

U.S. Attorney's Report to the District

The focus of most federal prosecution strategies is to attack sophisticated criminal activity, often spanning multiple jurisdictions. In the area of narcotics enforcement, that strategy is reflected in the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program.

The OCDETF program, established in 1982, is the centerpiece of the U.S. Attorney General's strategy to reduce the availability of drugs by disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking organizations, money laundering organizations, and related criminal enterprises. The program operates nationwide and combines the expertise of numerous federal agencies in a coordinated attack against major criminal organizations. Each of the 94 U.S. Attorneys' Offices participates in OCDETF, along with DEA, ATF, IRS, FBI, the US Marshals Service, and task force officers from numerous state and local law enforcement agencies.

The OCDETF strategy includes not only narcotics enforcement, but eliminating the financial infrastructure of drug trafficking organizations by emphasizing financial investigations and asset forfeiture. Each year OCDETF coordinates the annual formation of the Consolidated Priority Target (CPOT) List.

This Office has been very active and very successful in the OCDETF program. Several Assistant U.S. Attorneys in both the Sacramento and Fresno Offices devote all or most of their time to OCDETF matters. In Fiscal Year 2011, this office led the ten districts in the Pacific Region in the number of OCDETF defendants convicted. In the first quarter of FY 2012, this office was first in the region in a number of categories relating to numbers of active OCDETF investigations. Two cases announced in the last month illustrate the range of current OCDETF activity in this district.

On May 30, we announced the return of an indictment charging 32 people from 16 different cities in northern California with engaging in a widespread indoor marijuana cultivation and interstate trafficking conspiracy. Search warrants executed in the case resulted in the seizure of hundreds of thousands of dollars, quantities of marijuana, and numerous firearms, including guns that had been reported stolen and guns with obliterated serial numbers. The investigation was conducted in multiple counties, and included surveillance, the review of financial records, and search warrants executed at 41 locations.

On June 25, we announced the extradition of Shiraz Malik, a designated CPOT, from the Czech Republic. Malik, a Pakistani resident of Poland, is charged with running an international drug trafficking ring using the internet, and front businesses in the United Kingdom and Pakistan, to sell a variety of drugs including heroin, methamphetamine, and Ecstasy, and controlled substances including Oxycontin, ketamine, diazepam, and ephedrine to buyers all over the world. The investigation in that case involved an extensive undercover operation that included multiple purchases over the internet, and undercover meetings in three European cities.

For 30 years, the OCDETF program has proven one of the most effective tools to disrupt and dismantle sophisticated criminal drug trafficking organizations. The experienced prosecutors in this district are continuing to prove its effectiveness.

If you would like to communicate with our office, contact the main number in Sacramento, or submit a suggestion by clicking on the button below. Thank you.

United States Attorney

Benjamin B. Wagner