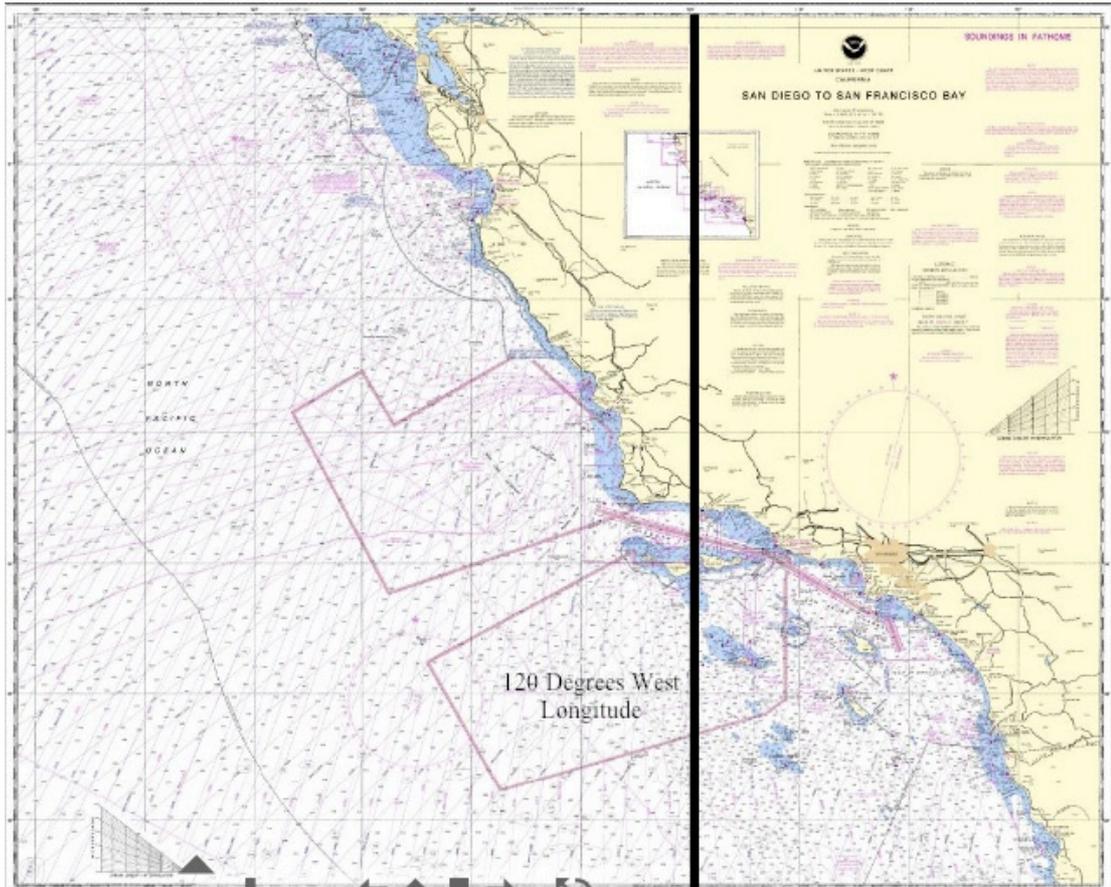


Figure 1. 120-degree West longitudinal line in the SWMB. *Source:* Adapted from Sausalito Yacht Club 2013

The obvious solution to this dilemma is to re-draw the demarcation line between the two organizations. Since the Central and South American threats and the majority of the SWMB AOR are within JIATF-South’s purview, it is logical to simply expand the JIATF-South AOR to account for the shifting smuggling trends. This is, however, a myopic fix. JIATF-West deals primarily with Asia-Pacific threats, which also extend along the California coastline; therefore, the geographic area logically remains in the purview of JIATF-West. Simply shifting the AOR does not adequately address the requirements of the new maritime threat.

As previously discussed, JIATF-South works off the premise that narcotics should be intercepted as far from America’s borders as possible. This is an important aspect of JIATF-South’s operations to note because it does not meet the mission requirements of border security. JIATF-South, therefore, is not the ideal agency to

secure the border. Assigning this increased responsibility to JIATF-South is a possible solution. Changing the ingrained purpose of the organization, however, would change the very nature of JIATF-South. It is possible that JIATF-South would rise to the occasion and seamlessly coordinate the resources along the SWMB; however, it would be taxing to the current mission. The better solution is to apply the lessons learned and variables presented by Munsing and Lamb to establish a similar organization along the SWMB with border security functions throughout the entire AOR.

