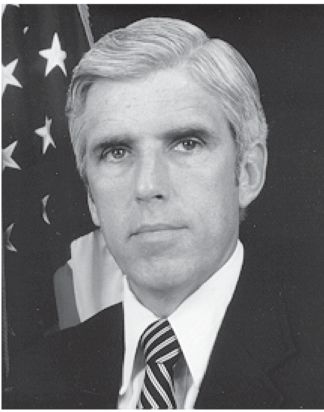
During the 1980s, international drug trafficking organizations reorganized and began operating on an unprecedented scale. The rise of the Medellin cartel, the influx of cocaine into the United States, and the violence associated with drug trafficking and drug use complicated the task of law enforcement at all levels.

One of the first wireless phones to be used in enforcement.

1980-1985



DEA

Francis M. Mullen, Jr.
Administrator, DEA
July 10, 1981 (acting)- March 1, 1985

Francis M. "Bud" Mullen, Jr., a career FBI agent of almost 20 years, was appointed Acting Administrator of the DEA on July 10, 1981. He began his FBI career in May 1962 at the Bureau's Los Angeles office, serving from 1963 to 1969. From there, he was assigned to the Administrative Services Division in Washington (1969-1972), the Planning and Inspection Division (1972), and was Assistant Special Agent in Charge in Denver, Colorado (1973-1975). Later, he served as Special Agent in Charge in Tampa, Florida (1975-1976) and in New Orleans, Louisiana (1976-1978), and he was the FBI's Inspector and Deputy Assistant Director, Organized Crime & White Collar Crime (1978-79); Assistant Director, Criminal Investigative Division (1979-80); and Executive Assistant Director, Investigations from 1980 until his appointment to DEA Administrator. He continued to serve in an acting capacity from July 1981 until he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on September 30, 1983, and sworn in as the DEA's third administrator on November 10, 1983. He is currently the Director of Mohegan Tribal Gaming Commission in Uncasville, Connecticut.

Administrator Mullen began his term at a time when the tremendous impact of drug abuse was being felt across the United States. The problem was especially acute in southern Florida, where unprecedented drug-related violence accompanied the cocaine transit routes of the Colombian cartels. It was clear to the Reagan Administration that U.S. drug fighting agencies needed help.

Acting Administrator Mullen stressed multi-agency cooperation with other members of the enforcement and intelligence communities. He made the policy official in a July 14, 1981, memo to DEA employees: "On policy, strategy and tactical levels, your cooperation with other agencies in all current and future DEA efforts is hereby ordered."

Special Agents	DEA Budget
1980......1,941	1980.....$206.6 million
1985......2,234	1985.....$362.4 million

During the early 1980s, international drug trafficking organizations reorganized and began operating on an unprecedented scale. The rise of the Medellin cartel, the influx of cocaine into the United States, and the violence associated with drug trafficking and drug use complicated the task of law enforcement at all levels. Violent crime rates rose dramatically during this period and continued to rise until the early 1990s. The "normalization" of drug use during the previous two decades continued as the U.S. population rediscovered cocaine. Many saw cocaine as a benign, recreational drug. In 1981, *Time* magazine ran a cover story entitled, "High on Cocaine" with cover art of an elegant martini glass filled with cocaine. The article reported that cocaine's use was spreading quickly into America's middle class: "Today...coke is the drug of choice for perhaps millions of solid, conventional and often upwardly mobile citizens." Drug abuse among U.S. citizens in the early 1980s remained at dangerously high levels.

The Rise of the Medellin Cartel

By the early 1980s, the drug lords of the Medellin cartel were well established in Colombia, where they used murder, intimidation, and assassination to keep journalists and public officials from speaking out against them. Law enforcement officers and judges were favored targets of these brutish drug cartels that controlled entire towns and economies to support their criminal business. By 1985, Colombia had the highest murder rate in the world. In Medellin alone, 1,698 people were murdered, and the following year, that number more than doubled to 3,500. The Medellin cartel was fast becoming the richest and most feared underworld crime syndicate the world had ever encountered.

During the period 1980 through 1985, the Medellin mafias delivered to the United States a large measure of the wholesale violence and terror that their drug trafficking activities had inflicted on their home country. In a grim parody of their campaign to control Colombia, they insinuated themselves into legitimate, and useful, sectors of the U.S. economy, such as the banking and import industries. The United States suffered badly from the cartel's presence as local drug gangs began to form, communities were terrorized, and drug use among teens continued to climb.

Colombian Marijuana

Colombian marijuana continued to be a problem in the early 1980s as Colombia-based traffickers brought boatloads of high-potency marijuana to the shores of the United States. Consequently, the DEA ran several investigations targeting these smugglers, including Operations Grouper and Tiburon.

