

Colombians Seize Drugs-Smuggling Submarine

A fully-submersible drug submarine capable of reaching the coast of Mexico has been found in Colombia.

While another such submarine was seized last July just across the border in Ecuador, this is the first time the Colombian authorities have seized a fully-submersible sub.

They had previously only found semi-submersible boats, where part of the structure always remains above the surface.

The vessel was discovered in a rural area of Cauca province on the Timigiqui River, about 275 miles southwest of the capital, Bogota.

It is capable of holding about eight tonnes of drugs, Colombia naval spokesman, Colonel Manuel Hurtado said. The sub would have taken about eight months to build

The boat was discovered following intelligence reports and tips from informants.

The submarine was empty when found, and no-one was captured.

The 99ft (30m) fibre-glass boat had two diesel engines powered up and ready to go.

With room for a crew of six, it could submerge up to 9ft and had a capacity to sail totally under water to the coast of Mexico without surfacing in a trip that would take eight or nine days, Col Hurtado said.

The sub would have taken up to eight months to build and cost around £1.7m, he said.

Colombia has seized at least 32 semi-submersible vessels designed to smuggle drugs over the past decade, including 12 last year.