



## Preface to Chapter 5: Disrupting Street Drug Gangs—Operation Knock Out

In May 2009, approximately 1,400 law enforcement officers swept across the City of Hawaiian Gardens near Los Angeles, CA, for the Nation's largest-ever gang sweep. The investigation into the Varrio Hawaiian Gardens gang began after the fatal shooting of Los Angeles Sheriff's Deputy Jerry Ortiz, who was gunned down by a gang member he was attempting to arrest. The Varrio Hawaiian Gardens gang is a Latino street gang infamous for its violent tactics. In addition to the murder of Deputy Ortiz, the racketeering indictment enumerates other violent attacks, drug trafficking, carjackings, and kidnappings. During the initial phase of Operation Knock Out, 88 defendants were arrested, with an additional 26 defendants arrested 2 months later, when the Operation was completed.

Operation Knock Out "sends a message to those who are responsible for bringing violence and distress onto the streets of Los Angeles that law enforcement is working together to take back our neighborhoods and get violent drug traffickers and street gangs out of our communities," said DEA Special Agent in Charge Timothy J. Landrum.



To date, Federal authorities have unsealed indictments charging 210 defendants, and 170 of those defendants have been taken into custody. With dozens of arrests leading to charges being filed in State court, Operation Knock Out has led to more than 300 gang members and associates being taken off the street. During this investigation, approximately 33 pounds of methamphetamine were seized, along with lesser quantities of other narcotics and approximately 125 firearms.

Operation Knock Out, an investigation into Varrio Hawaiian Gardens and other gangs and individuals who were involved in criminal activity, was conducted by the Los Angeles High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Southern California Drug Task Force (SCDTF), which is comprised of agents and officers with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); the IRS-Criminal Investigation; and the Los Angeles Police Department. The following agencies provided extraordinary support during both investigations and operations: the U.S. Marshals Service, the California Department of Justice's Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement, the Long Beach Police Department, the Ridgecrest Police Department, the Downey Police Department, the Kern County Sheriff's Department, the Bell Gardens Police Department, the Buena Park Police Department, the Costa Mesa Police Department, the California Highway Patrol, the Joint Forces Joint Training Base at Los Alamitos, the South Gate Police Department, the Hawthorne Police Department, the Montebello Police Department, the Santa Monica Police Department, the Peace Officers Research Association of California, the Ontario Police Department, the San Diego Narcotics Task Force, the Riverside Sheriff's Department, LA Impact, the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, and the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services' Multi-Agency Response Team.



## Chapter 5. Disrupt Domestic Drug Trafficking and Production

### Policy Statement

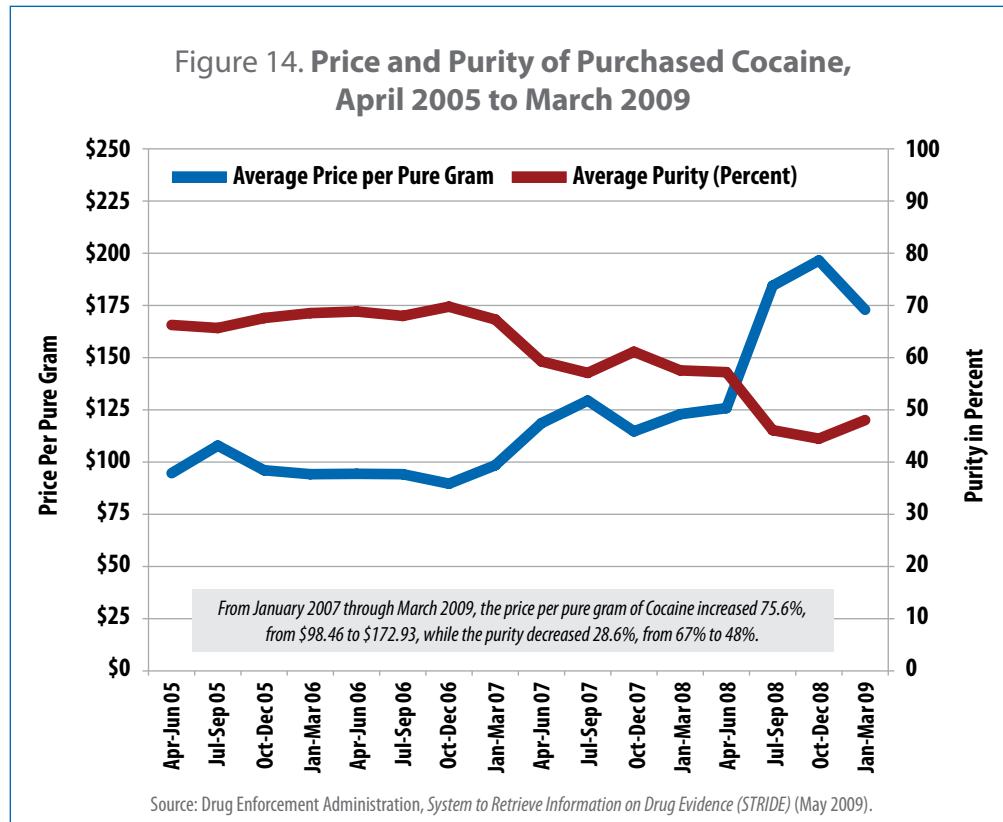
Drug-trafficking organizations move large quantities of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, and other illicit drugs into the United States and distribute these drugs throughout the Nation. Although these organizations are largely based in Colombia and Mexico, they operate throughout the Nation, in Canada, and in many other countries. These same groups, at times working through street and prison gangs, employ criminal networks that return the illicit proceeds of the drug trade, along with an array of weapons, across our borders. This two-way trade imposes enormous negative consequences on the safety, health, and security of our citizens. Drug trafficking and related violence, crime, and corruption clearly constitute a significant national security threat. The resources and capabilities of the United States and partner nations must be marshaled to disrupt the organizations that conduct this trade.

Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies must consistently seek not just to seize drugs, money, and guns, but to identify and disrupt trafficking and associated criminal networks. Seizures of these items must continue—they remain an important part of drug enforcement—but they ought to be employed primarily as mechanisms to deepen our understanding of how traffickers operate and to augment our ability to penetrate and dismantle whole organizations. Information that leads to the disruption of drug-trafficking organizations often starts with a seizure of drugs, money, or guns by State, local, or tribal officers. This is true, however, only if the seizure is treated as the start of a criminal investigation, not the end of it.

As indicated in earlier chapters of this *Strategy*, the United States has a heavy responsibility to address domestic drug use. The Administration is committed to supporting prevention, treatment, and the better use of our criminal justice resources to sharply reduce American drug consumption. However, in addition to these vital efforts, there must be transparent coordination of Federal, State, local, and tribal efforts. Prompt, reliable, accurate, and consistent information exchange is essential to improving our capacity to disrupt trafficker networks that operate in our towns, cities, and suburbs as well as on roads and highways. Similarly, greater intelligence exchange, including information on financial investigations, is essential to improving results on and near United States borders.

The United States must pursue an integrated strategy to disrupt and dismantle transnational drug-trafficking organizations. This means integrating our border enforcement and interdiction, domestic law enforcement, and international efforts so they are coordinated and mutually reinforcing. The United States-Mexico border region is the current primary locus for drugs being trafficked into the United States, but the threats posed by drug trafficking and the opportunities to address it are nationwide. Intensified intelligence exchange, information sharing, and coordination—especially of actionable tactical intelligence and information—are necessary to improve our efforts. Intelligence collection and analysis and information exchanges should be used to support law enforcement efforts to disrupt and interdict drug-trafficking operations in near real time and to develop investigations and cases for prosecution.

Attacking the drug-trafficking organizations' profits, assets, and money laundering operations is a critical component of a comprehensive strategy. The action items below, taken together, constitute a significant shift toward a more comprehensive, coordinated national approach to respond to this critical threat.



## Principles

### 1. Federal Enforcement Initiatives Must be Coordinated With State, Local, and Tribal Partners

The Federal Government must enhance information-sharing and support for State, local, and tribal partners while avoiding duplicative efforts that waste resources. These partners are essential to the success of this *Strategy*. Only by sharing information can all partners have a good understanding of how drug organizations operate within each jurisdiction. Drug-trafficking organizations do not view jurisdictional borders as an obstacle, but as another opportunity to exploit. Effective coordination is thus absolutely essential to the success of operations against drug-trafficking organizations. The only way to disrupt major drug-trafficking organizations is to acquire, analyze, and share information on how these groups operate. Much of this critical information resides in State, local, and tribal agencies. This is the primary reason why such information must be made available to all Federal, State, local, and tribal investigators and analysts who can use it. Every cash seizure, trafficker arrest, or traffic stop may provide a critical piece of the puzzle. Federal agencies must take necessary steps so that national data systems can receive input by State, local, and tribal agencies and provide access to the information resident in those systems to State and local agencies, building on the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC)

National Seizure System. Federal authorities, in turn, must work with local partners to coordinate joint operations such as domestic and international controlled deliveries of drugs, money, and weapons that will enable us to disrupt and dismantle trafficking organizations.