CHAPTER VI

Goldwater-Nichols and the SWMB Model

Although the United States government's "interagency community" – including departments, independent agencies, and many other organizations – is one in which the power of a unified whole would be greater than the sum of its parts working separately, unifying the whole has been elusive.

--Sunil B. Desai, *Policy Review*

"Interagency coordination" is mandated in national strategies and by executive and legislative decision-makers. The concept is generally accepted as a requirement for federal agencies to optimize the use of national resources. In theory, federal agencies should be streamlined and effective. In practice, however, they are redundant and resistant to change. With only few exceptions, such as JIATF-South discussed in the previous chapter, the federal government has never come together in a way to optimize its limited resources. There are many explanations for why agencies fail to cooperate; limited funding, restricted authorities, incompatible operating procedures, and other factors make coordinating between agencies difficult and often frustrating (Bardach 1998). Agencies have always been resistant to change and the lack of interagency cooperation is not a new problem.

Goldwater-Nichols

Within DOD, the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines historically had difficulty overcoming the barriers between services. In 1986, however, Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Act. This act legislated change within DOD to facilitate better interagency cooperation. While the act made many changes to the department, two themes developed that can be used to focus collaboration of various other organizations. First, the act made structural changes, which streamlined

interagency coordination. Second, the act changed the culture of the military services. Individually, changes to structural or organizational culture might not have been enough to impact the well-established military services. But together, these changes dramatically increased the ability of the military services to work together toward their common mission.

When looking at ways to force interagency collaboration, the first solution is often to structurally align the disparate agencies to mandate cooperation. This approach, however, does not adequately enhance cooperation; structural change must be only a part of the solution. For DOD, the Goldwater-Nichols Act changed the command structure of the entire department by removing command authority from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and restructuring the individual combatant commands located around the world. As shown in Figure 2, DOD's unified commands are separated both by regional responsibility and by functional responsibility. The combatant commanders of the relevant commands report directly to the Secretary of Defense and not to their individual service chiefs. Importantly, each of these commands consists of members of each of the armed forces. Even the USCG, which is not a member of DOD, is incorporated into the unified command structure. Leadership within the unified commands is also split between the military services. For example, the USSOUTHCOM combatant commander is a Marine Corps general while the deputy commander is an Army general (U.S. Southern Command 2013).

Each unified command consists of individual joint directorates. Senior officers from all of the services as well as high-level civilians head the directorates (U.S. Southern Command 2013). This leadership is split between the services to ensure that each service is represented in the overall command. The directorates are established by function, which like JIATF-South coordinates personnel "based on the

