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# LESSON 11

## DoD COUNTERDRUG SUPPORT

*The flow of cocaine and other illegal drugs into the U.S. continues to constitute a critical national security threat.*

--Department of Defense Guidance  
for the Implementation of a  
National Drug Control Policy,  
27 Oct. 1993

### Introduction

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<b>Purpose</b>	This lesson examines DoD's role in implementing the National Drug Control Policy and how DoD supports law enforcement efforts to halt the flow of illegal drugs into the U.S.
<b>Why Study DoD Counterdrug Support?</b>	Because drug trafficking is defined as a threat to U.S. national security, DoD support to counterdrug operations is one of 16 operations other than war that the Armed Forces are called on to support.
<b>Relationship to Other Instruction</b>	Counterdrug support is another type of operation other than war that the Armed Forces are called on to support.
<b>Study Time</b>	This lesson, including the issues for consideration, will require about 3 hours of study.

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## Educational Objectives

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**National Drug Control Strategy** State the National Drug Control Strategy and explain how DoD supports the implementation of this strategy. [JPME Area 1(a)]

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**DoD Support** Categorize how DoD supports Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in their efforts to disrupt the transport of illegal drugs **into** the U.S. [JPME Area 1(a)]

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**Legal and Regulatory Limitations** Discuss DoD's legal and regulatory limitations in support of the war on drugs. [JPME Area 1(a)]

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**DoD Support of Narcotic Combating Nations** Summarize the ways in which DoD supports those nations that demonstrate the political will to combat drug trafficking. [JPME Area 3(a)]

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**JPME Areas** 1/a/0.5  
**Objectives/Hours** 3/a/1.0  
**(accounting data)**

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## Discussion

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**Early History of Drug Use** Widespread drug abuse in the U.S. is not a new phenomenon. The first significant drug problem occurred during the post-Civil War era. During the war, morphine was used extensively as a painkiller to treat wounded soldiers. As a result, many veterans of the war became morphine addicts. At that time, the medical profession and society as a whole had no precedent for treating or even understanding drug addiction, and abuse was inevitable.

The next major drug epidemic occurred around the turn of the century. At that time, there were no legal restrictions on the importation or use of drugs in the United States. Opium and cocaine were used as the principal ingredients in various baby medicines, tonics, and nerve medicines.

The major users and abusers of these "medicines" were predominantly middle and upper income women. Only years later, as the drug casualties mounted and knowledge about the social damage associated with drug addiction and other dangers of drug use became widespread, did public opinion turn against drug abuse, and the practice came to be seen as deviant and dangerous behavior.

The Harrison Narcotic Act of 1914, the first comprehensive drug control legislation passed in the U.S., is the product of that sentiment.

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**From the 1920s to the mid-1960s** From the 1920s to the mid-1960s, illicit drug use in the U.S. was prevalent, but manageable, and not perceived as a significant problem for mainstream America. However, in the mid-1960s, amid much social unrest and an unpopular war in Vietnam, the country experienced an explosion of drug abuse.

The use of marijuana, hallucinogens, and stimulants became endemic and drug abuse was socially acceptable in many segments of our society.

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## Discussion, Continued

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### **The 1970s and Cocaine**

During the 1970s, the drug of choice transitioned to cocaine. Until then, cocaine had been the drug of choice mainly among the wealthy segment of U.S. society. It was both expensive and mistakenly viewed to be non-addictive. About the same time, Colombian drug traffickers such as Fabio Ochoa (patriarch of the Ochoa family), Pablo Escobar (principal founder of the Medellin Cartel), and Carlos Lederher (now serving a life sentence in a U.S. federal prison) recognized the enormous potential market for cocaine in the U.S. and began to develop it.

The increased knowledge of the technique for converting cocaine into crack caused cocaine to rapidly become the number one problem drug in the country.

During the same period, a broad base of government officials and community leaders began to recognize the significance and dimension of the drug problem and initiated measures to counter it.

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### **War on Drugs**

During the 1980s, as the nature and scope of the drug problem escalated dramatically, government at all levels was unprepared for what was to become known as the "war on drugs." By the mid-1980s the drug problem on the streets of America had become intolerable.

The advent of crack-cocaine (which was cheap and readily available) led to huge increases in street crime and violence in many major cities. The lives of significant numbers of the general population were being impacted, and the pressure to do something mounted.

