

*2007 Edition*

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

**(“White Powder and Black  
Firearms” Report)**

**POST CLEARANCE AUDIT, INVESTIGATION  
AND INTELLIGENCE DIVISION  
CUSTOMS AND TARIFF BUREAU  
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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.

Considering this serious situation, the Japanese Government formulated the "New Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy" in July 2003, to terminate this third period of stimulant drug abuse at an early stage. 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, in some cases by juveniles. This Meeting was created to restore Japan to the status of "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 formulated 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 gives the 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 enforcement activities, and ask for their greater cooperation with Customs.

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

Post Clearance Audit,  
Investigation and Intelligence  
Division,  
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# CONTENTS

I.	INTERDICTIONS OF ILLICIT DRUGS AND FIREARMS SMUGGLING IN 2007 .....	1
1.	Number of Interdictions .....	1
(1)	Summary .....	1
(2)	Interdiction of Major Illicit Drugs and Firearms .....	1
(3)	Transition in Amount of Seizures for Major Smuggled Illicit Drugs .....	3
2.	Trends in Illicit Drug Smuggling .....	4
(1)	Stimulants .....	4
(2)	Cannabis (herbal cannabis and cannabis resin (hashish)) .....	5
(3)	Tablet-type Synthetic Drugs such as MDMA (including MDA and MDE) .....	6
(4)	Other Illicit Drugs (cocaine, heroin, opium, psychotropics, ketamine, methylene) .....	7
3.	Trends in Firearms Smuggling .....	10
II.	SIGNIFICANT INTERDICTIONS IN 2007 .....	11
1.	Interdiction Cases by Smuggling Type .....	11
(1)	Smuggling Using Commercial Cargo .....	11
(2)	Interdiction Cases of Smuggling by Parents and Children .....	12
2.	Interdiction Cases by Substance Type .....	13
(1)	Stimulants .....	13
(2)	Cannabis .....	13
(3)	MDMA and Other Tablet-type Synthetic Narcotics .....	14
(4)	Other Illicit Drugs .....	15
(5)	Firearms .....	16
III.	LAW ENFORCEMENT AT THE BORDER AGAINST ILLICIT DRUGS AND OTHER ILLEGAL ITEMS .....	17
1.	Government Initiatives .....	17
(1)	Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse .....	17
(2)	Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures against Firearms .....	20
(3)	Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime .....	24
2.	Law Enforcement by Japan Customs .....	27
(1)	Consolidation of Organization for Enforcement .....	28
(2)	Reinforcement of the Collection and Analysis of Information on Smuggling .....	28
(3)	Buildup of Enforcement Equipment .....	30
(4)	Closer Cooperation with Relevant Agencies .....	31
(5)	Promotion of International Information Exchange .....	31
(6)	Technical Cooperation in the Field of Customs Enforcement .....	33

REFERENCE DATA:

- 1. Major Interdiction Cases of Illicit Drugs and Firearms (Top Three Cases) ..... 35**
- 2. Latest Interdiction Cases of Illicit Drugs and Other Smuggling**
  - (1) Illicit Drugs
    - ① By Sourcing Country/Territory ..... 36
    - ② By Mode of Transport..... 39
    - ③ By Amount of Seizure..... 41
  - (2) Firearms
    - ① By Sourcing Country/Territory ..... 43
    - ② By Mode of Transport..... 43
    - ③ By Amount of Seizure..... 43