

*2004 Edition*

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

**July 2005**

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

## 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 has caused grave social problems. Illicit drug abuse, in particular, is in such an extremely alarming situation that the present time is regarded as the 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 the "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. As a result, in the five years from 1998 to 2003 we seized more than three times as much stimulants at the border as we did in the preceding five years. However, since the number of arrests for abuse remained at high levels, as in the preceding period, considerable quantities of stimulants were estimated to continue to be smuggled in. In response to this situation, the Government drew up the "New Five-Year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy" in July 2003, recognizing that the third period of stimulant abuse was not yet over. In view of the importance of seaways for preventing the entry of illegal drugs into the country, the Government also formulated "Emergency Measures at the Border to Prevent Trafficking of Illicit Drugs," so that related agencies could make concerted efforts to carry out the drug prevention measures at the border, and is now working on a range of comprehensive measures.

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." Related government agencies are now making collective efforts to carry out a variety of measures.

Japan Customs is giving first priority to the interception of goods harmful to the society such as illicit drugs and firearms at the border. Japan Customs is therefore actively engaged in the efforts to promote a range of measures, including strengthening collaboration with related organizations, raising the level of collection and analysis of information and improving the equipment for detection, with the aim of reinforcing law enforcement activities at the border.

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. Through this booklet, we would like to provide some insight for law enforcement officials, contribute to a better understanding of the general public about the Customs Office's enforcement activities, and ask for their greater cooperation with the Customs Office.

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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Enforcement Division  
Customs and Tariff Bureau  
Ministry of Finance

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