

2008 Edition

**TRENDS IN
ILLICIT DRUGS AND FIREARMS
SMUGGLING IN JAPAN
("White Powder and Black Firearms"
Report)**

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PREFACE

Recent development toward global economy and borderless societies has brought about an increase of international 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.

Considering this serious situation, the Japanese government established the Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse for the control of stimulants and other illicit drugs and the Firearms Control Headquarters for the control of handguns and other firearms, strengthening its measures against illicit drugs and firearms. Since the drug situation is still serious, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse decided on the "Third Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy" at the meeting of the Headquarters in August 2008, promoting comprehensive and aggressive 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 2008, the Government formulated a "New Action Plan 2008 for Measures against 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.

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