

USS Kidd, Coast Guard Apprehend Smugglers, Seize \$6 Million in Cocaine



Some of the contraband seized in the Coast Guard, U.S. Navy and law enforcement drug interdiction. Photo: U.S. Coast Guard / Ricardo Castrodad

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard, Navy and U.S. law enforcement partners seized 225 kilograms of cocaine and apprehended three suspected smugglers following the interdiction of a drug smuggling go-fast in the Caribbean Sea on Aug. 24, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Aug. 29 release.

Two suspected smugglers are Dominican Republic nationals, and one is Colombian, while the seized cocaine has a wholesale value of approximately \$6 million.

The interdiction is the result of an international, multi-agency law enforcement effort in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard, Campaign Martillo (a joint, interagency, 20-nation collaborative counter narcotic effort), and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force (CCSF), will be prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico.

"The strong relationship and collaboration between the Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy continuously yields positive outcomes as evidenced by this case," said Rear Adm. Eric Jones, commander of Coast Guard Seventh District. "The shared unwavering resolve and daily interaction between our Department of Defense and local and federal law enforcement partners in the region help safeguard and strengthen the Caribbean region against this threat. We are committed to the protection of our nation's southernmost maritime border and of

our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.”

During a routine patrol in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South’s mission to detect attempts to transport contraband into the U.S. and partner nations, the USS Kidd’s (DDG 100) helicopter crew sighted a suspicious go-fast vessel in the Caribbean Sea. The USS Kidd, an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer operating with U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 401 onboard, coordinated with the Coast Guard Seventh District to interdict the suspect vessel.

The helicopter crew observed the suspected smugglers jettison multiple bales into the water as the go-fast continued to evade capture. The USS Kidd successfully interdicted and boarded the go-fast with the assistance of the CG LEDET 401. The USS Kidd’s crew and CG LEDET 401 apprehended the suspected smugglers and recovered eight jettisoned bales from the water. The seized contraband tested positive for cocaine.

The Coast Guard Cutter Resolute (WMEC-620) embarked and transported the suspected smugglers and seized contraband to San Juan, Puerto Rico Saturday, where awaiting U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)-HSI, and DEA special agents received custody.

Cutter Resolute is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in St. Petersburg Fla.

The USS Kidd is homeported in Naval Station Everett, Washington.