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## Discussion, Continued

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**National Security Decision Directive** In 1986, President Reagan issued a National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) declaring international drug trafficking to be a threat to U.S. national security. He directed that all elements of national power, **including the military**, be brought to bear in countering and defeating the threat.

Congress passed major legislation in 1986 and 1988 giving the President more authority and funding to address the problem. Complying with requirements of the 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act, President Bush formalized the first comprehensive, integrated, national counterdrug strategy with the publication of the National Drug Control Strategy dated September 1989. The original strategy serves as the foundation for all subsequent iterations of the National Drug Control Strategy which, by law, is promulgated annually.

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**Drug Law Enforcement** Presently more than 50 federal departments/agencies have a role in some aspect of drug law enforcement. Employees in these departments and agencies are highly professional and remarkably dedicated. Generally, too, the various agencies consider themselves significantly underfunded and argue they do not get the support they require.

These agencies also operate in overlapping jurisdictions; have different charters, responsibilities, and authorities; and compete for scarce resources. In such an environment, it is little wonder that programs are redundant, divergent, or competing.

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**Office of National Drug Control Policy** While some attribute these conflict situations to "turf battles," generally they are a reflection of the disconnects that reasonably occur when so many different players are brought together to employ their expertise to address a common problem. The establishment of the Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) with a grant of cabinet-level status was intended to develop an overall strategy and to optimize the application of available capabilities.

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## Discussion, Continued

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### DoD

After his appointment and confirmation as Secretary of Defense, Secretary Aspin realigned the responsibility for the Department of Defense Coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support (DEP&S) from the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs (ASD(RA)) to the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)).

The DoD Drug Coordinator, DEP&S, is headed by a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. This office broadly oversees the DoD counterdrug mission. That mission is as follows:

W Serve as lead agency for detecting and monitoring aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs **into** the U.S.

W Provide operational units and personnel, equipment and training support to drug law enforcement agencies (DLEAs)

W Assist in developing an effective command, control, communications, and intelligence (C<sup>3</sup>I) network among the DLEAs and other supporting agencies

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## Required Readings

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***Operations Other Than War (OOTW) Readings*** wThe National Drug Control Strategy: The White House, 1996, pp. 3-35. Find this reading in the *Operations Other Than War (OOTW) Readings*, Annex J, pp. J- to J-. This reading gives the intent and purpose of the national drug control policy.

wFarah, Douglas, "The Crackup." *The Washington Post Magazine*, July 21, 1996. Volume III, pp. 341-353. Find this reading in the *Operations Other Than War (OOTW) Readings*, Annex J, pp. J- to J-. Farah discusses allegations that Colombia's president elect (Earnest Samper) was being financed by cocaine barons and the effect it had on U.S. drug policy and U.S. and Colombian relations.

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***Joint Pub Readings*** Joint Pub 3-07, *Types of Military Operations Other Than War*, pp. III-3 to III-14. Find this reading in the *Joint Pub Readings* Vol. III (8800), pp. 837 to 845. In counterdrug operations, DoD supports Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in their efforts to disrupt the transport of illegal drugs into the United States.

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## For Further Study

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### **Supplemental Readings**

The readings listed are **not** required. They are provided as recommended sources of additional information about topics in this lesson that may interest you. They will increase your knowledge and augment your understanding of this lesson.

wJoint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*.

wJoint Pub 5-0, *Doctrine for Planing Joint Operations*.

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## Issues for Consideration

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**Flow of Illegal  
Drugs into the  
U.S.**

The flow of cocaine and other illegal drugs into the U.S. continues to constitute a critical national security threat. Are DoD efforts important in helping to stem the flow of illegal drugs into the U.S.? Why or why not?

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**War on Drugs**

Who is in charge of the war on drugs? Is there one individual responsible for coordinating the overall counterdrug effort or are there many individual agencies which come together collectively to help implement the national drug control policy? Is the current method the best method? Is there a better way to manage the war on drugs?

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**DoD  
Participation in  
Counterdrug  
Operations**

By law and regulation, DoD cannot actively participate in the arrest of drug traffickers or the seizure of drugs, and DoD personnel cannot accompany host nation forces on field operations. Should this policy be changed? Why or why not?