

2002 Edition

**TRENDS IN
ILLICIT DRUGS AND FIREARMS SMUGGLING
IN JAPAN**

August 2003

**ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
CUSTOMS AND TARIFF BUREAU
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
JAPAN**

PREFACE

Recent development toward a global economy and borderless society have brought the diversification of international trade patterns and the increase of international travelers. Consequently, the request for swift Customs clearance has risen, and efforts have been made to harmonize trade and Customs clearance procedures at international level. At the same time, in Japan, the soaring abuse of illicit drugs such as narcotics and stimulants among young people and the occurrence of serious crimes in which guns are used have caused grave social problems. In particular, illicit drug abuse is in an extremely alarming situation now, as it is regarded as a third period of stimulant abuse following the periods in the early 1950s and the early 1980s.

To address this serious situation, the Japanese Government formulated a "Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy" on May 26, 1998. This strategy is aimed at promoting comprehensive and active measures, including the implementation of strict controls on illicit drugs and campaigns to raise public awareness and cooperation in close collaboration with relevant law enforcement agencies.

Considering the fact that most antisocial goods such as illicit drugs and firearms are thought to be manufactured abroad and then smuggled into Japan, it is important to cut off its inflow at the border, and there is an increasingly strong social demand for tighter control as well. Japan Customs is placing a priority on intercepting the inflow of harmful goods at the border. In connection with this, we have taken measures such as strengthening intelligence analysis and promotion of information exchange, as well as building-up enforcement equipment.

In light of the importance of enforcement activities against smuggling of harmful goods at the border, this booklet features smuggling trends in Japan and enforcement measures being taken by the Japan Customs. We hope that this will provide some insight for law enforcement officials and serve to deepen the understanding and cooperation on customs enforcement.

Lastly, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to officials of related ministries and agencies, those who contributed to compile this booklet.

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[REFERENCE DATA: Records of Recent Interdictions of Smuggling Offenses]

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