

DHS Science and Technology Directorate

Building Interagency Connections—And Careers

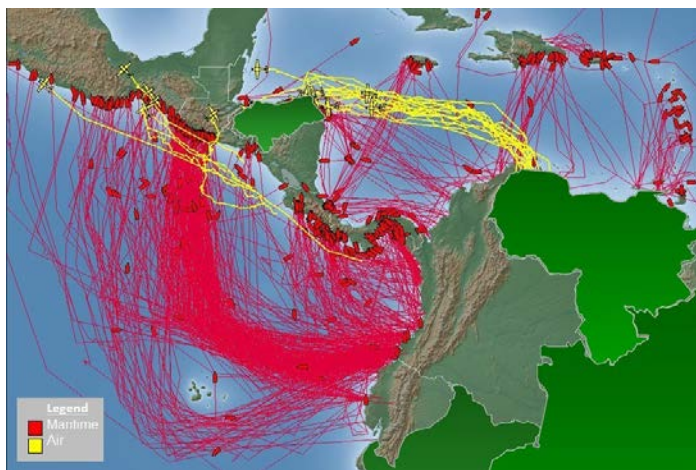
Liaison Officers bridge gap between the operational edge and DHS S&T

Connecting Research and Development and Acquisition to front-line Operations

Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF South), is a Department of Defense (DoD) task force with a very Homeland Security-centric mission. Located at Naval Air Station Key West, Florida, JIATF South focuses on drug trafficking interdiction and the capture and return of illegal migrants. JIATF South exploits technological innovation, rapid systems development testing, and deployment of new technologies to accomplish this mission. Technological advancements being developed in the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T) have the potential to contribute directly to this front-line mission.

Stronger relationships build effectiveness

Operators at the tactical edge know where mission capability gaps are, but don't always have the means to communicate those needs to the R&D community. Moving engineers and research analysts out of the headquarters environment to the tactical level enables them to see firsthand what end users need, and how potential solutions might fare in the real world. Building a user-focused mindset encourages innovation so that new technologies can meet urgent, tactical requirements. More importantly, the S&T liaison officer (LNO) becomes a known resource at JIATF South as a conduit to the integrated product team (IPT) process, and a valuable headquarters contact long after their rotation ends.



JIATF South tracks smugglers attempting to bring illegal narcotics into the United States by air and by sea.

The LNO returns from their 90-day assignment with a stronger grasp of the operational environment, so they can assist in delivering enhanced capabilities for improved mission effectiveness. The relationships forged by these LNOs have already facilitated improvements to JIATF South processes by introducing technologies that had been in development through S&T, including cargo anomaly detection software, and Blue Force tracking technology to link U.S., allied, and partner nation maritime assets to JIATF South for real-time location, course, and speed data.

Experience Operations firsthand



The S&T JIATF South Liaison Officer aboard a Coast Guard Sector Key West Fast Response Cutter on patrol in the Caribbean.

Our next LNO could be you

The S&T LNO billet is an ideal opportunity for GS-13s, 14s and 15s to gain operational experience. Volunteers must be highly motivated representatives of S&T, have an active TS/SCI clearance, and be available for a 90-day rotation to Key West, Florida. With their director's approval, applicants must commit to supporting JIATF South on-site while reaching back to CDS. Sharing information and connecting S&T innovations to emerging JIATF South mission gaps advances anti-terrorism and anti-trafficking efforts, while building well-rounded engineering and acquisitions professionals.



Homeland Security

Science and Technology

To learn more about the Capability Development Support Liaison Officer rotational billet at JIATF South, contact Dr. Steven Hutchison, Director, Office of Test and Evaluation, at steven.hutchison@hq.dhs.gov.