

# Case Study

## Fighting and Winning the War on Drugs in the China Seas

It was a big win, worthy of a press conference. Even the President showed up. The Republic of China (Taiwan) Coast Guard Administration had reason to celebrate a significant victory; \$30M in illegal narcotics, seized in the Coast Guard's recent interdiction efforts, covered table after table in an impressive display that dramatically underscored an anti-drug policy that is really working. The policy has been implemented and is driven by intensive and meticulous police work plus invaluable help from a small hand-held, portable device, the Thermo Scientific™ Gemini™ Handheld Analyzer.

The ROC Coast Guard held this major press conference to announce and display the seizure of \$30M worth of illegal narcotics, and to also reinforce the ROC's intensification of ongoing efforts to eradicate illicit drug trafficking. President TSAI Ing-wen attended the media event and reinforced her country's commitment to a comprehensive ban on illegal drug commerce, to integrate six anti-drug systems with a regional defense concept, and to continue strengthening social safety nets.



To date, the press conference was the largest of its kind on emerging drug logistics in the ROC and was attended by many high-ranking government and Coast Guard officials. Titled "Maritime Investigative Report on the Largest Emerging Drug Logistics Warehousing Conference in the ROC",



President TSAI Ing-wen at the News Conference being shown the Gemini along with the drugs

President TSAI Ing-wen reiterated that anti-drug efforts are the government's top priority and stressed that going forward, Taiwan's anti-drug network will continue to grow and tighten like a net with ever-finer mesh, offering greater protection from drugs for Taiwanese society. "The net will become stronger and stronger," She emphasized.

Indeed; in early February of this year, following the Lunar New Year, President TSAI Ing-wen embarked on a campaign to encourage units of the Coast Guard, Law Enforcement, and other colleagues in the ministry to intensify their efforts. The result was the cracking of a case against the largest illicit drug packaging factory in China, seizing an illegal drug cache with a market value of nearly one billion Yuan. The factory, according to the President, was effectively also a massive logistics warehouse where not only drugs were stored and distributed but also raw materials and firearms.

For the Coast Guard, the key to putting a dent in this traffic is active interdiction, on-the-spot, real-time detection when vessels are intercepted, stopped, and searched either in coastal waters or on the high seas. Sea conditions can change rapidly, so the Coast Guard crews need quick and reliable, credible results, but also definitive results that will stand up in court, since there may not be a second opportunity to stop the same smuggler vessel. This is what the Gemini Handheld Analyzer provides, because it is the first and only integrated Raman and FTIR handheld instrument in the world, providing complementary and confirmatory testing in a single, field-portable device. It's capable of identifying more than 14,000 individual substances in an average of 30 seconds or less. Fast, safe, and accurate, it identifies unknown solids and liquids, from narcotics to explosives and chemical warfare agents to industrial chemicals and precursors using a comprehensive onboard library. The Gemini handheld analyzer has been used on many occasions to detect and identify narcotics that individuals or organizations were attempting to smuggle into or through China and Taiwan.

Illegal drug interdiction is dangerous work; for the Coast Guard, there is the added risk of dealing with weather and sea conditions in addition to the dangers inherent in confronting drug traffickers. This is why, President TSAI Ing-wen points out, prosecuting a successful war on illegal drugs is a team effort involving many months of intensive work by the Coast Guard, Customs, Law Enforcement, and other ministries and agencies supported by narcotics detection and analytical technology. Ultimately the "New Generation Anti-Drug Strategy" is a top priority of the ROC government and part of a "Regional Joint Defense" strategy integrating six major anti-drug systems to combat the illicit drug trade, including inspections and intelligence to trace the source of the drugs.

While it may never be possible to fully end the traffic in illicit



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drugs due to the relentless efforts of the criminal element, remarked President TSAI Ing-wen, nevertheless the work being carried out by these partners in the program is bearing fruit; a number of major drug cases have been solved and sources of illicit drugs uncovered. "The integrity of the social safety net, the power of the family, the community, and the school, are fundamental allies in solving the drug problem," She said. "This is the way that we will fight against illegal drugs, and we will not relax our efforts. For those of you in the front lines, your government will stand behind you, and you will not fight alone."