



**2008 FACT SHEET
FOL MANTA CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTERNARCOTICS AND LOCAL
COMMUNITY**

During 2008, personnel supporting counterdrug operations from the Forward Operating Location (FOL) at Eloy Alfaro Air Base in Manta, Ecuador supported 822 counternarcotics missions, contributing to the seizure of 229 metric tons of cocaine with an estimated street value of 4.57 billion dollars.

U.S. Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection aircraft supported counterdrug operations by monitoring for suspected illicit trafficking activities along the Eastern Pacific and reporting suspicious activities to U.S. and partner nation law enforcement authorities.

“It’s our pleasure to support U.S. agencies conducting operations from FOL Manta. In 2008, their efforts and the efforts of our partner nations led to a considerable impact on the joint, counterdrug effort,” said Lt. Col. Jared Curtis, 478th Expeditionary Squadron commander. The 478th EOS provides the personnel and facilities necessary to host these units and aircraft.

The Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South), a Key West, Florida-based task force that coordinates U.S. aircraft operations in the region, used information from these aircraft to guide U.S. and Latin American authorities carrying out the seizures. An Ecuadorian liaison officer, working from JIATF South, provided a more seamless flow of information to host nation authorities.

In addition to playing a role in drug captures, FOL Manta personnel contributed time and resources to the local community in 2008. Volunteers donated over 9,000 hours to bring 180,000 items, including clothing, school supplies and toiletries, to local organizations dedicated to aiding Manta and the surrounding province of Manabí. Additionally, over 1,200 kilograms of food and 2 million packets of vitamins were distributed in 2008 through the help of FOL volunteers.

“As we transition from FOL Manta in 2009, we look forward to continuing our ties to the community groups we’ve supported over the years,” said Colonel Curtis. “One of the U.S. Air Force core values is ‘service before self,’ and I think our volunteers have exemplified that and will leave a lasting, positive impact on the community outside the FOL.”

“I am proud of the contribution FOL Manta has made in 2008, and indeed in the past nine years, to the fight against drug trafficking. It is clear that the cooperation between the United States and Ecuador and the partner nations of JIATF-South has produced positive dividends for the entire region,” said Ambassador Heather Hodges. “I am also proud of the contributions FOL Manta personnel have made to the Manta and greater Manabí community. I met with several community groups during my visit to Manta and am delighted with the fine work they are doing with the support of the volunteers from the FOL.”