

2003 Edition

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

July 2004

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

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Do not allow white powder or black weapons to enter our society.

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PREFACE

Recent development toward global economy and borderless societies has brought about an increase of international physical distribution and international travelers. Consequently, the request to expedite customs clearance has risen, and efforts have been made to harmonize the trade and Customs clearance procedures at the 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. Illicit drug abuse, in particular, is in such an extremely alarming situation that the present time is regarded as a third period of stimulant drug abuse, following the periods in the early 1950s and the early 1980s.

Facing this serious situation, the Japanese Government formulated a "Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy" in May 1998, to terminate this third period of stimulant drug abuse at an early stage and took comprehensive and active measures. Certain results were achieved, since large quantities of stimulants were seized at the border during the period. Nonetheless, the smuggling routes have not been eradicated yet. We can assume that considerable quantities of stimulants are being smuggled into Japan. Considering this situation, the Government determined a "New Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy" in July 2003 on the assumption that the third period of stimulant drug abuse had not been brought to an end. The new Strategy was adopted to continue to take comprehensive measures in close cooperation with the ministries and other governmental agencies concerned.

In September 2003, the Government set up a Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime to address the situation where heinous crimes are committed among the lives of the general public, and that by juveniles in some cases. This Meeting was created to restore Japan as "the safest country in the world" and to promote comprehensive and active measures in an effective way while the relevant promotional headquarters and law enforcement agencies work in close cooperation with each other. Moreover, in December 2003, the Government defined an "Action Plan for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime."

Japan Customs is giving first priority to the interception of inflow of goods harmful to society, such as illicit drugs, firearms, etc. at the border. Accordingly, Japan Customs is developing its activities in intensified ways and taking measures for further promoting closer cooperation with other law enforcement agencies concerned, promoting information exchange, strengthening intelligence analysis and improving the detection equipment.

This booklet features smuggling trends in Japan and law enforcement measures being taken by Japan Customs, considering the importance of law enforcement activities at the border against smuggling of goods harmful to society. We hope that it will provide some insight for law enforcement officials and will help the general public deepen their understanding of Customs' enforcement activities and provide cooperation to Customs.

Lastly, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the ministries and agencies concerned for their contributions in compiling this booklet.

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Customs and Tariff Bureau
Ministry of Finance

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

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