In 1981, Operation Grouper was conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard and 21 other federal, state, and local government agencies. It was one of the largest enforcement operations launched against marijuana traffickers from Colombia. The operation targeted 14 separate Florida, Louisiana, and Georgia-based trafficking organizations that were smuggling large-scale, multi-ton quantities of marijuana and millions of dosage units of methaqualone into the United States. For 22 months, nine DEA special agents operated undercover, some posing as off-loaders to a number of smuggling organizations. The smuggling network had negotiated deliveries to states as far away as Maine and New York. As a result of the operation, agents ultimately arrested 122 out of the 155 indicted subjects, and seized more than $1 billion worth of drugs, and $12 million worth of assets, including 30 vessels, two airplanes and $1 million in cash.

The following year, the DEA concluded Operation Tiburon, another major operation targeting marijuana smuggling from Colombia. Tiburon resulted in the arrest of 495 people and the seizure of 95 vessels, 1.7 million pounds of marijuana in the United States, and 4.7 million pounds of marijuana in Colombia. U.S. Attorney General William French Smith praised this operation as a “classic example of how agencies, and indeed entire governments, can work together sharing intelligence and expertise and zeroing in on the sea and air routes used by major smugglers.”

Operation Swordfish (1980)

In December 1980, the DEA launched a major investigation in Miami aimed against international drug organizations. The operation was dubbed Operation Swordfish because it was intended to snare the “big fish” in the drug trade. The DEA set up a bogus money laundering corporation in suburban Miami Lakes that was called Dean International Investments, Inc. The DEA agents teamed up with a Cuban exile who had fallen on hard times and was willing to lure Colombian traffickers to the bogus bank. In addition to spending time in Cuban prisons after the Bay of Pigs invasion, the exile had also served jail time in the United States for tax fraud and was heavily in debt to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. During the 18-month investigation, agents were able to gather enough evidence for a federal grand jury to indict 67 U.S. and Colombian citizens. At the conclusion of the operation, drug agents seized 100 kilos of cocaine, a quarter-million methaqualone pills, tons of marijuana, and $800,000 in cash, cars, land, and Miami bank accounts. Operation Swordfish was a significant attack on South Florida’s flourishing drug trade.

On February 20, 1981, DEA Miami Field Division special agents of Group No. 1 and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) seized 826 pounds of cocaine—a record seizure at that time. Florida Governor Bob Graham (center) applauded their success.

In 1981, DEA Albuquerque, the New Mexico State Police, and the Taos Police Department seized the first cocaine processing laboratory in the Southwest. Pictured (left) are special agents and 7.5 pounds of cocaine, which had been impregnated into articles of clothing.

Members of DEA Philadelphia Group 1 seized 20 pounds of methamphetamine in a joint DEA/FBI investigation of organized crime in 1981. From left are SAs Dennis Malloy, Richard B. Shapiro, and William McGinn.

International Security & Development Cooperation Act of 1981

The International Security and Development Act, Public Law 97-113, was passed in 1981. Among its provisions, this act authorized appropriations for the International Narcotics Control program under section 482 of the Foreign Assistance Act, specifically, $37.7 million for each of the fiscal years 1982 and 1983. The act allowed for the use of herbicides in drug crop eradication while requiring the Secretary of Health and Human Services to monitor any potentially harmful impacts of the use of such herbicides. Finally, the act directed the President to make an annual report to Congress on U.S. policy for establishing an international strategy to prevent narcotics trafficking. This mandated report was the forerunner of the International Narcotics and Controlled Strategy Report (INCSR), which the President issues every March and which highlighted the drug control efforts in every foreign country that receives aid from the United States.

Concurrent Jurisdiction with the FBI (1982)

In January 1982, Attorney General William French Smith announced a federal law enforcement reorganization. In an effort to bolster the drug effort with more anti-drug manpower and resources, the FBI officially joined forces with the DEA. The DEA would continue to be the principal drug enforcement agency and continue to be headed by an administrator, but instead of reporting directly to Associate Attorney General Rudy Giuliani, as Administrator Bensinger had, Administrator Mullen would report to FBI Director William H. Webster. Therefore, the FBI gained concurrent jurisdiction with the DEA over drug offenses. This increased the human and technical resources available for federal drug law enforcement from 1,900 agents to almost 10,000.

Administrator Mullen was the first FBI special agent to head the DEA. The Administration intended to increase cooperation between the two agencies by combining the street savvy of DEA agents with the variety of unique FBI investigative skills, especially in the area of money laundering and organized crime.

During the previous summer, high-ranking Justice Department officials had formed a committee to study the most effective method of coordinating the efforts of the DEA and FBI. Although the committee had considered an outright merger of the two agencies, they decided that formalizing a closer working relationship would be the most effective way to enhance the nation's drug fighting effort.

In order to implement concurrent investigations, the two agencies began an intensive cross-training program, and similar programs were established to coordinate intelligence gathering efforts and laboratory analyses. Several DEA executives were reassigned to make room for additional FBI agents who assumed managerial responsibility for the DEA.

