

## MARITIME INTERDICTION

**Agreement Between  
the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
and SAMOA**

Signed at Apia June 2, 2012



NOTE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Pursuant to Public Law 89—497, approved July 8, 1966  
(80 Stat. 271; 1 U.S.C. 113)—

“ . . .the Treaties and Other International Acts Series issued under the authority of the Secretary of State shall be competent evidence . . . of the treaties, international agreements other than treaties, and proclamations by the President of such treaties and international agreements other than treaties, as the case may be, therein contained, in all the courts of law and equity and of maritime jurisdiction, and in all the tribunals and public offices of the United States, and of the several States, without any further proof or authentication thereof.”

**SAMOA**

**Maritime Interdiction**

*Agreement signed at Apia June 2, 2012;  
Entered into force June 2, 2012.*

**AGREEMENT**  
**BETWEEN**  
**THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
**AND**  
**THE GOVERNMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA**  
**CONCERNING**  
**OPERATIONAL COOPERATION TO SUPPRESS ILLICIT**  
**TRANSNATIONAL MARITIME ACTIVITY**

The Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Independent State of Samoa (hereinafter, "the Parties");

BEARING in mind the complex nature of detecting, deterring and suppressing illegal activity at sea, including without limitation fisheries offences and illicit maritime drug trafficking;

RECOGNIZING the importance of strengthening and enhancing effective legal means for international cooperation in criminal matters for suppressing illicit transnational maritime activity;

DESIRING to promote greater cooperation between the Parties, and thereby enhance their effectiveness, in detecting illegal transnational maritime activity; and

BASED ON the principles of international law, in full respect of the freedom of navigation under applicable international law;

Have agreed as follows:

## **Article 1**

### **Definitions**

For purposes of this agreement, it shall be understood that:

1. "Illicit transnational maritime activity" includes illegal activities prohibited by international law, including international conventions to which both the Government of the United States and the Government of Samoa are party, but only to the extent enforcement is authorized by the laws of both Parties.
2. "Law enforcement officials" means for the Government of the United States, uniformed members of the United States Coast Guard, and for the Government of Samoa, members of the Ministry of Police and Prison and authorized officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.
3. "Law enforcement vessels" means warships and other ships of the Parties and third Party platforms as agreed by the Parties pursuant to Article 10, clearly marked and identifiable as being on government service, including any boat and aircraft embarked on such ships aboard which law enforcement officials of the Parties are embarked.
4. "Law enforcement aircraft" means aircraft of the parties clearly marked and identifiable as being on government non-commercial service and authorized to that effect.
5. "Competent Authority" means, for the purposes of this agreement, for the United States of America, the United States Coast Guard, and for Samoa, the Ministry of Police and Prison and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

## **Article 2**

### **Object and Purpose of Agreement**

1. The purpose of this agreement is to strengthen ongoing cooperative maritime surveillance and interdiction activities between the parties, for the purposes of identifying, combating, preventing, and interdicting illicit transnational maritime activity.
2. The Parties shall carry out their obligations and responsibilities under this Agreement in a manner consistent with applicable international law and with the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and that of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other States.
3. The Parties shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible, subject to the availability of appropriated funds and resources and in compliance with their respective laws.

**Article 3**  
**Combined and Joint Maritime and Air Operations**

1. Law enforcement officials of Samoa may be embarked on selected United States law enforcement vessels or aircraft. When embarked on United States law enforcement vessels, the United States shall facilitate regular communications between the embarked law enforcement officials and their headquarters in Samoa, and shall provide messing and quarters for the embarked law enforcement officials aboard United States law enforcement vessels in a manner consistent with United States personnel of the same rank.