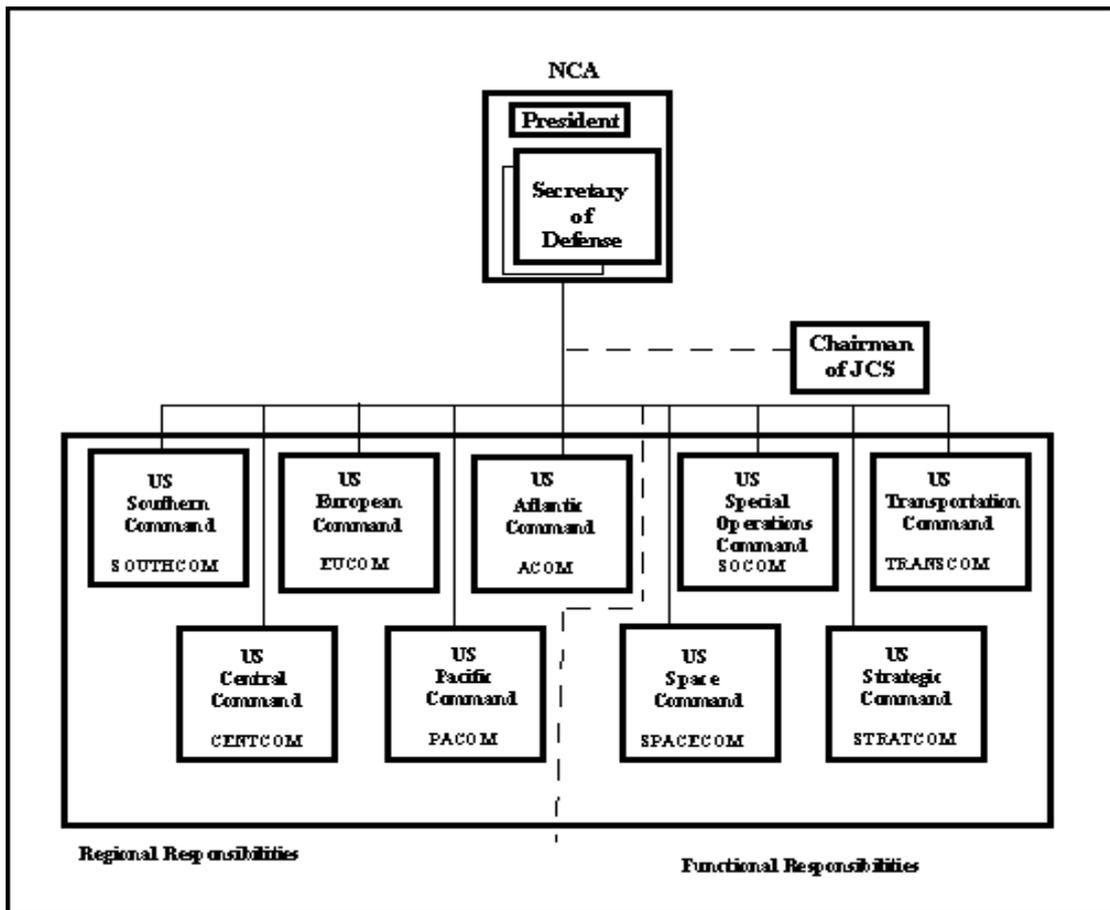


Figure 2. Post-Goldwater-Nichols DOD Unified Command Structure. *Source:* U.S. Department of the Army 1995.

similarity of tasks they perform (intelligence, operations, etc.)” (Munsing and Lamb 2011, 46). DOD’s post-Goldwater Nichols organizational structure provides an important model that should be emulated in future interagency endeavors.

Interagency reform, however, must also take into account the cultures of the agencies involved.

While it is impossible to legislate the culture of an organization, the Goldwater-Nichols Act encouraged “jointness” through a “joint officer personnel policy.” Perhaps the most recognized aspect of this policy is “joint duty assignment as [a] prerequisite for promotion to general or flag officer grade” (Goldwater Nichols Act). Not only does this policy reward individuals that serve in joint assignments but it also makes those assignments desirable to high performing and motivated military

officers. The previous perception of joint assignments was often that officers were assigned to joint assignments because they were expendable from their own services. After the Goldwater-Nichols Act, this was no longer true. The legislation ensured that – as much as is possible through legislation – joint assignments were valued and seen as career enhancing opportunities.

The Need for a Model

DOD's evolution into a better-organized and coordinated department did not happen overnight. The need for a coordinated department and the well-crafted legislation drove the change and forced a structure that encouraged cooperation. Since its implementation, the Goldwater-Nichols Act sparked many "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols" studies intent on utilizing the lessons learned by DOD and implementing them in other aspects of the government (Chiarelli 1993; Defense and National Security 2008). Many lessons from the Goldwater-Nichols Act such as the need for legislative support, fostering an interagency culture, and rewarding officers for joint duty assignments were gleaned in the establishment of JIATF-South discussed in the previous chapter. The performance variables discussed by Munsing and Lamb (2011) also apply to the post-Goldwater-Nichols DOD. This is not surprising because JIATF-South has military roots that grew within a post-Goldwater-Nichols DOD. Using the DOD unified command structure and the subsequent performance variables of the interagency JIATF-South as a guide; however, a theoretical interagency structure can be developed for implementation within other aspects of the government. The SWMB is one such area that will greatly benefit from this structure.

Attempts to enhance interagency coordination along the SWMB exist. The need is well recognized and various organizations attempt to fulfill the function. In

San Diego, a Joint Harbor Operations Center (JHOC) consists of federal, state, and local military and law enforcement agencies working together in the San Diego AOR. JHOC is made up of agencies with a stake in the maritime domain such as the USCG, USBP, CBP, OAM, the Navy, and San Diego's Harbor Patrol and it liaises with other federal agencies such as the FBI and DEA (Joint Harbor Operations Center 2012). Similarly, in Los Angeles County, the Port of Long Beach established a regional maritime coordination center. The Port of Long Beach Joint Command and Control Center coordinates resources from the USCG, CBP, and local law enforcement offices to protect the port and respond to security threats along the coast (Port of Long Beach 2009). These existing structures are attempts by various agencies to solve a national problem with local resources. The security threats along the SWMB, however, require national level attention to provide a comprehensive national solution.

