



Department of Homeland Security Counter-narcotics Doctrine

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Introduction

The counternarcotics mission is interagency, inter-departmental, and international in scope. Within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the counternarcotics effort crosses component lines, with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement playing major roles, and other components actively participating as well. Each DHS Component approaches its counternarcotics efforts as a subset of its broader mission.

The multi-component character of the DHS counternarcotics effort creates valuable operational synergies. In order to optimize our operational capabilities, however, our Department's leadership at all levels must understand and apply a set of unifying principles and priorities. DHS Counternarcotics Doctrine provides a means for achieving this end, by coordinating counternarcotics operations and enabling unity of effort.

Doctrine is a concise statement of the fundamental principles that guide an organization and shape its efforts, and provides a common reference point for planners and leaders. It is the result of theory, history, experimentation, and practice. Although doctrine provides a common frame of reference, it is a guide, not a set of hard and fast rules.

DHS Counternarcotics Doctrine is a distillation of the insights and wisdom we have gained from our collective experience over many years in the counternarcotics effort, and as such, it can serve to positively influence and guide the ways in which we develop our policy and plans, structure and employ our forces, and procure our resources. Our doctrine is authoritative, but requires judgment in application. DHS components and operating units will therefore apply this doctrine differently, within the constraints of established national and departmental goals.

The basic tenets of DHS Counternarcotics Doctrine are:

1. We will develop and maintain a comprehensive view of the illicit drug trafficking industry.
2. We will establish and aggressively exploit robust organizational and interagency intelligence capabilities spanning the spectrum of disciplines.
3. We will establish and employ an effective array of counternarcotics forces to counter the threat.
4. We will maintain operational agility and anticipate the actions of our adversaries.
5. We will collaborate with and support our federal, state, local, and tribal partners.

6. We will create synergies through collaboration and cooperation with international partners.
7. We will establish, support, and maintain effective command and control elements and multi-agency task forces.
8. We will establish and employ effective methods for evaluating counternarcotics performance, and regularly evaluate that performance.

The Basic Tenets of DHS Counternarcotics Doctrine

1. We develop and maintain a comprehensive view of the illicit drug trafficking industry.
 - Our counternarcotics efforts must identify and address all aspects of the illicit drug problem, from cultivation and/or production, to procurement, transportation, illicit financial transactions, sales, and ultimately demand and consumption.
 - The counternarcotics community must maintain in-depth awareness and understanding of the broad spectrum of trafficking activities, methods and geography, and other factors to include matters related to money laundering and the trafficking of non drug-related contraband, precursor chemicals, technology, and weapons. For example, we cannot focus on cocaine while ignoring other drugs, or concentrate on the transit zone and ignore the source and arrival zones. Similarly, we cannot deal with maritime conveyances while failing to address aircraft and land-based conveyances. We must address the proceeds of narcotics trafficking-related criminal activity, including the movement of money, technology, and weapons from the U.S. to criminal organizations in other countries; as well as the internal movement of contraband within the U.S. to market cities.
 - The DHS counternarcotics community must engage in cooperative efforts specifically designed to disrupt and dismantle Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO).
 - The DHS counternarcotics community will address drug trafficking at the state, local, and tribal levels, as well as at the national and international levels. We must understand the significant challenges and critical interests of our partners and build on strengths while minimizing weaknesses.
 - Our counternarcotics efforts must be directed at identifying, tracking, and targeting relationships that exist between drug trafficking and terrorism.

While the Southwest border of the United States remains a vitally important area of focus, our Northern border, our maritime approaches, and our airspace are also vulnerable. Drugs arriving at our borders were produced in other locations by individuals and criminal enterprises; these drugs spent time in transit, and certain financial transactions made their production and transportation possible. Each of the individuals, organizations, physical locations, means of movement, and transactions has inherent vulnerabilities that can be exploited by our counternarcotics enterprise. A comprehensive view of the illicit drug trafficking industry means that we will create and maintain the capacity to identify and track illicit drug production, trafficking, and financial transactions no matter their location. It also means that we are aware of the traffickers' ability to change their methods, modes, and approaches, and that we must respond immediately to, as well as in anticipation of, these changes.

Nearly all drug trafficking is carried out by DTOs. We must understand that DTOs are criminal business enterprises that produce, market, and transport illicit drugs for profit, but do not limit their activities to illicit drugs. DTOs also smuggle special interest aliens, members of transnational gangs, weapons, money, and other contraband. DTOs employ a variety of tactics to control and manipulate the drug trafficking industry, including extreme violence and coercion and the use of drug proceeds to garner public support and acquiescence, instill corruption, and undermine good governance and the rule of law. In some instances, these enterprises take on political trappings in an attempt to institutionalize their existence and ensure longevity. When successful in this effort, criminal enterprises can threaten legitimate political authority and national sovereignty.