### Actions

#### A. Maximize Federal Support for Drug Law Enforcement Task Forces [DOJ/OCDETF, DEA, ONDCP/HIDTA, DHS/ICE, CBP, Treasury]

Federal funding for drug law enforcement task forces enables State and local law enforcement agencies to participate in joint investigations, promotes local and regional coordination, and helps to minimize duplication of effort. There are many Federal agencies that support task forces, including DOJ, DHS, Treasury, and ONDCP. DOJ, for example, uses prosecutor-led, multiagency task forces sponsored through its Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) Program to target drug-trafficking organizations for dismantlement and disruption consistent with the *Strategy*. These task forces leverage the expertise and resources of the participating Federal, State, and local agencies in a cooperative, coordinated effort against these criminal organizations. DHS leads 17 Border Enforcement Security Task Forces, which leverage Federal, State, local, tribal, and foreign law enforcement resources to identify, disrupt, and dismantle organizations that seek to exploit vulnerabilities in United States borders. Federal agencies are directed to identify ways to enhance State and local participation in Federal drug-enforcement task forces. This can include finding opportunities for efficiencies by reducing duplication of effort within existing fusion centers through co-location or consolidation and better coordination of requests to State, local, and tribal partners to participate in task forces.

#### B. Improve Intelligence Exchange and Information Sharing [DOJ/OCDETF, DEA, ATF, DHS/ICE, CBP, I&A, ODNI, Treasury, ONDCP/HIDTA]

Although progress has been made since September 11, 2001, in enhancing information sharing, there is much more to be done. Federal agencies must foster an improved, faster exchange of information with State and local governments; this means a two-way exchange. Local officials need to know what happens to investigative leads they provide to Federal partners and need to see reporting from national authorities that affects the safety and security of their jurisdictions. Federal agencies must work together to ensure that criminal databases include all relevant information, are up to date, and are easily accessible by appropriate local authorities. In recent years, the development of national and State and urban area fusion centers, enhancement of EPIC, and NDIC's Field Intelligence Officer program, as well as increased dissemination of secure methods for distributing classified information (e.g., via the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network, or SIPRNET) have created new opportunities and new challenges. Fusion Centers must be interconnected and resources leveraged to avoid duplication of effort. For example, the OCDETF Fusion Center has expanded the number of participating Federal agencies to strengthen its fused database and leverage existing systems to further serve the national effort to attack organized crime. As directed in the *2009 Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy* (Southwest Border Strategy), Federal agencies will commit additional analytical personnel to supplement existing intelligence exchange.

**C. Ensure State and Local Law Enforcement Access to Federal Information on Mexico-Based Traffickers [DOJ/DEA, FBI, ATF, NDIC, DHS/ICE, I&A, CBP, Treasury/IRS, ONDCP, ODNI]**

Federal agencies, often working in close partnership with Mexico, have produced a large volume of information about Mexico-based drug-trafficking organizations. This information must be kept up to date and shared if it is to be used effectively against drug-trafficking organizations. However, this information often resides in different databases. Federal agencies must combine this information and make it available to authorized State, local, and tribal law enforcement so they might benefit from the information gathered. These same local partners should have the ability to add information to this pooled database. Information-sharing architecture is required that will allow State, local, and tribal fusion centers to contribute information on drug-trafficking organizations and drug-related violent crime so that the information can be accessed by all of those with a need to know and be made available rapidly for operational and strategic purposes. DOJ will work with DHS, Treasury, and ONDCP/HIDTA to ensure that information from Federal databases that include relevant data on Mexico-based trafficking organizations is accessible to State and local law enforcement officers who work on these issues.

**D. Promote Law Enforcement Collaboration Along Drug-Trafficking Corridors via “Gateway/Destination” Initiatives [DOJ/DEA, ONDCP/HIDTA, DHS/ICE, CBP, I&A]**

Information sharing across the southwest border has become an important priority in recent years. Likewise, it is also vital for Federal agencies to facilitate exchange of information throughout drug-, money-, and weapons-trafficking corridors. Although trafficking patterns do change, drugs that, for example, end up in Atlanta generally enter the United States through the southeastern parts of the Texas border with Mexico. Drug-related violence often follows along such trafficking corridors. Thus, it is extremely productive for law enforcement authorities from trafficking corridors to meet and exchange information on their drug investigations. To broaden knowledge of trafficking organizations and to ensure quick exchange of investigatory leads on targets, Federal agencies will coordinate gateway/destination initiatives with State, local, and tribal law enforcement partners throughout the year.