A SWMB Interagency Model – The Interagency Task Force

Post-Goldwater-Nichols DOD and JIATF-South provide examples from which to develop the regional coordination centers into a greater interagency model. Establishing coordination along the SWMB requires learning the important lessons from JIATF-South and the Goldwater-Nichols Act and implementing them in a national way. Successful change requires legislation, which covers three distinct aspects of the SWMB interagency model. The legislation must cover the purpose, the structure, and the culture of a new interagency task force (ITF). Similar to JIATF-South, this ITF is conceptually a fully integrated organization that coordinates resources to address the SWMB threat.

Purpose

Along the SWMB, dozens of individual agencies work to secure the hundreds of miles of exposed California coastline. At sea, federal agencies such as the USCG

and CBP's OAM patrol millions of miles of ocean. On land, the National Guard, USBP, ICE, and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents patrol hundreds of miles of shoreline. Locally, state law enforcement agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the state police as well as county sheriff and city police departments patrol their respective jurisdictions. All of these agencies expend resources to counter and discourage the smuggling threat but the resources are not managed effectively or efficiently. While the San Diego JHOC and the Long Beach Command and Control Center optimize what resources they can, coordination must be managed at a macro level across the entire SWMB. The establishment of the ITF will provide an avenue through which all of these agencies – federal, state, and local – can provide and receive support from each other.

This support must stem from a common mission. While each of the disparate agencies strives to counter the flow of smuggling along the SWMB, there is no common goal as to how that can or should be accomplished. Law enforcement agencies on land are interested in intercepting the smugglers but are also interested in disrupting the entire criminal network. At sea, the Coast Guard would rather intercept the smugglers before they reach shore to better contain the threat. This dichotomous dilemma is much like that faced by JIATF-South in countering narcotics in the Caribbean. Overcoming this issue, therefore, requires support from each agency. The mission must be shared and agreed upon by every agency involved. The mission must also be incorporated in relevant legislation. Without a legislative charter, the ITF will not receive the support, both political and fiscal, of the federal government. The ITF, therefore, will provide an avenue in which the common mission can be established and agreed upon.

The different perspectives of the mission are a product of the different authorities of each agency. The Coast Guard, for example, has extensive authorities at sea to stop and search vessels but in general lacks investigative authorities or jurisdiction on shore. Civilian law enforcement agencies, on the other hand, have investigative authorities that allow them to better dismantle criminal organizations. The separation of these authorities is an important aspect of America's judicial system but creates frustration between agencies. The ITF can objectively monitor a situation, determine what authorities are required, and dispatch the appropriate available resources. Figure 3 shows the relevant agency and asset responsibilities when an asset requests operational support from the ITF.