Over time, the FBI and the DEA shared many administrative practices, and the years between 1981 and 1986 proved to be a time of growth and development for both agencies. The DEA expanded its global responsibilities and placed greater emphasis on conspiracy and wiretap cases.

Southwest Asian Heroin

After years of aggressive law enforcement efforts aimed against heroin traffickers, several significant benefits were achieved. During the 1970s, the heroin addict population was reduced from over a half million to 380,000 addicts; heroin overdose deaths dropped by 80 percent; and heroin-related injuries decreased by 50 percent. In 1981, it was estimated that there was 40 percent less heroin available than in 1976. But, by the early 1980s, a new wave of heroin from the poppy fields of the "Golden Crescent" countries in southwest Asia—primarily Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan—began to flood the U.S. East Coast. Heroin traffickers reopened the notorious French Connection drug route of the 1970s, using many of the same organized crime smugglers in Italy, France, and West Germany. In 1980, DEA and U.S. Customs intercepted one of the largest illicit shipments of heroin since the French Connection. In Staten Island, New York, U.S. Customs detector dogs pointed to a shipment of furniture imported from Palermo, Italy. Inside the furniture, officers discovered 46 pounds of 65 percent-pure southwest Asian heroin. DEA agents then posed as truck drivers to make a controlled delivery of the furniture in New York City and Detroit, resulting in the Detroit arrest of a naturalized U.S. citizen from Sicily. In addition, three others were arrested in New York City.

Year	Foreign Office Opened
1981	Athens, Greece
1981	Tegucigalpa, Honduras
1982	Cairo, Egypt
1982	Barranquilla, Colombia
1982	Curacao, Netherlands Ant.
1982	Nicosia, Cyprus
1982	Peshawar, Pakistan
1982	Santo Domingo, Dom. Rep.
1984	Bern, Switzerland
1984	Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Chemist Romulo Reyes reviewed a drug analysis at the Southwest Regional Laboratory.

Methaqualone (1982)

Methaqualone, also called "Quaalude," was first marketed in the United States in 1965 as a sedative. By 1972, methaqualone had become one of the most popular drugs of abuse in the United States. Methaqualone abuse then increased suddenly in the late 1970s and early 1980s. According to the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) survey, methaqualone abuse in 1979 increased almost 40 percent.

One contributing factor to the increase of methaqualone abuse was the establishment of "stress clinics" in New York, New Jersey, and Florida. The sole purpose of these clinics was to issue prescriptions for methaqualone. Investigation of these clinics was complicated by the fact that patients underwent physical examinations so that there was a facade of legitimate medical treatment.

Responding to the alarming increase in methaqualone abuse in the early 1980s, the DEA targeted the major stress clinics. By mid-1982, these investigations resulted in 38 indictments. In addition, Florida and Georgia placed methaqualone in Schedule I, eliminating its medical use in those states.

At the peak of the U.S. methaqualone problem in the early 1980s, an estimated 85 percent of the methaqualone tablets that were being abused in the U.S. were counterfeit Quaalude tablets from overseas sources. In response, the DEA Diversion Control Program (renamed in 1982 from the Office of Compliance and Regulatory Affairs), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State, launched a series of successful diplomatic initiatives with the major drug manufacturing and exporting countries in Europe and Asia. As a result, five source countries placed more stringent controls on the exportation of methaqualone. Also, cooperative investigations with foreign law enforcement agencies and the development of a "Drug and Chemical Watch Manual" by the DEA and the U.S. Customs Service resulted in more effective interdiction measures.

By the end of 1982, there were clear signs that the comprehensive effort against methaqualone diversion was working. Then, in 1984, Congress rescheduled methaqualone into Schedule I, effectively eliminating its domestic production and medical use. That same year, the United Nations reported that there were only two countries in the world manufacturing methaqualone. By 1985, there were so few methaqualone emergency room mentions (down 83 percent from 1980 levels) that it no longer showed up on the DAWN Top 20 controlled substance list. The results of the coordinated domestic and international actions were described as a total victory against methaqualone abuse.

1983: FBI Director WIlliam Webster (left) and DEA Acting Administrator Francis Mullen are shown at the unveiling of an exhibit focusing on the cooperative DEA/ FBI efforts to enforce drug laws.

Reorganization of DEA Headquarters Functions

In 1982, when the FBI gained joint jurisdiction over drug investigations with the DEA, CENTAC was replaced with drug-specific operations, and the headquarters functions of the DEA were restructured into major drug enforcement investigations sections, known as the heroin, dangerous drugs, cocaine, and cannabis "drug desks." Each drug desk assumed responsibility for the direction, funding, and coordination of worldwide investigations for that drug category. Individual CENTAC investigations were renamed Special Enforcement Operations (SEOs), were removed from any central, overall control, and assigned to the drug desks. The new structure replaced the former geographical organization (domestic and foreign) with the expectation that it would improve the control and coordination of major investigations.

