



1999-2003

The most significant development in U.S. drug trafficking and abuse in the period 1999-2003 was the array of synthetic drugs that became popular, particularly among young people. Foremost among these laboratory-produced drugs was Ecstasy, a combination stimulant and hallucinogen sold in tablet form. It was touted as a “feel good” drug with an undeserved reputation for safety. In 2000, it was estimated that about two million tablets were smuggled into the U.S. every week. Other synthetic drugs like methamphetamine remained popular and continued to hit small-town, rural America particularly hard. Still other synthetic drugs with chemical sounding names like GHB, Rohypnol, GBL, and 1,4 BD were used both voluntarily as a way to get high, but even more tragically, concentrated doses of the drugs were slipped into the drinks of unsuspecting people, who then became victims of sexual assault.

Another challenge drug law enforcement faced in the late 1990s was the growing diversion of legal prescription drugs into the illegal market. In 1998, 2.5 million Americans admitted abuse of prescription drugs. By 2001, that had almost doubled to 4.8 million. OxyContin, a powerful prescription analgesic, became

heavily abused. DEA implemented a National Action Plan to combat diversion and abuse of that drug.

More traditional drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and marijuana, which are produced from agricultural products, continued on the drug scene as well. Marijuana remained the most popular drug of choice across the country, and cocaine—while use was down significantly since its peak in the mid-1980s—was the second most commonly used illicit drug in the U.S. Heroin saw a surge in trafficking and use, particularly on the East Coast, where high-purity Colombian heroin dominated the market. According to the 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, during the 1990s heroin incidence rates rose to a level not reached since the 1970s. By 2000, there were 146,000 new heroin users in the country.

DEA worked in partnership with its international counterparts to target the most significant drug trafficking organizations to disrupt supply. Colombian drug trafficking organizations continued to dominate the international cocaine trade. However, unlike their cartel predecessors, the Colombian cocaine trafficking groups of the late 1990s and early 2000s typically specialized in one aspect of the cocaine industry, with no one group of traffickers dominating all aspects of the illicit trade. DEA continued its productive working relationship with the Colombian National Police and dismantled several major cocaine and heroin trafficking groups based in Colombia.

In Mexico, with the election of President Vicente Fox in 2000 and his administration’s unprecedented commitment to ending the unchallenged reign of drug trafficking cartels there, DEA’s relationship improved greatly with its Mexican counterparts, and inroads were made into Mexico-based cartels. Likewise, DEA forged productive relationships with European law enforcement to deal with the smuggling of Ecstasy since that drug was produced almost exclusively in Europe.

DEA took on additional responsibilities in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America. The FBI reassigned hundreds of agents from narcotics investigations to counterterrorism activities. As a result, DEA reallocated resources to meet changing needs.





DEA joined the fight against terror by continuing conspiracy drug investigations and cutting off a funding source for terrorists through drug profits. The Office of National Drug Control Policy launched a major ad campaign to make Americans aware of the connection between drugs and terror.

In addition to its drug interdiction activities, DEA strengthened prevention, education, and treatment initiatives at the local level through DEA's Demand Reduction program and other initiatives. DEA instituted a number of programs like the Mobile Enforcement Team II (MET) program and the Integrated Drug Enforcement Assistance (IDEA) program to offer comprehensive help to local communities in establishing strong, coordinated anti-drug strategies.

While the vast majority of Americans supported DEA's efforts and the national anti-drug strategy, a well-financed and vocal legalization lobby spent huge amounts of money to encourage a greater tolerance for drug use. A number of states passed referendums to permit their residents to use drugs for a variety of reasons, particularly the use of marijuana for supposed medicinal purposes. The citizens who voted in these referenda often relied on the misinformation presented by the sponsors of expensive campaigns to legalize drugs. DEA initiated an anti-legalization campaign as a way to counter that information and publicize the many successes of current drug policy.

National Conference on Drugs, Crime, and Violence in Mid-Sized Communities (1999)

DEA hosted the National Conference on Drugs, Crime, and Violence in Mid-Sized Communities on Feb. 23, 1999. The focus of the Conference was to seek solutions and draw attention to the drug crisis that had rapidly permeated midsized communities nationwide. Survey results from delegates showed that cocaine and marijuana were the two most prevalent drugs affecting small cities and rural areas. However, one quarter of the participants noted that methamphetamine was a major concern. The conference allowed participants to share information and learn from the experiences of other cities and communities that had faced the problems of drug trafficking and drug-related violence.

DEA Opens New Justice Training Center (1999)

First envisioned in the mid-1970s, the new Justice Training Center (JTC) opened on April 28, 1999, at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA. The JTC is a 185,000 square foot building that contains a 250-bed, double occupancy dormitory, an assortment of classrooms (including practical training areas for fingerprinting, interviewing, and wiretap capabilities) and offices, a cafeteria, and an international training room equipped with simultaneous translation equipment. Prior to the opening of the JTC, DEA shared facilities with FBI.

The JTC is used for DEA Basic Agent training, Basic Diver-
sion Investigator training, Basic Intelligence Research Specialist
training, Basic Forensic Chemist training, In-Service training,
Certification training, specialized training, and supervisory,
management, and executive level training. The JTC is also used to
conduct drug training seminars for state and local law enforcement
personnel, and through the use of specially equipped classrooms,
conduct international drug training seminars for foreign law en-
forcement officials.

Opening of the DEA Museum (1999)

On May 11, 1999, the DEA Museum and Visitors Center officially opened at DEA headquarters in Arlington, VA. Occupying 2,200 square feet, the museum features a unique exhibit entitled "Illegal Drugs in America: A Modern History" that traces the history of illegal drugs in the U.S. from opium dens in the mid-1800s to the international drug mafias of the late 20th century. The exhibit includes historical photos, artifacts, text, and interactive computer displays that show the effects of drugs on American society and the efforts by federal law enforcement to combat the drug problem. The exhibit highlights major trends in illegal drug use as well as milestones and accomplishments of DEA and its predecessor agencies.

Many of the museum's artifacts were donated by former and active Special Agents, and members of the Association of Former Federal Narcotics Agents volunteered to give tours. In its first year, the museum drew 5,000 visitors and by 2003, that number had reached 10,000. Visitors include student groups, law enforcement officials, international visitors, and tourists to Washington, D.C.

Regional Enforcement Teams

Early in 1999, DEA created the Regional Enforcement Team (RET) program to address the threat of drug trafficking groups using established networks of compartmentalized cells to facilitate their illegal activity. While in the past these organizations had typically maintained their operations in larger cities, pressure from law enforcement led to their movement into smaller locations throughout the U.S. The RET Program consists of four teams of agents, analysts, and support staff that are responsible for addressing increased rates of drug abuse, trafficking, and violent crime in these smaller locations.

There were 18 RET deployments from 1999 to early 2003. In that time, 36 drug trafficking organizations were dismantled, more than 500 people were arrested and more than 22,000 pounds of drugs were seized.

Mobile Enforcement Teams

Since its inception in 1995, the Mobile Enforcement Team (MET) program continued to fight drug-related violent crime in communities throughout the U.S. The MET Program consists of 21 Teams based in 20 DEA Field Divisions across the country. Working with local law enforcement organizations who lack manpower and resources, DEA's MET Teams combat violent drug organizations in specific neighborhoods and restore safer environments for the residents.

From 1999 to 2003, DEA deployed MET Teams to 380 locations nationwide. Communities across the country felt a significant impact in areas where MET Teams were deployed. As of 2003, MET Teams arrested more than 15,000 people and took more than 10,000 pounds of illegal drugs off the streets.

In Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, the MET Team targeted two trafficking organizations. One group was responsible for bringing wholesale quantities of methamphetamine from Mexico for delivery to distributors throughout the Shenandoah Valley for distribution, while the other brought in crack cocaine from New York City. Both organizations were dismantled, and the work of the MET Team is likely to impede future drug trafficking in the area.

Mobile Enforcement Team II Program (1999)

In 1999, DEA initiated the Mobile Enforcement Team (MET) II program as a follow-up program to communities where DEA's MET teams had deployed. MET teams were groups of specially trained DEA agents sent to communities at the request of law enforcement to help remove violent drug trafficking organizations. The MET II program's goal was to ensure that successful law enforcement operations were reinforced by a vigorous community effort to prevent the reemergence of drug-related violent crime.

DEA, with financial assistance from the Bureau of Justice Assistance and technical support from the National Crime Prevention Council, provided cutting-edge regional training to communities where MET teams had been deployed. Each community sent a team of up to five members that included local and state elected officials; judicial and law enforcement officers; city, school, and program administrators; community activists; representatives of the business and faith communities; and other key decision makers. In 1999, the program was piloted in three regional sessions to leaders of 40 MET communities. In 2000, DEA held four regional sessions to 42 community teams and another four sessions to 37 MET communities in 2001.

The program's goals were met by community leaders committing to developing and employing broad-based strategies for improving citizen safety and equipping these leaders to plan and implement prevention programs. Majority of communities trained through the MET II program conducted far more prevention activities than prior to the training. By 2001, the MET II program evolved into the Integrated Drug Enforcement Assistance (IDEA) program.

Operation Ramp Rats I and II (1999)

In August and September 1999, DEA's Miami Division concluded two successful airport-based investigations of ramp workers ("ramp rats") who used their positions relating to baggage handling, cleaning, fueling and servicing airplanes to smuggle drugs. The investigations disrupted large-scale smuggling of heroin and cocaine into the U.S. along with the distribution of drugs, weapons, and explosives throughout the country. In addition, Miami Dade County instituted immediate security measures at Miami International Airport, making it more difficult to smuggle contraband through the area.

Operation Juno (1999)

Operation Juno was a significant and innovative investigation targeting money laundering operations. It began after the seizure of approximately 386 kilograms of liquid cocaine, which had been found concealed and shipped in frozen fish from Cartagena, Colombia in July 1995. It had been shipped under the name of Colapia S.A., a Colombian company whose U.S. distribution center was based in Atlanta. During the investigation of Colapia, it was revealed that the Atlanta owner was a partner with a prominent Cali, Colombia, narcotics trafficker. In 1996, DEA and the Internal Revenue Service began a pro-active undercover money laundering "sting" investigation named Operation Juno. Based in suburban Atlanta, with a company called "Airmark," DEA and the IRS gained permission from the Attorney General to open a legitimate stockbrokerage firm that served to validate the undercover money laundering operation.

The owner of Colapia S.A. referred the Operation Juno stock-

brokerage firm to other drug trafficking organizations in need of financial and money laundering services. Operation Juno targeted those drug trafficking organizations by offering financial services to launder their drug proceeds. Those proceeds, which were in U.S. dollars, were sold on the Colombian black market peso exchange market via a third-party money exchanger in Colombia. Once the Colombian pesos were deposited into the designated bank accounts, the money laundering contract with the narcotics traffickers was fulfilled. A total of 55 arrests were made in the U.S. during the investigation. Civil seizure warrants were also brought against 59 domestic bank accounts worldwide and approximately \$26 million in drug proceeds were targeted for seizure. Additionally five Colombian nationals were indicted.

Attempted Cop Murder-Drug Ring Investigation (1999)

In 1999, DEA, Fairfax County, VA Police, and the Maryland State Police completed a 3-year investigation of a drug trafficking, money laundering, and "cop killing" criminal group. Since at least 1994, Sergio Barrios and Gregory McCorkle were involved in a conspiracy to distribute cocaine in the Washington, D.C. area. In December 1995, McCorkle was driving his frequent route from New York to DC, when Maryland State Police Trooper David Hughes arrested him for possession of one kilogram of cocaine.

Shortly after his arrest, McCorkle plotted to kill Trooper Hughes in an attempt to have the case dismissed. On Aug. 27, 1996, an associate of McCorkle's shot a trooper as he drove his car into the Hughes' family driveway. The person he shot and wounded was Trooper Michael Hughes, the brother of the trooper who arrested McCorkle, who was also a Maryland State Trooper. Through a complex investigation supported by the DEA-supervised Intelligence Group of the Washington-Baltimore HIDTA, the task force was able to successfully link Barrios and McCorkle to the attempted murder. In May 1997, they and nearly 20 others were incarcerated for a variety of drug charges, and several were convicted of attempted murder. The investigation continued until the arrest of McCorkle's drug supplier in 1999. The task force that investigated the murder-drug ring, including three DEA agents, later received the nation's prestigious Top Cop award and were recognized at a White House ceremony with President Clinton and Attorney General Reno. David Hughes later became a DEA Special Agent.

Mexico

Between 1999 and 2003, Mexico remained the key transit country for cocaine en route to U.S. markets, as well as a significant source country for heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine destined for the U.S.

Among the most important changes that occurred in Mexico between 1999 and 2003 was the July 2000 election of President Vicente Fox-Quesada, ending the 70-year rule of a single political party in Mexico. President Fox ran on a platform of restoring public security and putting an end to corruption. The Fox administration made some significant progress towards those extremely ambitious goals by restructuring the Attorney General's office to reduce corruption and taking action against leaders of significant drug trafficking organizations. Mexican police and the military had effected the arrests of significant drug traffickers within virtually every major drug trafficking organization operating in Mexico.



As a result of this renewed dedication to fight drug trafficking, the level of cooperation in the counterdrug area reached unprecedented levels. Information sharing between DEA and the Government of Mexico was extremely productive and brought about very positive results in joint enforcement operations. By 2003, DEA's relationship with its counterparts in the Government of Mexico was better than ever.

Operation Impunity I and II (1999-2000)

In September 1999, the Amado Carrillo-Fuentes drug trafficking organization suffered a big hit when DEA and its counterparts arrested three of its major cell heads and 90 of its members. The arrests disabled all facets of their organization—the group's headquarters in Mexico, the U.S. cell heads, the drug and money transportation systems, and the local distribution groups. As a result of Operation Impunity, 12,434 kilos of cocaine and more than 4,800 pounds of marijuana were seized, along with \$19 million in U.S. currency and another \$7 million in assets. The Amado Carrillo-Fuentes organization had operated without fear of capture or prosecution in the U.S., believing that only their low-level operatives were at risk. Operation Impunity effectively demonstrated that even the highest level drug traffickers based in foreign countries could not conduct drug operations inside the U.S. with impunity.

Operation Impunity II continued to target the Amado Carrillo-Fuentes organization and concluded in December 2000 with the arrest of 155 individuals, the seizure of 5,490 kilograms of cocaine, 9,526 pounds of marijuana, and \$11 million in U.S. currency. Those arrested faced a variety of federal charges for their involvement in smuggling thousands of pounds of cocaine and marijuana from Mexico across the Southwest Border into Texas. Some of the defendants arrested during Operation Impunity II were organization leaders who replaced those arrested in the previous investigations. The three phases (Operation Limelight in 1996 was the first phase) clearly demonstrate the tenacity of some trafficking organizations and the need for law enforcement to continuously investigate groups that are large and well-established.

Colombia

By the mid-1990s, Colombian law enforcement began targeting leaders of the Cali cartel based on extensive investigation by DEA. The arrests or surrenders of six top Cali leaders during the summer of 1995 marked the beginning of the decline of the Cali cartel.

Although some elements of the Cali cartel continued to play an important role in the world's wholesale cocaine market, they no longer dominated the international cocaine trade.