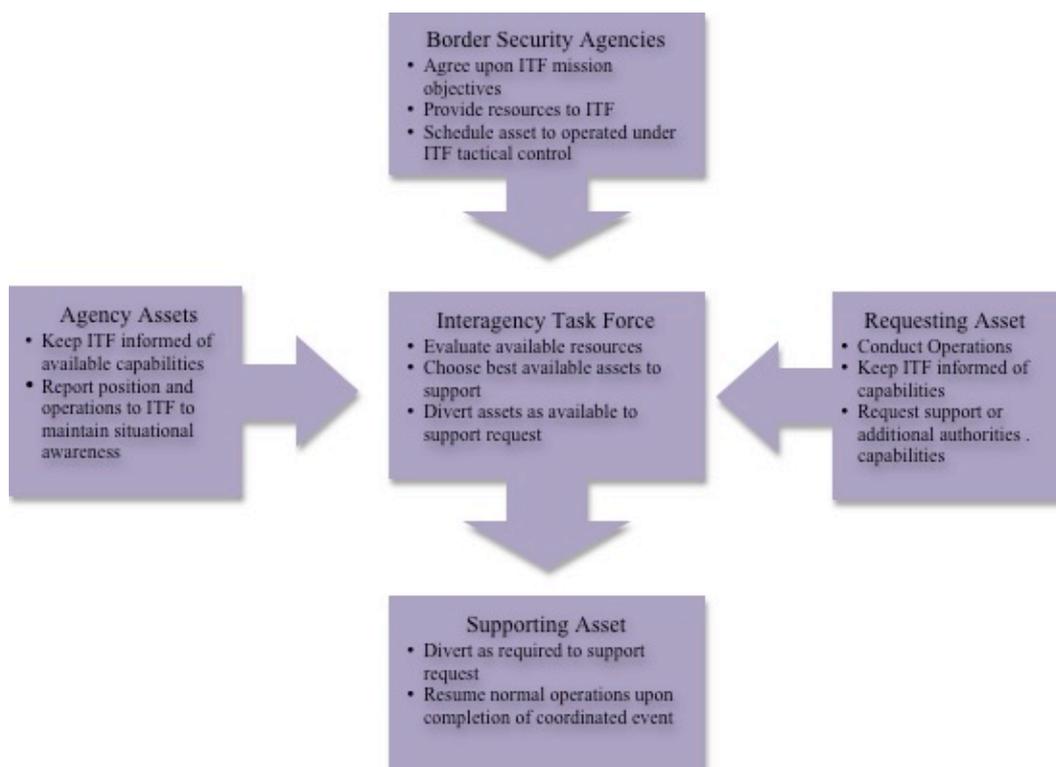


Figure 3. Organizational responsibilities when asset requests support from the ITF.

The mission of the ITF, therefore, is to support the agencies and assets in the field. By assuming tactical control of assets operating in support of the SWMB, the ITF maintains a snapshot of all available resources and how to best coordinate them to meet the mission goals. Currently, the smaller interagency organizations such as

the JHOC and Long Beach Command and Control Center not only lack their own resources but also lack direct lines of communication to the resources operating in the area. Communicating directly with the assets in the field eliminates confusion and provides immediate feedback to the asset requesting support. The mission of the ITF must not be to control the resources of the various agencies. Individual agencies will resist losing assets to the ITF; and, it is unnecessary for the ITF to maintain and control assets. Individual agencies will provide resources as they become available and the ITF will create operational plans based upon what is available at the time.

Creating a plan with a variety of resources presents a number of practical problems for the ITF. A Coast Guard patrol boat, for example, is not equivalent to an OAM patrol boat. The capabilities, authorities, and standard operating procedures between the two boats are all very different. Interoperability between disparate agencies, therefore, requires prior planning, training, and standardization. The ITF must provide the avenue to enhance standardization. Communications as well as tactics, techniques, and procedures must be standardized to ensure seamless coordination between resources and to prevent potentially dangerous situations from developing because of poor communications or misunderstandings. Individual agencies are not likely to change their operating procedures independently and a dramatic change requires legislation, accompanied by increased funding.

Structure

The ITF's structure must be designed to overcome the challenges currently faced along the SWMB but also with consideration of the challenges to come. The most obvious necessary structural change is the creation of an interagency coordination center that covers the entire SWMB AOR. The current regional coordination centers in San Diego and Long Beach do not effectively meet the scope

of the threat. Using several coordination centers within the AOR hinders the streamlining of resources throughout the AOR and leads to jurisdictional issues. The proposed ITF must encompass the SWMB coastline as well as the hundreds of thousands of square miles of the Pacific Ocean being used to exploit the coastline.

A common purpose and defined AOR, however, are not enough to evoke effective integration. The ITF's structure must also encourage collaboration. The ITF must have a small, collaborative leadership, which oversees functionally organized directorates. Keeping the leadership small streamlines decision-making; and, diversifying the ITF's leadership between the various involved agencies allows each agency to provide input into operations. This diversified leadership also provides a greater perspective through which to analyze and view the threats. Similarly, the ITF's functional directorates must be diversified among relevant agencies. In establishing directorates, the ITF should follow the general model provided by DOD's unified commands. Table 2 demonstrates how the ITF structure might compare to the structure of USSOUTHCOM. By emulating this model, the ITF uses a proven framework and ensures consistency in operations throughout federal agencies.

A common structure enhances the ability of federal agencies to synchronize resources. Although the ITF will coordinate resources, it will have no assets of its own. Individual agencies commit their assets to the ITF but it is important to note that the individual resources are not joint assets. The assets remain under the administrative and operational control of their parent agency; but when deployed to the SWMB they receive direction and support from the ITF. The assets will work side-by-side the assets of other agencies through the coordination of the ITF but retain their autonomous authorities.