Centralizing Operations (1982)

With the FBI being assigned concurrent jurisdiction, Administrator Mullen reorganized the nine-year-old DEA structure to centralize operations. Upper-level management positions were moved from the regional offices to headquarters. Field divisions reported directly to headquarters in accordance with FBI management procedures. Administrator Mullen also raised the qualifications bar for new recruits, making college degrees mandatory for new agents, and reorganized the office responsible for investigating internal cooperation. Cross-training programs were developed and each of the 10 field offices received a training coordinator (previously, training coordinators were located only at the five regional offices). The major policy shift, however, was to eliminate quotas or arrest goals once mandated for all DEA regions, and then to establish pursuing major traffickers as an agency-wide goal. "In the past," Mullen explained, "we concentrated on arrests. Now we're concentrating on convictions at the highest levels."

Task Force on South Florida (1982)

As the drug trade grew in South Florida, murder and crime rates soared. In 1979, there were 349 murders—almost one drug killing per day in Miami. By 1981, murders had climbed to 621. Local law enforcement and politicians pleaded for help. In February 1982, President Reagan announced that "massive immigration, rampant crime, and epidemic drug smuggling have created a serious problem" in South Florida. Soon, hundreds of additional federal agents were detailed to the Southern Florida Task Force. The DEA added 20 agents and the FBI 43 agents to their Miami offices. The U.S. Treasury Department contributed 20 analysts to track drug money, and for the first time, the U.S. armed services became involved in drug interdiction. Meanwhile, because drug traffickers were also establishing offshore banks to facilitate their money laundering, the U.S. Government heightened its emphasis on financial investigations. Vice-president Bush stated that "Our investigative efforts will be as stringent on bankers and businessmen who profit from crime, as on the drug traffickers, the pushers, the hired assassins, and others. There will be no free lunch for the white collar criminal."

Domestic Marijuana

By the 1980s, more than 60 percent of American teenagers had experimented with marijuana and 40 percent became regular users. Supply also continued to increase. In addition to the smuggling of Colombian marijuana across U.S. borders, domestic cultivation of marijuana continued to be a problem. As cultivation techniques improved, the potency of marijuana (THC content) also climbed from 3.68 percent in 1979 to 7.28 percent in 1985. To counter this trend, the Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program, initiated by Hawaii and California in 1979, rapidly expanded to encompass all 50 states by the close of 1985.

Administrator Mullen cuts cannabis plants during South Dakota seizures in 1983.

Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (1982)

On October 14, 1982, Attorney General William French Smith announced an 8-point program (see side-bar) to crackdown on organized crime, particularly syndicates involved with illegal drug trafficking. One highlight of the program was to establish 12 additional Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF), modeled after the successful South Florida Task Force, which was initiated under the leadership of Vice President George Bush. The President explained that "these task forces...will work closely with state and local law enforcement officials.

Following the South Florida example, they'll utilize the resources of the federal government, including the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), the DEA, the IRS (Internal Revenue Service), the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms), Immigration and Naturalization Service, United States Marshal Services, the U.S. Customs Service, and the Coast Guard. In addition, in some regions, Department of Defense tracking and pursuit capability will be made available...These task forces will allow us to mount an intensive and coordinated campaign against international and domestic drug trafficking and other organized criminal enterprises."

OCDETF was one of the first multi-jurisdictional task forces to combat drug trafficking, and over the years, the DEA has participated in 85 percent of all OCDETF investigations.

8-Point Crackdown on Organized Crime

- **Establish 12 additional task forces, modeled after the South Florida Task Force, in key areas of the United States.**
- **Create a 15-member panel to monitor organized crime's influence, hold public hearings on the findings for legislative recommendations and to heighten public awareness.**
- **Launch a project to enlist the nation's governors' support to strengthen criminal justice reforms against organized crime.**
- **Bring under a cabinet-level committee, chaired by the Attorney General, all federal agencies and law enforcement bureaus to bring a comprehensive attack on organized crime. The committee will review interagency and intergovernmental cooperation and report the findings directly to the President.**
- **Found a national center for state and local law enforcement training at the federal facility in Glynco, Georgia.**
- **Open a new legislative offensive aimed to reform criminal statutes concerning bail, sentencing, criminal forfeiture, exclusionary rule, and racketeering.**
- **Direct the Attorney General to submit an annual report on the fight against organized crime and organized drug trafficking groups.**
- **Allocate millions of dollars for prison and jail facilities.**

Scheduling of Dangerous Drugs

The scheduling of dangerous drugs and precursor chemicals has long been a mainstay in DEA's arsenal in curtailing drug trafficking. For example, in early 1980, phenylacetone (P2P), a precursor chemical favored by outlaw motorcycle gangs in manufacturing methamphetamine, was placed in Schedule II, which forced drug traffickers to search for alternative chemicals that were more difficult to obtain and synthesize.