**E. Assist Tribal Authorities to Combat Trafficking on Tribal Lands [DOJ/FBI, DEA, ATF, DHS, Interior, ONDCP]**

There are a host of challenges unique to tribal lands. Many Indian tribes are at high risk from illegal drug trafficking, production, and consumption because these tribes are located in geographically remote areas and suffer from a lack of economic development. Illegal prescription drug diversion and abuse has been a particularly worrying problem in recent years. The high poverty and unemployment rates, combined with the challenges of accessing often remote health care, facilities, educational opportunities, and social services, make tribal communities disproportionately vulnerable. In addition, in some tribal lands, there are jurisdictional and investigative challenges for law enforcement, notably, in tribal lands that share international borders with Mexico or Canada. Drug-trafficking organizations exploit these challenges to further their illicit drug trade operations. Federal agencies have sought to provide focused assistance to address these unique challenges. The ICE Shadow Wolves, which continue to play a vital role, were established by Congress in 1974 to address smuggling occurring through the Tohono O’odham Nation. The HIDTA Program has awarded funds in the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Oklahoma, and Washington. In all cases, the HIDTA Task Force Model of multiagency participation was a prerequisite for funding consideration. Other agencies have similarly sought collaborative

partnerships with Indian tribes that often lack the resources to effectively combat the illicit drug trade. Due to the threat, particularly on our borders, this challenge will continue to be addressed through additional collaboration by DOJ and HIDTA task forces, in the form of memorandums of understanding (MOUs) among Indian tribes, sheriff's departments, and HDTAs; program initiatives; updated intelligence assessments; and cooperative law enforcement efforts from multiagency task forces operating near tribal lands. These efforts will be expanded through additional collaboration with DOJ and HIDTA task forces operating near tribal lands.

**F. Ensure Comprehensive Review of Domestic Drug Threat [DOJ/NDIC, DEA, FBI, ATF, OJP, HHS/NIDA, SAMHSA, CDC, DOD, DHS/ICE, USCG, CBP]**

Drug trends can vary considerably from state to state or city to city. However, a national strategic analysis focusing on the impact of the drug trade can provide a clear and helpful guide in setting the Nation's agenda among many competing priorities. Thus the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) is directed to update the National Drug Threat Assessment, drawing on the expertise, knowledge, and data of both law enforcement and interdiction agencies (e.g., DEA, FBI, ATF, DOD, ICE, USCG, and CPB) and prevention, treatment, and research organizations (e.g., NIDA, SAMHSA, CDC, OJP). This updated assessment will assist ONDCP in reporting on implementation of this *Strategy* and in developing the 2011 update on the *Strategy*.

**2. United States Borders Must be Secured**

Protecting America's borders is a primary responsibility of Federal agencies, but it also requires a close partnership with State, local, and tribal authorities. Drug-trafficking organizations, operating throughout the continental United States, collect and move thousands of packages of illicit drugs, currency, and weapons through our local communities. This massive network of trafficker operatives moving across our national borders has created a serious threat to the safety of the American public. The traffickers have built a national web of stash houses; organizational cells specializing in drugs, guns, and money; and a virtual army of couriers with vehicles and advanced communications and logistics. This drug trade contributes to violence, kidnappings, robberies, and other crimes throughout the country, but especially in border areas. This same extensive trafficker network also could be exploited by terrorist organizations. Federal agencies have unique authorities and capabilities that must be applied to the serious threat to our Nation's borders posed by violent drug-trafficking organizations.

**Actions**

**A. Implement the Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy [ONDCP, DHS/ICE, CBP, I&A, USCG, S&T, DOJ/DEA, ATF, FBI, State, Treasury, DOD, ODNI]**

On June 5, 2009, Attorney General Holder, DHS Secretary Napolitano, and ONDCP Director Kerlikowske released the *Southwest Border Strategy*, which aims to stem the flow of illegal drugs and their illicit proceeds across the southwest border and reduce associated crime and violence in the region. It directs Federal agencies to increase coordination and information sharing with State and local law enforcement agencies, intensifies national efforts to interdict the south-bound flow of weapons and bulk currency, and calls for continued close collaboration with the Government of Mexico in their efforts against the drug cartels. The *Southwest Border Strategy* is an important component of the Administration's national



drug control policy and complements comprehensive efforts to respond to threats along the border. This *Southwest Border Strategy*, the product of a collaborative interagency effort led by the DHS Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement (CNE) and DOJ's Office of the Deputy Attorney General at the direction of ONDCP, shall be fully implemented.

**B. Develop National Arrival Zone Task Force Implementation Plan [TIC, DHS/CBP, ICE, DOJ/DEA, DOD, State, ONDCP]**

Drug detection, monitoring, interdiction, and apprehension are divided into Source, Transit, and Arrival Zones. United States anti-drug programs in the Source Zone are coordinated through U.S. Embassies within host nations, and the Transit Zone is coordinated by the Coast Guard-led Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S). In the Arrival Zone, although there is an extraordinary amount of effort by Federal, State, and local agencies, there is no comprehensive cross-cutting coordination mechanism. JIATF-S, widely recognized as the "gold standard" for Transit Zone intelligence fusion, information sharing, inter-agency coordination, and multinational partnering, should serve as a model for an Arrival Zone Task Force. The Interdiction Committee (TIC), chaired by the Coast Guard Commandant and chartered by ONDCP, is an interagency body that strategically coordinates supply reduction activities. For the past year, the TIC has been studying options to apply an operational model similar to JIATF-S to the Arrival Zone under the rubric of a National Task Force (NTF). The NTF, whether virtual in nature or concentrated within an existing multiagency coordination facility such as EPIC on the southwest border, would integrate multiple Federal coordination centers for air, land, and sea with regional and local intelligence and coordination centers to ensure near real-time dissemination of intelligence to task forces and agencies to support rapid facilitation of controlled deliveries or interdiction operations, as appropriate. Thus, TIC is directed to provide ONDCP with an update on the status of a National Arrival Zone Task Force implementation plan with full interagency and state and local participation by November 1, 2010.