Table 2. Directorate structure of proposed ITF compared to USSOUTHCOM

| Directorate | US SOUTHCOM Unified Command | (Proposed) Interagency Task Force – Maritime |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| J1 – Manpower & Personnel | Responsible for oversight of manpower, personnel, administration, and reserve functions for United States Southern Command. | Responsible for oversight of manpower, personnel, administration, and reserve functions for maritime border security assets. |
| J2 – Intelligence | Executes all-source, multi-discipline intelligence operations, fully synchronized and integrated with theater, component, national, interagency, and partner nation organizations. | Prepares all-source, multi-discipline intelligence products for the maritime domain. Fully coordinates with other J2 directorates of the Interagency Task Force. |
| J3 – Operations | Shapes the environment within the AOR by conducting theater engagement, Counter-Narco Terrorism (CNT) activities, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief to promote democracy, stability, and collective approaches to regional security. | Conducts coordinated and multi-agency maritime border operations including offensive surge activities to promote greater maritime security. |
| J4 – Logistics | Provides strategic logistics, medical and engineering capabilities through innovative partnership with DOD, interagency, and the public sector. | Coordinates logistics for various interagency – federal, state, and local – agencies conducting maritime border security operations. |
| J5 – Strategic Plans & Policy | Provides input into and translates national-level strategies, policies and plans into strategic-operational level long-range guidance. Develops concepts and ideas into staff and component actionable issues. | Prepares long-term maritime border security strategies based upon projected resources and threats. Develops various counter-offensive operations as deterrents to maritime smuggling. |
| J6 – Communication Systems | Enables USSOUTHCOM and its subordinate elements to exercise their full capabilities to accomplish assigned missions. | Coordinates the disparate communications systems of the many federal, state, and local agencies conducting maritime border security operations. |
| J7 – Theater Engagement | Executes activities that build partner nations capabilities to meet theater strategic objectives. | Engages Mexico and other foreign governments to more effectively combat maritime smuggling at its origin. |
| J8 – Resources & Assessment | Effectively manages and advocates for resources to achieve enterprise strategic goals. | Manages resources and prepares metrics to ensure efficiency between various agencies. |
| J9 – Interagency | Fosters “whole-of-government” solutions for 21st century challenges by integrating the US Government, private sector, and public-private organizations into the shared mission of ensuring security, enhancing stability, and enabling prosperity. | Coordinates with other law enforcement agencies – federal, state, and local – to encourage involvement with Interagency Task Force. |

Source: Adapted from U.S. Southern Command 2013.

As an organization, the ITF will have a joint structure. Each directorate will consist of individuals detailed from their respective agencies and reporting to the ITF. Individuals will continue to work for and be compensated by their parent agencies but

will conduct daily operations and report to the ITF leadership. This provides a rotating staff of military and civilian employees with current knowledge and experience of the priorities and capabilities of their respective agencies.

Understanding that agencies will be hesitant to provide experienced and qualified personnel to another organization without the means to replace the individual, Congress and the administration must appropriate and designate funds specifically to cover the personnel costs associated with the creation and operation of the ITF. At the local level, funding can be provided through programs such as Operation Stonegarden, which provided 55 million dollars in federal compensation to local agencies for coordination in border security operations in fiscal year 2013 (Federal Emergency Management Agency 2013).

Culture

The culture of the ITF will grow from its purpose and structure. As identified in Munsing and Lamb's (2011) analysis of JIATF-South, legislation can encourage a positive interagency culture. Stemming from the structure of the organization, the composition of the directorates is important to creating a positive culture. Mandating and funding a diversification of teams and leadership ensure that no single agency takes control over the organization and limit the role of each individual agency. Legislation also ensures that essential agencies do not withdraw their support and resources from the ITF. Legislation cannot, however, regulate the quality of the individuals detailed to the ITF or solve the differences between civilian and military employees. The differences between civilian and military employees are significant, particularly when the civilians are under specific contracts and represented by unions. Members of the military and some federal employees are deployable worldwide and paid a salary unrelated to their actual work hours. Many civilian employees,

however, are geographically settled in a certain area and are limited to 40 or 50-hour workweeks. These differences can create rifts within the combined workforce and difficulties in establishing work or patrol schedules.

Overcoming these differences requires an organizational culture shift, which cannot be mandated. The most important aspect of establishing a positive culture is leadership. The leader promotes and sets the tone of the entire organization. From day-to-day operations to the strategic and overarching attitudes of the employees, a strong leader can make the organization a positive or negative work experience. Choosing the leadership for the ITF, therefore, is vital to its success. The leadership has the potential to promote and encourage camaraderie between workers both in and out of the workplace. The leadership also has the potential to delegate and empower personnel. Through strong delegation, the organization will be more effective and leverage its diversity to identify and solve problems. Empowering the workforce to solve problems independently keeps the responsibilities of leadership focused upon strategic direction and general oversight.

