February 2005

National Drug Threat Assessment 2005: Threat Matrix

Overall Key Findings

- Mexican criminal groups exert more influence over drug trafficking in the United States than any other group. Mexican criminal groups smuggle most of the cocaine available in domestic drug markets into the country.
- Moreover, Mexican criminal groups produce and subsequently smuggle into the country much of the heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine available in U.S. drug markets.
- Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) appear to be gaining control of a larger percentage of the cocaine smuggled into the United States. The estimated percentage of cocaine smuggled into the United States via the Mexico–CentrAl AmericA corridor increased sharply from 72 percent in 2002 to 77 percent in 2003, and preliminary data indicate that the percentage may be higher than 90 percent for 2004.
- Domestic drug markets appear to be increasingly supplied with methamphetamine produced in methamphetamine superslabs in Mexico.
- Production and distribution of ice methamphetamine—a higher purity, more addictive form of methamphetamine—by Mexican criminal groups has increased sharply over the past 2 years in many drug markets.
- Colombian DTOs are increasingly relying on Mexican DTOs and criminal groups to transport South American heroin to the United States much as they rely on Mexican DTOs to transport cocaine.
- The threat posed to the United States by the Illegal diversion and abuse of prescription drugs has increased sharply since the mid-1990s and is now among the leading drug threats to the country.
- Law enforcement reporting indicates that transportation of bulk currency out of the United States—primarily overland across the U.S.–Mexico border—is the principal form of money laundering by DTOs.
- Mexican DTOs distribute ice (powder and liquid) throughout the United States and are increasingly targeting youth in the country with these illegal drugs. Ice availability has increased sharply since 2000. More adolescents perceive risk in using ice, and nonmedical use of ice has increased slightly.
- Powder cocaine use among adults decreased since 1999 while cocaine use among adults increased slightly.
- Marijuana use has decreased since 1991, and use among adults has increased slightly.
- Domestic drug markets appear to be increasingly supplied with methamphetamine produced in methamphetamine superslabs in Mexico. The demand for heroin will remain lower in 2005 than in 2004, attributed to Southwest Asian heroin, which is typically destined for Asian and European drug markets.
- Mexican DTOs continue to expand large-scale domestic cultivation operations, overall marijuana production in the United States will increase.
- Law enforcement reporting indicates that transportation of bulk currency out of the United States—primarily overland across the U.S.–Mexico border—is the principal form of money laundering by DTOs.

Cocaine

- Powder cocaine use among adults decreased since 1999 while cocaine use among adults increased slightly.
- Marijuana production decreased from 705 in 2001 to 410 in 2004.
- Increased seizures in Texas indicate it is the state through which most cocaine enters the U.S.

Methamphetamine

- Increased methamphetamine availability in the northeastern region.
- Ice availability has increased sharply since 2000. More adolescents perceive risk in using ice, and nonmedical use of ice has increased slightly.

Marijuana

- Since 1994, marijuana-emergency department (ED) mentions and treatment admissions increased.
- U.S. marijuana production increasing partly because of increased involvement by U.S.-based Mexican DTOs.
- Sales of marijuana shipments from Canada increased.

Heroin

- Heroin treatment admissions increased each year since 1996. Southwest Asian heroin production increased in 2002, 2003, and 2004 primarily because of increased production in Afghanistan.
- Sharp increases in South American heroin seizures along Southwest Border.

MDMA

- MDMA availability has decreased since 2003.
- More adolescents perceive risk in using MDMA.
- Decrease in MDMA smuggled directly into the U.S. from source areas. Asian DTOs are involving MDMA trafficking and may become the primary domestic suppliers.

Illicit Drug

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<th>Key Findings</th>
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<th>Seized in En Route/Within U.S. in 2003</th>
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<th>Wholesale Price Range in the U.S.</th>
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<th>Retail Price Range in the U.S.</th>
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<td>Mexico, Southwestern Border (SWB, CA, TX, AZ, NM), Miami, Florida, New York City, NY</td>
<td>Atlanta, Miami, coconut, Dominican Republic</td>
<td>$230,000-$300,000 per kg (powder)</td>
<td>African American, Hispanic street gangs, Colombian, Cuban, Dominican, Haitian</td>
<td>Mexican, Caribbean, Asian street gangs, Colombian, Cuban, Dominican, Colombian, OMGS</td>
<td>$25-$110 per gram (powder) $20-$100 per rock (crack)</td>
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<td>Mexican, California, Arizona, New Mexico</td>
<td>Texas, California, New York, Miami, Florida, New York City (NYC)</td>
<td>Miami, Phoenix/Tucson, Mexican, Hispanic-Italian, Asian, Mexican</td>
<td>$15.50-$195.00 per kg (powder); $135.00-$1,105.00 per kg (crack)</td>
<td>Mexican, Colombian, Hispanic, Canadian, Haitian, and Puerto Rican independent dealers and criminal groups</td>
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