**C. Develop National Plan for Southbound Interdiction of Currency and Weapons [DHS/CBP, ICE, DOJ/OCDETF, DEA, ATF, Treasury, ONDCP]**

The enormous amount of money generated by drug sales in the United States fuels the expansion of violent drug-trafficking organizations. Similarly, the weapons acquired by traffickers also enable them to wreak havoc within Mexico and the United States. The *Southwest Border Strategy* strongly endorsed an intensified focus on the south-bound threat. CBP is working to renovate south-bound point-of-exit lanes to allow for increased inspection and is hiring personnel specifically for the south-bound mission. DEA is building, in collaboration with other Federal agencies and State and local partners, a network of automated license plate readers to identify likely currency and weapons smugglers. This effort requires close cooperation with local authorities, both to facilitate installation of the cameras and to ensure the information is acted on appropriately. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is pursuing the use of Kingpin Act civil and criminal penalties against United States citizens supplying or selling arms to the cartels and also is exploring applying penalties to bulk cash smugglers. It is also aiming at designations of those receiving arms and bulk cash for the traffickers on the Mexican end of the supply chain. DHS, DOJ, and partner agencies will develop an interagency national concept plan in 2010 for a south-bound interdiction system and ensure sharing of data among systems tracking weapons, currency, and narcotics trafficking to promote effective targeting of operations and vital de-confliction of investigations. This effort will include utilization of the resources and capabilities of State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies.

**D. Coordinate Efforts to Secure the Northern Border Against Drug-Related Threats [DHS/CBP, ICE, USCG, DOJ/DEA, State, ONDCP, ODNI]**

The southwest border is a major focus of drug policy, but there are also considerable challenges on the northern border. MDMA/Ecstasy, marijuana, and methamphetamine are trafficked from Canada into the United States, while cocaine, bulk currency, and weapons are trafficked from the United States into Canada. Gang members, traffickers, and couriers move back and forth between both countries. The scale of synthetic drug-trafficking across the United States-Canada border is a serious concern for both governments. According to the 2010 National Drug Threat Assessment, the amount of MDMA seized at or between northern border ports of entry (POEs) increased 594 percent (from 312,389 to 2,167,238 dosage units) from 2004 to 2009. The United States benefits from a close, longstanding, and productive working relationship with Canadian law enforcement agencies. Canadian authorities and United States law enforcement agencies are already partnering through Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBETs) which identify, investigate, and interdict persons and organizations that pose a security threat or are engaged in other organized criminal activity. DHS leads United States participation in the IBETs, partnering with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canada Border Services Agency. These operations are vital and must be continued. United States agencies operating on the northern border will ensure that the necessary personnel, equipment, and technology are placed on or near the northern border and that information on threats and operations is shared both among all Federal agencies operating in the area and with State, local, and tribal partners in the region.

**E. Deny Use of Ports of Entry and Routes of Ingress and Egress Between the Ports [DHS/CBP, ICE, DOJ, DOI/BIA]**

This *Strategy* and previous Executive Branch efforts have focused on the vulnerabilities of our southwestern and northern land borders. As additional personnel, technology, and infrastructure are deployed to the land border, the threat to our air and maritime borders may increase. Air and maritime ports represent a unique challenge with regard to drug-related threats, considering the large volume of cargo and personnel that move through these ports each day. Traffickers have long sought to exploit this vulnerability, and intensified control efforts by United States agencies are necessary. Especially in the jurisdictions near our POEs, State, local, and tribal law enforcement and fusion centers should be provided with regularly updated information on smuggling/concealment methods and techniques. DHS will develop plans in 2010 to better control drug smuggling through these ports and engage with State, local, and tribal partners to improve current outcomes, particularly with respect to activity that may take place between the ports.

**F. Disrupt Surveillance Operations of Drug-Trafficking Organizations [DHS, DOJ, DOD]**

Drug traffickers dedicate significant resources to monitor interdiction operations of United States agencies. On the southwest border, for example, they employ large numbers of strategically placed spotters and lookouts who closely observe activities of CBP officers and the use of canines and provide guidance to trafficking vehicles on when and where to try to cross into the United States. Traffickers also are using advanced technology to intercept law enforcement communications. More systematic efforts will be made to attack and disrupt these trafficker capabilities.