The leadership can similarly use empowerment as a reward. It is an indicator that the employee or asset has the leader's trust and confidence. Typically identified as the most important aspect of establishing a positive relationship, trust takes time to cultivate. By fostering a culture of empowerment and rewarding personnel for outstanding performance, the ITF can create an atmosphere that draws in high-performing individuals. Building the organization on high performers and trusting them to function effectively and efficiently is important to ensuring the success of the ITF.

Creating Change

As an organization, the ITF will resemble many aspects of JIATF-South. The missions of the two task forces are similar but they have striking differences and vary greatly in the scope of the threat. The ITF will focus on a broader range of threats over a smaller area. It will also rely less upon foreign partnerships and more upon cooperation from local agencies. Incorporating local resources provides challenges but greatly streamlines the efficiency and effectiveness of border security forces along the entire SWMB. Creating the ITF is a bold initiative and will only succeed with high-level governmental support. The support must be more than the charge to create a whole-of-government approach to national security problems. The federal government must become involved enough in the solution to legislate change and to provide funding and resources to make that legislation a reality.

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

There is no standard force laydown: The best use of resources will vary daily or even hourly.

--Lou Orsini, *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*

A whole-of-government approach to any national security problem is idealistic. National strategies, Congressional committees, and government reports frequently state the importance of interagency cooperation and streamlining national security efforts. With the exception of the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act and support for JIATF-South, however, little has been done to provide appropriate guidance and support to make interagency success a reality. The political capital required to mandate that agencies relinquish tactical control of their resources or share their operational successes with other agencies simply has not been expended. Interagency cooperation does exist, but it is ad hoc and without the guidance necessary to make it lasting and effective.

Along the SWMB the federal government has the opportunity to create interagency reform to deal with an impending national security threat. The SWMB comprises an extensive part of border security and must be addressed before the threat develops further. The challenges and expansive nature of the SWMB reduce the effectiveness of individual resources. Smuggling routes are even more adaptable in the maritime domain than they are on land and smugglers constantly expand routes further and further offshore to evade the limited maritime resources available to interdict them. To enhance security along the maritime border, therefore, optimizing maritime counter-smuggling resources must accompany any increase in resources. The President's

mandate in the *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy* that agencies throughout the federal, state, local, and tribal governments shall “place particular emphasis on enhancing and expanding partnerships” (Obama 2013, 5) is not enough to bring these agencies together. National decision-makers must put forth the direction and the funding to make such cooperation a reality.

To focus their energy on coordinating agencies along the SWMB, national policymakers need to appreciate the threat posed by maritime smuggling. Over the last five years, smuggling increased dramatically. Smuggling routes changed, landing locations drifted further and further north, smugglers became more aggressive, and the various agencies trying to stop them were left without interagency coordination spanning the entire AOR. Indicators that the SWB smuggling “balloon” will squeeze toward the SWMB are present and the federal government must respond.

Congress delved into interagency reform when it passed the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986. Throughout the 1990s, it encouraged joint coordination by supporting JIATF-South. Both of these interagency efforts succeeded and are still providing positive results. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the federal government created DHS and the 9/11 Commission Report focused on creating cooperation within the Intelligence Community. Missing from the creation of DHS and the guidance from the 9/11 Commission, however, are lessons from the previous successes of JIATF-South and the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The legislation that created DHS and integrated the Intelligence Community does not address the cultural aspects of the agencies or create cooperation through joint doctrine and culture. By applying the performance variables

outlined by Munsing and Lamb (2011), the ITF can be founded on proven and effective principles.

Implementing the ITF still faces many challenges. JIATF-South and the Goldwater-Nichols Act were not immediately successful because organizations resist change; agencies along the SWMB are no different. Overcoming the perception that agencies will lose resources in an already constrained budget environment is a real challenge. Agencies are also sensitive to the idea that they will be sharing credit for successful counter-smuggling operations with other agencies. As budget cuts continue, agencies feel the need to prove their worth to the American people so that they continue to receive necessary resources. The ITF must earn the trust of each agency; it must convince them that it is not there to control their resources or take credit for their successful operations. The ITF must bring all the agencies together into a single team.