Following the dismantling of the Cali cartel, experienced traffickers who had been active for years, but who worked in the shadow of the Cali drug lords, seized the opportunity and increased their role in the drug trade. However, unlike their cartel predecessors, the Colombian cocaine trafficking groups of the late 1990s and early 2000s were decentralized and typically specialized in one aspect of the cocaine industry. No one group of traffickers dominated all aspects of the trade because, with the reintroduction of extradition in Colombia in December 1997, the major Colombian traffickers were increasingly willing to allow their foreign criminal associates (in particular, Mexican and Dominican transportation groups) to play an expanded international role in

the cocaine trade. The strategic objective of these Colombian drug lords was to further conceal their own overt criminal acts in the U.S. or Europe that would be the basis for extradition.

The main Colombian trafficking groups primarily were based in two regions in Colombia. One was the Northern Valle del Cauca region located near Colombia's west coast. The second area was Colombia's north coast. While traffickers in these regions operated more independently than the Medellin and Cali cartels, they nevertheless remained very powerful. By working with their counterparts in Mexico, these drug traffickers were responsible for most of the world's cocaine production and wholesale distribution.

Operation Millennium (1999)

In October 1999, a major joint DEA-Colombian National Police (CNP) investigation called Operation Millennium resulted in the arrest of two of the most powerful drug traffickers in the world—Alejandro Bernal-Madrigal, also known as Juvenal, and Fabio Ochoa. Bernal-Madrigal was the head of the most significant Colombian narcotics transportation organization and had taken the cocaine transportation function to unprecedented heights. Evidence obtained during this investigation demonstrated that Bernal-Madrigal's organization was responsible for transporting between 20-30 tons of cocaine per month from Colombia to the U.S. via Mexico, primarily in containerized cargo. Fabio Ochoa was one of the top leaders of the Medellin cartel. He was imprisoned in 1991, released in 1996, and continued his trafficking operations with Bernal-Madrigal and others after his release.

Beginning in May 1998, DEA worked with CNP to investigate the drug trafficking activities of Bernal-Madrigal. The investigation focused on authorized electronic intercepts of Bernal-Madrigal and the leaders of other Colombian drug trafficking organizations. At one point during the investigation, CNP in conjunction with DEA was managing 66 simultaneous authorized electronic intercepts on principal targets. These intercepts revealed the inner workings of the cocaine industry and focused on the most significant drug traffickers and their respective organizations in both Colombia and Mexico.

In Operation Millennium, Bernal-Madrigal and 30 of his top criminal associates, including Ochoa, were arrested. In September 2001, Ochoa was extradited to the U.S. after a long battle to remain in Colombia. He was the 30th Colombian national and 13th Operation Millennium defendant to be extradited to the U.S. since the reintroduction of extradition in 1997. More than 1,500 Colombian prosecutors and CNP officials participated in Operation Millennium, which, according to the CNP, was one of the largest law enforcement actions undertaken by the Government of Colombia against drug trafficking.

Laboratory Reaccreditation (1999)

In 1999, the Office of Forensic Sciences' laboratory system was reaccredited by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB). The first accreditation was completed in 1994. This accomplishment was significant because DEA laboratories were recognized as conforming to national and international technical and operational standards. The areas of forensic drug analysis, fingerprint examination and Source Determination Program analysis (tablet and capsules toolmark examinations) were the technical specialties accredited by ASCLD/LAB.



The extradition of Alberto Orlandez-Gamboa, aka Caracol (the Snail), August 2000.

Extradition of Caracol (2000)

Alberto Orlandez-Gamboa, aka Caracol (the Snail), headed a major cocaine trafficking organization based in Barranquilla, Colombia. The organization transshipped significant amounts of cocaine to the U.S. and Europe via the smuggling routes it controlled from Colombia's North Coast through the Caribbean. As head of the organization, Caracol depended on his close associates to conduct the organization's operations and to insulate himself. As is typical with many Colombia-based organizations, Caracol compartmentalized his business dealings. In addition, the success of Caracol's Barranquilla-based drug trafficking organization was attributed, in part, to the respect the drug organization received from other traffickers operating on Colombia's North Coast. Intelligence indicated that traffickers paid taxes to Caracol's organization in order to be allowed to ship drugs out of the North Coast. His influence in this region was so strong that traffickers even asked him for permission before conducting assassinations.

On June 6, 1998, Caracol was arrested in Barranquilla, as a result of an ongoing joint investigation between DEA's Barranquilla Resident Office and the CNP. After his arrest, Caracol immediately was flown to Bogota, Colombia, where he was held on murder, kidnapping, and terrorism charges. He was extradited to the U.S. in August 2000.

On March 13, 2003, Caracol pleaded guilty to participating in a narcotics trafficking conspiracy that smuggled tens of thousands of kilograms of cocaine into New York and other cities. His plea was announced on the morning he was to go on trial in Federal District Court in Manhattan after losing a crucial appellate ruling.

Retiring CNP Director Serrano Honored (2000)

DEA presented retired Colombian National Police (CNP) Director General Rosso Serrano with the first-ever honorary Special Agent badge at a ceremony at DEA headquarters on July 19, 2000. It is the DEA's highest award, and is presented only in exceptional cases to individuals outside DEA who have had a monumental impact on drug law enforcement nationally or internationally. "I can think of no one who so embodies the spirit of this award but General Serrano. He has put service to his country, his people, and the world before his personal safety," stated Administrator Donnie Marshall at the ceremony.

General Serrano joined the CNP in 1963 as a second lieutenant and advanced steadily through the ranks until becoming Director in 1995. The accomplishments of CNP under General Serrano debilitated major international drug traffickers and affected the drug trade worldwide. Under his command, the CNP declared war on drug cartels and joined forces with the DEA in dismantling the infamous Cali organization. Other CNP accomplishments under Serrano include the arrests of Jose Santacruz-Londono, Pacho Herrera, Henry Loaiza-Ceballos, and Juan Carlos Ramirez-Abadia. Cooperation between DEA and CNP continued as new independent drug organizations were created. One of the most significant was Operation Millennium, in October 1999, that dismantled the "Juvenal" transportation organization, which had been supplying between 20 and 30 tons of cocaine per month to the U.S. and Europe.

Drug Submarine Seized in Colombia (2000)

On Sept. 7, 2000, the CNP seized a partially constructed, steel double-hulled submarine from a warehouse outside Bogota, Colombia. Once assembled, it would have been nearly 100 feet long. All information suggested the submarine could have been used to transport up to 10 metric tons of illicit drugs from Colombia to remote off-load sites in Latin America and the Caribbean. The seizure of this high-tech submarine demonstrated the vast resources and ingenuity of Colombian drug traffickers and the lengths they were willing to go to transport their product.

Operations Odessa/Atlantico/Journey (2000)

Maritime illicit drug smuggling organizations were the target of Operations Odessa, Atlantico and Journey. Operation Odessa/Atlantico involved multiple cocaine and money seizures from organized maritime Greek drug smugglers who worked closely with Colombian traffickers. These operations took place from 1998-2000. Operation Odessa was an investigation of many initiatives launched by the Hellenic Republic. Thanks to cooperation from the Greek Government, assets worth \$7 million were seized, as was the M/V Bulk Princess.

Operation Journey also targeted maritime smuggling operations in Colombia that moved their operations to Venezuela as a result of Operation Odessa. Thanks to the sharing of information between various law enforcement authorities, Operation Journey seized more than nine tons of cocaine hidden by the De La Vega drug trafficking organization.

DEA Support to U.S. Government Drug Production Estimates

Any reality-based illicit drug production estimate must start with the most accurate information available on crop yields and



clandestine laboratory operations. Accordingly, since 1993, DEA intelligence analysts and forensic chemists have collected and analyzed unique science-based data on coca and opium poppy cultivation as well as cocaine and heroin production in the Andean Region of South America. This research revolutionized U.S. Government cocaine and heroin production estimates. In 1999, for example, the U.S. Government more than doubled the previous estimates of Colombia's potential cocaine base production due to DEA's coca yield and cocaine laboratory studies. Likewise, in 2002, again as a result of new data from DEA, the U.S. Government slashed by more than 50 percent the previous estimates of Colombia's potential heroin production. As of 2003, this program had conducted crop yield and clandestine laboratory efficiency studies only in the Andean Region.

Operation New Generation (2000)

A significant international drug trafficking and money laundering organization was dismantled in November 2000. Since November 1998, DEA had been investigating the drug trafficking and money laundering activities of the Colombia-based Carlos Mario Castro-Arias cocaine transportation organization. Castro-Arias was a significant drug trafficker responsible for smuggling large quantities of cocaine concealed in (**incomplete sentence**)

Although Castro-Arias evaded authorities, the investigation yielded 102 arrests, 2,110 kilograms of cocaine, 1,400 grams of heroin, six tons of miscellaneous chemicals, and \$2.3 million in U.S. currency.

DEA Special Agent Richard Fass's Killer Apprehended (2000)

On June 30, 1994, DEA Special Agent Richard Fass and his partner, Special Agent Michael Pelonero, were working an undercover investigation targeting a large-scale methamphetamine trafficking organization in the Phoenix area. The organization was headed by Agustin Vasquez-Mendoza, a Mexican national, with whom Special Agent Fass had been arranging the sale of 10 kilograms of methamphetamine. At the time of the sale, however, Vasquez-Mendoza's colleagues, Rafael Rubio-Mendez and Juan Vasquez-Rubio, shot and killed Special Agent Fass in an apparent robbery attempt. Both men were arrested near the scene while attempting to flee and later received life sentences for the murder. Vasquez-Mendoza—the leader and mastermind of Fass' killing—fled to Mexico, and the manhunt for him became one of the most intense in recent U.S.-Mexico history, lasting more than six years.

A Fass Task Force was formed in the Phoenix Division, dedicated to locating Vasquez-Mendoza. The task force worked closely with U.S. and Mexico law enforcement entities, including the Mexican Military. For several years, the pursuit of the fugitive concentrated in a remote mountainous region in Michoacan where residents lived in wooden shacks without telephones or electricity. Mexican law enforcement was reluctant to enter the region because of the dangerous drug traffickers who protected these areas. The Fass Task Force used more than 30 confidential sources to infiltrate these areas.

The task force also conducted a media blitz, participating in three "America's Most Wanted" shows, two "Unsolved Mystery" programs, and one Latin television show called "Placas." By 1998, the reward for Vasquez-Mendoza had reached \$2.25 million, and he had been placed on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list. In addition,

the task force created a tip hotline, which was manned around the clock to follow leads. DEA's Mexico office also conducted a media blitz in Mexico, and Mexican law enforcement conducted road-blocks of highways leaving the mountainous area where Vasquez-Mendoza was believed to be hiding. The Fass Task Force eventually arrested more than 40 fugitives wanted by other jurisdictions.

By 2000, investigators narrowed their search to the town of Puebla, Mexico. Mexican law enforcement led the search there and learned that Vasquez-Mendoza had married and assumed a new identity. Investigators located a pay phone his wife frequently used to call her parents, and on July 9, 2000, the Mexican police surrounded Vasquez-Mendoza walking away from the phone and arrested him without incident. Phoenix SAC Tom Raffanello stated that, "This investigation has helped strengthen and build a stronger relationship with Mexican law enforcement officials. During this entire operation, they were constantly amazed that DEA was so relentless in tracking this fugitive." As of 2003, Vasquez-Mendoza remained in custody in Mexican prison pending extradition to the U.S.

Operation Green Air (2000)

In April of 2000, DEA's Special Operations Division successfully concluded an 18-month investigation of a Jamaican-based marijuana trafficking organization that used Federal Express (FedEx) as its exclusive method of transportation. FedEx cooperated with DEA to uncover drivers, a security official, and several customer service representatives who were receiving substantial bribes from the traffickers. It is estimated that more than 4,000 packages of marijuana, supplied by the Mexico-based Arellano Felix organization, were smuggled into FedEx hubs including Atlanta, New York, Boston, Connecticut, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, Philadelphia and Newark. Operation Green Air resulted in the arrests of more than 100 individuals including 25 FedEx employees.

LSD Laboratory Seizure (2000)

When DEA seized an LSD manufacturing laboratory in November 2000 in an abandoned nuclear missile silo in Wamego, KS, containing approximately 3.9 million dosage units of LSD, it had a huge impact on LSD manufacturing in the U.S. According to DEA's Special Testing and Research Laboratory, the Wamego lab had the capacity to produce 258 million dosage units of LSD. In Fiscal Year 2000, DEA projected that the worldwide LSD demand was 100 million dosage units. Following the Wamego lab seizure, there was a tremendous 98% decline in LSD submissions for source determination analysis during FY 2001. In FY 2002, there were no LSD exhibits submitted to DEA laboratories for analysis. In March 2003, the two men arrested for operating the LSD lab were convicted on charges of conspiracy and possession of LSD with intent to distribute.

Operation Tar Pit (2000)

In March 2000, Operation Tar Pit concluded an investigation targeting black tar heroin trafficking group based in Mexico. This joint DEA/FBI investigation, conducted exclusively within the U.S., linked the Nayarit, Mexico, based organization to transportation and distribution cells throughout the U.S. from San Diego, CA to Steubenville, OH. Further, the investigation linked the high-purity black tar heroin to numerous heroin overdose deaths in the small town of Chimayo, New Mexico. DEA, FBI, and state

and local law enforcement agents arrested nearly 200 individuals in 12 cities.

DEA Participation in Making of Award-Winning Movie Traffic (2000)

In December 2000, the movie *Traffic* opened to critical acclaim and was a box office hit across the country. Featuring Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Benicio del Toro, Don Cheadle, Erika Christensen, and Dennis Quaid and directed by Steven Soderbergh, the movie showed intertwining vignettes to tell the modern day story of fighting drugs. The winner of four Academy Awards, the movie focused a great deal of media and public attention on DEA and the problems of illicit drugs in America. Parts of the movie were filmed on location at DEA's El Paso Intelligence Center, and several DEA agents had small roles in the film. DEA offered considerable input into the movie's portrayals of the drug situation, and most believed it accurately depicted the challenges law enforcement faced.

Ecstasy and Predatory Drugs

By the late 1990s, a drug called MDMA (3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine)—more often known as Ecstasy—emerged in full force in American youth culture. A hallucinogen sold in a small ingestible pill form, often imprinted with colorful logos and designs, Ecstasy gained popularity initially at raves. Raves are all-night dance events, generally operating from approximately 10:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. the following morning and characterized by loud, rapid tempo (“techno music”), light and laser shows, smoke or fog, and psychedelic screen images. Ecstasy use by 12th graders nearly doubled in five years from 1996 to 2001. By 2002, there was a slight decrease in that usage, possibly signaling a leveling off.

Other drugs like Gamma Hydroxybutyric Acid (GHB) and Ketamine are also used at raves, and they all came to be known as club drugs. However, by 2002, DEA began calling this subset of drugs “predatory drugs” because many of them, particularly GHB and Rohypnol, could be slipped into a victim’s drink. The drugs are odorless and tasteless and render the victim unconscious. Criminal predators use these drugs to commit rape and sexual assault.

Another measure of these drugs’ popularity is emergency room mention of the drugs. In 1998, there were 1,282 mentions of GHB in hospital emergency rooms. That number rose almost three-fold to 3,340 in 2001. DEA seizures are also a good indicator of the level of abuse. For instance, in 1999 DEA seized 4,552 dosage units of Ketamine, and by 2001, that had risen to 7,020,317. DEA took a number of enforcement, prevention, and legislative measures to combat Ecstasy and predatory drugs.