50th State Joins EPIC (1984)

On October 24, 1984, the State of Pennsylvania signed a participation agreement with EPIC, becoming the 50th state to do so. A signing ceremony and news conference were held at the Pennsylvania State Police Headquarters in Harrisburg. Also announced at the conference was the opening of the DEA's new Harrisburg office, comprised of a supervisor and three agents.

Fitness for EVERYONE

Deputy Administrator Jack Lawn and Administrator "Bud" Mullen stretch before a fitness run.

OPBAT (1982)

Operation Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands (OPBAT), launched in 1982, continued in the 1990s to combat the flow of illegal drugs through the Caribbean into the southeastern United States. Historically, the United States had an excellent working relationship with both the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and the Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands (as a dependent territory of the United Kingdom). The DEA, along with U.S. Coast Guard, Department of State, Army, Customs Service, Southern and Atlantic Military Commands, actively supported the Royal Bahamas Police Force and Royal Turk and Caicos Police Forces in combating drug trafficking through 100,000 square miles of open water surrounding 700 islands with a land mass of 5,382 square miles. With increasingly effective law enforcement efforts along the Mexican border, there had been a resurgence of smuggling through the Caribbean. The traffickers used turboprop twin-engine aircraft, large "go fast" high-powered vessels, global positioning systems, cellular telephones, and Cuban territorial air and seas as cover for their trade. All of these factors made OPBAT's law enforcement operations exceedingly difficult.

Joint DEA/FBI SAC Conference (1983)

In March 1983, the first joint DEA/FBI Special Agent in Charge Conference was held. Attorney General William French Smith joined the assembly for the first day of the conference. In his address, the Attorney General expressed his personal satisfaction with the progress of the DEA/FBI relationship, and commended those present for working to ensure the program's success. The Attorney General also spoke about the significance of drug law enforcement in the Reagan Administration's overall crime control program and acknowledged the danger inherent in the drug control mission.

First Joint DEA/ National Narcotics Border Interdiction System (1983)

In March 1983, President Reagan announced the formation of the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System (NNBIS) to interdict the flow of narcotics into the United States. NNBIS was headed by then Vice President George Bush, and had an Executive Board made up of members from the State Department, Treasury, Defense, Justice, Transportation, Central Intelligence Agency, and White House Drug Abuse Policy Office. Acting Administrator Mullen also participated as a member of the board.

Special Agents Mark Johnson (left) and Dempsey Jones (right) met with Vice President George Bush during his 1984 trip to the National Narcotic Border Interdiction System (NNBIS) at Long Beach, CA.

NNBIS was designed to coordinate the work of those federal agencies with existing responsibilities and capabilities for interdiction of seaborne, airborne, and cross-border importation of narcotics. The role of NNBIS was to complement, but not to replace, the duties of the regional Drug Enforcement Task Forces operated by the Department of Justice. NNBIS monitored suspected smuggling activity originating outside national borders that targeted the United States, and coordinated the seizure of contraband and the arrest of suspects involved in illegal drug trafficking. The DEA committed one agent and one analyst to each of the six regional centers (South Florida, Los Angeles, El Paso, New Orleans, Chicago, and New York City) in liaison capacities.

Career Board (1983)

The Career Board was established in 1983 by Acting Administrator Francis M. Mullen, Jr., as a way to ensure a more comprehensive career mobility system within the DEA. In the words of Administrator Mullen, "the Career Development Program has been designed to reinforce the concepts of equal opportunity for advancement, mobility, diversity of assignment and centralized selection of managerial personnel. The objective of the special agent career ladder is to assist DEA criminal investigators in attaining the highest level of competence while, at the same time, developing a highly capable managerial corps." When formed, the Career Board was composed of the Deputy Administrator (as chairman) and three Assistant Administrators. A Senior Special Agent at the GS-15 level was selected to serve as Executive Secretary for the Career Board to provide administrative and technical support. This configuration assured diversity and tried to ensure that the most qualified personnel for promotions were selected. To do so, the Board evaluated each employee's overall record of experience and expertise, the Special Agent in Charge's personal recommendations, the overall needs of the DEA, and most important, the fair and equitable treatment of each individual.

Operation Pisces (1984)

In 1984, the DEA set up an undercover money laundering operation called Operation Pisces with the IRS and several state and local agencies.

This two-year, undercover intelligence investigation successfully revealed a direct connection between the Colombian cartels, including drug kingpin Pablo Escobar, and street gangs in the United States, as well as deals negotiated in Denmark and Italy.

During the operation, DEA agents, posing as money launderers, also discovered that the drug lords were moving a ton of cocaine per week and reaping profits of almost $4 million a month. The organizations used check cashing businesses to launder the enormous proceeds from the sale of cocaine. When the operation ended in 1987, law enforcement had arrested 220 drug dealers and seized $28 million in cash and assets and more than 11,000 lbs. of cocaine in Southern California. The investigation was further proof of the continuous flow of drugs and money between Colombia and the United States.

