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National HIDTA Directors Association

The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program Should Remain at ONDCP

BACKGROUND

Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Director John Walters proposed transferring the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program from ONDCP's Office of State and Local Affairs (OSLA) to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Director Walters made this recommendation without consulting the over 500 federal, state and local law enforcement leaders across the Nation that comprise the 28 HIDTA executive boards. He made this recommendation without consulting the HIDTA Directors, who collectively possess over 1,000 years of federal, state and local law enforcement experience, the majority being in drug law enforcement. He also made this recommendation without consulting Congress, who authorized and supported the HIDTA program since its inception in 1990. When Director Walters first made this recommendation in 2005, he also made it in a policy vacuum—and Congress strongly rejected it.

This paper presents the reasons why the proposal to move the HIDTA program from ONDCP to DOJ has been met with such strong opposition throughout the Nation. One of the primary factors contributing to HIDTA's universal acceptance and success in combating the drug problem is the fact that it resides in the Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Office of State and Local Affairs.

- Congress has repeatedly authorized and funded HIDTA in ONDCP because as a true federal, state and local partnership, the HIDTA program fit perfectly into the overall mission for which ONDCP was authorized.
- ONDCP provides a neutral environment for a program that is built on the premise that all federal, state and local agencies have an equal voice in managing their individual HIDTAs, while addressing regional drug threats within the overall national mission.
- ONDCP's Office of State and Local Affairs, with input from the HIDTA Directors, issues general program guidance but does not ascribe to the "one size fits all" philosophy. OSLA allows for both fiscal and policy flexibility throughout the country based on regional resources and needs. OSLA does not consider itself as the program's lead agency, does not compete for HIDTA funds and does not maintain an enforcement component that might attempt to exercise control or compete for investigative funding.

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP

Page Two

- HIDTA is a unique and extremely successful program that has progressed and been effective under ONDCP's Office of State and Local Affairs. There is no sound rationale to move the program and potentially eliminate the very factors that have contributed to the program's success. This is simply not good public policy.
- In 2005, 90 bi-partisan members of the U.S. House of Representatives signed a letter that read, "...the proposed transfer to (DOJ's) OCDEF is contrary to existing law and sound drug enforcement policy. It will potentially be more disruptive to the HIDTA program than simple budget cuts..."

The body of this paper is separated into two sections:

1. The HIDTA program should remain at ONDCP
2. National leaders speak out against transferring HIDTA from ONDCP

THE HIDTA PROGRAM SHOULD REMAIN AT ONDCP

In 1990, Congress authorized the establishment of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program in the Office of National Drug Control Policy's Office of State and Local Affairs. Since that time, the program has grown, progressed and become highly effective in combating the drug problem not only locally and regionally, but also nationally. The program has demonstrated its effectiveness in targeting, dismantling and/or disrupting international, multi-state and local drug trafficking organizations.

There is no question of HIDTA's impact in its multi-faceted approach to combating the methamphetamine problem across the Nation. There is no doubt that HIDTA's uniqueness and flexibility have facilitated addressing other serious drug problems across the country, including the interdiction of drug shipments and dismantling of violent drug dealing gangs. The 28 HIDTAs have the support of Congress as well as federal, state and local law enforcement administrators and officers across the country.

Policymakers have questioned why Director Walters has recommended the transfer of the successful and effective HIDTA program, especially when there is no supporting plan, data or research indicating the benefit of such a transfer. Moreover, those closest to the HIDTA program believe the proposed move from ONDCP to DOJ would adversely impact the program's effectiveness and result in a significant reduction in support from the program's vital state and local partners. Reasons for this strong nationwide sentiment include:

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP
Page Three

1. The HIDTA program has been extremely efficient and effective under ONDCP's Office of State and Local Affairs. Why change and potentially negatively impact the program's effectiveness? Data from the *2004 HIDTA Program Annual Report* includes:
 - Three-quarters of the 4,729 drug trafficking organizations HIDTA law enforcement initiatives targeted in 2004 were either completely dismantled or notably hampered in their ability to operate (disrupted). Fifty-five percent of these organizations were either international or multi-state in scope.
 - HIDTA initiatives have worked effectively to seize drug traffickers' financial supports. In 2004, they disrupted or dismantled over 320 money laundering initiatives. Eighty-six percent of these organizations were either international or multi-state in scope.
 - Drug trafficking organizations have lost their inventory and profits as HIDTA task forces across the country have seized their drugs and assets. **The wholesale value of drugs seized by HIDTA task forces in 2004 was \$10.5 billion. The task forces seized slightly less than \$0.5 billion in assets.**
 - Calculating the 2004 drug and asset seizure value against the \$177 million expended to support the program's law enforcement initiatives yielded a **return on investment of \$60 in drug seizures and \$3 in asset seizures for every federal dollar invested in the HIDTA Program**
2. The vast majority of state and local law enforcement representatives involved in the HIDTA program are opposed to moving from ONDCP to the Department of Justice. These state and local stakeholders invest approximately \$630 million of their own resources annually to support the \$227 million provided annually by ONDCP; however, they were not consulted concerning the future of the program. A significant number of state and local leaders have indicated that if the transfer occurs, they would likely withdraw their resources since they firmly believe the neutrality and equal voice offered through ONDCP will be lost.
3. The Department of Justice is comprised of a number of agencies (DEA, FBI, ATF and USMS) directly involved in HIDTA that compete for scarce resources and funds. Accordingly, it would be difficult for DOJ to remain objective or even present the appearance of neutrality and objective management of the program if it became the HIDTA's parent agency.

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP
Page Four

This situation is even more complex, as a significant portion of the federal representatives on HIDTA executive boards are DOJ representatives. The equality of decision making authority among federal, state and local agencies as it currently exists would be eliminated.

4. Currently, the 28 HIDTA executive boards are comprised of an equal number of federal and state/local law enforcement executives with an equal voice and vote. This ensures no one agency can dominate. All issues are equally considered in developing the regional threat, strategy, funding and program assessments. Transferring the program would likely create an imbalance of power and potentially shift the priorities from a combination of federal, state and local needs to those of DOJ. Since ONDCP does not have representation on the executive boards nor compete for resources or funding, this is currently not an issue. There is no one from ONDCP to exert pressure or influence executive board decisions.

This problem occurred in 2005 with Director Walters' recommendation. When some HIDTA executive boards addressed motions to oppose the proposed budget reductions and move, most Justice agency representatives on the board abstained from voting. Although these actions may have been understandable, they created some friction within boards that previously did not exist. This may be indicative of the lack of independence of Justice agency managers should DOJ leadership decide to change the HIDTA program's focus. This would negate the independent equal vote/equal voice of each member of the executive board.

5. A number of DOJ personnel have told HIDTA Directors they are opposed to moving the program out of ONDCP. They related that because they work for the President and Justice, they felt they could not make a public statement opposing the budget cuts or move to DOJ. However, a senior manager from one of the U.S. Department of Justice agencies in Florida wrote, "Oversight at the DOJ signals a return to those days of unilateral administration and funding. A neutral entity attached to the executive branch such as ONDCP, not directly affiliated to any agency that it services, is far desirable in terms of unbiased oversight and allocation of resources... I personally believe the current proposal to reduce HIDTA funding and move oversight from ONDCP to DOJ, to be a potential error of huge proportions and detrimental to the overall drug reduction efforts."
6. Non-DOJ federal agencies have also expressed concerns with the HIDTA program moving to DOJ. They have articulated their apprehension that they will no longer have an equal voice and will become subservient to Justice agencies.

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP
Page Five

They expect the majority of support and direction will go to Justice agencies, particularly DEA. Notably, they do not believe DOJ can function as a neutral broker like ONDCP, as they recognize that ONDCP maintains no enforcement arm, does not have a representative on the executive boards, and does not compete for HIDTA funds or resources.

