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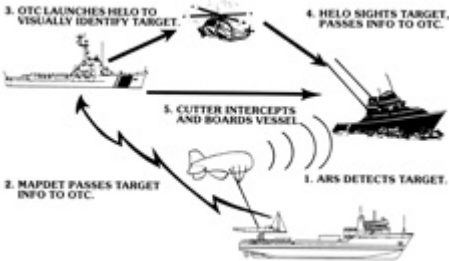

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Aerostat Program

During the 1980s as a result of the increased illegal traffic of narcotics and migrants in the Caribbean, the Coast Guard established the Mobile Aerostat Program. It consisted of two shore-based units located in Key West and Miami, Florida. The units were comprised of two teams per vessel (total of five) which alternately deployed aboard Sea Based Aerostat (SBA) Platforms. Aerostats were unmanned lighter-than-air aircraft which mounted sophisticated radar and other surveillance equipment. The MAP mission was to provide continuous air and surface surveillance for other law enforcement units working in the same geographic area of responsibility. SBAs normally worked in conjunction with high and medium endurance cutters and patrol boat class vessels. Successful operations were conducted with other U. S. and foreign naval forces. From 1984 to the program's decommissioning on 31 March 1992, the Aerostats provided target information resulting in numerous drug seizures and illegal alien interdictions.

Official Coast Guard Imagery (click on thumbnail for high resolution image)	Caption/ Historical Information
	Line drawing of surveillance ship and Aerostat
	Schematic of how the Aerostat program operated
	Aerostat and surveillance ship