According to intelligence and open-source reporting, designated foreign terrorist organizations including—but not limited to—the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, Sendero Luminoso, the Provisional Irish Republican Army, Hizballah and the Abu Sayyaf Group—derive financial benefits from participation in drug trafficking activities. Relationships between drug trafficking and terrorist organizations can be permanent or ad hoc and often change over time. Our counternarcotics efforts must include a concerted focus on the drug-terror nexus.

2. We will establish and aggressively exploit robust organizational and interagency intelligence capabilities spanning the spectrum of disciplines.
 - Since our adversaries are well resourced, motivated, and agile, our intelligence efforts must identify gaps, anticipate threats, be flexible, and make use of our technological superiority in gaining information.
 - Intelligence must be all-source and the result of an interdisciplinary synthesis. Intelligence must incorporate the full capacities and capabilities of our interagency and international partners.
 - Information collected during investigations, arrests, and prosecutions must be exploited as part of a continuing cycle of success. This cycle begins with intelligence providing cueing for detection, sorting, and monitoring; leads to interdiction and apprehension; is followed by investigation and prosecution; and feeds back into the intelligence system for further use by relevant agencies.
 - Intelligence products must be made available within and between agencies across the spectrum of the counternarcotics enterprise, to include state, local and tribal entities. To the greatest degree possible, we also must be able to share tactical information and intelligence with partner nations.
 - We must be mindful of the traffickers' ability to thwart the intelligence collection efforts of the interagency and our international partners and we must mitigate our vulnerabilities in this area.

Our counternarcotics forces cannot construct a multi-thousand mile maritime barrier against drug traffickers, nor can they achieve success by randomly patrolling known high trafficking areas. Rather, it is necessary for our forces to find ways of being in the right place at the right time. This is largely the purview of our counternarcotics intelligence community. Over the past ten years, we have enjoyed great success in removing record amounts of cocaine and other drugs from the commerce stream, primarily due to the development of timely and accurate intelligence that is actionable on the tactical level.

As our capabilities in this area have developed, we have come to understand the fundamental importance of interagency information sharing to our success in the counternarcotics effort. We will expand and refine our abilities to share intelligence and collaborate on its development with our interagency partners in state, local, and tribal law enforcement. To this end, we will produce intelligence products that are classified appropriately for release to state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies (LEAs), and we will work with the interagency to assist state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to obtain adequate security clearances for their personnel. To ensure maximum dissemination of relevant information, we will, to the maximum extent possible, produce Unclassified/For Official Use Only products.

We must apply our technological resources to optimize the effective flow of intelligence. To this end, DHS will continue to integrate agency collection, analytical and dissemination systems and processes, with the goal of establishing a Departmental common intelligence picture.

3. We will establish and employ an effective array of counternarcotics forces to counter the threat.

DHS must field counternarcotics forces and organizations to:

- Operationally exploit all actionable intelligence and investigative information.
 - Successful law enforcement results can only be achieved through a strong partnership between the intelligence and operations communities, which enables optimal placement and use of scarce resources.
 - Operational commanders must prioritize and decide how best to utilize actionable intelligence.
- Maintain a robust steady-state level of detection, investigation, operations, and law enforcement capabilities.
 - This necessitates the employment of sufficient numbers of assets in an efficient combination of mutually supporting, fully mission-capable platforms.
 - Providing effective support to deployed field units requires a domain awareness and response coordination infrastructure that can support deterrence or interdiction, as well as prosecution case development.

- Maintain the option of conducting surge activities in excess of steady-state operations.
- Maximize synergies among air, land, and marine platforms; intelligence; law enforcement; and other assets to create capabilities that exceed the sum of the individual capabilities.
 - The force-multiplier effect of cued intelligence, maritime patrol aircraft, and armed helicopters for example, has been well established.
 - Tactical commanders should be encouraged to seek out and utilize new synergies.
- Exploit technological advantages (including those of our interagency and international partners) that work as force multipliers.

The counternarcotics community has very strong investigative and intelligence capabilities. As a result, we are often able to accurately direct interdiction assets toward vessels, aircraft, land vehicles, and individuals known to be carrying illicit drugs. However, while we are often able to identify and track these conveyances and individuals, we do not always possess sufficient interdiction assets to conduct law enforcement endgames. As a result, some conveyances and individuals known to be trafficking illicit drugs escape interdiction and apprehension. To remedy this shortfall, DHS and its interagency partners must develop and maintain the right kinds of intelligence, as well as interdiction and law enforcement forces with appropriate authorities; field these forces in sufficient numbers; and integrate them in combinations that take advantage of operational and tactical synergies. To this end, strategic planners must plan, program, and budget endgame resources; and operational commanders must effectively link intelligence, detection, monitoring, tracking, identification, investigation, and endgame resources.