DEA’s Legislative Response to the Problem of Club Drugs

GHB is a central nervous system depressant that was originally marketed as a releasing agent for growth hormones that stimulates muscle growth. It generates feelings of euphoria and intoxication and is often used with alcohol, which enhances its effect and increases the potential for respiratory distress. GHB is also used in the commission of sexual assaults because it renders the victim incapable of resisting and causes memory problems that complicate case prosecution.

In response to the increasing abuse of GHB, DEA’s Office of Diversion Control initiated a scheduling review incorporating

data on the abuse, diversion, and trafficking of GHB sent to the Department of Health and Human Services for its review in 1997. In the late 1990s, DEA provided abuse, diversion, and trafficking data to Congress in support of legislative action. In early 2000, the “Hillary Farias and Samantha Reed Date-Rape Prohibition Act of 1999” (Public Law 106-172) became law, placing GHB in Schedule I, as well as the related chemical GBL. GHB is now subject to Federal regulatory controls and the criminal, civil, and administrative sanctions specified in the Controlled Substance Act.

Ecstasy-like substances, touted as “legal” substitutes, had been found in clubs and advertised over the Internet. In September 2002, DEA published a final rule in the Federal Register temporarily placing pharmacologically related and chemically similarly structured chemicals like BZP, TFMPP, and 2C-T-7 in Schedule I pursuant to the Controlled Substances Act emergency scheduling provision, due to imminent hazard to public safety. In early 2003, DEA’s Diversion Control office continued to gather information regarding the abuse, diversion, and trafficking of these substances to place them permanently in Schedule I. In January 2003, DEA published a proposal in the Federal Register temporarily placing AMT and 5-MeO-DIPT as well into Schedule I, pursuant to the emergency scheduling provision of the Controlled Substances Act. Finalization of this order was expected later in 2003.

DEA’s Ecstasy & Club Drugs Conferences (2000-2001)

To focus national attention on the Ecstasy threat, DEA hosted the International Conference on Ecstasy and Club Drugs in partnership with about 300 officials from the domestic and foreign law enforcement, judicial, chemical, prevention, and treatment communities. The conference was held in Arlington, VA, from July 31 to Aug. 2, 2000, and centered on the growing threat of Ecstasy, GHB, Rohypnol, and Ketamine. By hosting this conference, DEA took the lead on identifying the gravity of the issue and the efforts to combat the club drugs problem in the country. Medical experts provided information on the harmful physical effects of club drug abuse, and media representatives offered their perspectives on the club drug epidemic. During the conference, a working group developed several objectives that were adapted into DEA’s Demand Reduction plan. These goals included advancing drug education and prevention, enhancing parental knowledge of raves and club drugs, and educating high school and college students about the realities of raves and the dangers of club drugs.

As a follow-up to the International Club Drugs Conference, DEA held three regional club drugs conferences during 2001. These were held in Atlantic City, New Jersey; Oak Brook, Illinois; and San Diego, California. All three gathered 200-250 participants from regional law enforcement, education, prevention, treatment, medical, and the health areas to develop area-wide plans to address the problem. In addition, each domestic DEA division held numerous club drug seminars and training in their areas.

Arrest of Salvatore Gravano (2000)

In December 1999, DEA’s Phoenix Division and the Phoenix Police Department initiated a joint Title III investigation of a major international Ecstasy organization headed by former mob underboss Salvatore “Sammy the Bull” Gravano and his son. This three-month investigation resulted in the arrest of Gravano, his son, and 38 co-defendants, the confiscation of tens of thousands



Salvatore "Sammy the Bull" Gravano

of Ecstasy pills, and approximately \$500,000 in asset seizures. The Gravano organization was importing large quantities of Ecstasy directly from Europe and is believed to be the largest Ecstasy organization ever dismantled in Arizona.

In the 1990s, the former underboss of the New York Gambino crime family had admitted killing 19 people but received leniency in exchange for his testimony against mob boss John Gotti and others. He served five years in prison, then moved to Phoenix under the witness protection program. He pled guilty to both Arizona and New York federal drug charges and is currently serving a 20-year concurrent sentence.

Operation Rave Review (2000)

DEA's New Orleans Field Division Office initiated OCDETF Operation "Rave Review" in January 2000, in cooperation with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the New Orleans Police Department. The investigation centered on raves held at the State Palace Theater in New Orleans and was prompted by the large number of drug overdose incidents among clubgoers reported by local emergency rooms. More than 500 teenagers and young adults had been treated in a two-year period, and all had attended raves at the State Palace Theater. A 17-year-old girl had also died after overdosing at a rave event at the State Palace Theater. The investigation further determined that most of the Ecstasy distribution in the city of New Orleans was being conducted at the raves, which were attended by as many as 4,000 teenagers and young adults. DEA agents worked in an undercover capacity at these raves and made numerous purchases of illegal drugs. Undercover agents observed that 50% to 60% of the rave patrons were under the influence of club drugs.

Based on DEA's investigation, a federal grand jury returned indictments against the three managers of the rave promotion company for federal narcotics violations in January 2001. The indictment marked the first time a rave promoter and/or manager had ever been charged in violation of Title 21 U.S. Code, Section 856(a)(2) establishment of manufacturing operations, otherwise known as the "crackhouse statute."

The impact of this investigation was observed immediately in New Orleans as the number of club drug related overdoses dropped by a phenomenal 90%. In addition, the State Palace Theater Corporation, "Barbecue of New Orleans," pled guilty to

all charges in the indictment and was fined \$100,000.00. Furthermore, this case inspired Senator Joe Biden, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and author of the 1980's federal "crack house" laws, to expand the "crack house" statutes to include any businessman, club owner, or promoter on whose premises or at whose events illicit drugs are used or sold. Under the legislation's provisions, property owners, promoters, and event managers could be fined up to \$250,000 and face up to 20 years in prison on Federal criminal charges.

Strategic Planning Conference (2000)

In 2000, the Office of Forensic Sciences held a Strategic Planning Conference at the Justice Training Center in Quantico, VA. Attendees focused on analyzing the needs and expectations of the DEA Laboratory System's many customers and developing ways to meet them. Specific goals, objectives, and strategies to improve service, strengthen the organizational structure, utilize technology more effectively, and to obtain additional facilities and resources were identified. The resulting Strategic Plan helped the laboratory system position itself over the next five years to meet future expected, and unexpected, challenges in the coming decade.

Operation Red Tide (2001)

Operation Red Tide began as a result of the largest single seizure of Ecstasy—2.1 million tablets in July 2000 in Los Angeles. An 18-month investigation ensued that targeted a multi-ethnic, transnational Ecstasy and cocaine distribution organization. It came to a climax when Dutch National Police arrested seven co-conspirators, executed search warrants at 17 locations, and seized several hundred thousand U.S. dollars, as well as several hundred thousand Dutch guilders. More than 22 suspects in four U.S. cities and four European countries were arrested.

Approximately 3.3 million tablets linked to the syndicate were seized during this effort. Administrator Marshall stated, "The success of Operation Red Tide has ensured that a large volume of Ecstasy that would have made it into the hands of our youth never hit the streets."

Would-Be Killers of Special Agents Charles Martinez and Kelly McCullough Convicted and Sentenced (2001)

In February and March 2001, Jose Ivan Duarte Acero and Rene Benitez were each convicted in Southern Florida courts in separate trials for the 1982 kidnapping and attempted murder of DEA Special Agents Charles Martinez and Kelly McCullough. On June 8, 2001, Duarte and Benitez received life sentences.

The sentencing marked the end of DEA's longest-running investigation—a 19-year effort to track, capture, try, and convict in American courts the men who kidnapped and nearly killed Martinez and McCullough in Colombia. "This case, once again, sends a clear message to violent drug traffickers who attempt to harm DEA agents: DEA will never waiver, not for a second, in its efforts to commitment to bring you to justice," said Administrator Marshall at the time.

In 1982, Duarte and his conspirator Benitez were hired by Colombian drug traffickers to kidnap the DEA Special Agents. The two agents, who were assigned on temporary duty to Colombia as pilots, were abducted from their hotel in Cartagena and transported by car to a secluded area 15 miles away. Agent Martinez



was shot while they were still within city limits. Then Duarte and Benitez stopped the car and shot Martinez again. At that point, McCullough fled. He was shot as he ran into the jungle. Martinez escaped when his captor's gun jammed as they attempted to shoot him for the third time.

Even though Martinez and McCullough each suffered multiple gunshot wounds, both had the courage and the presence of mind to elude their captors and escape into the night. They separately reached Cartagena the next day and phoned the U.S. Embassy for assistance. The physician who examined them after the shootings were amazed that the bullets had not struck any vital organs. Shortly thereafter, both agents were airlifted out of the country by a U.S. Air Force plane from Panama. Meanwhile, Duarte and Benitez became fugitives, with warrants issued for their arrest in June 1982. Benitez was eventually captured in Colombia, extradited, and imprisoned in Miami in 1995. Duarte continued to evade authorities until August 1997, when he was detained in Ecuador. The Ecuadorian Government ultimately expelled the fugitive, and he was then transported to the U.S. to stand trial. Agents Martinez and McCullough both returned to duty after recovering from their wounds and continued to serve with DEA until retiring in the late 1990s.

Operation White Horse (2001)

In January 2001, DEA, along with FBI, IRS, and the U.S. Customs Service, concluded a 10-month investigation to dismantle an organization responsible for placing high-purity Colombian heroin on America's streets. Operation Whitehorse, an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) operation, brought together the previously mentioned federal agencies, the Colombian National Police (CNP), and state and local law enforcement in an effort that netted 96 arrests and the seizure of approximately \$1.3 million in U.S. Currency. In essence, Operation Whitehorse wiped out an entire international heroin trafficking organization from its headquarters in Colombia to its street-level dealers in Philadelphia.

U.S. Supreme Court Decision on Marijuana as Medicine (2001)

In November 1996, California voters enacted a medical marijuana initiative measure entitled the Compassionate Use Act of 1996. The measure provided Californians with the right to obtain and use marijuana for medical purposes. The measure created an exception to California laws prohibiting the possession and growing of marijuana by a patient or his primary care giver who for the patient's medical purposes upon the recommendation or approval of a physician. Several groups, including the Cannabis Buyers' Cooperative (Cooperative), organized medical cannabis dispensaries to grow and distribute marijuana to qualified patients. Under the measure, a person was required to provide a written statement from a treating physician assenting to marijuana therapy and submitting to a screening interview. If accepted by the Cooperative, the patient received an identification card entitling him to obtain marijuana from the Cooperative. In January 1998, the U.S. sued the Cooperative in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California to prevent it from distributing and manufacturing marijuana. The U.S. argued that, while the Cooperative's activities were legal under California law, they violated the Federal Controlled Substances Act. The District Court issued an

order that prohibited the Cooperative from possessing, manufacturing, and distributing marijuana. The Cooperative continued to distribute marijuana and claimed that the distributions were medically necessary. The District Court held the Cooperative in contempt and authorized the U.S. Marshal to seize the Cooperative's premises. The Cooperative appealed to the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The Court of Appeals held that medical necessity is a legally cognizable defense to violations of the Controlled Substances Act.

The Government appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Cooperative claimed that it was entitled to a medical necessity defense. On May 4, 2001, the Supreme Court rejected the medical necessity defense and held that marijuana has no accepted medical use under Federal law and stated that the Controlled Substances Act reflects a determination that marijuana has no medical benefits worthy of an exception outside the confines of a Government-approved research project.

Operation Marquis (2001)

Operation Marquis, an 18-month nationwide investigation, brought together agents from DEA, FBI, and the U.S. Customs Service, as well as state and local law enforcement officers. The operation targeted a Mexico-based drug trafficking organization responsible for putting tens of millions of dollars worth of cocaine and marijuana on the streets of at least a dozen U.S. cities. The organization was alleged to have brought the drugs into the U.S. from Mexico into Southern Texas where they were warehoused before being transported to established distribution cells throughout the U.S. Operation Marquis brought about the arrest of more than 300 individuals and the seizure of over \$13 million U.S. currency, 8,645 kilograms of cocaine, 23,096 pounds of marijuana, and 50 pounds of methamphetamine.

Operations Caribe and Wirecutter (2001)

These two related investigations, which took place in 2001, focused on money laundering and the Colombian black market peso exchange. Caribe, spearheaded by DEA's Caribbean Division, led to the seizure of more than a million dollars in cash, 347 kilograms of cocaine, 3.8 kilos of heroin, and 15 arrests. Wirecutter, a joint U.S. Customs and DEA Bogota case, also targeted both drug traffickers and the black market peso exchange in Bogota. Wirecutter resulted in 10 arrests, the seizure of approximately 4000 kilos of cocaine, 5.5 kilos of heroin, and \$2,304,843 in currency.

The Cancun Case (2001)

DEA's Merida, Mexico, office played a significant role in arresting Mario Ernesto Villanueva, Mexico's most wanted fugitive for more than two years. As the former Governor of Quintana Roo, one of the wealthiest states in Mexico, Villanueva had created Mexico's first "narco-state," a government that worked for, and with, some of the world's largest drug traffickers. The television show *60 Minutes* dedicated an entire episode to his corruption and his belief that he was untouchable.

For three years, DEA's Merida office conducted an intense, focused investigation that eventually put an end to the narco-state of Quintana Roo and the men who ran it. The two main goals of the investigation were to arrest Villanueva and dismantle the cell of the Juarez Cartel operating in the Yucatan Peninsula and being run by Alcides Ramon, aka El Metro.



HISTORY

Ramon corrupted Mexican officials at all levels throughout the Yucatan peninsula to include Quintana Roo Governor Villanueva. Ramon paid the Governor \$400,000 to \$500,000 for each shipment of cocaine that was smuggled through the state of Quintana Roo. Between 1994 and 1997, the Juarez Cartel allegedly transported between 17 and 27 tons of cocaine monthly through Quintana Roo.

In 1998, after a number of failed attempts to significantly disrupt the Ramon organization, the dedication and determination of Mexican law enforcement and DEA agents began to pay off. Between October 31 and Nov. 11, 1998, more than 300 million dollars worth of luxurious water front properties, yachts, jet skis, boats, cars and motorcycles were seized by the Mexican Government. In addition, over 115 arrests and/or indictments took place during the course of this investigation.

Less than a month later on June 12, 2001, Alcides Ramon was arrested by elements of the Mexican military in Villahermosa, Tabasco, Mexico. The two bosses of Cancun, Ramon and Villanueva, remained in custody at the maximum-security prison "La Palma" in Almoloya, Mexico, as of early 2003.

Caribbean Initiative/UNICORN

The transit of illegal drugs throughout the Caribbean created unique challenges to law enforcement. One of those was an intelligence void about trafficking organizations operating out of the region and a lack of cooperation among law enforcement agencies. As a result, DEA's Caribbean Field Division created the UNICORN system (Unified Caribbean On-Line Regional Network) in 1998 to establish a communications network among Caribbean law enforcement agencies to share information and establish better cooperation and communication regarding drug trafficking activity in the area. This operation was the first step in developing a systematic regional strategy in narcotics investigations. Operation UNICORN led to the development of Regional Intelligence Centers throughout Mexico, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic. This concept and the global exchange of information eventually spread to 36 countries, including those in Eastern and Western Europe. Using the groundwork laid in UNICORN, at least four major drug trafficking organizations targeted by the international law enforcement community were dismantled.

The first operation to employ the UNICORN system was Operation Genesis, a bi-national initiative to foster and maintain cooperation between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Conducted in late 1998, Genesis resulted in 126 arrests throughout Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Prior to this, these two countries had never before coordinated their antidrug efforts. DEA assisted the exchange of information through the UNICORN system.

