Drug Smuggling at the Border

CBP Office of Intelligence

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Who We Are and What We Do...

- **Border Security:** CBP secures America’s borders at and between ports of entry by stopping inadmissible people and illicit goods. CBP is the largest federal law enforcement agency.
  - 22,910 CBP Officers
  - 19,828 Border Patrol Agents
  - 1,205 Air & Marine Agents

- **Trade:** CBP works to secure and facilitate imports arriving in the U.S., accommodating the increasing volume and complexities of international trade.

- **Travel:** CBP secures and facilitates legitimate travel. Over a million times each day, CBP officers welcome international travelers and returning U.S. citizens into the United States
Where We Are...

- In the United States
  - 328 ports of entry
  - 135 Border Patrol stations and 20 substations
  - 35 permanent checkpoints
  - 14 Air and Marine branches, 5 National Air Security Operations Centers, and one Air and Marine Operations Center
On a Typical Day in Fiscal Year 2016, CBP...

- **PROCESSED:**
  - 1,069,266 passengers and pedestrians
  - 282,350 incoming privately owned vehicles
  - 74,417 truck, rail, and sea containers
  - $6.3 billion worth of imported products

- **CONDUCTED:**
  - 1140 apprehensions between U.S. ports of entry
  - 22 arrests of wanted criminals at U.S. ports of entry
  - 752 refusals of inadmissible persons at U.S. ports of entry

- **SEIZED:**
  - 7,910 pounds of drugs
  - $289,609 in undeclared or illicit currency
  - $3.8 million worth of products with Intellectual Property Rights violations
The Southwest Border (SWB) remains the main entry point for all drugs and accounted for the following percent of CBP drug seizures in CY 2016.

- 98 Percent of the marijuana
- 96 percent of the methamphetamine
- 83 percent of heroin
- 44 percent of cocaine*

* This figure includes CBP “technical seizures” e.g. USCG seizures on the high seas turned over to CBP for processing.
Two Types of Drugs

- Opiate: Drugs derived from the poppy plant (Heroin, Opium)
- Opioid: Manufactured chemicals that act on the same receptors as opioids (Fentanyl)

Source of Heroin Used in the United States*

- Predominately Mexican and South American
- Moved primarily by Mexican Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) across the Southwest Border (SWB)
- Commercial Air is a secondary route.
- Relatively little Southwest or Southeast Asian heroin is seized by CBP

Source of Fentanyl Used in the United States*

- China is a significant source, but it is moved into the United States by two main methods and entities
- Southwest Border moved by Mexican TCOs
- Mail/Express Consignment Operations (ECO) Shipments by small criminal groups

*Based on CBP seizure and intelligence reporting
**Heroin Smuggling**

- **Southwest Border main entry point for heroin**
  - The SWB accounted for 78 percent (10,027 kg of 12,888 kg) of heroin seized by CBP between CY 2011 and CY 2016
  - Mexico leading producer of heroin used in the United States
  - Mexican TCOs control production and distribution

- **Majority of flow is through the ports of entry (POEs)**
  - Moved in privately owned vehicles (POVs) in multi-kilogram loads through the ports of entry (POE)
  - 78 Percent (1,107 kg of 1,419 kg) of the heroin seized at SWB POE by CBP in CY 2016 were concealed in POVs
  - Non-POE seizures focused at US Border Patrol Checkpoints
  - Southern California was the leading source of SWB heroin seizures
    - 50 percent (5,081 kg of 10,027 kg) of the heroin seized by CBP along the SWB between CY 2011 and CY 2016 was in Southern California
Heroin Smuggling

- Commercial Air is key but secondary route
  - Both Colombian and Mexican heroin
  - Multiple techniques: couriers, left over baggage, mail/ECO shipments, cargo, and on aircraft
  - Little Southwest or Southeast Asian seized by CBP
  - Little “In-Transit” to other countries
  - Key “Originating Countries”: Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Guatemala.
Fentanyl Smuggling

- **Southwest Border**
  - Fentanyl often imported from China
  - Moved by Mexican TCOs
  - High weight (multi kilogram) but low concentration (less than 10 percent)
  - Usually mixed with adulterants (e.g. dipyrone, mannitol, and lactose) or with heroin or cocaine
  - Concealed in POVs moving through POEs
  - Southern California leading source of seizures

- **Mail/Express Consignment**
  - Shipped directly from China
  - Small criminal groups for local or internet distribution
  - Low weight (less than a kilogram) but high concentration (over 50 percent)
  - Seizures focused in key Mail/ECO facilities, but destined to all points in the United States
Methamphetamine Smuggling

- Southwest Border is the Main Entry point

  - The majority of methamphetamine destined to the United States originates in Mexico, and Mexican TCOs are increasingly producing larger quantities of cheap, higher-purity methamphetamine

  - SWB accounted for 96 percent (75,509 kg of 78,826 kg) of the methamphetamine seized by CBP between CY2011 and CY 2016

  - The Sinaloa Cartel and New Generation Jalisco Cartel (CJNG) are the most significant Mexican TCOs involved in methamphetamine trafficking

  - The majority enters the United States in POVs moving through the POEs
    - CBP data shows that in CY 2016, POVs accounted for 94 percent (14,177 kg of the 14,970 kg) seized at SWB POEs, and 67 percent of the 21,107 kg of methamphetamine seized along the SWB that entire year
Cocaine Smuggling

- **Colombian Cocaine Production Driving Increase in Drug Flow**
  - Main source of cocaine used in the United States based on DEA testing.
  - Colombian production has increased 36.5 percent between CY 2015 and 2016 from 520 MT to 710 MT, according to ONCDP.
  - Drug flow towards United States has increased but remains below 2006 levels according to 2016 National Drug Threat Assessment

- **Southwest Border remains primary entry point**
  - Mexican TCOs still dominate the cocaine trade.
  - Approximately 90 percent of the cocaine trafficked to the United States in 2016 first transited through the Mexico/Central America corridor.
  - POVs accounted for 85 percent (7,369 kg of 8,627 kg) of the cocaine seized by CBP at SWB POEs in CY 2016
  - Southern California was the leading source of SWB cocaine seizures.
    - 49 percent (30,289 kg of 61,201 kg) of the cocaine seized by CBP along the SWB between CY 2011 and CY 2016 was in Southern California
    - Checkpoint Seizures are likely consolidated loads from “Stash Houses”
Cocaine Smuggling

- **Commercial Air is Secondary Route**
  - Mail and Express Consignment (FedEx, DHL, UPS) leading source of seizures
  - Common tactics: Couriers, left over bags, air cargo, and aircraft concealment
  - Originating countries: Colombia, Dominican Republic, and Guatemala

- **Commercial Maritime Remains a Key Route**
  - Containerized cargo from South American and the Caribbean and coastal freighters from Haiti are the main threat
  - Increased flow from Caribbean is likely due to surge in Colombian production
  - Miami and New York leading source of CBP seizures (main US East Coast ports)
  - Key Tactics: “Rip-loads”, within the cargo (fake avocados, pallets), container (wall, ceiling, floor, and reefer unit)

- **Northern Border Flow is Generally North Bound**
  - Most seizures are outbound; cocaine seizures by Canadian authorities at the border are up
  - Smuggling between the ports is significant smuggling tactic
Marijuana

- **Mexico Remains the Leading Source of Foreign Marijuana Destined for the United States**
  - The SWB accounted 98 percent (6,587,128 kg of 6,692,523) for all CBP marijuana seizures between CY 2011 and CY 2016.
  - Due to its high volume/low value, the majority of SWB marijuana is smuggled between the POEs.
  - Arizona is the main corridor, accounting for 45 percent (2,944,798 kg of the 6,587,128 kg) seized by CBP along the SWB between CY 2011 and CY 2016.

- **Seizure are Down due to a Variety of Factors**
  - CBP marijuana have dropped 47 percent from 1,372,639 kg in CY 2011 to 724,251 kg in CY 216.
  - Increase legalization in the United States as reduced demand.
  - Mexican marijuana is low quality when compared to domestic crop.
  - Possible shift by cartels to other drugs.
Concealment Methods at Land POEs

- Common land POE concealment Methods
  - Tires
  - Gas Tanks
  - Cargo
  - Walls & Floor
  - Doors & Side Panels
Concealment Methods at Air POEs

- Common air smuggling concealment Methods
  - Luggage and goods
  - Left over bags
  - Internal
  - On Body
Concealment Methods at Sea POEs

Common sea smuggling concealment Methods
- Rip-loads (bags tossed in container)
- Container Structure
- Cargo
- On Vessel
Common between the ports smuggling methods
- Backpackers (Main method)
- Air cannons, trebuchets & catapults (100-300 meters)
- Tunnel (basic to complex)
- Ultralights & UAVs
- Ramps
Questions?