

**STATEMENT OF  
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BEFORE THE  
HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY, AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
AThe Poisoning of Paradise: Crystal Methamphetamine in Hawaii@**

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Good morning Chairman Souder and members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me here today to speak to you on the problem of crystal methamphetamine trafficking and abuse in Hawaii. I also appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's efforts in partnership with other federal government agencies and state and local authorities to address the battle against drugs and crystal methamphetamine in Hawaii.

Introduction

First, I want to emphasize that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) remains committed to fighting the fight against illegal drugs in Hawaii and working with you to put the drug trafficking organizations out of business. As you are all aware through law enforcement reports and the news media, crystal methamphetamine continues to rank as the most widely abused illicit drug in Hawaii. Much of the crystal methamphetamine abuse in Hawaii is attributed to the drug trafficking organizations which have strong ties to both domestic and international organized crime enterprises.

Although the FBI Honolulu Division continues to investigate drug trafficking organizations using the Enterprise Theory of Investigation- that is, to seek the dismantlement of the entire criminal organization and not just individual members, we are doing so with a lot less manpower resources. After September 11, 2001, the FBI, with the blessing of Congress, reallocated several hundred Special Agents working drug investigations to counterterrorism and other investigative programs. This decision was done clearly out of necessity, and it provided the Counterterrorism Program with some of the best investigators in the FBI. In response to this move, the FBI Drug Program bolstered its presence in Hawaii on the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) and other joint task forces as a force-multiplier.

Part of the reasoning behind the reallocation of FBI drug investigative resources was the realization that there are thousands of other highly committed, experienced, state and local law enforcement officials engaged in drug investigations. At the federal level, the DEA, ICE, IRS, ATF, and U.S. Coast Guard are all valuable assets in the war on drugs. The FBI, however, is not abdicating its commitment to drug investigations. In the meantime, the FBI continues to concentrate the vast majority of our FBI drug agents on dismantling the largest drug trafficking organizations and criminal enterprises, those identified in the Attorney General's list of 41 Consolidated Priority Organization Targets. We also remain committed to the national programs -- OCDETF and HIDTA -- as well as major joint intelligence efforts in Hawaii. Bottom line: the FBI remains committed to working with you in this fight against illegal drugs.

### Crystal Methamphetamine in Hawaii BTrends and Abuses

Crystal methamphetamine, commonly known as ice, is the drug of choice in Hawaii. The sale, use and transportation of crystal methamphetamine in Hawaii has had a devastating impact on all of Hawaiian society. As we all are acutely aware, crystal methamphetamine tears away at the inner fabric of Hawaii. Crystal methamphetamine brings violence to our streets. Crystal methamphetamine wastes young lives and wreaks havoc on families. Crystal methamphetamine saps millions of dollars out of our economy every year. Crystal methamphetamine drains the resources of our criminal justice and health care systems. And drugs such as crystal methamphetamine make criminal enterprises across the country and around the world -- richer, stronger, and more formidable.

The specific statistics on how crystal methamphetamine affects the overall crime issues is staggering. An estimated 90 percent of property crime in Hawaii is believed to be drug-related. In addition, many homicides and other violent crimes, including hostage situations, have been associated with crystal methamphetamine. In 2002, U.S. Attorney Ed Kubo stated that crystal methamphetamine had been associated with over 90 percent of confirmed child abuse cases. Recently, news articles in Hawaii have reported that assaults on police officers have increased fivefold over the past five years and that the violence associated with crystal methamphetamine abuse is a contributing factor to that increase.

The wide-spread use of crystal methamphetamine has also deeply hurt the economy and social image of Hawaii. Several studies done by universities have reported that Hawaii authorities spend close to half a billion dollars per year on corrections, education, counseling, and other related programs relative to the crystal methamphetamine problem. News reports have noted that there are as many as 30,000 crystal methamphetamine users in Hawaii who spend between \$540 million to 1.8 billion annually based on a \$50 to \$170 per day habit. In addition, the crystal methamphetamine also has a negative impact on the natural environment in Hawaii. Many researchers believe that the manufacturing and usage of crystal methamphetamine may be having a detrimental impact on the environment.

## Crystal Methamphetamine in Hawaii B Deeper Ties to International & Organized Crime Connections

Here in Hawaii, the problems with crystal methamphetamine transcends beyond the typical street dealer. The FBI in cooperation with other law enforcement agencies has determined that the crystal methamphetamine problems extend to international boundaries and strong organized crime connections. For example, in Hawaii, traditional Asian criminal organizations distributed crystal methamphetamine. Lately, Mexican drug trafficking organizations and other criminal organizations are becoming increasingly more involved in the production and distribution of crystal methamphetamine.

Recent law enforcement reports indicate that most of the crystal methamphetamine in Hawaii appears to be produced in Mexico and California. Mexican drug trafficking organizations transport crystal methamphetamine to Honolulu, Maui and other Hawaiian counties via California and to a lesser extent Las Vegas. Some Asian drug trafficking organizations, such as Filipino, Vietnamese, and Korean, transport crystal methamphetamine to Hawaii via Canada and California to avoid strict Customs and Border Patrol inspections conducted at Hawaii ports of entry such as the Honolulu International Airport (HIA). Hawaii law enforcement estimates that approximately 80-90 percent of the crystal methamphetamine seized in Hawaii is smuggled through the HIA via mailed parcels and couriers on commercial flights.

Once the crystal methamphetamine is successfully smuggled into Hawaii, the local drug trafficking organizations generally distribute the drug throughout the islands via independent distributors. Some of these distribution sites may be local night clubs or simply street corners or beach-front sites. However, the line between the international drug traffickers and the local Hawaiian drug traffickers is becoming more blurred as the locals are participating in more complex international operations. Some of the local, as well as the international drug trafficking organizations, are expanding their drug business to other U.S. territories such as Guam and Saipan. The FBI, with resident agencies in Guam and Saipan, bolstered its resources to fight the spread of the crystal methamphetamine traffickers in these islands.

To address these international, domestic, and organized crime connections, the FBI developed the FBI Drug Program Plan (DPP). The FBI DPP is designed to dismantle and disrupt Drug Trafficking Criminal Enterprises (DTCE) which pose the greatest threats to the economic and national security of the United States. Specifically, the FBI and its partner agencies in Hawaii are attempting to identify the primary targets and crystal methamphetamine-related organizations involved in the manufacture and distribution of this drug. These goals will be accomplished through task forces and other joint initiatives with other agencies.

## Multi-Jurisdictional Approach and the Use of Sophisticated Techniques to Fight the

## Crystal Methamphetamine Problem

In support of the FBI's DP to disrupt and dismantle the DTCEs, the FBI Honolulu Division utilizes a multi-jurisdiction, interagency approach to its investigations. Coordination with other law enforcement agencies, especially the DEA, is vital to the success of the federal counter-drug effort. In cooperation with other agencies, the FBI will also utilize the following sophisticated investigative techniques and strategies to fight illegal drugs:

- (1) Direct appropriate investigative and analytical resources to address the threats posed by priority targets;
- (2) Encourage the use of Title III's, criminal pen registers, and subpoenas;
- (3) Encourage the use of complex undercover operations;
- (4) Maximize the use of specialized drug intelligence sources to fully develop investigations of drug trafficking enterprises;
- (5) Consult with respective counterparts in DEA to confirm investigative efforts are not being duplicated and to identify opportunities for joint initiatives and investigations;
- (6) Ensure appropriate deconfliction through shared databases such as DRUGX;
- (7) Ensure initiation and coordination of multi-jurisdictional investigations through office leads and referrals;
- (8) Ensure investigations are initiated against priority targets posing the greatest threat to the Honolulu Division, and which are multi-jurisdictional and of regional/and or national significance and influence; and
- (9) Actively participate in ad hoc task forces High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) initiatives.

Besides the sophisticated techniques listed above, the FBI in cooperation with other partners continues to work closely with the Hawaiian communities through programs such as the U.S. Department of Justice initiative "Weed and Seed". The Weed and Seed Program is designed to support the community involvement in the fight against illegal drugs. The Weed and Seed program is a multi-faceted proactive approach to fight crime by weeding out the criminal element and seeding the community with services that support the neighborhood revitalization. Because of the program's success, the Hawaii HIDTA is joining forces with the Honolulu Weed and Seed. Through this cooperation, the HIDTA hopes to reduce the harmful consequences associated with crystal methamphetamine.

## Task Force Approach in Action: OCDETF and HIDTA

Pursuant to the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF), the FBI has joined forces with other federal government and local agencies through HIDTA to investigate and neutralize drug trafficking in Hawaii. OCDETF and HIDTA permit law enforcement to use a multi-faceted approach to cull various expertise and resources to the table to address the drug problems. With the expertise and knowledge of ICE officials, IRS officials, ATF officials, DEA officials, Customs and Border Protection (BCP) officials, local/state police, and the FBI, a full throttle attack on drugs has become commonplace in Hawaii.

FBI Honolulu Special Agents are collocated with other agents in HIDTA to address the drug problems in Hawaii in a timely and accurate fashion. As a result of this close cooperation, law enforcement has been very successful in carrying out its mission to arrest and neutralize drug trafficking organizations in Hawaii. For example, in October of 2003 under the codename "Operation Shave Ice", law enforcement arrested nearly 60 people on drug charges in Oahu, the Big Island of Hawaii, Las Vegas, Nevada, Los Angeles, California, and Phoenix, Arizona. The arrests and searches of businesses and homes were a coordinated effort by federal, state, and local law enforcement officers in the war on crystal methamphetamine. Operation Shave Ice, an OCDETF investigation, dismantled five loosely affiliated crystal methamphetamine rings in Hawaii. U.S. Attorney Ed Kubo for the District of Hawaii noted that Operation Shave Ice ranked among the top 10 drug ring shutdowns in Hawaii history. Over \$200,000 from the ring was confiscated with 12 firearms. The arrests also revealed a complex import system that used commercial airliners, shipping companies and the U.S. Postal Service.

#### Expansion in the FBI's Intelligence Component

In addition to the multi-jurisdictional approach as evidenced by the FBI's participation in HIDTA, the FBI will enhance its intelligence sharing efforts to enable it to more effectively target and pursue these drug trafficking organizations. The FBI realizes that to dismantle the most significant DTCEs requires an intelligence capability which can accomplish the following: identify existing or emerging drug activities, determine associations between individuals and groups engaged in drug trafficking, and provide strategic intelligence in support of drug investigations.

FBI drug investigations will maximize the use of intelligence resources such as the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC), the multi-agency Special Operations Division (SOD), the U.S. Department of Justice's Criminal Intelligence Section (CIS), the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FINCEN), the OCDETF Fusion Center, and other specialized drug intelligence resources to insure the sharing of information, collection of intelligence, and analysis of that information to state and local partners and to drive our own investigations. This process enables the FBI to identify the most worthy targets.

The FBI Honolulu Division has also created the Field Intelligence Group (FIG), a new squad designed to collect, analyze, and disseminate raw intelligence information to relevant agencies to address the fight against drugs, terrorism, and hostile intelligence organizations in a more timely manner.

#### DOD=s Joint Interagency Task-Force

In July 2004, the Department of Defense=s (DOD) Joint Interagency Task Force-West moved from the San Francisco area to Honolulu. The FBI will be partnering with this task force to intercept drugs coming from the Far East. The FBI believes this joint coordination will flush out human smuggling, money laundering, and narcoterrorism investigations.

The FBI, in coordination with the DOD Joint Interagency Task-Force, is keen to maintain vigilance over the investigation of major drug trafficking cartels who have established successful smuggling routes into the United States, whether overland via Points of Entry (POEs) in Mexico and Canada, by sea through commercial ports on either coast, or by air. It is clear that narcotics traffickers are exploiting smuggling routes into the United States as hundreds of tons of cocaine as well as thousands of illegal aliens find their way across our borders each year. The FBI, in conjunction with all our law enforcement partners, especially the DEA and the Department of Homeland Security, must remain committed to identifying and eliminating these smuggling routes, which could easily be adopted for other, even more catastrophic purposes- like to import a weapon of mass destruction.

The FBI is instituting major initiatives against special interest aliens (SIA) as a means to identify, dismantle, and prevent sleeper terrorist cells from operating in the United States. The FBI's continuing commitment against major drug cartels is a natural extension of this effort, as the same smuggling routes and smuggling organizations used to import illegal drugs are also used to move SIAs into the country.

#### Conclusion

I do not see the fight against illegal drugs in Hawaii ending anytime soon. We are in this for the long haul.

The FBI Honolulu Division, despite our limited resources available for drug investigations, will continue to partner with all agencies to attack the crystal methamphetamine problem in Hawaii.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee today.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.