Operations Conquistador and Columbus

Operation Conquistador and its preceding operation, Columbus, both used UNICORN to facilitate the exchange of infor-



A press conference of recent maritime seizure where 15 countries, DEA, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Customs participated.



A press conference to announce the successes of joint operations with the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America.

mation among counterdrug agencies in the Caribbean area and source countries. Conquistador combined the efforts of 26 countries and embodied the overall objective of developing effective regional strategies to disrupt drug trafficking organizations and criminal organizations. Executed by the DEA's Caribbean Field Division with assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard and ATF in March 2000, the operation resulted in the arrest of over 2,000 people and the seizure of almost 5,000 kilograms of cocaine, 362 metric tons of marijuana, and 3,370 dosage units of dangerous drugs.

Operation Columbus, was a multi-national regional enforcement effort focused on air, land and maritime interdiction; eradication; and airstrip denial. The operation, targeting the operations of Caribbean-based drug trafficking groups, had unprecedented arrest and seizure statistics for the region. Involving Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and the island nations of the Caribbean, the investigation brought about over 1,000 arrests and the seizure of 900 kilograms of cocaine and nine kilograms of heroin.



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Operation Liberator

In November 2000, DEA concluded Operation Liberator, a multinational regional operation focused in the Caribbean and South America that also achieved success due to UNICORN. The operation, consisting of three weeks of raids, was intended to disrupt trafficking in the Caribbean and South America region, consolidate counterdrug efforts in the Caribbean transit zone, continue development of a regional strategy, and develop a cohesive environment among source and transit countries in the area. The effort, which was led by DEA with the collaboration of 36 countries, brought about the arrest of several leaders of drug trafficking organizations, one of whom was thought to ship two tons of Colombian cocaine into the U.S. each month.

DEA and Explorers

Since 1980, DEA Demand Reduction Coordinators (DRCs) have worked with Law Enforcement Explorers throughout the country to assist youth interested in “exploring” law enforcement as a profession. This partnership continued through the late 1990s and early 2000s. In some cases, DEA sponsored the Explorer Post. DRCs provided training in the area of narcotics enforcement, community involvement, and general drug abuse issues. The Demand Reduction Section participated in the bi-annual Law Enforcement Explorer Conference as well as in Explorer Leadership Training sessions held at both the DEA and FBI Academies during the summer. The Law Enforcement Explorer Program was additionally a recruitment program, since many Explorers become either police officers or federal agents.

Operation Green Clover (2001)

Operation Green Clover was a one-year investigation of an Ecstasy trafficking organization that was a primary source of the drug in Colorado that concluded in August 2001. Named after the green clover logo on their Ecstasy pills, DEA and its law enforcement partners arrested 55 individuals in Colorado and California and seized 85,000 Ecstasy tablets as well as significant amounts of other drugs. Operation Green Clover was an important investigation not only because it dismantled a significant trafficking organization, but also because it was one of the first to call public attention to the dangers of Ecstasy use. The investigation had been sparked by the death of Brittney Chambers, who died on her 16th birthday in Colorado after taking one Ecstasy pill that had been distributed by the organization. Brittney’s mother participated in the Operation Green Clover press conference and later opened a teen center to promote drug awareness and alternatives to drug use for teens in Colorado.

Operation Triple X (2001)

In October 2001, DEA dismantled a major methamphetamine and Ecstasy drug laboratory in Escondido, CA. This takedown, dubbed Operation Triple X for the logo on the organization’s Ec-

stasy tablets, resulted in 20 arrests and seizures of 48,000 Ecstasy tablets, 1 pound of methamphetamine, 48 kilos of 3,4-Propene (which produce 500,000 Ecstasy tablets) 700 pounds of Camphor oil (which produce one million Ecstasy tablets), 45 gallons of GBL (used to produce GHB), other precursor chemicals and laboratory equipment, and \$429,000 in U.S. currency. This case was important because the vast majority of Ecstasy in the U.S. was produced in labs in Europe; the lab seized in Operation Triple X was one of the most significant Ecstasy labs ever dismantled in this country.

Operation Landslide (2001)

Operation Landslide, an organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation, resulted in 38 U.S. arrests and five Mexican arrests in November, 2001. Drug seizures from this operation totaled over 770 pounds of heroin, 34 pounds of methamphetamine and three kilograms of cocaine. Thanks to Operation Landslide, U.S.-based drug trafficking cells operating in San Francisco, San Jose, and Los Angeles were revealed.

Operation Perfect Storm (2001)

Initially targeted toward lower distribution cells in the greater Boston area, Operation Perfect Storm identified sources of supply for the Boston trafficking cells. These groups were operating out of New York, New Jersey, and Florida and were already being targeted by federal authorities on unrelated investigations. This multi-agency law enforcement effort resulted in the arrests of at least 144 defendants, the seizure of over 2,700 kilograms of cocaine, 17 kilograms of heroin, and \$3 million in cash.

September 11th Terrorist Attack and DEA (2001)

On Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001, America was attacked by terrorists who hijacked commercial airplanes and crashed them into both towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Arlington, VA. A third hijacked plane—believed to be headed for either the White House or the Capitol—crashed in rural Pennsylvania. More than 3,000 Americans died in the attack. The terrorists were part of Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda terrorist network, based in Afghanistan.

The DEA Headquarters building—which directly overlooks the Pentagon—was immediately impacted. Many employees witnessed the plane hitting the Pentagon, and the headquarters building shook from the impact. The building was secured, and employees were immediately evacuated. The Washington Division office maintained a command center. Agents and Intelligence Research Specialists were detailed to the FBI to assist in following up on investigative leads, and other agents were detailed to support the FBI’s efforts at the Pentagon crash site and help with evidence collection. Testing was also conducted to verify the safety of the headquarters building.

In New York, DEA’s office, approximately 40 blocks from the World Trade Center, was secured, and it was determined that all employees were safe. Some agents were immediately deployed to the FBI Command Center, and the enforcement group located at conjunction with Customs, established perimeter security at the airport’s Building 75, which housed various Federal agencies. The New York office also helped with the apprehension and detainment of five individuals suspected to have participated in the attack as they attempted to travel outbound from JFK. The office also supplied technical equipment to help in the search and rescue



operation as well as telephone lines to assist in Title III interceptions. DEA further assisted in intelligence gathering, translation of foreign documents, execution of search warrants, and provision of temporary office space.

DEA's Aviation Division also significantly contributed to rescue and recovery efforts. From September through January, the Aviation Division completed a variety of missions, which included transporting personnel, equipment, and critical blood supplies,

as well as providing airborne video and Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) camera systems. This equipment included technology to detect signals given off by electronic devices such as cell phones. The FLIR camera systems were used to assist the New York City Fire Department by providing thermal imaging technology to determine "hot spots" within the World Trade Center buildings so they could determine where to deploy fire fighting equipment and extinguish underground fires located near subterranean fuel storage tanks.

When Attorney General Ashcroft asked for volunteers from Department of Justice agencies to serve as Air Marshals, over 1,000 DEA special agents offered their help within hours of the request. More than 250 DEA Special Agents served as Air Marshals for seven months following the attack to increase in-flight security.

As a result of the terrorist attacks, increased security measures were put into place at DEA facilities, such as x-ray screening of visitors, restrictions on vehicles entering the property, and revised occupant emergency plans. Overseas, DEA's office in Peshawar, Pakistan, was evacuated, and DEA's Islamabad, Pakistan, office was reduced to essential staff.

Security measures at all overseas DEA facilities were upgraded. Shortly following the 9/11 attacks, there were anthrax exposures throughout the country, which prompted more security measures in DEA, particularly with mail handling operations. Fortunately, no DEA facilities tested positive for anthrax exposure.

Narco-Terrorism

The drug trade and terrorists have been connected for centuries as various rulers and terrorist organizations have used the vast profits from the drug trade to arm, equip, and train members of their violent groups. However, it was the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, that brought that connection to the attention of the American public. Drug money contributed in part to the ability of the al Qaeda organization to carry out the 9/11 attacks.

DEA defines narco-terrorism as a subset of terrorism, in which terrorist groups participated directly or indirectly in the cultivation, manufacture, transportation, or distribution of controlled substances and the monies derived from these activities. A third of the international terrorist organizations identified by the State Department are linked to illicit drug activities. For example, in South America, Colombia's two major insurgent groups—the FARC and the ELN—as well as the right wing AUC, are linked to drug trafficking. In Peru, the Shining Path—a terrorist organization—most likely extracts a revolutionary tax from the cocaine base operators.

While DEA does not specifically target terrorists, the agency targets and tracks down drug traffickers and drug trafficking organizations involved in terrorist acts. For example, in January 2002, DEA announced the successful conclusion of Operation Mountain Express III, which targeted suppliers of pseudoephedrine, the chemical essential to making methamphet-



The aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

amine. The operation yielded the seizure of more than 30 tons of pseudoephedrine and arrests of more than 370 people in 12 cities. Many arrested were citizens of Middle Eastern countries who were sending their sizable drug profits back to the Middle East. DEA investigated the flow of money, and there were indications that some of the money funded terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas.

Drugs and Osama bin Laden

In Afghanistan, the former ruling Taliban built its financial base from heroin trafficking. They used it as a major source of funding by taxing opium production, lab operations, and the movement of drugs. U.S. intelligence confirmed a connection between the Taliban and international terrorist Osama bin Laden and the al Qaeda organization. In addition, DEA's intelligence indicated that bin Laden was involved in the financing and facilitation of heroin trafficking activities. Afghanistan was a major source country for the cultivation, processing, and trafficking of opiate products, producing over 70 percent of the world's supply of illicit opium in 2000.

Narco-Terrorism Symposium (2001)

On Dec. 4, 2001, DEA hosted a ground-breaking symposium entitled "Target America: Traffickers, Terrorists, and Your Kids" to call attention to the link between drug trafficking and terrorism. The symposium, held at DEA Headquarters, was moderated by Robert Novak, the long-time syndicated columnist and TV political commentator. Hosted by the AFFNA DEA Museum Foundation, a 6-member panel of experts discussed the significant and complex relationships between terrorism and drug trafficking before a full house of invited guests—including Members of Congress and their staff representatives—and DEA employees. Following the event, Mr. Novak wrote a column featuring the event and DEA's important role in the war against terrorism.

Integrated Drug Enforcement Assistance program (2001)

In late 2001, Administrator Hutchinson launched a new initiative that grew out of the MET II program called the Integrated Drug Enforcement Assistance (IDEA) program. IDEA combined law enforcement action with strong community efforts to find solutions to the problems that often cause drug abuse and create a welcoming environment for drug traffickers. IDEA was considered innovative because, while many programs focused only on law enforcement or only on treatment, IDEA brought diverse community groups together to work out problems. Instead of MET II's regional approach, it focused on one community at a time. IDEA addressed not only drug problems, but also the underlying issues that are the root of drug use and trafficking.

DEA and state and local law enforcement identified drug trafficking targets and executed enforcement operations. Concurrent to drug enforcement action in a community, the IDEA program provided communities with long-term support in developing and implementing prevention and treatment programs. The goal was to partner law enforcement with community coalitions. Summits were held at each site to bring together large numbers of community-based organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations, parks and recreation departments, schools, drug courts, law enforcement, and community leaders to form new and last-

ing partnerships and identify problems and long-term solutions. Once enforcement efforts were complete, IDEA encouraged that 15% of law enforcement seized assets be directed to community prevention, education, and treatment programs.

In 2001 and 2002, three sites piloted the program. They were: North Charleston, SC, Allentown, PA, and Portsmouth, VA. Three additional sites were added later in 2002 and 2003: Springfield, MO, Mobile/Prichard, AL, and Pueblo, CO. DEA provided a full-time special agent to each site to work with experts in crime prevention, alternative judicial systems such as drug courts, restorative justice initiatives, drug testing, and law enforcement training. Administrator Hutchinson established an IDEA National Advisory Council comprising law enforcement, judiciary, government officials, substance abuse, and crime prevention experts to consult with DEA on program design, implementation, and evaluation. To support the IDEA program and emphasize demand reduction activities on the whole, Administrator Hutchinson committed to doubling the number of Demand Reduction Coordinators across the country.

The IDEA program was ongoing at all six sites in 2003, and all reported significant arrests and seizures from law enforcement efforts and encouraging results in the prevention, education, and treatment areas. IDEA communities reported increased participation in community drug programs, better identification of funding sources for anti-drug efforts, stronger and better organized community coalitions, greater awareness of the community's drug problems, and more enthusiasm in solving the drug problems. While IDEA's funding was eliminated in DEA's 2003 budget due to tightening fiscal concerns relating to national security, DEA continued to provide non-monetary support to IDEA communities through its Demand Reduction Coordinators and local offices so that successes could continue.

DEA World Goes Hi-Tech (2001)

In September 2001, the popular DEA in-house publication, *DEA World*, was distributed electronically for the first time. Switching to an electronic format allowed for quicker and much more frequent publication of the news-magazine and ensured that everyone in DEA would have easy access to it.

The new publication featured many of the same types of stories as the older print version but was much more timely and current. *DEA World* was published on Webster, the internal computer network, and each issue had the appearance of a miniature website. Soon after the first electronic newsletter was released, entries for the new publication poured in from all over the field. Employees were eager to share their local news with the global DEA community. Stories in a typical issue featured successful cases, awards won by employees, community service events, and information about employee services.

This new communication tool served as a way for employees around the world to stay in touch with each other and to share the agency's news and accomplishments.

Operation Containment

Operation Containment is an intensive, multi-national, law enforcement initiative that was congressionally mandated and is led by DEA. It began in 2002 and was ongoing in 2003. It involves 19 countries from Central Asia, the Caucasuses, Europe, and Russia. The goal is to implement a coordinated post-Taliban



heroin counternarcotics strategy to deprive international terrorist groups of some of their financial basis for their activities. While each country had unilaterally or jointly conducted similar interdiction operations in the past targeting Afghanistan heroin transporters, Operation Containment is the first coordinated, large-scale operation.

Working to diminish the availability of heroin and morphine base along the Balkan and Silk Road trafficking routes, the operation focuses on interdiction at specific land, air, and sea border checkpoints, intelligence sharing, database connectivity, and collective targeting of drug traffickers and organizations. The operation eliminates duplication of efforts and effectively allocates limited counterdrug law enforcement resources throughout the region. The operation also targets other illicit commodities such as precursor chemicals, weapons, ammunitions, and currency that could be used by terrorist organizations to finance their operations.

Operation Containment also included re-opening the DEA office in Kabul, Afghanistan (which had been closed for security reasons in 1980) and expanding existing offices in Asian and European cities. DEA's communications intercept and intelligence capabilities also grew in support of agencies conducting counterterrorism investigations in the U.S.

Operation Containment continued into 2003, and has proven to be one of the most successful drug interdiction initiatives to be undertaken on a multi-regional basis. During a mid-2002 blitz operation, 1,705 kilos of heroin were seized, with an estimated value between U.S. \$28 million and U.S. \$51 million. Also seized were 5,329 kilos of marijuana, 355 kilos of opium, 2,013 poppy plants, as well as significant amounts of cocaine, weapons, cigarettes, and amphetamines. The operation was responsible for collecting much information on terrorist activities in the region.

Just as important, Operation Containment laid the groundwork for closer cooperation among the countries for future operations—the mutual participation of 19 countries in a common operational and intelligence sharing action had not been undertaken before. It is significant that the Russians and Chinese traveled to Turkey for operational planning, the Pakistanis and Indians who were at conflict with one another put their differences aside, as did the Turks, Macedonians, and Greeks to achieve the common goal of depriving violent terrorists of drug-derived funds.

