U.S., International Forces Seize Illegal Drugs in Gulf of Oman



GULF OF OMAN (Jan. 30, 2023) Illicit drugs interdicted by USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) sit on the deck of a fishing vessel for inventory as the U.S. Coast Guard cutter sails in the Gulf of Oman, Jan. 30. (U.S. Coast Guard photo) **(Photo by U.S. Coast Guard)**

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MANAMA, Bahrain –

A U.S. Coast Guard vessel seized illegal drugs worth a total estimated U.S. street value of $33 million from a fishing vessel transiting international waters in the Gulf of Oman, Jan. 30.

U.S. Coast Guard cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) was patrolling regional waters in support of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 when it seized 4,000 kilograms of hashish and 512 kilograms of methamphetamine from the smuggling vessel.

Currently led by the United Kingdom Royal Navy, CTF 150 is one of four task forces organized under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). This was the first drug seizure in 2023 for CMF.

“This is just the beginning of our work in delivering maritime security operations in the region to stop illicit activities and drug smuggling,” said UK Royal Navy Capt. James Byron, the CTF 150 commander. “This comes as a result of a valued partnership between CTF 150 and all partner nations in Combined Maritime Forces.”

Byron assumed command of the multinational task force Jan. 18 after Royal Saudi Navy Rear Adm. Abdullah Al-Mutairi led the unit for six months.

Under Al-Mutairi’s leadership, CTF 150 ships logged more than 10,000 hours on regional patrols and intercepted six shipments of illegal drugs that included opium, heroin, hashish and amphetamines. The combined estimated value of the seized drugs totaled more than $250 million.

Since 2021, CMF has interdicted $1 billion worth of illicit narcotics during maritime patrols. CMF is the largest international naval partnership in the world consisting of 38 member-nations and partners.