2. The embarked law enforcement officials shall be empowered to grant United States law enforcement vessels and aircraft, on behalf of the Government of Samoa, authority to:

(a) enter Samoan territorial sea to assist the embarked law enforcement officials to stop, board, and search vessels suspected of violating Samoan laws or regulations, and to assist in the arrest of the persons on board and the seizure of contraband and vessels;

(b) assist the embarked law enforcement officials in performing fisheries surveillance and law enforcement activities in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Samoa, including stopping, inspecting, detaining, directing to port and seizing fishing vessels in accordance with the national laws and regulations of Samoa;

(c) stop, board, and search vessels located seaward of any State's territorial sea and claiming registry or nationality in Samoa to assist the embarked law enforcement officials in the enforcement of applicable laws and regulations of Samoa; and

(d) employ reasonable force to stop non-compliant vessels subject to the jurisdiction of Samoa.

3. The embarked law enforcement officials may assist United States law enforcement officials in the conduct of boardings undertaken pursuant to the authority of the United States, including right of visit boardings and boardings authorized by other flag and coastal States, as appropriate.

**Article 4**  
**Operations Without an Embarked Law Enforcement Official**

Whenever United States law enforcement officials operating without an embarked law enforcement official from Samoa encounter a vessel used for commercial or private purposes and claiming registry or nationality in Samoa, located seaward of any nation's territorial sea and suspected of illicit transnational maritime activity, by this Agreement the Government of Samoa authorizes the boarding and search of the suspect vessel and

the persons found on board by such officials. If evidence of illicit activity is found, United States law enforcement officials may detain the vessel and persons on board seaward of any State's territorial sea pending expeditious disposition instructions from the competent authority of the Government of Samoa. Whenever the United States conducts a boarding and search pursuant to this Agreement it shall promptly notify the competent authority of Samoa of the results thereof.

#### **Article 5 Use of Force**

When carrying out actions in support of the proposed operations, the use of force shall be avoided except when necessary to ensure the safety of the embarked officers, United States personnel, and other persons, or where the officials are obstructed in the execution of all authorized actions. Any use of force pursuant to this Agreement shall be in strict accordance with the applicable laws and policies of the Party using force and shall not exceed that which is necessary and reasonable under the circumstances. Nothing in this Agreement shall impair the exercise of the inherent right of self-defense by officials of either Party.

#### **Article 6 Jurisdiction over Detained Vessels**

In all cases arising under subparagraphs (a), (b) or (c) of Article 3(2) or under Article 4, the Government of Samoa shall have the primary right to exercise jurisdiction over a detained vessel and/or persons on board (including seizure, forfeiture, arrest, and prosecution), provided, however, that the Government of Samoa may, subject to its Constitution and laws, waive its primary right to exercise jurisdiction and authorize the enforcement of United States law against the vessel and/or persons on board.

#### **Article 7 Disposition of Seized Property**

Assets seized in consequence of any operation undertaken in Samoan territorial sea pursuant to this Agreement shall be disposed of in accordance with the laws of Samoa. Assets seized in consequence of any operation undertaken seaward of the territorial sea of Samoa pursuant to this Agreement shall be disposed of in accordance with the laws of the Government exercising jurisdiction. To the extent permitted by its laws and upon such terms as it deems appropriate, one Government may, in any case, transfer forfeited assets or proceeds of their sale to the other Government.

**Article 8**  
**Shipboarding Otherwise in Accordance with International Law**

This Agreement does not limit the right of either party to conduct boardings of vessels or other activities consistent with international law whether based, *inter alia*, on the right of visit, on the rendering of assistance to persons, vessels, and property in distress or peril, on the consent of the vessel master, or an authorization from the flag or coastal State or on any other basis in international law.

**Article 9**  
**Conduct of Officials**

Each Party shall ensure that its personnel, when conducting boardings and searches pursuant to this Agreement, act in accordance with its applicable national laws and policies and with international law.

**Article 10**  
**Third Party Platforms**

Vessels and aircraft of States other than the Parties, including warships and vessels clearly marked and identifiable as being on government non-commercial service and authorized to that effect, with which the Governments of Samoa or the United States of America have agreements or arrangements for combating illicit transnational maritime activity, may be authorized by agreement of the Parties, to operate pursuant to this agreement.