New Museum Exhibit on Narco-Terrorism (2002)

As a continuation of the effort to educate Americans about the historic and strong link between terrorists and drug trafficking, DEA opened a new exhibit at the Headquarters Museum called "Target America: Traffickers, Terrorists, and You." The exhibit was housed in a new 1,500 square foot addition to the DEA Museum. Administrator Hutchinson opened the exhibit at a ceremony on Sept. 3, 2002, and was joined by former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Attorney General John Ashcroft, and ONDCP Director John Walters.

The exhibit opens with a sculpture composed of rubble and artifacts from the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and it uses the events of September 11th as a starting point for the historic story of the connection between the violent drug trade and terror from the Silk Road in the 11th century to the present. Interactive kiosks allow visitors to follow the trafficking of drugs, the movement of money, and the use of terrorism worldwide. Photo essays and artifacts detail the impact of drugs and terrorism, show

individuals and groups responsible for terrorist acts, examine America's response to drugs and terrorism, and present visitors information on getting active with an anti-drug message in their communities to allow them to deny funding to terrorists.

The exhibit stayed at the DEA Museum through August 2003, then began a nationwide tour with stops in New York, Chicago, Detroit, Dallas, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Tampa and Omaha through 2013.

DEA Turkey Seizes Worldwide Record 7.4 Tons of Morphine Base (2002)

On March 31, 2002, Turkish Jandarma officials, accompanied by Istanbul Resident Office personnel, arrested 15 individuals and seized 7.4 tons of morphine base. The morphine base was discovered beneath piles of hay during the search of a warehouse located in Hendick, Turkey, approximately 120 miles east of Istanbul. This seizure marked the culmination of five days of arrests and searches executed by the Jandarma in conjunction with DEA, targeting a multifaceted organization led by Attila Ozyildirim. This organization was involved in the production, transportation, and distribution of multi-hundred kilograms quantities of morphine base and heroin. Intelligence indicated that Ozyildirim and his associates maintained strong connections with other significant Turkish traffickers as well as sources of supply in Afghanistan and Iran.

Although large shipments of morphine base and heroin are common in Turkey, according to the Jandarma, this was the largest seizure of morphine base ever in the country. In addition, it was one of the largest seizures of opiates in Europe. During all of 2000, according to the U.S. Department of State, Turkish authorities seized approximately 1.7 metric tons of morphine base. This single seizure is almost six metric tons larger than the annual total for 2000. Given the 1:1 ratio for the conversion of heroin from morphine base, this amount of morphine base would have provided a significant amount of heroin to the European market.

FARC Indictments and Arrest (2002)

In March 2002, the Department of Justice indicted for the first time members of a known terrorist organization on drug trafficking charges. Three members of the Colombian narco-terrorist group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia (FARC), were indicted on charges of conspiracy to manufacture cocaine, then transport and distribute it in the U.S. The FARC is a Colombian Marxist terrorist organization whose stated goal is to overthrow the Colombian Government. The U.S. State Department called the FARC the most dangerous international terrorist group based in the Western hemisphere. The organization is heavily engaged in drug trafficking.

In December 2000, DEA's Bogota office opened an investigation of Tomas Molina-Caracas, the commander of the FARC's 16th Front. He was using territory in a sparsely populated area in eastern Colombia controlled by the 16th Front to manufacture and export multi-ton quantities of cocaine. Molina and the 16th Front completely controlled a small village and its airstrip as a center for the collection and exportation of cocaine. By 2000, Molina was manufacturing and exporting between one and three tons of cocaine per month, the majority of which was shipped to the U.S. and Europe.

During 1999 and 2000, Molina began purchasing large quantities of weapons and military equipment for the FARC. Some of the



transactions were direct trades of weapons for cocaine, and at other times, arms were purchased with cash derived from the sale of drugs. By early 2002, DEA had enough evidence to seek an indictment against key members of the Molina organization. In March 2002, the indictment was unsealed charging Molina, two other members of the FARC, a Colombian cocaine lab operator, and three Brazilian traffickers with conspiracy to produce and export cocaine knowing and intending that it be smuggled into the U.S.

In June 2002, Carlos Bolas—one of those FARC members indicted in March on drug charges—was arrested by Surinamese authorities using a false Peruvian passport. Bolas appeared before a magistrate in Suriname, and knowing that he was wanted in the U.S. on drug trafficking charges, Surinamese authorities expelled him and turned him over to U.S. authorities. On June 19, Bolas was transported to the Washington, D.C. area where he was arraigned in U.S. District Court.

Administrator Hutchinson explained the significance of Bolas' arrest by saying, "This arrest takes our fight against narco-terrorism to a new level. For the first time we have not only indicted a member of a terrorist organization involved in drug trafficking, but we have also arrested him. This means that narco-terrorists will be held accountable to the justice system and to the rule of law in both U.S. and Colombia."

AUC Indictments and Arrests (2002)

Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the indictment of leaders of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), also known as the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, on Sept. 24, 2002, on charges of trafficking over 17 tons of cocaine into the U.S. and Europe beginning in early 1997. The indictment was based on a 2-1/2 year DEA investigation that gathered witness testimony as well as evidence from Colombia, Spain, Portugal, Chile, and Puerto Rico.

The AUC is a right-wing paramilitary group in Colombia listed on the State Department's Foreign Terrorist Organization List. The AUC operates in most regions of Colombia and is principally funded by drug trafficking. The organization is estimated to have more than 8,000 paramilitary fighters with operations that vary from multi-ton cocaine distributions to the U.S. and Europe, to assassinations, and involvement in guerrilla combat units. According to the Colombian authorities, in 2002, the AUC was responsible for 2,601 deaths and 182 kidnappings and is considered by international human rights groups and the U.S. Department of State to be responsible for 70 percent of the human rights violations in Colombia.

Carlos Castano-Gil was Commander in Chief of the AUC until he resigned in May 2001 to become a member of the AUC's Political and Military Directorate. However, he retained the title of Commandante of the Autodefensas Campesinas de Cordoba and Uraba (ACCU), the largest paramilitary group that fell under the AUC umbrella. For several years, multiple sources of information cited Castano as one of the most powerful drug traffickers in Colombia.

During an interview broadcast on Sept. 8, 2002, Castano expressed his willingness to surrender to Colombian and U.S. authorities should he be indicted on narco-trafficking charges by the U.S. After the announcement of the indictment on September 24, Castano reiterated this stance and said that he planned to surrender to authorities pending the further review of the charges by

his lawyer in the U.S. Castano also stated that he could no longer remain in a position of authority in the AUC and the ACCU because of the damage that these charges would do the organization's credibility. As of early 2003, Castano had neither surrendered to authorities nor given up his leadership position.

In a separate DEA/FBI investigation, two other commandants of the AUC were arrested in Costa Rica on Nov. 6, 2002, for their involvement in a multi-million dollar cocaine-for-arms deal. In March 2003, DEA and Colombian authorities conducted the takedown of Operation Pegasus II. This case targeted a large drug trafficking organization with close ties to the AUC Bloque Libertadores del Sur.

Legalization

The small, but vocal minority of drug legalization advocates who had been pushing for decriminalization and outright legalization of drugs for a number of years continued unabated in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These groups, such as the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, focused on the state ballot initiative process as a way to achieve their goals. These organizations are financially backed by several multi-millionaire sponsors and have the means to launch all-out, ill-informed publicity campaigns. While they were successful in a number of states, by 2002, community coalitions across the country were beginning to make marked gains in opposing these legalization initiatives.

Administrator Hutchinson Debates Legalization Advocates (2001-2002)

During his tenure at DEA, Administrator Hutchinson engaged in three public debates about drug legalization. He viewed them as important opportunities to deliver a positive, anti-drug message and help educate Americans about the dangers of drug legalization and drug use. His first debate was one month after taking office when he was pitted against New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson—a proponent of legalized drugs. It was the first time a DEA Administrator formally debated the issue of drug legalization in a public forum. National Public Radio (NPR) hosted the event entitled "Directing America's Drug War: Which Way to a Safer Society" on Sept. 10, 2001, at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

Before a packed house of hundreds of students and citizens as well as numerous protesters, Administrator Hutchinson and Governor Johnson debated the issue and took questions from the audience for two hours. Mr. Hutchinson emphasized a balanced anti-drug strategy that encompasses education and treatment in addition to law enforcement. He pointed out the many successes in the fight against drugs and offered areas where the country could do better. The debate was broadcast at a later date on NPR.

Administrator Hutchinson and Governor Johnson continued the debate in November 2001 at Yale University's Law School. Mr. Hutchinson discussed the history of illegal drugs, pointing out that the country had legalization in the 19th century, and it was a failure. He also discussed the connection between drugs and terrorism.

In April 2002, Fordham University's School of Law hosted a debate entitled "America's Oldest War: The Efficacy of U.S. Drug Policy." This time, Administrator Hutchinson debated Graham Boyd, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union. The debate focused largely on the issue of marijuana as medicine, with



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Mr. Hutchinson arguing that safe and effective medicines must be determined by science and the regulatory process, not by referenda sponsored by the legalization lobby.

Marijuana Research

Repeated attempts by proponents of marijuana legalization in the late 1990s to remove marijuana from Schedule I of the CSA, thereby effectively legalizing the drug, were definitively curtailed with the April 2001 publication in the *Federal Register* of DEA's denial of the Jon Gettman/*High Times* magazine petition to reschedule marijuana. In January 2001, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) returned a scientific and medical evaluation on this petition and recommended that marijuana and THC continue to be subject to control under Schedule I of the CSA. In its decision, HHS clearly reaffirmed that marijuana has a high abuse potential and is not approved for medical use.

However, in response to national interest in the potential therapeutic use of marijuana for treating the symptoms of a variety of illnesses, DEA registered eight researchers to study the effects of smoked marijuana. These registrations were granted upon close and thorough review of study protocols by an independent review board and panels from HHS and the Food and Drug Administration. By early 2003, neither the medical community nor the scientific community had found sufficient data to conclude that smoked marijuana was the best approach to dealing with these important medical issues. The most comprehensive, scientifically rigorous review of studies of smoked marijuana was conducted by the Institute of Medicine, an organization chartered by the National Academy of Sciences. In a report released in 1999, the Institute did not recommend the use of smoked marijuana, but did conclude that active ingredients in marijuana could be isolated and developed into a variety of pharmaceuticals.

One of those was Marinol, which was brought to market in the 1980s after DEA granted researchers authorization to work with marijuana. Marinol is a prescription drug containing synthetic THC, which has been found to relieve the nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy for cancer patients and to assist with loss of appetite with AIDS patients. Unlike smoked marijuana—which contains more than 400 different chemicals, including most of the hazardous chemicals found in tobacco smoke—Marinol was proven safe, and its therapeutic value was supported by clinical evidence.

San Francisco Marijuana Raids/Protests (2002)

On Feb. 12, 2002, DEA Agents confiscated more than 8,000 marijuana plants and made several arrests at a San Francisco cannabis club, known as the Harm Reduction Center. The operator, Kenneth Hayes, was cultivating large quantities of marijuana in San Francisco and Sonoma County and was also participating in smuggling of high-grade Canadian marijuana into the Bay Area.

The arrests received considerable publicity and press coverage in relation to California's medical marijuana law. The cannabis club was affiliated with the City and County of San Francisco to provide "medical" marijuana to "patients." Additionally, one of the arrestees was Edward Rosenthal, longtime contributing editor of *High Times* and *Cannabis Culture* magazines and the author of several "how to" books on marijuana cultivation.

The investigation determined that the cannabis club was en-

gaged in marijuana trafficking in violation of federal law. While the club claimed to distribute marijuana to sick people, it was in fact selling marijuana to anyone. Four operators were charged federally with cultivation, conspiracy, and maintaining a location for drug manufacturing.

Two pled guilty, and as of early 2003, are awaiting sentencing. The third defendant, Rosenthal, went to trial, and his case resulted in a guilty conviction. The fourth, Hayes, sought asylum in Canada.

Coincidentally, on the same day of the cannabis club raids, Administrator Hutchinson spoke before a sold-out audience at San Francisco's Commonwealth Club, a prestigious public affairs speech forum. San Francisco, caught between conflicting state and federal laws concerning medical marijuana had long been home to intense debate regarding drug laws. Mr. Hutchinson's visit and the cannabis club arrests prompted public protests from San Francisco residents and elected officials.

When Administrator Hutchinson arrived to deliver his speech, over 200 protestors had gathered outside the Commonwealth Club. Chanting "DEA, go away," and waving banners, protestors expressed their disapproval of the marijuana arrests. Simultaneously, protest groups launched a "web attack" against the DEA website. They attempted to shut down the DEA site by visiting it repeatedly. The site received 30,000 hits at once, but service was not disrupted. "In many ways, this debate is a good thing," said Administrator Hutchinson of his not-so-warm welcome. "If nothing else, it shows everyone how important this issue is and it helps the DEA get our message across. DEA must follow the law—we don't judge what is use and what is abuse. We judge what is legal and what is illegal."



San Francisco Marijuana Protests, 2002.

Speaking Out Booklet and Grass Roots Movement

To get DEA's message out about why drug legalization would be a catastrophic failure and why marijuana should not be legalized for medicinal or recreational use, DEA's Public Affairs office initiated an informational campaign. An entire section on anti-legalization was created on the website, which included many materials about the subject. One of the most comprehensive was "Speaking Out Against Drug Legalization," a 25-page booklet that logically laid out the top 10 facts on legalization. It detailed national, international, and local statistics and examples of failed prior legalization experiments and also discussed the many successes of current drug policy.

DEA's Demand Reduction section also began a new, proactive emphasis on outreach and coalition-building. The agency reached out to other anti-drug and pro-law enforcement organizations already organized and on the ground—those who interacted with the media and public on a regular basis and those who were intimately involved in their communities. The Demand Reduction section's mission was to proactively engage the support of these coalitions. The number of neighborhood anti-drug coalitions in this country was huge, but largely unorganized. DEA made it a goal to help those groups develop a better network of communication to both build local, state, and national support for the fight against drugs, and build local, state, and national support for the DEA.

2002 Election Results on Legalization Initiatives

The results of the grass roots movement supporting current drug policy paid immediate dividends. In the fall of 2002, drug decriminalization or legalization initiatives were on the ballot in several states. The legalization lobby was behind these initiatives and had greatly assisted with funding, signatures, and wording of the initiatives. Widespread passage was expected, but because of a strong grass roots movement by parents, anti-drug coalitions, and law enforcement, four of the six initiatives failed—showing the American public's support for drug enforcement. The results were:

- Arizona: 57% of voters killed a plan (Proposition 203) that would have made state law enforcement the broker for medicinal marijuana.
- Nevada: 61% of voters opposed a proposal that would have allowed anyone to possess up to 3 ounces of marijuana.
- Ohio: 67% opposed a proposal (Issue 1) that would have allowed nonviolent drug offenders to seek treatment instead of serve jail time.
- South Dakota: 62% of voters defeated an industrial hemp initiative.
- Washington, D.C.: 78% of voters approved an initiative that would offer drug rehabilitation instead of prison for some nonviolent offenders.
- San Francisco: 63% approved a measure to have the city study growing and dispensing marijuana for medical purposes.