Coordinating a team requires standardization, which also presents significant challenges. Every federal agency engaged in maritime operations in the SWMB operates with a different standard operating procedure (SOP). Every aspect of operations, from radio frequencies to policies governing the use-of-force, must be aligned to ensure safe and effective interoperability. Some aspects of standardization such as ensuring all agencies have and use the appropriate radio frequencies are relatively easy to enhance. Enhancing other aspects such as sharing classified information between federal and local agencies is more difficult. But, every aspect of standardization requires funding. Federal, state, and local agencies have different equipment and standardizing equipment is expensive; most agencies do not have the funding to standardize themselves. This piece of the puzzle, therefore, also falls to the ITF and to the government to provide the

necessary funding. With high-level political and financial support and the appropriate interagency structure modeled after JIATF-South and Goldwater-Nichols, the ITF can overcome its challenges.

Beyond the SWMB

This thesis provides an exploratory analysis of the developing SWMB threat and its importance to national security. It also outlines the interagency reform necessary to counter the threat using past interagency successes as models. The proposed ITF serves to enhance cooperation between agencies that are already working toward the same overall goal. To facilitate this goal, the structure and culture of the ITF must be crafted from inception to encourage coordination. The scope of the research, however, is limited to the theoretical. Implementing an ITF along the SWMB requires an organizational design that accounts for the various factors gleaned from past interagency successes. The physical structure and design of the organization is a project in itself. It must incorporate the feedback of all border security agencies along the SWMB and engage the senior leadership of these agencies and the decision-makers within government. It is this cohort of high-level decision-makers that will agree upon the future of interagency cooperation. By taking into account the principles learned from JIATF-South and the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the decision-makers can design lasting change.

But, effective implementation of the ITF is only the first step in what could lead to interagency coordination throughout DHS. Beyond the realization of an SWMB ITF is its incorporation into the overall SWB. Because the SWMB threat stems from the same sources as the threat along the land border, these two aspects of border security could theoretically be integrated. Future research could create a greater border security

mechanism that streamlines operations throughout all border security missions. The process would require an expansion of the legislative mandate and would require greater insight into how the government utilizes its various resources. Surging resources from the land to the maritime border or from the maritime to the land border requires not only extensive training but also raises personnel and employee-union concerns. This expansion would also incorporate hundreds of other local and tribal governments and increase the complexity of implementation.

To an even greater extent, the potential exists to adapt the ITF model to DHS in its entirety. This expansion might create the structure for a DHS that truly integrates homeland security agencies. Such a development would require an extension of the ITF organizational structure beyond functional responsibilities to include geographic responsibilities. While the structure of the SWMB ITF closely resembles that of JIATF-South or a single DOD unified command, a DHS-wide structure would likely look more like the overall DOD model with agencies fitting into the structure in both regional and functional commands. Theoretically, the DHS structure was designed to increase collaboration between the various agencies within the department. Incorporating the Goldwater-Nichols Act and ITF model to DHS, however, could help streamline the various agencies as the department continues to adapt to changing homeland security threats. While the structure of the ITF is only partially relevant to the DHS model, it would provide a starting point for Goldwater-Nichols based interagency reform within the department. As an impending threat, the SWMB provides an avenue through which DHS can finally begin to effectively and efficiently streamline its agencies and enhance the national security of the United States.

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APPENDIX A

Abbreviations

AIAI: Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya

ATF: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives

AOR: Area of Operations

BEST: Border Enforcement Security Teams

CBP: Customs and Border Protection

CDFG: California Department of Fish and Game

CHP: California Highway Patrol

CHS: Committee on Homeland Security

CHS-BMS: Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security

CHS-OIM: Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management

DEA: Drug Enforcement Agency

DHS: Department of Homeland Security

DOD: Department of Defense

DTO: Drug Trafficking Organization

EPIC: El Paso Intelligence Center

FBI: Federal Bureau of Investigation

GFV: Go-Fast Vessel

HSI: Homeland Security Investigations

ICE: Immigrations and Customs Enforcement

ITF: Interagency Task Force

JCS: Joint Chiefs of Staff

JHOC: Joint Harbor Operations Center

JIATF: Joint Interagency Task Force

JTF: Joint Task Force

MDA: Maritime Domain Awareness

NNBIS: National Narcotics Interdiction System

OAM: Office of Air and Marine Interdiction

ONDCP: Office of National Drug Control Policy

PDD-14: Presidential Decision Directive 14

SFTF: South Florida Task Force

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

SPSS: Self-Propelled Semi-Submersible

SWB: Southwest Border (between U.S. and Mexico)

SWMB: Southwest Maritime Border (California coastline)

USBP: United States Border Patrol

USCG: United States Coast Guard

USPACOM: U.S. Pacific Command

USSOCOM: U.S. Special Operations Command

USSOUTHCOM: U.S. Southern Command

VADER: Vehicle Dismount and Exploitation Radar