Operation Pipeline (1984)

As drug traffickers established their networks within U.S. borders, they began to rely heavily on the highway system to move their wares from entry points to distribution hubs around the country. Beginning in the early 1980s, New Mexico state troopers grew suspicious when they noticed a sharp increase in the number of motor vehicle violations that resulted in drug seizures and arrests. At the same time, and unknown to the troopers in New Mexico, troopers in New Jersey began making similar seizures during highway stops along the Interstate-95 “drug corridor” from Florida to the Northeast. Independently, troopers in New Mexico and New Jersey established their own highway drug interdiction programs. Over time, as their seizures mounted, law enforcement officers found that highway drug couriers shared many characteristics, tendencies, and methods. Highway law enforcement officers began to ask key questions to help determine whether or not motorists they had stopped for traffic violations were also carrying drugs. These interview techniques proved extremely effective. The road patrol officers also found it beneficial to share their observations and experiences in highway interdiction.

The success of the highway interdiction programs in New Jersey and New Mexico led to the creation of Operation Pipeline. This DEA-funded training program featured state police and highway patrol officers with expertise in highway interdiction who provided training to other officers throughout the country. Pipeline, a nationwide highway interdiction program, was one of DEA’s most effective operations and continued to provide essential cooperation between the DEA and state and local law enforcement agencies. The operation was composed of three elements: training, real-time communication, and analytic support. Each year, state and local highway officers delivered dozens of training schools across the country to other highway officers. These were intended to inform officers of interdiction laws and policies, to build their knowledge of drug trafficking, and to sharpen their perceptiveness of highway couriers. Training classes focused on: (1) the law, policy, and ethics governing highway stops and drug prosecution; and (2) drug trafficking trends and key characteristics, or indicators, that were shared by drug traffickers. Also, through EPIC, state and local agencies shared real-time information with other agencies, obtained immediate results to their record checks, and received detailed analysis of drug seizures to support their investigations.

In December 1984, over 1,600 pounds of cocaine were seized in the New York area as a result of a six-month investigation by the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force. Pictured with the cocaine seized are, from left to right: Raymond Jones, Chief of the Organized Crime Control Bureau, New York City Police Department; Thomas A. Constantine, Deputy Superintendent of the New York State Police; Raymond Dearie, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; New York Field Division SAC Bruce Jensen; and John Luksic, U.S. Customs SAC at the JFK airport office.

The Crime Control Act (1984)

In 1984, the Crime Control Act targeted various aspects of civil and criminal sanctions related to drug trafficking. Specifically, federal criminal and civil asset forfeiture penalties were expanded and increased. The law also established a determinate sentencing system for drug offenses. In addition, it amended the Bail Reform Act to target pretrial detention of defendants accused of serious drug offenses. The National Drug Policy Board was created by the Act to coordinate international and criminal justice issues related to drugs. Chaired by the Attorney General and composed of members of the Departments of Treasury and Defense, it was the forerunner to the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Explorers wait for a signal from DEA agents participating in a mock exercise at the 1984 National Law Enforcement Explorer Conference at Ohio State University. This was the third year that the DEA took part in the conference, which is sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America.

Tranquilandia (1984)

In March of 1984, another very important discovery signaled just how sophisticated the Medellin cartel's operations had become. Colombian law enforcement officials conducted a raid against Tranquilandia or "Quiet Village." It was much more than a cocaine lab located 160 miles south of San Jose del Guaviare. What they found was a fully equipped cocaine factory, complete with living quarters for 100 people, several storage rooms for chemicals and supplies, and workshops for automobiles and airplanes. With this efficient production line, traffickers were synthesizing 20 tons of cocaine a month, putting $12 billion in the coffers of the Medellin cartel in only two years. Authorities seized more than 10 tons of cocaine and cocaine base at Tranquilandia and found more labs and similar compounds in the surrounding jungle. The police destroyed drugs and material conservatively estimated to be worth $1.2 billion.

This startling discovery had actually begun when the DEA country attache in Bogota asked for a study on chemical imports, especially ether and acetone entering Colombia. The study determined that 98 percent of the imported ether (90 percent originating from the United States and West Germany) was being used to make cocaine. Due to the findings of the chemical report, the DEA contacted U.S. chemical companies to ask for their cooperation in alerting law enforcement about unusually large chemical orders.

When an individual from Colombia walked into the chemical company office in New Jersey requesting to pay cash for nearly two metric tons of ether—an amount equivalent to half of all the legitimate ether imports for the entire country of Colombia for 1980—the chemical company notified the DEA.

The processing of cocaine base to paste.

A cache of precursor chemicals near a South American cocaine processing lab.