Methamphetamine

From 1999 to 2003, methamphetamine abuse had become a national problem as this drug epidemic spread eastward. Its use was initially mainly confined to the West and Midwest, but has

now surfaced in other areas, especially the Southeast. Florida in particular has seen an increase in abuse and clandestine laboratory production. In 1999, law enforcement seized 22 methamphetamine labs in Florida, but by 2002, that had increased to 109. Similarly, 30 meth labs were seized in Alabama in 1999; by 2002, that had risen to 198.

In last five years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of small, toxic methamphetamine labs in rural communities. While the meth trade is still dominated by Mexico-based traffickers producing the drug in larger "super labs" on the West Coast, the increase in small labs has been significant. The growing numbers of small, dangerous clandestine laboratories has strained communities and state and local police forces. Effective and safe clean-up of these labs is very costly and drains community resources and manpower. In response to this new pressure on local law enforcement, DEA is working with the COPS program to provide state and local clan lab clean-up training to increasing numbers of police officers.

Traffickers' methods of producing methamphetamine and obtaining pseudoephedrine, a chemical necessary to make meth, have changed in recent years. The growing numbers of small labs led to an increase in the use of the over-the-counter "blister packs" of cold and allergy medication as a source of pseudoephedrine. The medications are packaged in such a way that they would be impractical as a source of supply for a super labs where massive quantities of the drug are made. But they have been used more and more by small lab operators.

Canada emerged as a source of supply for pseudoephedrine after DEA's Operation Mountain Express I and II effectively stopped the illegal pseudo trade within the U.S. Discussions between the U.S. and Canada led to tighter restrictions on pseudo production and transportation in Canada.

In 2002, a new meth threat began to emerge – meth in tablet form, called "yaba," that comes from Southeast Asia. Yaba accounted for only a small percentage of meth used in the U.S. by 2003, but law enforcement is concerned about its increasing potential for abuse since its appearance is similar to the popular drug Ecstasy.

Operation Mountain Express I, II, and III (2000-2002)

In August 2000, DEA special agents stunned the methamphetamine production underworld, arresting more than 140 individuals in eight cities with a promise of more arrests to follow. The arrests marked the first of three phases of Operation Mountain Express. The operation combated the production of methamphetamine by targeting those who produced and illegally distributed pseudoephedrine, a chemical essential to the manufacture of methamphetamine.

Phase One of the operation yielded arrests in Los Angeles, Denver, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, San Diego, Portland, Houston, and Lodi, CA. In addition, DEA suspended chemical registrations of 10 companies, 770 chemical registrations were surrendered, and 29 wholesale chemical companies closed. The arrested defendants faced federal charges for their involvement in a loosely structured national network that trafficked in pseudoephedrine. In the late 1990s, pseudoephedrine (pseudo) had become widely used in the production of methamphetamine because of its ready availability in over-the-counter cold and allergy medications. The



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operation focused on the transfer of pseudo produced for legal purposes to those who used it illegally to produce meth.

Operation Mountain Express continued with phase two, using information gained in phase one of the operation to identify registrants (physicians or pharmacists who are authorized to handle controlled substances) who were involved in the illegal diversion of pseudo and to cancel their registrations. The rogue registrants were not subject to criminal prosecution, but were prohibited from working with controlled substances.

Operations Mountain Express I and II effectively shut down the illegal pseudo trade within the U.S. Traffickers began to look for sources of supply in Canada and the illegal trade and transport between Canada, and the U.S. grew. Operation Mountain Express III was created when DEA pursued this new pseudo trafficking market in Canada. Intelligence indicated that traffickers were purchasing large amounts of pseudo in Canada and then returning to the U.S. with the product, often via the Ambassador Bridge in Detroit. As a result, Detroit and nearby Chicago became hubs of pseudo distribution. From these points, pseudo was transported to California and distributed to meth "super labs" where it was converted to methamphetamine by Mexico-based drug traffickers.

The successful conclusion of Operation Express III was announced by DEA Administrator Asa Hutchinson, U.S. Customs Commissioner (and former DEA Administrator) Robert Bonner, and IRS Deputy Commissioner Bob Wenzel. Operation Mountain Express III ended on Jan. 10, 2002, when DEA Special Agents, assisted by the U.S. Customs Service, Internal Revenue Service, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested 54 traffickers, in addition to the 67 previously arrested as part of the investigations.

Operation Mountain Express did unprecedented damage to the methamphetamine trade. In 2001, there were a total of 6,000 pounds of meth seized by DEA; the three phases of Operation Mountain Express resulted in the seizure of nearly 30 tons of pseudoephedrine, which could produce 37,000 pounds of meth. The operations also yielded 371 arrests and the seizure of 269

pounds of meth, 151 vehicles, 13 weapons, and nearly \$17.5 million. DEA also tightened regulatory controls over DEA-registered chemical handlers. Legislative initiatives were also undertaken to address weaknesses in the regulatory framework. Additionally, the investigation traced large amounts of profit being sent to individuals in the Middle East, who had possible ties to terrorist organizations.

Methamphetamine Summits (2000-2002)

In the early 2000s, DEA co-sponsored methamphetamine summits across the country in partnership with the National Crime Prevention Council and local communities. These summits were training conferences at which a state, county, or city developed a strategic plan for reducing methamphetamine use and trafficking in the area. The summits brought together hundreds of people from the community who were involved in different aspects of the methamphetamine problem: law enforcement, social workers, school officials, local officials, prevention experts, treatment providers, parents, and environmental firms. The goal was to coordinate these various groups and mobilize resources to prevent and reduce the proliferation of meth and meth labs. Meth summits were held in Sacramento, CA in 2000; in Bellevue, WA in 2001; and in Indianapolis, IN; Little Rock, AR; Lexington, KY; Oklahoma City, OK; and Hawaii County, HI in 2002.

Meth in America Tour (2002)

In the spring of 2002, Administrator Hutchinson launched a nationwide tour to call attention to the country's growing methamphetamine problem. The campaign, called "Meth in America: Not in Our Town" began in May and continued through July 2000. DEA took the tour to 32 states over the course of the three months. Many of the stops were smaller states that were struggling with the social and financial impact of the drug.

At each site, Administrator Hutchinson held press conferences in conjunction with state and local officials, and often the tour was combined with scheduled meth summits. The focus was the meth problem in that community and the resources and op-

tions available to help combat the problem. Administrator Hutchinson emphasized the federal response to methamphetamine trafficking, but also cited the many innovative actions communities were taking to combat the problem. He also cited the many community coalitions that were impacting the meth problem. The tour received much national and local attention and raised overall awareness of the meth problem and sparked discussions on solutions.

Hazardous Waste Cleanup Program

Since 1980, the Environmental Protection Agency's hazardous waste regulations have required generators of hazardous waste to properly manage their waste. DEA along with state and local law enforcement agencies, become the "generator" of hazardous waste when clandestine drug laboratories—which are generally methamphetamine labs—are seized. As the generator, law enforcement



IA Melissa Conway and SA Sean Stephen King examine some of the Mt. Express seizures.



*Hazardous Waste
Cleanup Program.*

and minimizing the agency's liability. Through the use of nation-wide contracts, DEA's program promoted the safety of law enforcement personnel and the public by using highly qualified companies with specialized training and equipment to perform the removal of the wastes at the seized laboratory. Using these contractors reduces the risk of injury to law enforcement personnel and the public from the clean up of the seized laboratory.

The program has become increasingly more efficient as DEA gained more experience in cleaning up clandestine drug laboratories. The average cost per cleanup in the FY 1991-1992 time frame was \$17,000. While the number of clandestine drug laboratory cleanups rose, the average cost per cleanup continued to go down. Through contract improvements and DEA's contract management experience, the costs of a removal were subsequently reduced to approximately \$4,000 in FY 2000 and to less than \$3,300 in FY 2002.

New hazardous waste contracts became effective in FY 2003. The new contracts include many time and cost saving tools to help address the field's concerns and the dramatic increase in workload. The new contracts are

expected to significantly improve the response time by increasing the number of Contract Areas from 29 to 44 and requiring response facilities in each. The greater competition created by smaller Contract Areas and new cost reduction factors should result in additional cost savings for the government, while maintaining strict environmental compliance standards. In addition, the new contracts contain provisions for weekly pickups from containers in states that establish a container storage program and have entered into a Letter of Agreement with DEA to provide this service. DEA began discussions regarding a pilot container program with several states in FY 2002 to determine the feasibility and degree of cost savings associated with the approach.

Targeting the Arellano-Felix Trafficking Organization (2000-2002)

The Arellano Felix Organization (AFO), often referred to as the Tijuana Cartel, was considered one of the most powerful and violent drug trafficking organizations in Mexico. At the height of its power, the AFO was responsible for the transportation, importation, and distribution of multi-ton quantities of cocaine, marijuana, and large quantities of heroin and methamphetamine into the U.S. from Mexico—primarily from Tijuana into San Diego and Los Angeles.

DEA offices in Mexico and the U.S., most notably Tijuana, San Diego, and Los Angeles, relentlessly pursued the principal members of this organization in an effort to bring about their downfall. The most prominent members of the AFO were brothers Benjamin, Eduardo, Ramon, and Francisco Javier Arellano Felix; Ismael Higuera Guerrero; Jesus Labra Aviles; Manuel Aguirre Galindo; and Ismael Higuera-Guerrero. Jesus Labra Aviles, long considered the financial mastermind of the organization, was arrested in Mexico City in March 2000 by the Government of Mex-

bears the responsibility for ensuring that the wastes from clandestine laboratories are managed in compliance with all applicable health, safety, transportation, and environmental requirements.

The DEA Laboratory System established a program in 1990 to address environmental concerns from the clean up of clandestine drug laboratories. The amount of waste material and chemicals from a clandestine drug laboratory varies from a few pounds to several tons, depending on the size of the laboratory and its manufacturing capabilities. Wastes can be highly toxic, flammable, corrosive, reactive and, in some cases, radioactive. These wastes can cause injury and death to laboratory operators, and can cause fires and explosions that can contaminate the interior of homes, apartments, motels, etc.

In some instances, these wastes have been indiscriminately dumped into pits, streams, lakes, septic tanks, and along the roadside.

Cleaning up a seized clandestine drug laboratory can be a complex, dangerous, and expensive undertaking. The DEA hazardous waste program has been successful in promoting the safety of law enforcement personnel and the public, protecting the environment,



ico with the support of DEA's Tijuana office. This was followed by the arrest of major AFO Lieutenant Ismael Higuera-Guerrero two months later in May 2000. He, too, was arrested by the Mexican Government in coordination with DEA's Tijuana office.

Higuero-Guerrero had been the most blatant member of the AFO directing operations in Tijuana for years.

At the beginning of 2002, AFO was dealt two huge blows: First, its infamous and brutal enforcer and assassin Ramon Arellano Felix was killed in a street fight with drug trafficking competitors and Mexican police, then, a month later, the AFO's overall Chief of Operations, Benjamin Arellano-Felix, was arrested in Puebla, Mexico, by the Mexican Military.

Operation Crossfire (2002)

On April 10, 2002, Operation Crossfire, a bi-lateral anti-corruption investigation conducted in collaboration with federal Mexican Government officials, resulted in the arrest of 42 active federal, state, and local law enforcement officers from Mexicali, Tijuana, and Ensenada. These arrests included the Tijuana Chief of Police, heads of the State Judicial Police in Tijuana, Tecate, and Mexicali; and the Assistant State Attorney General. All of them were assisting the Arellano-Felix Organization.

Drug Smuggling Tunnels

Reports of drug smuggling tunnels increased significantly in late 2002 and early 2003. Traffickers may have increased their use of subterranean smuggling in light of increased border security, either real or perceived. Mexican drug trafficking organizations had used tunnels as a smuggling method since at least 1990. All of the narco-tunnels seized were in California (in the San Diego-Tijuana area) and Arizona (Douglas, Naco, and Nogales). At least 13 tunnels were discovered. Narco-tunnels ranged in sophistication from a 16-inch PVC pipe; to tunnels dug off of drainage systems; to well-engineered tunnels equipped with electricity, ventilation, and rails.

DEA, in cooperation with Mexico's Policia Federal Preventiva, discovered one of the most significant drug smuggling tunnels on Feb. 27, 2002. It was approximately 4 feet by 4 feet, more than 800 feet long, and 20 feet underground. It was equipped with its own ventilation system, lighting, and rails on which an electronic cart moved drugs. The Mexican entrance was hidden behind a fireplace in a home near Tecate, Mexico, and the U.S. exit was concealed under a stairway in a home in Boulevard, CA. About 300 pounds of marijuana were seized from inside the tunnel. Ownership of the tunnel was attributed to the Jose Albino Quintero-Meraz organization.

Drug Treatment Courts

Drug treatment courts are specialized community courts designed to help stop the abuse of drugs, alcohol, and related criminal activity. Non-violent offenders who have been charged with simple possession of drugs are given the option to receive treatment instead of a jail sentence. A judge oversees each case from the beginning and traces progressions and lapses through random drug testing and monitoring attendance to treatment sessions. If a participant fails to meet the minimum requirements set forth by the court, immediate sanctions are imposed. For determined individuals, completion of the program might bring about dismissal of charges, a reduced sentence, a lesser penalty, or a combination of these.

Drug courts have seen rapid growth since their inception in 1989—by 2003, there were about 700 nationwide. Administrator Hutchinson was a champion of drug courts during his tenure at DEA. He visited several drug courts across the country to encourage and support participants and spoke at many graduation ceremonies. Drug courts were a centerpiece of his message that, to make progress in the fight against drugs, it was necessary to heal the addicted—to restore their lives and make them productive citizens again and help reduce the demand for drugs in this country.

Israeli Ecstasy Traffickers Extradited (2002)

Two Israeli Ecstasy traffickers were extradited to Miami in August 2002, marking the first time that Israeli citizens were extradited to the U.S. on drug charges. The two men, Meir Ben David and Josef Levi, were indicted in October 2000 in Miami for conspiracy to import Ecstasy and possession with intent to distribute Ecstasy into the Southern District of Florida. The investigation, initiated by DEA's Fort Lauderdale office in 1998, revealed that Ben David and Levi were part of an Israeli organized crime syndicate responsible for smuggling large quantities of Ecstasy from Europe into the U.S. Ben David coordinated shipments of Ecstasy from Europe into the U.S. using body couriers and parcel couriers. Levi assisted the organization by distributing Ecstasy at various nightclubs throughout South Florida as well as to other Israeli Ecstasy traffickers. During the course of the investigation, hundreds of kilograms of Ecstasy were documented as being imported into the U.S. by this organization.

Operation X-Out (2002-2003)

In late 2002, DEA began Operation X-Out, a multi-faceted, 12-month initiative that focused on identifying and dismantling organizations that were producing and distributing Ecstasy and predatory drugs in the U.S. and abroad. DEA committed to invest more resources in Ecstasy and predatory drug investigations and increase these kind of investigations from 5% of DEA's total cases to at least 10%. Airport interdiction task forces were increased at certain airports and new tasks forces were created in cities like New York and Miami that were primary entryways for the drugs. Also created within DEA was a task force that focused on Internet drug trafficking.

Operation X-Out also included an awareness campaign to educate students, parents, educators, and the health and law enforcement communities about the dangers of Ecstasy and predatory drugs. DEA held press conferences and town hall meetings across the country that focused on enforcement and prevention efforts at the local level. The first was held in November 2002 in San Diego, where Administrator Hutchinson launched Operation X-Out and called attention to the growing problem of Ecstasy and predatory drug abuse. The press conference was followed by a town hall meeting attended by about 300 educators, health experts, students, rape crisis centers, and concerned citizens who discussed solutions to the problem in their community. Similar events were held during 2003 throughout the country, with a particular emphasis on college campuses.

