Coast Guard Seizes 75,000 Pounds of Cocaine Through Operation Pacific Viper



U.S. Coast Guard crews conduct counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean as part of Operation Pacific Viper. The operation highlights the Coast Guard’s commitment to disrupting transnational criminal organizations and preventing the flow of illicit drugs into the United States. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

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WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard announced Thursday it has seized more than 75,000 pounds of cocaine in the Eastern Pacific Ocean since launching Operation Pacific Viper in early August, averaging over 1,800 pounds interdicted daily.

These drug seizures, and the apprehension of 59 individuals suspected of narco-trafficking, were the result of more than

20 interdictions since Aug. 8.

Through Operation Pacific Viper, the Coast Guard is accelerating counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, where significant transport of illicit narcotics continues from South America. In coordination with international and interagency partners, the Coast Guard is surging additional assets—cutters, aircraft and tactical teams—to interdict, seize and disrupt transshipments of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs. Operation Pacific Viper continues the Coast Guard's efforts to protect the Homeland, counter narco-terrorism and disrupt Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Transnational Criminal Organizations and cartels seeking to produce and traffic illicit drugs into the United States.

"The Coast Guard's maritime fighting force is relentless in our ongoing operations to counter narco-terrorism," said Rear Adm. Jeffrey Novak, deputy commander Pacific Area. "Our latest milestone through Operation Pacific Viper – over 75,000 pounds of cocaine seized – underscores our commitment to dismantling Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Transnational Criminal Organizations engaged in narco-trafficking. The Coast Guard is bringing every authority and every capability at our disposal to disrupt cartels and criminal organizations, stop the flow of deadly drugs into the U.S., and secure U.S. borders and maritime approaches. While we continue our crucial work to defend America, I could not be prouder of the men and women of the Coast Guard in celebrating this milestone."

Detecting and interdicting narco-terrorism on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. U.S. Southern Command's Joint Interagency Task Force-South, based in Key West, Florida, detects and monitors both aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and

apprehension. Interdictions in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard’s Southwest District, headquartered in Alameda, California.

The Coast Guard is the United States’ lead federal agency for maritime drug interdiction. We are part of the Department of Homeland Security team protecting our nation and are at all times a military service and part of the joint force defending it.