



## THE U.S. RESPONSE TO SECURITY THREATS ALONG THE SOUTHWEST BORDER

Drug trafficking across the Southwest border remains an acute threat to the security of the United States and one of our Nation's top drug control priorities. Improving security and stopping the flow of drugs, money, and guns across the Southwest border, while facilitating lawful travel and commerce, is vital to the public safety and health, national security, and economic interests of both the United States and Mexico.

### U.S. Government Activities

The U.S. Government response to these threats is to work with State and local law enforcement, as well as our Mexican partners, to enhance border security and target drug trafficking organizations in the United States and Mexico. Reducing the demand for illicit drugs in the United States is a top priority in the Obama Administration's 2010 *National Drug Control Strategy*, which also introduced five-year goals for reducing drug use and its consequences.

### New Homeland Security Measures

The Department of Homeland Security recently announced new measures to enhance the security of America's border communities. The new measures include:

- New partnerships with State and local law enforcement;
- Expanded information sharing capabilities among law enforcement partners;
- Enhanced technology and targeting to crack down on smuggling;
- Additional tools to enforce our immigration laws while prioritizing the arrest and removal of dangerous criminal aliens; and
- Increased cooperation with Mexico, already at unprecedented levels.

These initiatives come in addition to President Obama's request for \$500 million in supplemental funds for enhanced border security and law enforcement, and his deployment of up to 1,200 additional National Guard troops to assist ongoing efforts to secure the border and combat cartel violence.

### National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy

The *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*, released on June 5, 2009, is a blueprint for substantially reducing the flow of illicit drugs, drug proceeds, and associated instruments of violence across the Southwest border. The *Strategy* has six strategic objectives:

1. Enhance intelligence capabilities associated with the Southwest border;
2. Interdict drugs, drug proceeds, and associated instruments of violence at the ports of entry, between the ports of entry, and in the air and maritime domains along the Southwest border;
3. Ensure the prosecution of all significant drug trafficking, money laundering, bulk currency, and weapons smuggling/trafficking cases;
4. Disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations;
5. Enhance counterdrug technologies for drug detection and interdiction along the Southwest border; and
6. Enhance U.S.-Mexico cooperation regarding joint counterdrug efforts.

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*ONDCP seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation's effort to reduce drug use and its consequences.*

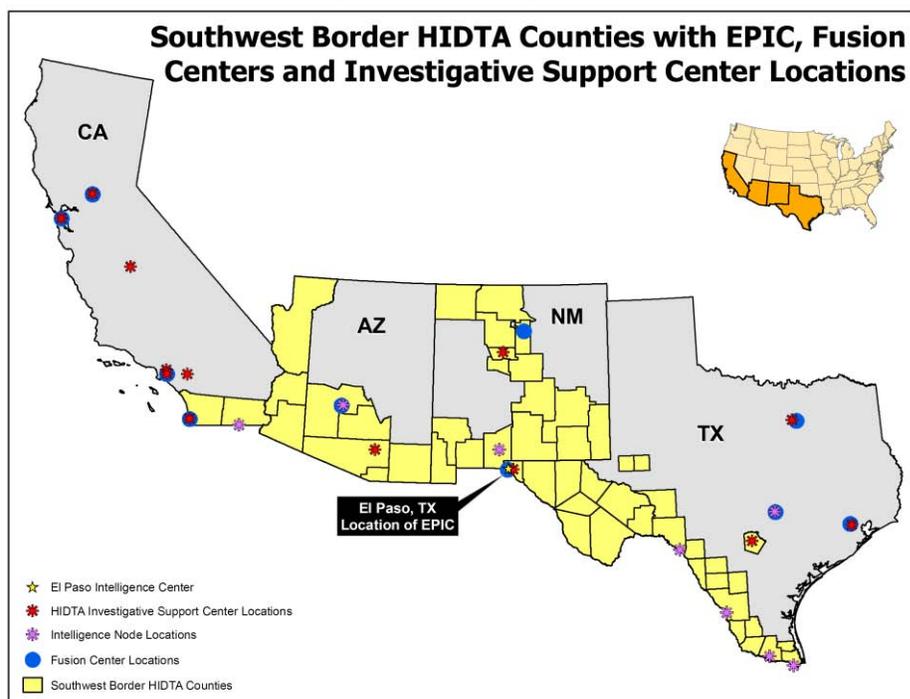
## Demand Reduction Efforts along the Southwest Border

In February 2010, top government officials from the United States and Mexico signed the Declaration of Drug Demand Reduction Cooperation, stating a commitment to reduce illicit drug consumption and acknowledging the need to work together and with other partners in the region. The statement underscores the importance of intensifying prevention and treatment efforts on both sides of the border, including measures to strengthen families and communities to help reduce the influence of criminal drug organizations and promote healthy lifestyles and attitudes, particularly among young people and other at-risk populations.

## Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program, created by Congress in 1988, provides assistance to Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical drug trafficking regions of the United States.

The Southwest Border HIDTA, one of 28 designated HIDTAs around the country, was established in 1990 to develop joint, seamless regional systems for coordinated interdiction, intelligence, investigation, and prosecution in the effort to reduce trafficking and other drug-related activities in the Southwest border area and throughout the continental United States. Task forces in the HIDTA's five regions are integral to many of the action items in the *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*.



## Merida Initiative

The Merida Initiative is an historic program of cooperation that acknowledges the shared responsibilities of the United States and Mexico to counter the drug-fueled violence that threatens citizens on both sides of the border. Fully supported by the Obama Administration, the Merida Initiative also has wide bipartisan support in Congress, which has appropriated more than \$1.3 billion in support of Mexico. The United States is currently providing technical expertise and assistance to Mexico for police professionalization, prosecutorial capacity building, judicial and prison reform, justice sector institution building, information technology enhancement, infrastructure development, and border security.

The U.S. and Mexican governments have built on the foundations of the Merida Initiative to establish four strategic areas to guide cooperation and institutionalize our partnership:

- Disrupt organized criminal groups;
- Institutionalize reforms to sustain the rule of law and respect for human rights;
- Create a 21<sup>st</sup> century border; and
- Build strong and resilient communities in both countries.

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