**Article 11**  
**Exchange and Knowledge of Laws and Policies of Other Party**

1. To facilitate implementation of this Agreement, each Competent Authority shall ensure the other Party is fully informed of its respective applicable laws and policies, particularly those pertaining to the use of force.
2. Each Competent Authority shall ensure that all of its officials are knowledgeable concerning the applicable laws and policies in accordance with this Agreement.

**Article 12**  
**Exchange of Operational Information**

1. The Competent Authorities shall endeavor to exchange operational information on the detection and location of suspect vessels and shall maintain communications with each other as necessary to carry out the purpose of this Agreement.



2. Each Party shall inform the other Party, and keep current, the points of contact for coordination and communication in accordance with the terms of this agreement. Such information shall be updated by and exchanged between the Competent Authorities.

3. A Party conducting a boarding and search pursuant to this Agreement shall promptly notify the other Party of the results thereof.

### **Article 13 Technical Assistance**

1. One Party may request, and the other Party may authorize, officials to provide technical assistance, such as specialized assistance in the conduct of search of suspect vessels, for the boarding and search of suspect vessels located in the territory or waters of the requesting party.

2. Subject to the availability of resources and in accordance with the laws, regulations, and policies of the United States, the Government of the United States may assist the Government of Samoa in acquiring and developing sufficient capacity and technical, logistical, and material resources to carry out the object and purpose of this Agreement.

### **Article 14 Claims**

1. Any injury to or loss of life of an official of a Party while carrying out operations arising from this Agreement shall normally be remedied in accordance with the laws of that Party.

2. Any other claim submitted for damage, harm, injury, death or loss resulting from an operation carried out by a Party under this Agreement shall be resolved in accordance with the domestic law of that Party, and in a manner consistent with international law.

3. If any loss, injury or death is suffered as a result of any action taken by the officials of one Party in contravention of this Agreement, or any improper or unreasonable action is taken by a Party pursuant thereto, the Parties shall, without prejudice to any other legal rights which may be available, consult at the request of either Party to resolve the matter and decide any questions relating to compensation or payment to the fullest extent practicable.

### **Article 15 Disputes and Consultations**

1. Disputes arising from the interpretation or implementation of this Agreement shall be settled by mutual agreement of the Parties.

2. In case a difficulty arises concerning the operation of this Agreement, either Party may request consultations with the other Party to resolve the matter.

**Article 16**  
**Effect on Rights, Privileges and Legal Positions**

Nothing in this Agreement:

1. Is intended to alter the rights and privileges due to any individual in any administrative or judicial proceeding; or
2. Shall prejudice the position of either Party with regard to the international law of the sea, or affect the territorial or maritime boundaries or claims of either Party, as between them or with third States.

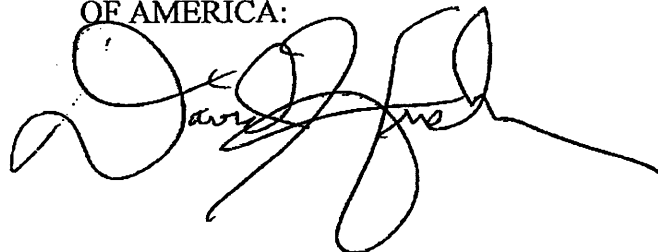
**Article 17**  
**Entry into Force, Duration, and Termination**

1. This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature of both Parties.
2. This Agreement may be terminated at any time by either Party upon written notification to the other Party through the appropriate diplomatic channel. Such termination shall take effect six months from the date of notification.
3. This Agreement shall continue to apply after termination with respect to any administrative or judicial proceedings regarding actions that occurred during the time the Agreement was in force.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized by their respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.

DONE at Apia, this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of June, 2012.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA:



FOR THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE INDEPENDENT  
STATE OF SAMOA:

