

Disrupting the Market for Illegal Drugs

The global drug trade exacts a terrible toll on the American people, threatening their families, their finances, and their freedoms. The illicit drug trade also poses a serious threat to our national security due to its ability to destabilize and corrupt governments and to diminish public safety in regions vital to U.S. interests. The ill-gotten profits and nefarious alliances cultivated by the drug trade also facilitate the activities of terrorists and organized criminals worldwide.

The United States confronts these threats through a combination of law enforcement investigation, interdiction, diplomatic efforts, targeted economic sanctions, financial programs and investigations, and institutional development initiatives focused on disrupting all segments of the illicit drug market, from the fields and clandestine laboratories where drugs are produced, to the streets of our communities where they directly threaten our citizens. Domestically, State, local, and tribal law enforcement cooperation are supported by Federal initiatives such as the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) and the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) programs. These efforts are supplemented by the work of the DEA's Mobile Enforcement Team and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) programs, as well as by the work of Federal agents operating out of DEA and ICE field offices across the Nation. Improved interagency coordination and technological enhancements are strengthening our defenses along our national borders. Internationally, the critical partnerships among the law enforcement, interdiction, and international development agencies of the United States and of our allies are increasing the risks and reducing the rewards for drug traffickers and narco-terrorists around the globe. Working closely with source countries is at the core of our strategy to disrupt the illegal drug supply chain, as it is in the source zone that we can remove the greatest amounts of drugs and profits from the system.

The domestic and international partnerships forged during this Administration are creating more agile and effective responses to disrupt the illicit drug markets that threaten

the health, safety, and security of the citizens of the United States. The National Drug Intelligence Center's 2009 National Drug Threat Assessment describes historic disruptions in the cocaine and methamphetamine markets as a result of cumulative progress in Colombia, the transit zone, Mexico, and on the Southwest Border. Challenges remain, and surely new ones will emerge, but the past seven years have yielded meaningful achievements and important lessons learned.

From the Streets to the Border: Disrupting the Market at Home

Every day hundreds of thousands of State, local, and tribal law enforcement officers work in partnership with Federal agents to man the front lines of our fight against the illicit drug trade. The Federal Government supports these efforts in the field by facilitating coordination, providing intelligence and investigative information, and utilizing the unique authorities and capabilities of Federal agencies to press the attack against violent drug trafficking organizations operating within the United States. The HIDTA program provides important resources to State and local law enforcement agencies to facilitate investigations, information sharing and operational coordination, and to promote special strategic initiatives. Through the Governors' Counterdrug State Plans, the National Guard provides highly skilled criminal analysts to support the task forces and investigative support centers located within the HIDTAs. Law enforcement organizations within HIDTAs cooperatively assess drug trafficking problems and design specific initiatives to reduce or eliminate the production, manufacture, transportation, distribution, and chronic use of illegal drugs and money laundering.

OCDETF brings together Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies to conduct comprehensive, multi-level attacks on major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations. Focusing their investigations on the most significant international drug and money laundering targets impacting the United States, law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Attorney's Offices in OCDETF's nine regions seek to disrupt and dismantle the command and control structure of major drug trafficking organizations identified as Consolidated Priority Organization Targets (CPOTs).

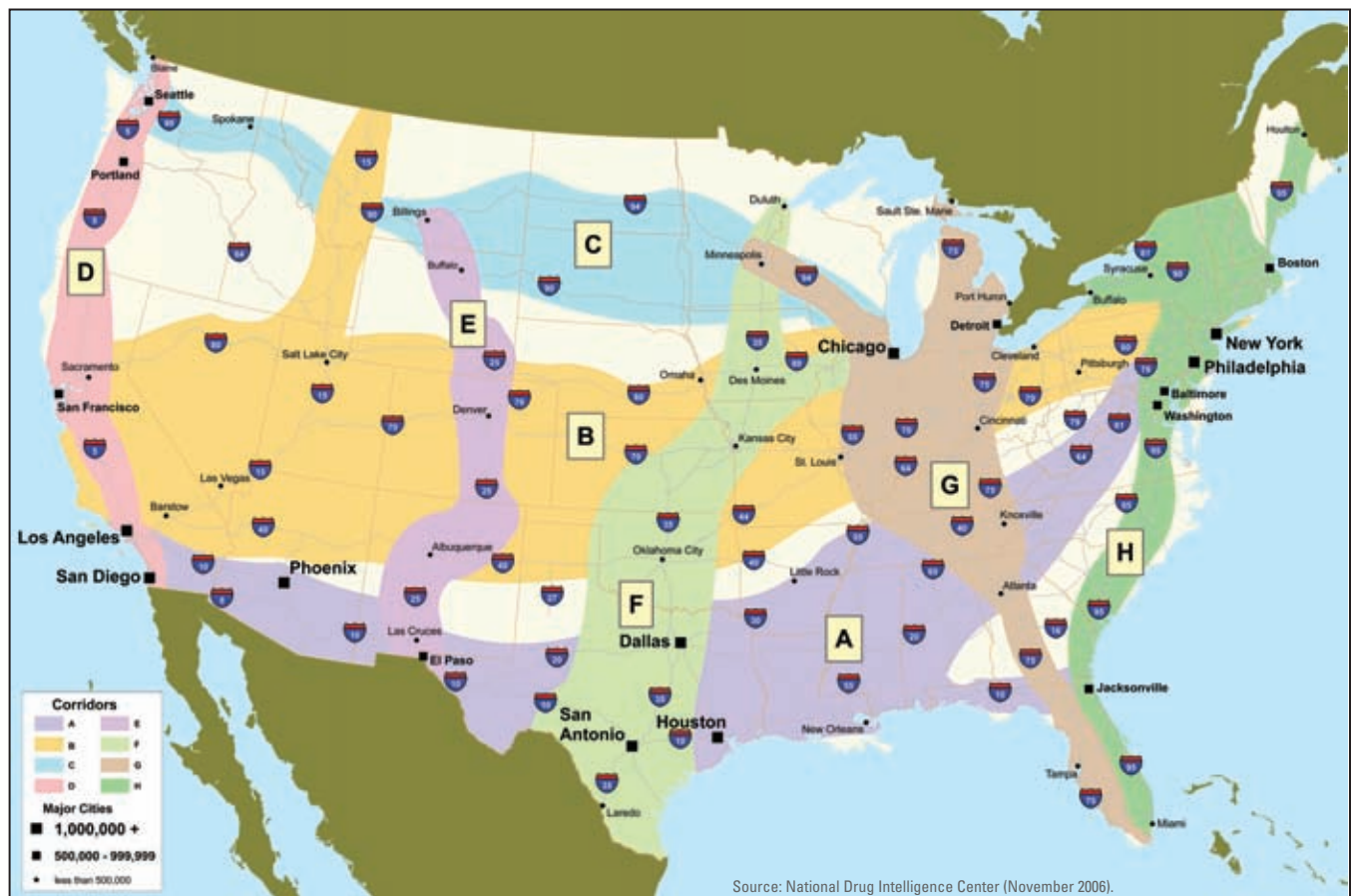
From 2002 to 2008, a total of 110 CPOTs have been identified, of which 81 percent have been indicted, 53 percent have been arrested, 25 percent have been extradited from other countries, and 3 percent have been killed either by other gang members or as a result of resisting arrest. Of the 110 existing CPOTs, 26 percent are linked to Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

Highway Interdiction

The Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE) Program promotes regionally coordinated enforcement and interdiction operations along key drug transportation corridors identified by the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC). In 2008, the program grew to support nationally and internationally coordinated operations along all of the major drug transportation corridors, involving State police and patrols in 48 States, many local law enforcement agencies, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian provincial

police agencies. In partnership with the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), NDIC, the HIDTAs, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Federal law enforcement agencies, State and local authorities coordinate highway operations, share real time intelligence and situation reporting, and funnel information into the Domestic Highway Enforcement Community on EPIC's secure Web portal. While drug related seizures and investigations have grown as a result of this effort, its impact extends to all crimes, threats, and hazards on the Nation's highways. Through mid-2008, DHE resulted in the seizure of over \$600 million in narcotics and investigations of over 160 drug trafficking organizations. While drug related seizures and investigations have grown as a result of this effort, its impact also extends to all crimes and hazards on the Nation's highways. An operation in late 2007 along Interstate 80 reported an 8 percent reduction in fatality crashes and injury accidents.

Figure 12. Major Domestic Drug Smuggling Corridors Targeted by the HIDTA Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE) Initiative



Through Operations Pipeline/Convoy and Jetway, EPIC and DEA personnel instruct uniformed State and local officers in such concepts as weapon concealment, drug money detection techniques, and indicators of illegal activity for their use during traffic enforcement duties and in airports, train stations, and bus terminals. Armed with this knowledge, the training motivates the officer to go beyond the traffic warning or ticket and make additional discoveries and arrests. In addition, DEA's bulk currency program coordinates and exploits intelligence gleaned from all U.S. highway and airport interdiction money seizures in order to develop the evidence necessary for identifying, disrupting, and dismantling large-scale drug trafficking organizations.

Confronting the Threat of Methamphetamine and Synthetic Drugs

Over the last seven years, significant progress has been made against the threat methamphetamine poses to communities across the country. Prior to 2006, small clandestine laboratories were an endemic problem in the United States that led not only to the spread of methamphetamine abuse, but also to increasing health and environmental hazards resulting from damaging waste. However, the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act, enacted by Congress in 2006, placed significant restrictions on the precursor chemicals ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, and phenylpropanolamine and contributed to a decline in the seizure of small clandestine labs. Internationally, the United Nations (UN) has taken action through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the UN's central policymaking body on drug-related matters. In 2006, the CND passed a resolution sponsored by the United States that requested governments to provide an annual estimate of licit precursor requirements and to track the export and import of such precursors. To date, 114 countries and jurisdictions have provided these estimates, greatly improving the international community's understanding of the flow of these chemicals and the potential for their diversion. These provisions, along with the sustained and coordinated efforts of Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement, have contributed to a 70 percent reduction in domestic methamphetamine laboratory seizures, from a high of 10,037 in CY 2004 to 2,958 in CY 2007, according to DEA.

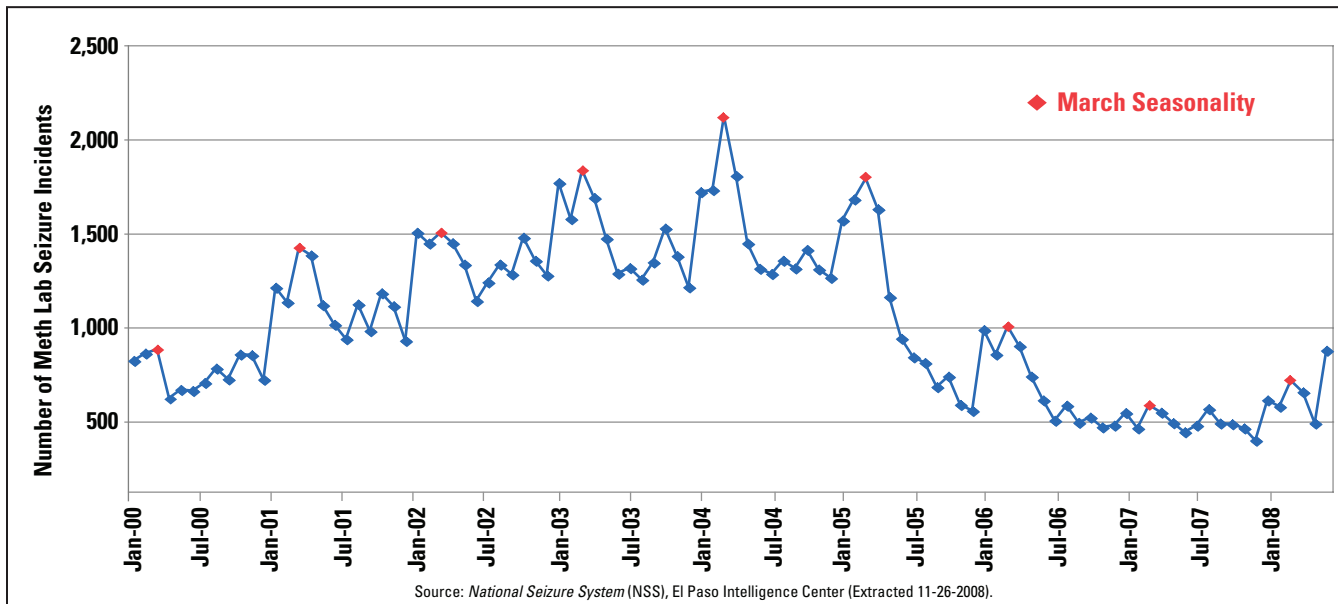
Figure 13.
Countries That Have Supplied Annual Precursor Licit Estimates in Accordance with UNODC Resolution 49/3



While progress has been made against the threat of methamphetamine, prescription drug diversion continues to pose a significant challenge. Within the HIDTA program, additional resources have been allocated beyond HIDTA base-level funding to combat prescription drug diversion. For instance, the HIDTA-funded National Methamphetamine and Chemicals Initiative (NMCI), which hosts training courses around the country for State and local law enforcement officials on combating all aspects of methamphetamine production and trafficking, has recently expanded its mission to include the threat posed by prescription drug diversion. Programs such as NMCI will continue to counter the causes of increased prescription drug abuse, such as prescription drug diversion, doctor shopping, and rogue Internet pharmacies.

One of the fastest growing avenues for diversion has been through rogue Internet pharmacy schemes. In one year, DEA identified 34 known or suspected rogue Internet pharmacies that dispensed 98,566,711 dosage units of hydrocodone combination-products. Further, controlled substances account for 11 percent of prescription sales at legitimate "brick and mortar" pharmacies in the U.S., versus 80 to 95 percent at these rogue Internet pharmacies. The recent passage by Congress of the Ryan Haight Online Pharmacy Consumer Protection Act of 2008 will do much to establish a clear standard for legitimate online pharmaceutical sales and enable law enforcement agencies to more effectively identify illegitimate online pharmacies.

Figure 14.
Total Methamphetamine Seizure Incidents Have Been Declining



DEA directs its efforts on several additional fronts to address the increase in diversion and abuse of pharmaceuticals. DEA implemented the cyber crime initiative known as the Internet Online Investigations Project which detects, attacks, and dismantles the infrastructure of organizations or entities that use electronic media (e.g., the Internet) to covertly bring drugs into the U.S. or divert licit drugs domestically. Also, DEA's Distributor Initiative focuses on meeting with distributors identified as selling to pharmacies that appear to be filling invalid prescriptions. These meetings emphasize the need for the distributors to immediately stop selling to pharmacies where large scale diversion appears to be occurring. Distributors are advised that they risk administrative, civil, or criminal sanctions if they fail to cut supply lines to these illicit operations, to report suspicious orders, or to report thefts in a timely manner.

Targeting Domestic Marijuana Production

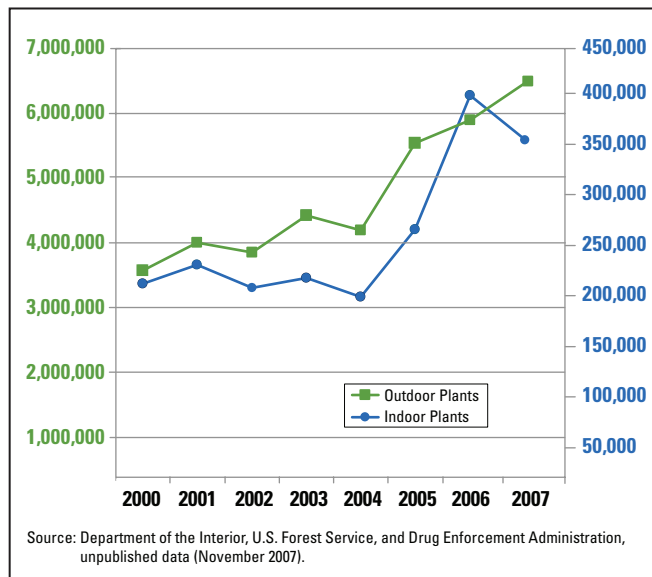
Marijuana has long been the mainstay of drug trafficking organizations, accounting for much of their illicit revenue. Traditionally, much of the marijuana available on U.S. streets has been trafficked over the southwest border from Mexico while smaller quantities—but of a much higher potency—have been smuggled in from Canada. In recent

years, however, evidence has emerged indicating that drug trafficking organizations are expanding their marijuana cultivation operations across the border into the United States, reducing risky border crossings and increasing profit margins by operating closer to the market. This trend poses a wide range of dangers, as violent Mexican drug trafficking organizations set up environmentally destructive grow operations on public lands, and as Canada-based Asian criminal organizations set up hazardous indoor grow operations in American communities in our northwest. The drug itself has become far more dangerous as well, with the average potency of samples of seized marijuana reaching 9.64 percent THC in 2007, a 151 percent increase since 1983, and the highest average potency ever recorded, according to NDIC.

Through the Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP), DEA provides resources to support 114 State and local law enforcement agencies in their efforts to eradicate domestic marijuana crops. In 2007, DCE/SP was responsible for the eradication of 6,599,599 cultivated outdoor cannabis plants and 434,728 indoor plants. The HIDTA program's marijuana eradication efforts are funded through the National Marijuana Initiative (NMI). NMI supports efforts on public lands throughout the United States, but funds are predominately aimed at the top seven States where outdoor marijuana is grown. These States,

collectively known as the “M7,” are California, Oregon, Washington, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Hawaii. Each State’s National Guard Counterdrug Program annually supports the eradication effort with manpower and equipment. In 2008, National Guard helicopters flew nearly 6,600 flight hours in support of M7 reconnaissance and marijuana extraction missions. Success in outdoor eradication efforts by Federal, State, and local agencies has increasingly driven marijuana cultivation indoors. Both the DCE/SP program and the HIDTA program have mobilized resources to follow this trend, and are working with Federal, State, local, and tribal partners to identify and target major indoor grow operations in the United States.

Figure 15.
Outdoor and Indoor Marijuana Eradication, 2000-2007



Working Together Along the Southwest Border

While law enforcement at all levels is responding to the rising threat of domestic marijuana cultivation, Federal, State, local, and tribal authorities are also increasing their cooperation on the border with Mexico, the point of entry for much of the marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin available on U.S. streets. The Government of Mexico has mounted an unprecedented effort to combat the drug trafficking organizations that exploit our shared border. U.S. law enforcement is responding in kind, targeting

major cartels and border “Gatekeepers,” while also working to stem the flow of illegal firearms and illegal profits from the United States into Mexico.

The Department of Homeland Security’s Secure Border Initiative is a comprehensive multi-year plan to secure America’s borders that promises to increase the pressure that U.S. law enforcement and the Government of Mexico are already applying to drug trafficking organizations on the southwest border. The Secure Border Initiative includes significant increases in Border Patrol staffing, expanded detention and removal capabilities, the comprehensive and systemic upgrading of border security technology, and increased investment in infrastructure improvements at the border. The increases in Border Patrol personnel and infrastructure are beginning to show their deterrent effect, resulting in reduced levels of drug seizures and illegal alien apprehensions.

In addition, DEA has enhanced efforts along the southwest border by increasing offices and personnel in the United States and Mexico and by continuing aggressive enforcement operations targeting the leaders and infrastructure of the Gulf Cartel, Juarez Cartel, Sinaloa Cartel, and the Arellano Felix Organization.

To target the southbound flow of illegal weapons that is fueling much of the violence on the southwest border, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives initiated Project Gunrunner, a program that dedicates additional special agents, industry operations investigators, and intelligence research specialists to the investigation of arms smuggling into Mexico. Project Gunrunner also facilitates the sharing of eTrace technology with Mexican partners, allowing the tracing of crime guns in order to reveal smuggling trends and generate crucial investigative leads. ICE is also working with the Mexican government to stem arms trafficking through Operation Armas Cruzadas. As part of this initiative, DHS and Government of Mexico agencies partner in unprecedented bi-lateral interdiction, investigation, and intelligence-sharing activities to identify, disrupt, and dismantle cross-border arms smuggling networks. Operation Armas Cruzadas operates under BEST, an ICE-led initiative designed to enhance security on the southern border and combat violence related to smuggling organizations through a coordinated effort involving Federal, State, local, and foreign law enforcement agencies. These and other initiatives are being carried out in coordination with the

Administration's *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*, which will be updated in 2009 and will continue to contribute to the broader homeland security efforts of the U.S. Government.

Denying Illegal Drug Profits

Undermining the financial infrastructure of trafficking organizations has proven to be one of the most effective means to disrupt the market for illegal drugs. U.S. efforts to deny drug traffickers their illicit proceeds extend to efforts by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) to block illicit access to the U.S. financial system and the financial services industry. OFAC sanctions reinforce and augment U.S. and Mexican law enforcement activities to counter crossborder drug trafficking. OFAC continues to target the financial networks of Mexican drug trafficking organizations, resulting in the designation of 50 individuals and 39 entities since December 2007. As a direct result of OFAC's designations of the Victor Cazares Salazar financial network in December 2007, Mexican authorities were able to arrest five individuals on money laundering charges. In October 2008, OFAC designated a pharmaceutical company tied to the Amezcua Contreras drug trafficking organization, which is involved in the illicit manufacturing of the key methamphetamine precursor chemical, pseudoephedrine.

The smuggling of large sums of drug cash across our borders continues to be the primary method used to expatriate drug proceeds from the United States. To address this increasing threat, DEA relies on its bulk currency initiative and extensive foreign operations to identify instances where bulk U.S. currency is introduced into a foreign country's local economy. DEA's El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) acts as the central repository for all seizure information. EPIC also conducts the initial research and analysis of the seized evidence and intelligence in an attempt to link these seizures to ongoing priority target organizations and other investigations.

The Department of Homeland Security also actively targets drug-related money laundering, especially bulk currency smuggling, through the work of ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). ICE utilizes its 26 Special Agent in Charge offices to work with State and local authorities throughout the Nation to identify and intercept bulk cash shipments. ICE and CBP also work with international partners providing extensive training in bulk cash

interdiction and investigations to counterparts around the globe. ICE's recently established Bulk Currency Smuggling Center in Vermont will serve as a real-time operational center, providing Federal, State, and local agencies with critical intelligence and providing support for more effective and expeditious ICE financial investigations.

International Partnerships: A Layered Defense

The Merida Initiative

Cooperation at home has produced results that are mirrored by cooperation abroad. As U.S. agencies at every level work together to stem the flow of illegal drugs crossing the border with Mexico, our Mexican counterparts have renewed their commitment to counter the threat posed to both of our countries by the flow of drugs north and the flow of illegal weapons and ill-gotten profits south. President Calderon has reorganized and strengthened Mexico's security forces, deployed military units to support police operations, cracked down on corruption, arrested major drug traffickers, sought fundamental criminal justice reform, and extradited a record number of drug kingpins and other criminals to the United States.

Cooperative drug enforcement efforts with Mexico produced impressive results in 2008, with Mexican authorities striking blows against several major cartels, including the arrests of Eduardo Arellano-Felix of the Arellano-Felix drug trafficking organization, Jaime Gonzalez of the Gulf Cartel, and Alfredo Beltran Leyva of the Sinaloa Cartel. DEA continues to coordinate with Mexican counterparts to support drug enforcement operations while providing training, public awareness, intelligence collection, and operational assistance, reducing the trafficking of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and marijuana to the United States. The effectiveness of these efforts is indicated by higher prices for cocaine and methamphetamine, lower purity levels for these drugs, declining seizures on the border, and increased violence by drug trafficking organizations in Mexico.

Through the Merida Initiative, President Bush and President Calderon initiated a regional partnership that also includes the nations of Central America and aims to improve the capacities of our countries to fight the traffickers. The Merida Initiative strengthens joint efforts to fight illicit drug trafficking by providing Mexico and its Central

American neighbors with additional training and equipment to allow them to support law enforcement operations in the near-term, while also providing technical assistance for reform and oversight of security agencies to ensure long-term sustainability. To face the threat posed by gangs throughout Central America, the United States, through the Merida Initiative, will undertake efforts with partner nations to prevent the conditions that lead to gang membership. Lastly, the Initiative will complement the region's ongoing efforts, both in Mexico and Central America, to reduce the demand for drugs and educate the public as to their effects.

Transit Zone Interdiction

The United States is also working with partner nations to prevent illicit drug shipments from ever reaching the transit countries of Central America and Mexico. In FY 2008, seizures in the Western Hemisphere transit zone amounted to 290.4 metric tons. Although this total fell short of the interdiction goal of 25 percent of the estimated movement in the previous fiscal year, global seizures and disruptions of cocaine shipments remain dramatically higher than they were in 2001. Moving forward, the goal for our national removal rate will increase by 2.5 percent each year, to 27.5 percent of the estimated cocaine movement in FY 2009 and eventually reaching 40 percent in FY 2014. Operations such as Panama Express will remain essential as the United States pursues increasing seizure rate goals in the years ahead. For years, Panama Express has targeted the organizations transporting large drug shipments from South America to the United States. Panama Express employs DoD agencies to include Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), DEA, U.S. Marshals Service, ICE, and Department of the Treasury resources in a coordinated effort to investigate these organizations and ultimately disrupt and dismantle their trafficking operations. The record-level seizure rates of the past eight years have caused traffickers to employ more creative methods to move their drugs to market, such as the use of littoral routes, more elusive conveyances, shifts to smaller and more widely distributed load sizes, and the increasing use of largely unchallenged routes through Venezuela. International cooperation will remain essential to countering these shifts and meeting our interdiction goals.

The enactment of the Drug Trafficking Vessel Interdiction Act of 2008, which creates a Federal felony offense for operation and embarkation in a stateless submersible or semi-submersible vessel on an international voyage with intent to evade detection, is expected to serve as an important tool in curbing one of these movement methods. As always, international cooperation will remain essential to countering these shifts and meeting our interdiction goals.

Colombia's Commitment

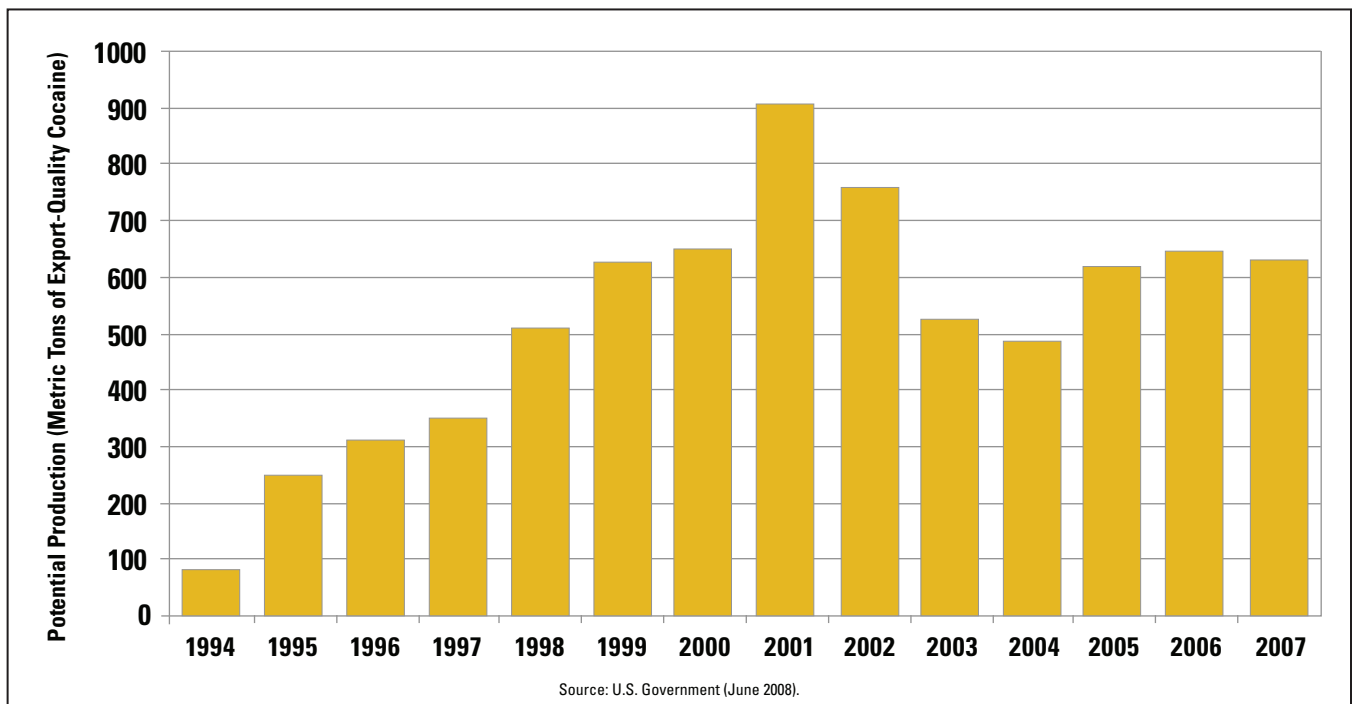
Disrupting the drug market at its source is at the core of the layered defense described in this strategy. By working with the governments of producing countries, we can eliminate illegal drug crops before they move to final production and interdict drug shipments before they are broken down into smaller loads, thereby removing the greatest amount of narcotics from the market. In so doing, we also assist partner nations in strengthening public security and democratic institutions, while striking powerful blows against terrorist groups and international organized crime by denying those criminal groups access to the profits from drug production at the beginning of the trafficking chain.

The pressure placed on drug trafficking organizations by increased transit zone seizures has been amplified by dramatic decreases in potential cocaine production in the Andes since 2001. The Government of Colombia has expanded its presence throughout the country, reducing levels of violence, attacking coca and poppy cultivation and illicit drug trafficking, dismantling drug trafficking organizations, disrupting the transportation networks of the drug trafficking organizations, and increasing access to justice and social programs. U.S. Government estimates indicate that seizures of cocaine and coca base inside Colombia have grown from about 38 metric tons in 2001 to about 93 metric tons as of early December 2008. Destruction of HCl laboratories increased from 83 in 2003 to 240 in 2007 and had reached 301 as of December 8, 2008, according to Government of Colombia figures. Colombia continues to face challenges, however, not the least of which are increasingly porous borders with its neighbors, particularly Venezuela, where there is almost no control of cocaine flow from Colombia and no cooperation with the United States or other allies to pursue cocaine movement through its territory.

Colombia has extradited 789 narcotics traffickers and other criminals to the United States for trial since 2002, of which 208 were extradited in 2008, significantly more than the 164 in 2007. These extraditions included 15 former paramilitary leaders who are accused of continuing to conduct drug trafficking from prison in Colombia and the leader of the North Valley Cartel, Diego Montoya. In March 2008, the Colombian Security Forces dealt a significant blow to the largest remaining drug trafficking organizations in Colombia, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), by killing its number two leader, Raul Reyes. His death was followed by the death of another member of the FARC Secretariat, Ivan Rios, and then that of the supreme leader of the FARC, Manuel Marulanda, AKA “Sureshot.” These events have increased the pressure on FARC leaders and have severely hampered their drug trafficking activities. The other major remaining cartel, the North Valley Cartel, also suffered huge losses in 2008, including the death of one of its leaders, Wilber Varela (“Jabon”) and the capture and its other leader Diego Montoya (“Don Diego”), as well as the capture and extradition of paramilitary leader and North Valley Cartel collaborator Juan Carlos Ramirez (“Chupeta”).

The 2007 U.S. Government coca crop estimate for Colombia highlights for the first time the results of scientific studies showing how eradication pressure is diminishing the productivity of existing coca fields. New productivity data show that Colombia’s maximum potential production dropped to 535 metric tons of pure cocaine in 2007. Based on recent scientific field studies by DEA on the impact of eradication, we can now calculate that Colombia’s maximum potential production of pure cocaine has fallen a full 24 percent since its high point in 2001 (from 700 metric tons to 535 metric tons). This success is directly attributable to the will of the Government of Colombia to attack trafficking at its source through eradication, increased presence of the State, improved security, and development programs to provide alternatives to coca cultivation—all of which will need reinforcement to preclude backsliding and losing gains made over the past seven years. The declines in maximum potential production which, combined with other effective law enforcement efforts, has contributed to the decline in cocaine purity and increase in cocaine prices in the United States.

Figure 16.
Declining Cocaine HCl Potential Production in Colombia



Challenges in the Andes and Beyond

Venezuela

While cooperative counterdrug efforts at home and in the Western Hemisphere transit zone and source zone have reduced the availability of drugs on American streets, drug traffickers are exploiting areas where cooperation is weak in order to sustain their deadly trade. In response to the successes achieved by Colombia in improving public security, reducing potential cocaine production, and strengthening its institutions, drug traffickers are increasingly exploiting the porous border with Venezuela, a country whose government is incapable—or unwilling—to control drug trafficking and that refuses to cooperate with the United States to improve its counterdrug efforts. The flow of cocaine through Venezuela to Hispaniola and Central America continued to increase in 2008. In addition, intelligence indicates that Venezuela is being utilized as a main distribution point for drug trafficking organizations shipping drugs to West Africa and Europe. JIATF-S estimates that 91 percent of detected suspect aircraft destined for Hispaniola originate in Venezuela. The United States continues to seek

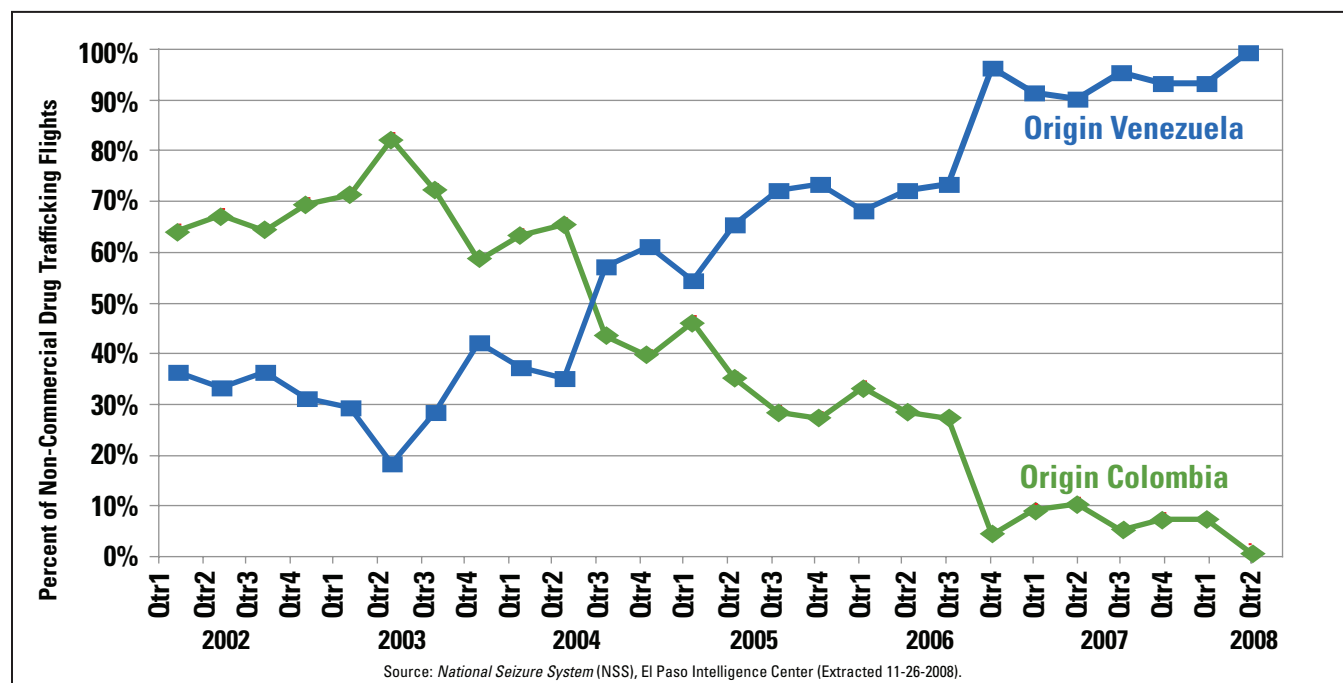
a renewed bilateral counterdrug relationship with Venezuela, but, regrettably, these overtures have been routinely rebuffed by the Venezuelan Government.

Bolivia

Likewise, a deteriorating willingness to cooperate with international drug enforcement efforts on the part of the Government of Bolivia is opening another path of least resistance for drug traffickers. President Evo Morales, who also is the current president of a coca grower association, has made it clear that his government is not interested in fully cooperating with the United States on drug control, having declared the Ambassador persona non grata, expelled DEA agents and restricted USAID workers from the coca growing Chapare region. By pursuing policies to increase legal coca cultivation for non-scientific or medicinal purposes, the Government of Bolivia violated existing Bolivian law and contravened the 1988 UN Drug Convention. In the meantime, the permissive environment in Bolivia has already resulted in a 14 percent net increase in coca cultivation according to U.S. estimates. Nonetheless, the United States remains ready and willing to resume counternarcotics cooperation with Bolivia if and when its government indicates readiness to work with its U.S. counterparts.

Figure 17.

Venezuela Now Accounts for the Vast Majority of Suspected Non-Commercial Drug Trafficking Flights



Africa

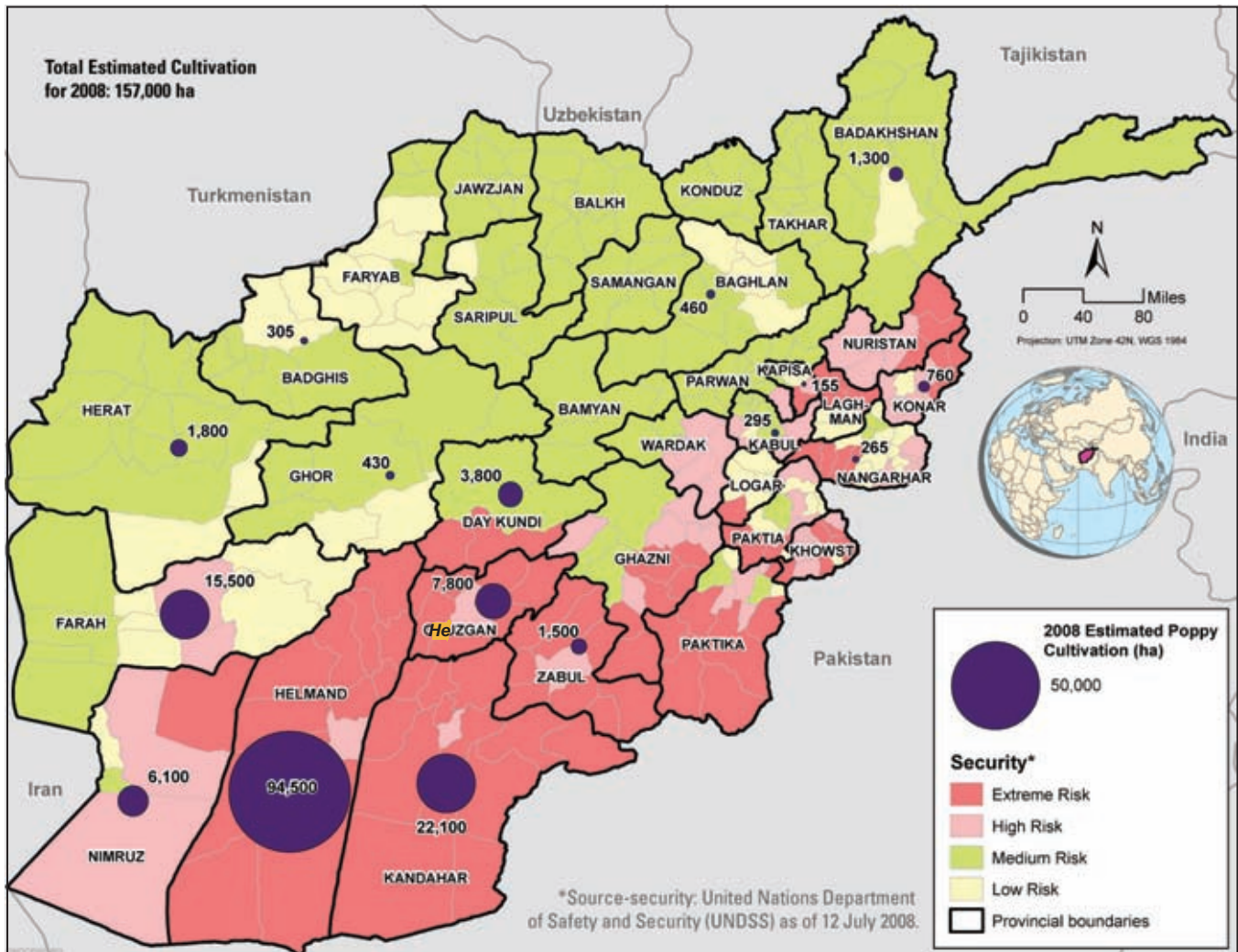
West Africa has become a transshipment location for substantial quantities of cocaine being transported to Europe by South American DTOs and for large quantities of bulk currency Euros moving back to the Western Hemisphere. Colombian and Venezuelan traffickers are establishing a foothold in West Africa and are cultivating relationships with African criminal networks to support their operations in the region. The African continent also serves as a transshipment and diversion point for precursor chemicals used to manufacture methamphetamine and other controlled substances. Many of the same South American DTOs responsible for transporting major cocaine shipments to the

United States are using Africa as a transit base and storage location for cocaine destined for European markets. DEA is planning to increase its capabilities to work with African partner nations and collaborate with law enforcement counterparts in addressing the destabilizing influence of drug trafficking on African transit countries.

Afghanistan

The drug trade undermines the Government of Afghanistan's drive to build political stability, economic growth, and establish security and the rule of law. The U.S. Government remains committed to a five-pillar counternarcotics strategy consisting of public information, alternative development, poppy elimination and eradication, interdiction, and justice

Figure 18.
Security Map with Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan, 2008



reform, but acknowledges that challenges remain, especially in the south where the link between the drug trade and insurgency is strongest.

Opium poppy cultivation has been nearly eliminated in most of Afghanistan's north and east, and 2008 estimates indicate that 29 provinces are poppy free or have low levels (less than 6,000 ha) of poppy cultivation. Progress was mostly attributable to strong leadership and overall integration with the internationally supported counterinsurgency campaign.

To address the continuing narcotics-insurgency challenge in the south, in 2008 the Government of Afghanistan endorsed an Afghan counternarcotics plan to extend governance and the rule of law in Helmand Province. The Plan is designed to cut narco-insurgents' ability to produce and transport illegal drugs in a key growing area, thereby depriving them of funding and of the control of geographic areas that are used to launch operations against the provincial government and coalition forces.

The five-pillar strategy provides the appropriate mix of incentives and disincentives necessary to disrupt the narcotics-insurgency connection. Incentive programs such as the Good Performers Initiative, designed to provide quick-impact assistance in areas where anti-poppy progress has been made, will be enhanced in 2009 to more rapidly and more substantially reward those provinces that reduce cultivation.

Interdiction operations targeting high-level traffickers will be further integrated into the counterinsurgency campaign in 2009. DEA is expanding their presence in Afghanistan, and will continue their support for the Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan by training and mentoring several counternarcotics investigative units. Elimination will be enhanced in 2009 as the eradication focus shifts to targeting the wealthiest and most powerful cultivators. However, as shown in 2008, the Government of Afghanistan will likely face numerous security-related challenges in executing the elimination pillar.

Looking Ahead: A Global Approach

While we have made significant progress over the last eight years in reducing the demand for and availability of illegal drugs in the United States, challenges remain both at home and abroad. For many years there has been a consensus, both in our own Nation and internationally, that illicit drug abuse has significant social and health consequences which requires strict regulation. That consensus, although still strong, has come under attack internationally. Although decades of research suggest that balanced drug policies are working, well-funded legalization advocates continue to promote their views aggressively at international forums. To ensure that strong, effective international drug policies are maintained, it is essential that experts in the effectiveness of drug prevention, education, and treatment efforts step forward to educate the international community. Fortunately, a renewed international movement against drugs is emerging.

In September 2008, 600 representatives of anti-drug non-governmental organizations gathered in Stockholm, Sweden for the first World Forum Against Drugs (WFAD) conference. After the successful completion of the conference and the signing of a declaration, WFAD organizers announced their intention to create a permanent organization to combat drug legalization efforts around the world through annual meetings, publications, and participation in international meetings such as the United Nations CND. This group shows promise as a constructive partner in the effort to reduce drug use, production, and trafficking around the world.

This new commitment in the international community could not have come at a better time. This year marks the completion of the review by Member States and international organizations of the progress made towards the accomplishment of ambitious anti-drug goals set ten years ago at a United Nations General Assembly Special Session. In March 2009 high level government officials from around the world will gather in Vienna to review the world's progress. The United States and like minded partners from every region of the world have been working to develop plans to move forward by building on the initial 1998 goals. The March meeting is expected to result in a renewed commitment by all to combat drug use, trafficking, and production.