Three Largest Ecstasy Seizures

As of early 2003, the following seizures were the largest made in the country. The millions of tablets involved showed the huge



1.2 million ecstasy tablets seized in New York inside a diamond cutting apparatus.

extent to which Ecstasy was being smuggled into the country by international drug trafficking organizations and the drug's tremendous popularity in the U.S.

1. In July 2000, DEA and the U.S. Customs Service seized approximately 2.1 million Ecstasy tablets at the Los Angeles International Airport. The tablets, labeled as clothing, arrived on an Air France flight from Paris concealed in an airfreight shipment. Several individuals, who were responsible for overseeing and coordinating this shipment, were arrested. DEA later connected these individuals to a significant Israeli trafficking organization that was responsible for importing multi-kilogram quantities of Ecstasy into the U.S. (See Operation Red Tide)
2. The second largest seizure was made by the New York Police Department when they seized 1.6 million Ecstasy tablets from two Israeli nationals at a Manhattan apartment. The pills had an estimated street value of \$40 million and were sold in 100,000 tablet quantities to mid-level distributors in the area.
3. The third largest Ecstasy seizure occurred in conjunction with arrests made in October 2002 by DEA New York. DEA arrested three Israeli nationals in connection with a seizure of 1.4 million Ecstasy tablets with an estimated value of \$42 million. The investigation began by DEA's Belgium office where they received information from Belgian law enforcement about the tablets, which were bound for New York. It was the second largest seizure in Europe.

DEA Website Reaches Millions

In DEA's early years, the concept of internet communications would have seemed like a sci-fi fantasy. But by 2003, in an age when websites are the main sources for finding or providing information, DEA kept up with the demand for a thorough and informative webpage. When DEA's website, www.dea.gov first went on-line in 1996, it contained just a few web files of infor-

mation—in 2003, the website contained 2,500 files that addressed every aspect of the agency and its mission. The website featured: recent news stories that changed almost daily, current drug facts and statistics, recruiting and training information, and photos of major fugitives. In late 2002, the website expanded to include webpages for each of DEA's divisions. Individual divisions used their sites to promote local drug news and reach out to their communities.

DEA became adept at using the DEA.gov as a way to reach out to the public, to community, schools, the media, and our law enforcement partners. When the site was first created, it had one million visitors. By 1998, the number of visitors had grown to 18 million. In 2002, after a major overhaul of the site and increased efforts to publicize it, the DEA.gov received 100 million visitors. This staggering growth represented continued increase in public interest in the DEA and the agency's improved capability to provide important information to the American people.

Operation Webslinger (2002)

In a first-of-its kind investigation, Operation Webslinger targeted predatory drugs such as GHB and its derivatives, GBL and 1,4 Butanediol (1,4 BD), sold over the Internet. This operation was also groundbreaking because e-mail addresses and web page communications of Internet drug traffickers were identified for Title III interceptions. While not the first time this method of intercept was used, Operation Webslinger was one of the earliest to use Internet intercepts on a national and international scale. These Internet intercepts revealed key information about the traffickers' operations, including their sources of supply and the amount of drugs they were selling. Perhaps most important was these intercepted Internet communications proved the sites were selling the chemicals not as the industrial solvent as advertised, but for human consumption—which is key to prosecuting traffickers under the drug analog statutes.

In September 2002, DEA successfully concluded this operation with the eventual arrest of 175 individuals in more than 100 cities across the U.S. and Canada. Those arrested were sources of supply, midlevel brokers, and users. DEA and law enforcement partners dismantled four nationwide distribution rings of these drugs, which are used both to induce a high and in the commission of sexual assault. DEA seized approximately 25 million dosage units of predatory drugs and more than \$1 million in assets. The operation had an immediate impact on Internet drug sales, with users complaining in chat rooms they were no longer able to purchase these drugs.

Operation Arctic Heat (2002)

A savvy, flexible drug operation involving Alaskan traffickers was the target of Operation Arctic Heat. These traffickers did business all over the U.S., including New York and Los Angeles. In November 2002, DEA agents arrested more than 60 individuals and seized more than 160 kilograms of cocaine, \$2 million in cash, and \$35,000 in counterfeit money. Seizures also took place in Anchorage, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Salt Lake City, Chicago,



and Grand Junction. This drug operation also targeted money laundering and movement of drug proceeds and worked on an extensive embezzlement scheme designed to “smurf” money out of the U.S. and into the Dominican Republic.

Lebanese Opium and Marijuana Eradication Program Resumes (2002)

With urging and support from DEA and other international drug liaison officers, Lebanon re-engaged their opium poppy and cannabis eradication initiatives in 2002. In February 2002, the Lebanese Internal Security Forces, assisted by the Lebanese military and the Syrian military, eradicated approximately 7 million square meters of opium poppy in the Bekaa Valley. In August 2002, approximately 9 million square meters of cannabis were eradicated in the Bekaa. DEA Special Agents, along with other drug enforcement liaison officers, were invited to witness the eradication initiatives. Being in the Bekaa Valley for a DEA Agent was likened to finding the Holy Grail an archeologist. This eradication initiative was expected to have a significant impact on the availability of heroin and marijuana in Western Europe in 2003.

The International Drug Profiling Conference (2002)

The International Drug Profiling Conference (IDPC) convened in December 2002 and was the first-ever forensic science conference to bring delegates together to define and standardize “drug profiling” to meet the enforcement and intelligence requirements of international drug law enforcement. The IDPC was comprised of delegates from the U.S., Australia, Great Britain, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Hong Kong, the United Nations Drug Control Program, and The Netherlands. The first IDPC ended with an agreement among delegates that they would set realistic and achievable goals that could be implemented internationally. By consensus, the first two goals the delegates chose to pursue were the development of drug profiling databases and the development of programs dealing with the profiling of heroin and Amphetamine Type Substances.

Operations Pipedreams/HeadHunter (2003)

On Feb. 24, 2003, DEA successfully completed Operations Pipedreams and Head Hunter, a nationwide sweep of major drug paraphernalia distributors and businesses. The coordinated operations netted 55 individuals across the country and seized \$150,000 cash. As a result of this operation, 11 Internet sites were taken offline and redirected. Targeted companies sold half of the nation’s supply of drug paraphernalia and accounted for more than a quarter of a billion dollars in retail drug paraphernalia sales annually. Using both traditional retail stores and Internet websites, the distributors were one-stop shops for drug dealers and users, selling everything from miniature scales, pipes, bongs, cocaine freebase kits, and cutting agents to dilute processed drugs in their raw form. Approximately 115 tons of drug paraphernalia with an estimated wholesale value of \$15-20 million were removed from the sites as well.

Critical to the success of Operation Pipedreams was the use of Internet intercepts on e-commerce sites and e-mail accounts to track the money and domestic and international shipments of drug paraphernalia. Operation Pipedreams was conducted by DEA offices in Des Moines, IA, Boise, ID, and Pittsburgh, PA.

Arrest of Osiel Cardenas-Guillen in Mexico (2003)

On March 14, 2003, Mexican officials brought the reign of Osiel Cardenas-Guillen to an end. He was arrested at a residence in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico, following a fierce firefight with Mexican police. Before his arrest, Cardenas was the head of a drug trafficking organization that controlled large-scale marijuana and cocaine trafficking through the smuggling corridor between Matamoros, Mexico and Brownsville, TX. Cardenas had numerous resources that enabled him to maintain 15 to 25 heavily armed bodyguards at all times, protection and support from all levels of Mexican law enforcement, and technical assistance from the Mexican phone company.

Through the combined efforts with the Government of Mexico, DEA, FBI, and U.S. Customs, the Cardenas reign on the Northeastern Mexico corridor came to a halt. This investigation, called “Operation Golden Grips” was an important arrest because it sent a message to traffickers that violence and intimidation did not protect them from law enforcement.

The catalyst of this operation was the November 1999 assault and attempted kidnapping of two U.S. federal agents and a confidential source. During the assault, Cardenas and 12 to 15 members of his organization, armed with assault rifles, surrounded a vehicle occupied by the agents and attempted to kidnap them and a confidential source who was in the car. Only after an extensive discussion between one of the agents and Cardenas were the agents allowed to leave the scene and travel directly to the border. The agents were followed to the border by members of the Cardenas organization.

Hemp Rule (2003)

On March 21, 2003, DEA announced two final rules that address the legal status of products derived from the cannabis plant. These cannabis products, also known as “hemp” products, often contain the hallucinogenic substance tetrahydro-cannabinols (THC). THC is the primary psychoactive chemical found in the cannabis (marijuana) plant.

These rules set forth what products may contain “hemp.” Under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), THC is a Schedule I controlled substance. Schedule I consists of those controlled substances that have not been approved as medicine by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The CSA provides that anything that contains “any quantity” of a Schedule I hallucinogenic controlled substance is, itself, a Schedule I controlled substance, unless it is an FDA-approved drug product. Thus, the CSA prohibits human consumption of any non-FDA-approved product that contains any amount of THC.

In some cases, a Schedule I controlled substance may have a legitimate industrial use. The CSA allows for industrial use of Schedule I controlled substances, but only under highly controlled circumstances. The rules announced by DEA create an exemption in the law that removes all CSA regulatory restrictions for legitimate industrial products made from cannabis plants. Exempted industrial products include paper, rope, and clothing (which contain fiber made from the cannabis plant), animal feed mixtures, soaps, and shampoos (which contain sterilized cannabis seeds or oils extracted from the seeds). DEA is exempting these types of industrial cannabis products from control because they are not intended for human consumption and do not cause THC to enter the human body.

The rules prohibit cannabis products containing THC that are intended or used for human consumption (foods and beverages). This approach is consistent with the long-standing rule under federal law disallowing human consumption of Schedule I controlled substances outside of FDA-approved research. The rules became effective April 21, 2003.

International Drug Enforcement Conference

The International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC) was established in 1983 in an effort to institutionalize regional cooperation among executive-level drug law enforcement officials from South, Central, and North America, as well as the Caribbean. IDEC is an “operationally oriented conference.” In the earlier years, IDEC served as a forum to discuss country-specific enforcement problems and programs, and later to topical-related issues. The principal purpose of the yearly conference was to share drug-related intelligence and develop an operational strategy to successfully attack trafficking organizations at every link in the drug chain. IDEC XX was the first conference that included new members as well as observers from Asia, Europe, and Russia.

IDEc XVII: 1999, Washington, D.C., U.S., “Identifying and Attacking Major Trafficking Organizations”

IDEc XVIII: 2000, Buenos Aires, Argentina, “Multi-Regional Investigations and Operations Targeting Major Traffickers”

IDEc XIX: 2001, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, “Multi-Regional Investigations and Operations Targeting Major Traffickers and Their Organizations”

IDEc XX: 2002, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, “Combating Major International Drug Trafficking Organizations Through Global Cooperation and Partnership”

IDEc XXI: 2003, Panama City, Panama, “International Counternarcotics and Terrorism”

Diversion

Many problems associated with drug abuse are the result of legitimately manufactured controlled substances being diverted from their lawful purpose into illicit drug traffic. By 2003, the number of people who abuse prescription drugs each year roughly equals the number who abuse cocaine—about 2 to 4 percent of the population. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, abuse of prescription drugs was a growing problem.

In 1998, 2.5 million Americans admitted abuse of prescription drugs. By 2001, that had almost doubled to 4.8 million.

OxyContin Abuse

The problem of prescription drug diversion was brought to the attention of many Americans because of the abuse of OxyContin that began in the late 1990s. OxyContin is a twelve-hour controlled release formulation of the Schedule II drug oxycodone, a powerful analgesic. The drug was introduced in 1996 and experienced exponential growth, becoming the number one controlled pharmaceutical in terms of sales by the year 2000. This rapid growth was accompanied by similar increases in diversion and abuse. The number of people reporting use of OxyContin for non-medical purposes at least once in their lifetime increased from 221,000 in 1999 to 399,000 in 2000 to 957,000 in 2001.

OxyContin was being diverted through fraudulent prescriptions, over-prescribing, theft and illegal sales, and “doctor shop-

ping”—the practice of going to different doctors until one prescribes the narcotic the patient seeks. The drug had become a target for diverters and abusers due to the large amounts of active ingredients and the ability of abusers to easily compromise the controlled release mechanism. Simply crushing a tablet negates the timed effect of the drug, enabling abusers to swallow, inhale or inject the drug for a powerful morphine-like high. The Drug Abuse Warning Network reported that emergency room mentions for oxycodone, the active ingredient in OxyContin, were more than 100 percent higher in 2000 than in 1998.

OxyContin abuse appears to have begun in rural areas of the eastern U.S., then spread to suburban and urban areas in many parts of the country. Numerous communities experienced an up-swing in crime as a direct result of the OxyContin problem. Additionally, medical examiners reported overdose deaths associated with the abuse of oxycodone, the active ingredient in OxyContin.

In response to this escalating abuse and diversion, DEA embarked on a comprehensive OxyContin Action Plan that was implemented in FY 2001. This was the first DEA plan to target a specific brand of controlled substance. It focused on enforcement and regulatory investigations targeting key points of diversion. This plan brought the problem of diversion and abuse of OxyContin to the attention of numerous federal, state and local agencies; advisory committees; and to the general public through meetings, presentations, interviews, demand reduction and Internet sites.

The Action Plan had a significant impact. There was a four-fold increase in DEA OxyContin cases opened in FY 2001 over FY 2000. Arrests made in conjunction with OxyContin investigations rose seven fold from FY 2000 to FY 2001. OxyContin cases opened in FY 2001 and 2002 totaled 305, and arrests for the same period totaled 351.

Pain Management Initiative

For years, the issue of adequate pain management was a source of controversy in the medical community. DEA's role enforcing the Controlled Substances Act and regulating the most powerful narcotics used in the treatment of pain was viewed by some as inhibiting pain medication availability, when, in fact, both diversion control and pain management constitute health issues.

Recognizing the need to reconcile differences and work together to ensure optimum pain treatment as well as drug diversion control and drug abuse prevention, the Office of Diversion Control developed consensus on the issue with 21 prominent health organizations. The result was a joint statement entitled “Promoting Pain Relief and Preventing Abuse of Pain Medications: A Critical Balancing Act.” Emphasizing that patients’ ability to receive proper care, including pain management, should not be hindered by drug abuse prevention efforts, the statement pledges cooperation between the health care community and law enforcement, and states: “The roles of both health professionals and law enforcement personnel in maintaining this essential balance between patient care and diversion prevention are critical.”

The Office of Diversion Control continues with its efforts to strike a balance regarding the use of narcotics to effectively treat pain. On-going relationships have been developed with renowned pain specialists and medical groups to develop educational materials for physicians and investigators concerning both diversion and acceptable medical practices. These efforts were essential and continued into 2003 as DEA confronted complex drug policy issues.



On-line Investigations Project

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, the worldwide web had become a ready source of pharmaceuticals including controlled substances. Many of these sales are suspect because they circumvent the doctor/patient relationship that is necessary for the legitimate prescribing of controlled substances. Realizing that this easily accessible outlet greatly increased the potential for the abuse and diversion of controlled substances, DEA needed to combat this problem in its early stages of development. However, searching the Internet for possible diversion activities was beyond the reach of Diversion Investigators, so it was evident that an integrated, focused, data-mining activity was necessary to identify, collect, and analyze this data.