4. We will maintain operational agility and anticipate the actions of our adversaries.

In order to develop and maintain operational agility, we must:

- Collect, exploit, and disseminate all-source intelligence and information.
- Enable secure law enforcement information sharing.
- Establish strategic and operational intelligence and law enforcement relationships at the international, federal, state, local, and tribal levels.
- Conduct effective operational and operations support planning at all levels.
- Employ day/night all-weather capable aircraft, vessels, and remote sensing equipment.
- Field sufficient long-range and long-endurance assets capable of covering the entire operating area, and provide the resources and logistics to extend their range and endurance as necessary.

- Maintain robust and secure forward operating locations capable of supporting counternarcotics assets and operations (e.g. airborne, seaborne, and land-based).
- Maintain ready access to multiple seaports and airports in order to enable a significant number of assets to operate within the area of interest at any given time.

It is fundamentally important for counternarcotics forces to strike drug traffickers at times and locations, or in manners for which the traffickers are unprepared. This is the element of surprise, and it is enabled by our ability to be operationally agile. Surprise can decisively shift the equation in favor of our counternarcotics forces. To exploit the element of surprise, we must develop and field forces capable of operating in a variety of conditions and environments throughout the entire operating area, and we must employ them in ways that maximize their mobility. To maintain operational agility and preserve the element of surprise, we must work diligently to identify and mitigate drug traffickers' counterintelligence efforts.

5. We will collaborate with and support our federal, state, local, and tribal partners.

DHS will leverage the capabilities of state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies by nurturing and supporting task forces and other partnerships between them and federal counternarcotics law enforcement agencies, including those under the purview of DHS. Examples of DHS support to state, local, and tribal law enforcement entities involved in the counternarcotics enterprise will include, but will not be limited to:

- Active engagement in Joint Interagency Task Forces (JIATF), High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA), Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF), Border Enforcement Security Task Forces (BEST), and Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBET).
- Close cooperation with state investigative agencies, police, and state National Guard counternarcotics programs.
- Integration of state, local, and tribal law enforcement personnel into national interdiction centers and investigative task forces.

The impact of illicit drugs is seen most directly and most immediately at the state, local and tribal levels, and it is the law enforcement entities, medical professionals, and community leaders at those levels who are obliged to act on a day-to-day basis to directly address this problem. As a result of their day-to-day direct exposure to drug traffickers, the state, local, and tribal LEAs generally possess the best and most current understanding of how traffickers are operating and what is required to defeat them. Hence, we must support, nurture, and enhance these LEAs' ability to execute their mission. DHS will aggressively act to bring state, local, and tribal counternarcotics law enforcement entities into a full partnership with the federal counternarcotics enterprise.

6. We will create synergies through collaboration and cooperation with international partners.

In partnership with other federal departments, to include but not limited to the Departments of State, Defense, and Justice, DHS must establish and maintain bilateral and multilateral relationships that:

- Lead to the establishment and recurring execution of cooperative counternarcotics exercises, operations, and investigations.
- Foster information sharing, and the use of interoperable counternarcotics systems, communications, assets, and procedures.
- Foster relationships conducive to the creation and maintenance of cooperative forward-operating agreements.
- Lead to the establishment of agreements with respect to detection, monitoring, and enforcement activities in territorial and international seas/airspace.
- Lead to the establishment of agreements regarding international investigations.
- Facilitate the creation of standard operating procedures and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned.
- Make use of the entire spectrum of international relationships available to us, to include partnerships with private, as well as public, institutions and appropriate nongovernmental organizations.
- Are enhanced through the exchange of liaison personnel between the United States and partner nations.
- Facilitate transnational investigations and prosecutions.

The success of the DHS counternarcotics enterprise, which encompasses both domestic and international efforts, depends on cooperation between concerned nations. In the Western Hemisphere, as illicit drugs move from South and Central America toward areas of demand, they generally pass through the landmass, airspace, or waters of a number of countries, all of which view drug trafficking as a threat to national and international security. These countries generally seek to cooperate with U.S. drug interdiction efforts.

A given shipment of illicit drugs is more vulnerable to seizure while it is in its bulk state moving from its country of origin toward the U.S. border than it is after it gets dispersed and enters the United States. It is therefore critical for the counternarcotics interagency to establish and maintain close cooperative counternarcotics partnerships with the countries from which drug shipments originate and through which they pass.