Seizing this opportunity, the DEA set up a sting in Chicago code-named Operation Scorpion. A front company called North Central Industrial Chemical (NCIC), purposely using the same initials as the National Crime Information Center, was established and contacted the individual with an offer to fill his order. Eventually, 76 drums of ether were sent to New Orleans. Two of the drums had been wired with electronic tracking devices. By satellite, agents were able to monitor the movements of the chemicals. After several days, the chemicals were traced to a dense jungle area in Colombia. The DEA worked with the Colombian National Police to help raid the site, never anticipating the magnitude of the operation.

The DEA had long understood the vital link of chemicals and drugs. Without chemicals, traffickers could not manufacture their drugs. One of the DEA's early attacks on the chemical trade had occurred in 1982 with Operation Chem Con, short for Chemical Control. The DEA gradually expanded its efforts to control chemicals essential to the processing of coca to cocaine with governments worldwide, and it was this chemical tracking that led to major laboratory seizures in South America, including Tranquilandia.

Owners and Commissioners of Professional Sports Leagues met with President Ronald Reagan to express their support and to participate in prevention efforts. DEA sponsored a series of posters featuring the Washington Redskins which augmented Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign.

Drug Prevention Programs

With skyrocketing drug seizures, trafficker arrests, and drug use, public awareness about the drug issue was greatly heightened. Concerned citizens called on their elected officials to do more to control the destructive tide of drugs washing across the country. Parents of teens and young children were particularly alarmed, and some 4,000 formal parent organizations formed all over the United States. It was this national awareness and outcry that led to First Lady Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" program that was formally announced in February 1985.

The DEA realized that the unharnessed energy of parents, teachers, and other concerned citizens in communities across the nation could be a vital asset in reducing drug use among teens. Over the next few years, the DEA ventured into a new and very important aspect of our nation's drug problem—prevention and education. The DEA had long understood the important equation between supply and demand, and knew that enforcement efforts alone would not solve the drug problem. Law enforcement officials recognized that without a dramatic reduction in the U.S. public's demand for illegal drugs, the problem would never go away.

In September 1984, President Reagan signed a proclamation for National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week, saying, "We are on the right track."

In June 1984, the DEA joined forces with the National High School Athletic Coaches Association in a cooperative education and prevention program that focused on 5.5 million high school athletes. The Sports Drug Awareness Program, as the program was called, began with Frank Parks, a high school coach in Washington, D.C., who believed that high school athletes, with their coaches as leaders, could serve as positive role models to help young people resist the temptation of drugs. More than 40 organizations of professional, college, and high school sports joined the program. The DEA also recruited and trained many professional athletes to work with the Sports Drug Awareness Program. These popular sports figures captured the attention of the children and helped instill the message that drug use was dangerous.

1984 Amendment to the Controlled Substances Act

Legislation passed in 1984 addressed many of the problems that had emerged since passage of the CSA in 1970. The most important amendment was the inclusion of a "public interest revocation" provision. This amendment provided additional authority for the denial or revocation of a practitioner controlled substance registration based on a demonstration that such registration was contrary to the public interest.

This is the same authority that the DEA always had under the CSA with respect to manufacturers and distributors. However, the DEA needed the tools to eliminate a source of diversion without solely relying on a state regulatory action or having to go through a lengthy and labor intensive criminal prosecution. For the practitioner, this provision also provided a means of removing controlled substance privileges without affecting their medical license or giving them a criminal record.

After the Public Interest Revocation (PIR) program was initiated, revocations and surrenders rose from less than 100 per year, prior to PIR authority, to more than 400 per year. Subsequently, by 1989, DAWN emergency room mentions for prescription drugs had dropped to 33 percent of total mentions for all controlled substances.

Under the provisions of the CSA, the formal administrative scheduling process could take years to complete. In the interim, the DEA was unable to take effective action against the traffickers responsible for these new and often dangerous drugs. The amendments provided for one-year emergency scheduling of a drug if the abuse of that drug constituted an "imminent hazard to the public safety," while normal scheduling procedures were being pursued. As a result of this amendment, incidents of controlled substance analogue abuse significantly declined.

Training

Until 1981, the DEA continued its training at the National Training Institute, located at DEA Headquarters, 1405 "Eye" Street, in Washington, D.C. That year, DEA's Domestic Training Division was moved to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia. In addition to Basic Agent training, the program included subject matter training, such as intelligence collection, executive development, and technical skills, as well as occupational training for compliance investigators, intelligence analysts, chemists, supervisors, mid-level managers, state and local police officers, and international law enforcement officers. With the exception of FBI training, all other federal law enforcement training was conducted at FLETC. The first FBI/DEA firearms instructor school was held in November 1984 at the FBI Academy in Quantico. Training included current firearms training concepts practiced by the FBI, and practical training in various combat shooting courses utilizing revolvers and semiautomatic pistols. Shoulder weapons training included shotgun, M-16, and H&K and K-MP5 machine guns. Additional training included stress obstacle shooting courses, building entry and clearance, arrest, and handcuff procedures.

