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Deborah Tyroler

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Panama: U.S. To Provide Additional Anti-narcotics Trafficking Assistance

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Aug. 14, US Ambassador Deane Hinton and Panamanian government leaders signed an accord providing US\$470,000 in assistance for anti-narcotics trafficking efforts. The funds will be used for training, technical assistance, and purchase of equipment for the Judicial Technical Police (Policia Tecnica Judicial-PTJ), customs agents, and members of the Interior and Justice Ministries. Purchases will include new boats for patrolling coastal waters, vehicles, and computer hardware. During the signing ceremony, Hinton declared "in the last six weeks, Panamanian anti-narcotics forces have seized more cocaine than in the country's history." During the month of July alone, customs agents and members of the PTJ seized a total of 5,174 kg. of cocaine valued at US\$186 million. Announcement of the accord followed several reports in the US media that cocaine trafficking in Panama has reached levels greater than those which existed during the regime of ousted Gen. Manuel Noriega. (Source: Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias-Spanish news service EFE, 08/14/92)

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