### 3. Focus National Efforts on Specific Drug Problems

Different approaches are required to respond adequately to the variety of drug threats our Nation faces. Drug production entities represent specialized industries that demand specific responses. Methamphetamine, in particular, poses a serious threat not only to consumers and those who manufacture it themselves, but also to law enforcement officers who have to make arrests in or near toxic lab sites and clean up those labs. Addressing marijuana production in our national parks requires the technical capacity to locate the fields within large areas as well as air-lift capability to reach the fields.

#### Actions

##### A. Counter Domestic Methamphetamine Production [DOJ/DEA, ONDCP/HIDTA]

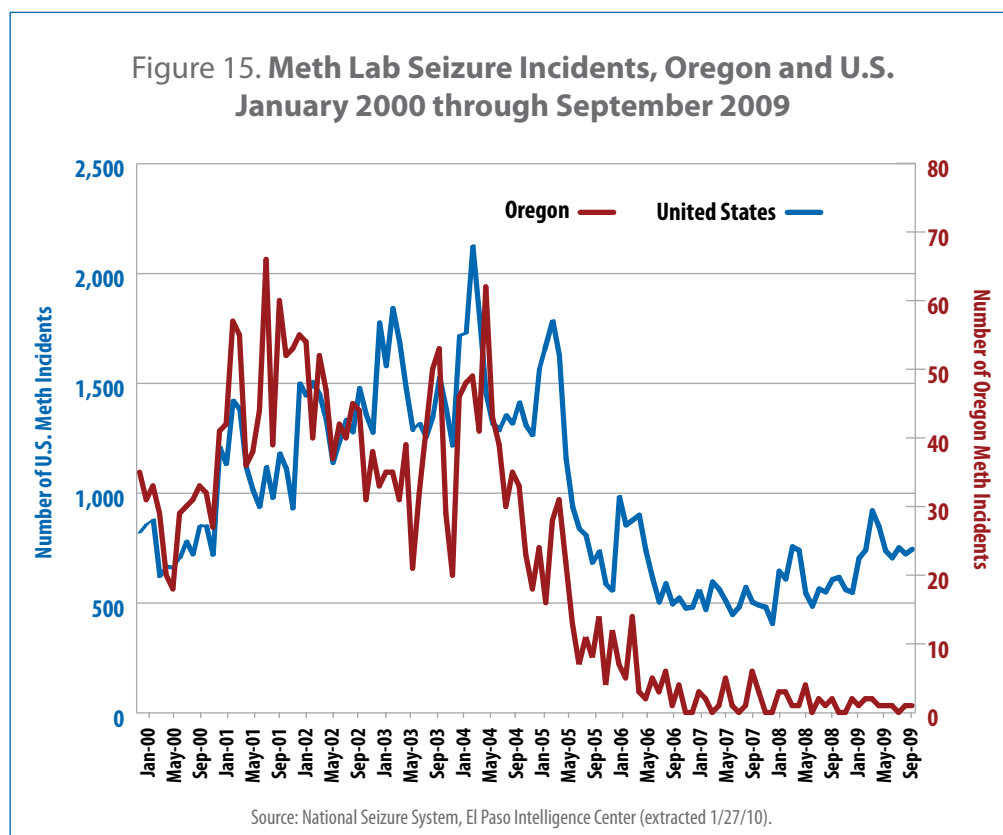
Current Federal and most State laws to control pseudoephedrine, the key ingredient needed to make the most powerful form of methamphetamine, are no longer as effective in addressing the serious threat posed by domestic methamphetamine production as they once were. Drug traffickers and others are now evading these laws and domestically producing methamphetamine in increasing quantities. Teams of pseudoephedrine purchasers, known as “smurfers,” go from store-to-store throughout California and many other states, some even using global positioning system (GPS) devices to map out every location. This smurfing is feeding not only small neighborhood user labs, but also large-scale “super labs” run by drug-trafficking organizations in California. Although it is important to consider the public health benefits of convenient public access to cold medicines such as pseudoephedrine, domestic meth labs pose serious health and safety risks to the public, law enforcement, and children forced to live in or near such toxic environments. In an effort to address this growing threat, some states are now using comprehensive electronic pseudoephedrine sales monitoring systems. However, those efforts have been unable to prevent a resurgence of small-scale meth production in several states. Facing a similar threat, the State of Oregon, in 2006, returned pseudoephedrine to a prescription drug, as it was prior to 1976. Three years later, the results are very encouraging (see Update below). In early 2010, Mississippi enacted a similar law. In light of recent trends, DOJ will conduct a review of how to best enhance our Nation’s approach to countering domestic meth production, including careful consideration of whether our Federal laws must be updated. In addition, NDIC will continue to monitor and report strategic trends in methamphetamine production and precursor chemical smurfing through production of the annual *National Methamphetamine Threat Assessment*.

