



U.S. Department of Justice

National Drug Intelligence Center

National Drug Intelligence Center Releases National Drug Threat Assessment 2008

For Release after 3:00 p.m. EST
November 07, 2007

Contact: Charles Miller
(202) 532-4037

The National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC), a component of the Department of Justice and the nation's principal center for strategic drug intelligence, has released the *National Drug Threat Assessment 2008*, detailing drug trafficking and abuse trends within the United States. The assessment identifies the primary drug threats to the nation, tracks drug availability throughout the country, and analyzes trafficking and distribution patterns of illicit drugs within the United States. It evaluates the threat posed by illegal drugs, comparing availability, production and cultivation, transportation, distribution, and demand.

The *National Drug Threat Assessment 2008* details these emerging threats based on the most currently available law enforcement, intelligence, and public health reporting and data.

Key findings of the report are as follows:

- During the first half of 2007, at least 38 prominent U.S. drug markets, principally in the eastern United States, witnessed sustained cocaine shortages. A confluence of events, not the least of which was unprecedented sustained counterdrug activity by the Mexican Government including the extradition of multiple high-level traffickers, combined with significant maritime cocaine seizures and continued successful counterdrug activity in cocaine drug source countries and the United States, all contributed to the shortages. Some areas continued to show reduced availability through October 2007, while other market areas have rebounded. According to the National Drug Threat Survey, cocaine replaced methamphetamine as the principal drug threat to the United States as reported by state and local law enforcement.
- Methamphetamine availability and abuse remain significant concerns to law enforcement and health professionals in the United States. Treatment admissions for methamphetamine abuse have doubled since 2000. Domestic methamphetamine production has continued to decline, and precursor chemical import restrictions and controls in Mexico have caused Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) to adapt their operating procedures to maintain their methamphetamine production capabilities. Methamphetamine production in Canada has increased, with some production intended for distribution in the United States.

More

- The threat associated with marijuana trafficking and abuse is increasing as growing demand for high-potency marijuana has been met by increased availability of the drug.
- The strength and influence of Mexican and Asian DTOs are increasing in various markets throughout the nation, particularly with regard to marijuana and methamphetamine trafficking.
- Pharmaceutical drug abusers in a growing number of states are having greater difficulty acquiring drugs through prescription forgery, doctor-shopping, or unscrupulous physicians and pharmacists. This is attributed to the increasing number of states that have implemented statewide prescription monitoring programs (PMPs). Nonetheless, abusers are obtaining their drugs from other sources, including neighboring states that do not have PMPs in place.
- Bulk cash smuggling from the United States to Mexico—the principal method for laundering illegal drug proceeds—increased in 2006.

In preparing the 2008 assessment, NDIC partnered with federal, state, and local agencies in the collection of data and information. NDIC conducted thousands of field interviews with law enforcement and public health officials regarding all aspects of illicit drug activities in their jurisdictions. Another significant source of data and information is the National Drug Threat Survey. NDIC annually surveys a national, statistically representative sample of more than 3,400 state and local law enforcement agencies. Data from the survey are used to produce national-, regional-, and state-level statistical estimates, which NDIC intelligence analysts employ when preparing the national assessment.

In addition to the *National Drug Threat Assessment*, NDIC annually produces nine regional drug threat assessments in cooperation with the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force of the Department of Justice and 28 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area drug market analyses in cooperation with the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Combined with the *National Drug Threat Assessment*, the regional assessments and market area analyses provide a comprehensive portrait of illicit drug activity within the United States.

A copy of the *National Drug Threat Assessment 2008* can be found at our web site at:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs25/25921/25921p.pdf>

###