Vehicle stops and ammunition ballistics were also addressed and applied to practical situations. This was the first of several such schools that fostered the sharing of ideas and concepts in the application and training of firearms in federal law enforcement.

Special Agent Jerry Jensen, the Regional Director of Los Angeles, headed up the new institute in Glynco. Special Agent Frank Monastero, who had served as director of training, was reassigned to the position of chief pilot.

On December 17, 1982, the DEA graduated its first class of Basic Agents from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) located at Glynco, Georgia. The BA-18 class was composed of 32 men and 2 women who ranged in age from 23 to 35. The 34 members of BA-18 were selected from a pool of more than 4,000 candidates. Admission to BA-18 was a highly prized honor because it had been two years since the graduation of the previous BA-17 class. The DEA continued to train at Glynco until it moved its training facilities to the FBI Training Academy at Quantico, Virginia, in 1985.

Participants in DEA's first firearms instructor school held at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, in 1984.

Aviation

In March 1980, the DEA Air Wing completed its 20,000th airborne law enforcement mission. Working in close support of domestic regional and district offices, Air Wing personnel daily provided a unique surveillance and role enhancement capability. Additionally, aviation resources and special agent / pilots were called upon to support special operation both domestically and overseas. Focusing on maximum use of current aircraft and assignment personnel, the Air Wing brought this valuable support element to many priority investigations.

During fiscal year 1983, the DEA Aviation Wing logged more than 12,000 hours of flight time in support of domestic and overseas enforcement missions. Because the missions were progressively more complex, demanding, and hazardous, a new safety program was implemented. The Aviation Safety Council, which was a five-member group, composed of four agents and one maintenance specialist, met on a regular basis for the purpose of eliminating conditions which represented hazards to DEA aviation operations.

Rocky Andresano and Vance Huffman in a DEA Aero Commander.

Technology

In 1981, the DEA, in coordination with the Department of State, represented by Thomas M. Tracy, Assistant Secretary for Administration, signed an agreement that provided the DEA with telecommunication facilities supporting automated data processing (ADP) in the DEA's foreign offices.

The ADP support safeguarded the DEA's computerized data holdings worldwide. This program formulated the procedures for the protection of DEA sensitive and administratively controlled information promulgated by other federal agencies. This automated support also provided for the rapid interchange of vast amounts of information with other federal and state law enforcement agencies.

In May 1994, Special Agent Bob Johannsen showed Deputy Administrator Lawn the Title III room during a Washington Field Division briefing.

Special Agents Charles R. Henderson (left) and Dennis E. Checkoway displayed technological equipment seized during the 1981 raid of a clandestine amphetamine laboratory in Campe Verde, Arizona. Shown above are a voice stress analyzer, a telephone scrambler, two scanners, and lab equipment capable of producing six pounds of amphetamine a day.

Laboratories

In 1977, field laboratory and headquarters personnel prepared the first edition of the Clandestine Laboratory Guide for Agents and Chemists. This was the first compilation of illicit drug manufacturing procedures and investigative techniques published in a single volume. The Guide was revised and reissued in 1981. This publication has since been revised several times to keep up with changing clandestine laboratory practices and newly encountered illicitly manufactured drugs.

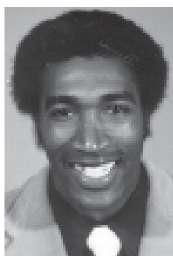
DEA tape librarian Dorothy Dupree from the Office of Information Services prepared tapes for use in support of DEA investigations and prosecutions.

In the early 1980s, communications equipment operator Bobbie Peters transmitted messages on this teletype machine.

The workload of DEA laboratories increased in the early 1980s. When the Attorney General of the United States announced that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) would be given concurrent jurisdiction with DEA over federal drug law violations in 1982, DEA laboratories became responsible for conducting analysis of all drug evidence purchased or seized by FBI agents in connection with their investigations. Also, a dramatic increase in the number of exhibits submitted by the District of Colombia Metro Police Department as a result of "Operation Clean Sweep" gave rise to a period of mandatory Saturday overtime, as well as reinforcement and support from the Special Testing and Research Lab in McLean and the North Central Laboratory in Chicago.

Killed in the Line of Duty

Thomas J. Devine
Died on September 25, 1982
DEA Special Agent Devine, a Group Supervisor at the Newark Field Division, died in Passaic, NJ, from gunshot wounds received during an undercover investigation in New York City.



Larry N. Carwell
Died on January 9, 1984
DEA Special Agent Carwell of the Houston District Office died in a helicopter crash during an operations flight near the Bahamas.

Marcellus Ward
Died on December 3, 1984
Detective Ward of the Baltimore, Maryland Police Department was shot and killed while working on an undercover assignment. He was assigned to the DEA's Baltimore District Office Task Force.