#### Update: Oregon’s Approach to Fighting Methamphetamine Labs

In 2008, the Government of Mexico banned pseudoephedrine entirely. This has had a significant positive impact on the control of methamphetamine for both Mexico and the United States. Several countries in Central America have also increased restrictions on sale of pseudoephedrine. However, this has put further pressure to smurf (i.e., make numerous purchases in small amounts) pseudoephedrine and manufacture methamphetamine here in the United States. Short of banning pseudoephedrine in the United States, there is another option that has shown encouraging results.

Effective July 1, 2006, the State of Oregon returned pseudoephedrine to a prescription drug, as it was prior to 1976. There was extensive debate in Oregon as to whether this law would prevent smurfing and

meth labs and whether there would be public outcry or other adverse consequences. More than 3 years later, smurfing within the State of Oregon has been virtually eliminated, meth labs have been nearly eradicated, and local officials report little to no public outcry or other adverse consequences. Oregon's progress is highlighted in the chart below, which compares meth lab seizure trends in Oregon with the national trend. Others have seen this progress and are acting on it. In 2009, New Zealand and a number of local municipalities in Missouri followed Oregon's lead, and early results have also been positive. This approach, as well as others, should be closely examined to enable our Nation to plot a course to effectively address the continuing and growing domestic methamphetamine production threat.



#### B. Identify Interior Corridors of Drug Movement and Deny Traffickers Use of America's Highways [DOJ/DEA, EPIC, DHS/ICE, CBP, ONDCP/HIDTA]

Drug traffickers employ our Nation's roads and highways to move large amounts of drugs, currency, and weapons, both northbound and southbound. Although many of these drug-trafficking routes are well known, the volume of traffic makes it difficult to interdict this trade. Further, drug traffickers have shown great resourcefulness in building into all types of vehicles hidden compartments that are often difficult and time-consuming for law enforcement officers to locate. To combat this threat, DEA funds training in contraband detection. The HIDTA program, through its Domestic Highway Enforcement initiative, has funded specialized equipment, training, intelligence-sharing activities, and operational

travel and overtime expenses to increase manpower focused on highway interdiction. This initiative has engaged all 48 contiguous states in joint operations planning and intelligence sharing with each other and with Federal agencies, primarily through EPIC. Departments and agency task forces will increase collaboration among Federal, State, and local law enforcement working against a common threat in key drug-trafficking corridors.

**C. Eradicate Marijuana Cultivation [ONDCP/HIDTA, Interior, USDA, DOD/National Guard, DOJ/DEA, NDIC]**

Drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs), generally those with links to Mexican cartels, are exploiting United States territory, especially public lands, for the cultivation of marijuana. Moreover, marijuana is being cultivated by traffickers from Mexican DTOs at remote outdoor grow sites on a number of Indian reservations, particularly those in the Pacific Northwest. Often, these marijuana fields are guarded 24 hours a day by armed criminals and sometimes protected by booby traps, thereby posing a significant threat to public safety. In addition, significant environmental damage results from marijuana cultivators camping for extensive periods in pristine public lands and using fertilizers and other chemicals. Federal agencies have worked with their State, local, and tribal government counterparts to respond to marijuana cultivation. By coordinating their efforts and pooling their resources, they have eradicated record numbers of marijuana plants each year for the past 5 years. Support from Federal agencies and information on the precise location of clandestine marijuana fields from State, local, and tribal agencies is crucial to those responsible for managing public lands, especially as trafficking organizations expand to additional states. The DEA, National Guard, and HIDTA Task Forces, as well as State and local agencies, have provided critical support in funding, helicopter support, and intelligence analysis. ONDCP, through the HIDTA program, provides funding for investigation and eradication of marijuana plantations through the Domestic Marijuana Eradication and Investigation Project (DMEIP). ONDCP will collaborate with DEA and the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and other agencies to review the current threat as assessed by NDIC and work to increase the effectiveness of marijuana eradication.

**D. Stop Indoor Marijuana Production [DOJ/DEA]**

Marijuana trafficking is prevalent across the Nation, with both domestic and foreign sources of supply. California, Hawaii, Kentucky, Oregon, Tennessee, Washington, and West Virginia are considered the top seven (M7) states for marijuana cultivation. In 2007 and 2008, cannabis plant eradication increased 34 percent and 14 percent, respectively. Due to this success, many cultivators have been forced to abandon large, outdoor cannabis plots in favor of smaller, better concealed gardens and indoor cultivation. The use of indoor grow operations and other technological advances have enabled traffickers to increase the potency of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis plants. In 2008, DEA and partner agencies seized in excess of 4,100 indoor grow operations. The leading states for indoor cannabis cultivation in 2008, by number of plants eradicated, were California (182,602 plants), Florida (78,489 plants) and Washington (41,497 plants). DEA, in coordination with State, and local agencies, must aggressively deploy resources as efficiently as possible in close partnership with State agencies to eradicate the marijuana and dismantle organizations that produce it.