To meet this need the Office of Diversion Control initiated the On-line Investigations Project. The purpose of the project is to develop a state-of-the-art computer system, maintain a data warehouse to store data collected from the worldwide web, and develop an information management system to manage the collection of web site text, image, and other relevant data from the worldwide web. The project will correlate information, detect patterns through link analysis and uncover trends by sifting through large amounts of data stored in the warehouse to provide constant and timely leads to the field. The On-line Investigations Project is expected to advance the investigative tools available to Diversion Investigators and have a dramatic impact on the ability to conduct investigations on the worldwide web to detect the diversion of controlled substances.



Dr. Eddie Sfeir-Byron, Bolivian Drug Czar and Vice Minister for Social Defense, along with Bolivian officials witness the destruction of 344 pounds of cocaine and 17 metric tons of coca leaf seized by DEA and Bolivian authorities.

companies and suspect individuals, gathering of intelligence on trafficker diversion methods, improved regulatory control of the chemical—led to two subsequent chemical targeting initiatives, Operation Topaz and Project PRISM.

Operation Topaz is an international initiative aimed at preventing the diversion of AA, a chemical utilized by traffickers in the illicit production of heroin. Topaz began on March 1, 2001, and is a cooperative effort by drug law enforcement and regulatory officials from 40 countries and regions, as well as the International Narcotics Control Board, ICPO/ Interpol, European Commission, and the World Customs Organization. Based on the premise that the prevention of the diversion of certain industrial chemicals to the clandestine production of illicit drugs is a critical element of any drug enforcement effort, Operation Topaz was developed as a long term monitoring program of AA.

Project PRISM aimed to assist Governments in developing and implementing operating procedures to more effectively control and monitor trade in amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) precursors in order to prevent their diversion. Project PRISM targets multiple chemicals used in the clandestine production of ATS, including ephedrine and pseudoephedrine for illicit production of amphetamine and methamphetamine, and safrole and methylenedioxymethylethyl-2-propanone for production of MDMA and its analogs.

All of these initiatives have resulted in a broad level of international agreement regarding the actions that must be taken to prevent chemical diversion, thereby impacting clandestine, illicit drug production.



National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS)

As the nation's primary agency charged with enforcing the controlled substances laws and regulations of the U.S., DEA invested in strategic and operational information sources at the Federal, State, local, and even foreign levels. The National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS), a DEA program that systematically collects drug analyses results and other associated information from state and local forensic laboratories nationwide, is enhancing DEA resources for carrying out its core mission. NFLIS has proved to be an effective information source for better understanding and monitoring our nation's drug problems. It improves DEA's ability to track national, regional, and local drug abuse trends, including providing timely and geographically specific information on emerging drug problems. NFLIS can also be used to identify specific drug characteristics including commonly reported abused drug combinations. One of the key advantages of NFLIS is that it collects forensic laboratory data verified by chemical analysis that has the highest degree of validity.

Sponsored by the Office of Diversion Control, NFLIS is the only database available in the U.S. that provides actual and estimate nationwide and regional scientifically validated data on drugs associated with law enforcement activity. Initiated in 1997 to provide reliable data for drug scheduling, NFLIS has grown into a fully operational system with interest from other DEA offices and government agencies. By 2003, 32 out of 50 state laboratory systems and 48 out of 72 local laboratories participated in the NFLIS; over 800,000 drug analyses results were collected during 2001. Participation in NFLIS was totally voluntary, but the ultimate goal is to enlist all of the approximately 300 forensic laboratories.

Aviation

During 1998 to 2003, the Aviation Division recognized the ever increasing role aviation support was in obtaining DEA enforcement objectives. The Division implemented long-term strategic plans in order to provide more effective and efficient service. A component of these plans was an effort to modernize and standardize the fleet.

Older, maintenance-intensive aircraft were replaced with new Cessna 206 surveillance aircraft, Pilatus PC-12 cargo aircraft, and Eurocopter A-Star helicopters. Standardization was reflected in the acquisition of Beech Super King Air cargo aircraft, which replaced other aging turboprops.

The Aviation Division applied the same upgrade policy to its technology by purchasing new day/night video surveillance cameras to replace less dependable, less capable equipment. In 2003, the Division created a state-of-the-art Aviation Communications Center capable of tracking and flight-following all OA assets through the use of high frequency radio, very high frequency radio, and satellite communications. The Center facilitates the maximization of Aviation asset usage and produces cost savings by eliminating the requirement for contractor-flight following.

The Division expanded its representation and support assets in the Caribbean and poised itself for future mis-

sion expansion worldwide with the acquisition of a Learjet 60 aircraft. This aircraft significantly increased mission profiles and represented an asset that is capable of global deployment.

Training

From 1999 to 2003, DEA's Training Division continued its mission to ensure that DEA employees were provided the technical and professional competencies and ethical and leadership skills to accomplish the DEA mission. This training took place at DEA's new Justice Training Center, which opened in April of 1999 in Quantico, VA.

One of the most significant developments at the DEA Training Academy was the establishment of the new Clandestine Laboratory Tactical Training School in 2000. The course is needed because of the increase in the number of clandestine laboratory seizures throughout the country, with the corresponding escalation of problems confronting state and local agencies that are called to the scene of these laboratories. Often referred to as "chemical time-bombs," these labs present unique dangers to users, neighbors, law enforcement, and the surrounding environment. Often, it is state or local police who first encounter these laboratories and



Training exercises.



must ensure that they are investigated, dismantled, and disposed of appropriately and safely.

The class was designed for Special Agents and narcotics officers who are involved in clandestine laboratory raids, but had limited tactical training and experience. Their training included the full use of issued equipment including air purifying respirators and self-contained breathing apparatus.

The DEA Basic Clandestine Laboratory Certification School is the most widely recognized law enforcement sponsored clandestine lab training course that met OSHA standards. The Unit also conducted an Advanced Site Safety Officer school for DEA and state and local officers. This school is designed to certify attendees as clandestine laboratory Site Safety Officers, an OSHA requirement for every clandestine Laboratory site. Advanced assessment and investigative techniques are taught at this school.

From 1999 to 2003, DEA continued its mission to conduct and sponsor counternarcotics training to thousands of foreign law enforcement counterparts. Since 1969, DEA and its predecessor agencies trained officials in more than 243 countries. DEA continued its participation at the four International Law Enforcement Academies, including one in San Jose, Costa Rica, scheduled for opening later in 2003. These academies have been successful in increasing the professionalism of participants through the exchange of law enforcement techniques and investigative strategies and in strengthening transnational crime fighting.

Technology

DEA's secure, centralized computer network, Firebird, which standardizes investigative reporting, case file inventories, administrative functions, and electronic communications, was successfully deployed to approximately 97% of DEA's offices (domestic and foreign) by 2003. This was accomplished in part by the Small Firebird Initiative that provided full Firebird functionality to those DEA offices where the installation of the Firebird desktop was either cost prohibitive or a security issue. Only those offices with security or facilities related issues did not have Firebird connectivity. In addition, Firebird technical refreshment of all division network and shared servers was completed and the replacement of workstations was initiated.

DEA was the first component in the Department of Justice to electronically transmit information through the Department's Joint Automated Booking System (JABS) to the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) through the Firebird Booking Station (FBS). FBS provides rapid identification of individuals under arrest or detention through automation of the booking process and electronic access to IAFIS, with an average response time of 30 minutes; it minimizes duplication of data entry during booking; and it promotes data sharing of arrest records among Department law enforcement agencies and other authorized parties through an interface with the Nationwide JABS.

Investigative Management Process and Case Tracking (IMPACT), an automated case management system, was developed to support DEA Special Agents, Intelligence Analysts, and Diversion Investigators in their daily case management activities. IMPACT was designed to improve mission performance and achieve greater operational efficiency in the establishment, recording, accessibility, and analysis of information pertaining to DEA investigations.

In 2003, IMPACT was deployed as a pilot to the Phoenix and Miami Divisions with over 800 field users.

DEA transitioned to a full, on-line Electronic File Room. All Investigative Reports from 2002 forward and millions of earlier records are available for full text search from the desktop of any DEA office with access to Firebird or SFI.

Communication capabilities were improved through the use of Internet technologies and new trusted dial-up communication capabilities. Web Architecture was developed and used to publish the Administrator's Newsletter, providing improved access to information available on the DEA Website. In addition, by 2003, DEA was using the DOJ/FBI sponsored Law Enforcement Online (LEO) secure dial-up network to provide trusted access to and among federal and state law enforcement organizations.

DEA implemented a Centralized Call Data Delivery system for intercepted cellular pen register data for the field. This system enables each division to obtain cellular call data without the need to establish a dedicated connection to individual cellular companies, thus generating substantial cost savings to DEA.

New DEA Laboratory Construction (2002 and 2003)

During 2002 and 2003, DEA replaced four of its aging laboratory facilities—three regional laboratories and the Special Testing and Research Laboratory. The four new state-of-the-art laboratories are located in Dallas, TX; Dulles, VA; Largo, MD; and Vista, CA. These newly constructed multimillion-dollar modern laboratories are capable of providing a full line of analytical support to drug law enforcement agents.

Laboratory System Reorganization (2003)

In 2003, through the support of DEA's Executive Management, several changes were implemented that were identified as critical needs in the Laboratory System's FY 2000-2005 Strategic Plan. The changes included reorganizing the Office of Forensic Sciences to create a Quality Assurance Manager position and a second Associate Deputy Assistant Administrator position at Headquarters. The reorganization also affected the laboratories by creating an Associate Laboratory Director position in each laboratory and by creating a new Digital Evidence Laboratory for the forensic examination of digital evidence.

Creation of DEA's Digital Evidence Laboratory (2003)

DEA's commitment to supporting its drug investigations in the 21st Century achieved a major milestone with the February 2003 establishment of a Digital Evidence Laboratory within its Office of Forensic Sciences. In the short period of just nine years, DEA built a world class digital forensic program from what first started out as a small engineering program, that is capable of handling the full range of digital evidence including computers, servers, Personal Digital Assistants, Global Positioning System navigational devices, satellite phones, two-way pager devices, and cell phones. This new laboratory provides needed forensic support at the field level to acquire digital evidence from drug investigations thereby leaving no stone unturned. The elevation of the digital evidence function to a laboratory status organizational level reflects the present and future importance that this relatively new forensic science plays in DEA investigations in the new millennium.



Left and above: DEA laboratory technicians.

The Scientific Working Group for the Analysis of Seized Drugs

The mission of the Scientific Working Group for the Analysis of Seized Drugs (SWGDRUG) is to recommend minimum standards for the forensic examination of seized drugs and seek their international acceptance. SWGDRUG is a cooperative effort between the DEA's Office of Forensic Sciences and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to address the following:

- Recommend minimum standards for forensic drug analysts' knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Promote the professional development of forensic drug analysts.
- Provide a means of information exchange within the forensic drug analyst community.
- Promote the highest ethical standards of practitioners in all areas of forensic drug analysis.
- Recommend minimum standards for drug examinations and reporting.
- Establish quality assurance recommendations.
- Seek international acceptance of SWGDRUG minimum standards.

The SWGDRUG core committee is comprised of representatives from federal laboratories and regional forensic science associations in the U.S., the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI), the United Nations Drug Control Program, Australia, Great Britain, Japan, Canada and Germany. A forensic science educator and a representative from an internationally recognized standards writing organization also participate on the committee. The SWGDRUG process evolved since 1997 to be recognized as one of the most successful scientific working groups in the world.

Sub-Regional Laboratories and Mobile Operations

DEA's first sub-regional laboratory became operational in FY 1997 in support of the Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). This laboratory was established to bring analytical and support services closer to the source of illicit drug activity—clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine. In 1999, the laboratory was relocated from the Food and Drug Laboratory in Kansas City, KS, to the Kansas City Regional Crime Laboratory in Kansas City, MO.

In 1999, DEA opened a second sub-regional laboratory in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This laboratory provides analytical and support services to the Caribbean Division as well as other federal agencies within the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. This laboratory is collocated with the Food and Drug Administration Laboratory.

In 2000, DEA took delivery of a 38-foot mobile laboratory. Equipped with a fume hood, bench space, support infrastructure, and appropriate analytical instrumentation, the laboratory is capable of operation by either shore-power through a 100 amp, 200 volt shore line or an on-board diesel generator. In early 2001, the mobile laboratory was deployed to Tucson, AZ, where two chemists provided additional forensic support along the Southwest Border of the U.S. In late 2002, the mobile laboratory was moved to El Paso, TX to provide much needed forensic laboratory support in that region.

Microgram

The 35th Anniversary Issue of *Microgram* was published in 2002. This periodical has progressed from a sporadically published "communication" from the Bureau of Drug Abuse Control and Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs in the late 1960s to the dawn of electronic posting by the DEA in the 21st century. By 2003, over 1,400 offices around the world received *Microgram* each month.



In 2002, the Office of Forensic Sciences determined that there was a need to convert *Microgram* into two separate publications entitled *Microgram Bulletin* and *Microgram Journal*. *Microgram Bulletin* includes all the material previously included in *Microgram*, except scientific articles. Additional and/or expanded information was also incorporated into *Microgram Bulletin*. *Microgram Journal* is a quarterly journal dedicated solely to the publication of scientific articles on the detection and analysis of suspected controlled substances for forensic/law enforcement purposes. It was the intent of the Editor and the Office of Forensic Sciences that *Microgram Journal* become a premier scientific journal in this discipline.

Additionally, starting with the January 2003 issues, the *Bulletin* and the *Journal* moved from a law enforcement restricted status to an open, unclassified status, and both were posted on DEA's Internet website.

Inspections

DEA's Inspection Division is responsible for maintaining the integrity of DEA and providing security for its employees. DEA's integrity system is comprised of three primary components within the Inspection Division: the Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR), the Office of Inspections, and the Office of Security Programs.

Technological upgrades and resource enhancements were acquired, enabling the Inspection Division to more effectively and efficiently carry out its mandate. The vulnerability of our infrastructure was made evident by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The challenges posed by terrorism and new technology available to criminals were matched by DEA's security apparatus.

DEA remained committed to ensuring the integrity and professionalism of its employees and thoroughly investigated all credible allegations of employee misconduct. In October 2000, OPR opened a field office in Dallas, TX. DEA's presence along the Southwest Border and the power and influence of drug trafficking organizations that operate in this area necessitated the expansion of OPR there.

The Office of Inspections, through the annual Division Inspection Program (DIP) and the three-year cyclical on-site inspection process, ensures that managers maintain the highest-level of operational, financial, and organizational integrity, as well as compliance with internal and external controls, policies and procedures, Federal laws, and sound auditing practices. IN investigates all shooting incidents related to DEA Special Agents and DEA-sponsored State and Local Task Force Law Enforcement personnel to determine the circumstances involved and accountability of an incident. Due to a major IN organizational realignment and the establishment of the DIP and cyclical on-site processes, IN assisted managers in identifying issues that improved operational and financial efficiency and effectiveness in all DEA program areas and offices.

The most dramatic changes in the Inspection Division were in the Office of Security Programs (IS). This office experienced significant growth in recent years. By the end of 1997, the office had a staff of 28 employees. As of spring 2003, the staff had expanded six-fold to 189 employees and contractors. The office is now divided into three sections: Information Security, Physical Security, and Personnel Security—each headed by a Supervisory Special Agent.

IS provides a wide variety of continuing security services and equipment to the entire agency and also inspects and issues com-

pliance orders to headquarters, domestic and foreign offices with regard to security and safety. Furth