Relevant bilateral and multilateral agreements include but are not limited to those that deal with forward basing, ship boarding, host nation “shipriders,” counternarcotics operations in

and above territorial seas, information sharing, air interdiction, waiver of jurisdiction to prosecute, and the extradition of drug suspects.

7. We will establish, support, and maintain effective command and control elements and multi-agency task forces.

In order to establish and maintain effective command and control of counternarcotics forces and activities, DHS components will:

- Support, share information, participate, and contribute resources to each of the command and control elements as appropriate.
- Participate in other multi-agency task forces as feasible and take advantage of the synergies possible through coordinated efforts.

The complexity and geographic scope of the illicit drug trade requires the Department to integrate its counternarcotics efforts with those of its interagency and international partners. The arrest of a single trafficker or the seizure of a single vessel might hinge on the cooperation of several federal departments; numerous state, local, and/or tribal law enforcement organizations; and a number of international partners. Effective cooperation of this kind is the product of mutually beneficial policies and good leadership being exercised under the authority of interagency command and control elements.

Command and control elements tie intelligence, planning, operational employment, and law enforcement response into an optimized whole. Through these command and control elements, participating organizations bring their specialized knowledge and expertise to bear against a common threat. In doing so, they harmonize the activities of multiple organizations working toward a common objective while respecting the authorities of each of the participant organizations.

Within the drug interdiction enterprise, national task force operations centers, JIATF-South for example, fuse intelligence to support counternarcotics operations at all levels (including federal, state, local, tribal, and international); support, plan for, and execute drug interdiction operations; respond to actionable intelligence and law enforcement leads; and coordinate support to law enforcement agencies. Multi-agency task forces other than operations centers include the El Paso Intelligence Center, HIDTAs, OCDETF, BESTs, IBETs, Operation Panama Express, Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Intelligence Operations Coordination Center, Border Enforcement Coordination Center, and Border Intelligence Centers.

8. We will establish and employ effective methods for evaluating counternarcotics performance, and regularly evaluate that performance.

To effectively evaluate the performance of the DHS counternarcotics enterprise, we will:

- Through cooperation with the interagency, create measures of effectiveness that evaluate performance relative to outcomes rather than outputs.
- In consideration of performance targets, including those set by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) via the National Drug Control Strategy, determine what data to collect and how best to do so in order to accurately measure performance.
- Establish and ensure adherence to requirements for routine reporting of metrics and other relevant performance data.
- Maintain effective databases and other methods of acquiring, sorting, and evaluating interdiction-related performance data.
- Contribute to and expand upon relevant counternarcotics databases such as the Consolidated Counterdrug Database (CCDB).
- Apply rigorous interpretive standards in analyzing counternarcotics performance data by identifying trends, assessing their impact, and employing this information to develop best practices and guide future operations.
- Establish and use standard forums for capturing and sharing best practices and lessons learned.

Measuring outcomes is critical to our understanding of the correlation between enforcement activity and interdiction performance targets. To be useful, outcome measurements must assist us in identifying effective procedures and practices. This in turn will help us identify appropriate resource requirements, personnel levels, and focus areas.

Databases such as the CCDB can provide the interagency certain insights into the shadowy world of drug trafficking. The utility of any database is dependent on the quality and completeness of its inputs and the rigor applied to the analysis of its data. To ensure the interagency's access to reliable data, DHS components must ensure full participation in relevant data collection, sharing, and analysis efforts that support the CCDB and other databases.

Applying Counternarcotics Doctrine

Counternarcotics Doctrine must be broadly understood within DHS and widely referenced and applied as we plan and execute counternarcotics programs and operations.

Within DHS, organizational leadership should use the tenets of Counternarcotics Doctrine as a schematic that describes how to assemble the basic elements critical to the success of the counternarcotics mission. By extension, Counternarcotics Doctrine will also serve as a roadmap for operational planners and managers as they work to maintain and enhance the Department's robust support for this critical mission. For example, program managers dealing with Counternarcotics-related programs must be cognizant of Counternarcotics Doctrine in order to make informed resource allocation recommendations.

When working with the Department's partners in the broader counternarcotics community, DHS personnel should use Counternarcotics Doctrine to explain and advance our Department's perspective and to complement and support other federal, state, local, and tribal efforts to stop the entry of illegal drugs into the United States. This doctrine emphasizes the need for us to take a comprehensive view of the illicit drug trafficking industry. DHS personnel should articulate this perspective where appropriate during interagency planning sessions and other forums. Having done so, DHS personnel should then seek to create organizational partnerships that strengthen the collective effort to target all aspects of the illicit drug trafficking business in accordance with this comprehensive view.

DHS Counternarcotics Doctrine is a clear statement of this Department's commitment to the success of our counternarcotics mission and our understanding of the requirements that must be met to achieve that success.