**E. Partner with Local Law Enforcement Agencies to Combat Street, Prison, and Motorcycle Drug Gangs [DOJ/FBI, ATF, DEA, USMS, ONDCP/HIDTA]**

Gangs play a major role in distributing drugs and other contraband throughout the country. United States law enforcement agencies, in collaboration with State, local, and tribal partners, work to disrupt and dismantle gangs through a variety of initiatives. The National Gang Targeting, Enforcement and Coordination Center (GangTECC) is a national multiagency anti-gang task force that targets the most significant and violent gangs in the United States. GangTECC Federal agents work in close collaboration with Gang Squad prosecutors in the Criminal Division of DOJ and with the analysts at the National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) and can offer direct support for those engaged in anti-gang initiatives. The FBI's Safe Streets Violent Crime Initiative supports 200 task forces to pursue and prosecute violent gangs through sustained, proactive, coordinated investigations. These task forces combine short-term, street-level enforcement activity with financial analysis and Title III wire intercept investigations to prosecute the entire gang, from the street-level thugs and dealers up through the crew leaders and, ultimately, the gang's command structure. The FBI, in coordination with DEA's Mobile Enforcement Team and DOJ, will review the effectiveness of these efforts and provide recommendations later this year on how to enhance their impact.

**F. Disrupt Illicit Financial Networks by Exploiting Cash Seizures [DOJ/OCDETF, DEA, Treasury, DHS/ICE]**

Bulk seizures of currency, regardless of who makes the seizure or where it is made, should be treated, to the extent allowable by law, as drugs or other contraband are treated. The reason to characterize bulk currency as contraband is that it places a stronger focus on investigating and prosecuting those individuals who are transporting the currency. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), for example, partnered with DEA, IRS, ICE, and FBI to put together Financial Investigative Teams that are now deployed to investigate significant currency seizures. Now, 100 percent of individuals caught with illicit proceeds are prosecuted, compared with about 1 percent 5 years ago. In Texas, these initial seizures now lead to controlled deliveries, which enable the identification of coconspirators, detection of currency stash locations, and generation of important leads on major trafficking organizations. Some of these investigations have resulted in the discovery of much more money than what was found at the initial seizure. IRS should facilitate these financial investigations by working directly with and training State and local law enforcement agencies on interviewing suspects and on money-laundering investigative techniques that will increase their financial investigative skills. ICE will continue its focus on bulk cash smuggling through Operation Firewall, and DEA will maintain its Money Trail Initiative coordinated by the Special Operations Division. All Federal agencies listed above will assist State and local partners in conducting currency investigations, provide best practices information, and report back to ONDCP in 2010 on progress in changing the way currency seizures are treated throughout the United States.

**G. Develop National Parcel Post Initiative [DHS/CBP, ICE, DOJ/DEA, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, ONDCP/HIDTA]**

There is little doubt that a significant amount of illegal drugs moves through our public and private mail systems. This is a particular problem with prescription drugs, which are easily mixed in with large-scale legitimate mailings. Considering the huge volume of packages, domestic and international, that are

transited throughout the 50 States, this threat poses a difficult challenge and overwhelms the limited manpower now focused on examining these packages. Nonetheless, new technologies combined with investigatory efforts hold promise to curtail this problem. The HIDTA program currently funds some parcel post operations that have netted numerous seizures across the country. One obstacle with this project is the coordination needed for these types of investigations. Federal agencies need to support State and local agencies with these types of investigations, given the multijurisdictional boundaries involved for State and local partners. DHS will partner with HIDTA and DEA in 2010 to develop a new initiative to first analyze how this challenge can best be met on a national scale and then to launch pilot initiatives at several locations.

**H. Establish Interagency Task Force on Drug Endangered Children [DOJ, ONDCP, HHS, ED]**

The Drug Endangered Children (DEC) national movement emerged as a multidisciplinary response to children exposed to drug use, trafficking, and/or narcotics manufacturing and who are often victims of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse; neglect; and drug-related violence. Considering the serious risks to the health and safety of drug endangered children, there is a need to support the creation of a DEC infrastructure and increase capacity development at the State, local, and tribal levels. A new Interagency Task Force on Drug Endangered Children will be formed to support the identification of model protocols, programming, and best practices, including the development and implementation of a national multidisciplinary training program to assist States, local, and tribal governments in identifying, responding to, and providing services for drug endangered children. In addition, the new Task Force will identify other tools, protocols, or programs that may assist in protecting children. By establishing these tools and promoting their use under its current authorities, DOJ and all partners will be better able to rescue, protect, and serve the most vulnerable victims of drug-related crimes.