7. The U.S. Department of Justice performs a significant number of much needed services for our country. Drug enforcement is just one of a multitude of its responsibilities and functions. DOJ is a very large centrally controlled bureaucracy comprised of a number of agencies with very specific federal responsibilities and missions. The success of DOJ is predicated on the results produced by each of its agencies in fulfilling their mission as directed by the Attorney General. In contrast, ONDCP performs a much needed mission for this country, coordinating the Nation's efforts to eliminate the proliferation of illegal drugs and drug abuse. Unlike DOJ, they do not manage operational units but rather coordinates collaborative efforts among federal, state and local drug enforcement, treatment and prevention efforts. They are a small bureaucracy with specific responsibilities. ONDCP's success is predicated on the results produced by the partnerships they create and facilitate. It is ONDCP's lack of an operational component, and its focus on partnerships, neutrality and independence that have allowed the HIDTA program to be successful. Conversely, it is DOJ's structure, control, federal mission and policies that have led to its success as a department that manages a much broader array of worthwhile, but divergent responsibilities, and a sizeable number of operational entities, some of which having little to do with drug enforcement.
8. In late August, 2001, prior to Director Walters' Senate confirmation hearing, staff from ONDCP's Office of State and Local Affairs wrote a response as to why the HIDTA program should remain in ONDCP. In addition to many of the issues already addressed, they added:
 - Management of the program requires review of HIDTA threat assessments, strategies and budgets. Information gleaned from these processes gives the Office of State and Local Affairs a unique, accurate perspective of drug issues. Congressional wisdom in having ONDCP manage the HIDTA program has paid huge dividends for law enforcement and the American people.
 - The HIDTA program has flourished largely because of grass roots support by state and local criminal justice agencies. This undaunted support comes chiefly because the program is managed by a neutral agency with no competing interests in the program resources.

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP

Page Six

ONDCP provides the unbiased neutrality, real and perceived, necessary for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to willingly participate in the program.

- The HIDTA program’s national scope provides an immediate pulse on regional drug trends and issues while enhancing the capability to implement policy nationwide.
 - The HIDTA program provides ONDCP’s Office of State and Local Affairs with a unique link to state and local criminal justice agencies, an often-overlooked commodity and partner in our fight against illicit drugs and drug-related crime. Many interagency meetings intended to enhance cooperation and coordination are attended by ONDCP solely because it manages the HIDTA program.
 - ONDCP’s Office of State and Local Affairs policymaking and leadership roles are significantly enhanced by using the HIDTA program as a primary vehicle to implement its national policies (i.e., connectivity between HIDTAs, National Clandestine Laboratory Seizure System, National Methamphetamine Initiative and other programs that directly impact national drug policy).
 - HIDTA improves ONDCP’s Office of State and Local Affairs’ ability to promote cooperation and coordination among all levels of criminal justice agencies, as well as among law enforcement, prevention and treatment.
9. In 1990, Congress authorized and funded HIDTA in ONDCP’s Office of State and Local Affairs for specific reasons, many of which have been addressed in this paper. The importance of this placement was emphasized during the October 2001 Senate confirmation hearing for John Walters as Director. The Senate Judiciary Committee specifically asked him if he had any intention of moving the HIDTA program out of ONDCP. Director Walters’ answer was no. When Director Walters recently changed his position and recommended moving HIDTA to DOJ, Senators Grassley, Biden, Hatch and DeWine sent him the following letter:

“Dear Director Walters:

It is with great alarm that we read in the President’s budget that you intend to move the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program out of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and into the Department of Justice.

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP
Page Seven

As you will recall, the issue of whether to move the HIDTA program out of ONDCP was the subject of much discussion at your confirmation hearing in October 2001. At that time, you assured members of the Senate Judiciary Committee “I have no intention at this point in time, nor do I know of one in the administration, to move these programs out of ONDCP.” In response to Senator Biden warning you at that time that there would be “holy war” if you were to transfer the program, you said that you did not have any philosophical difference with the Committee on the issue of moving the HIDTA program.

Given this exchange at your confirmation hearing we would like an explanation in writing by March 1, 2005 as to why you chose to move the HIDTA program out of your office after assuring the Committee that you would not do so and why you did not consult with the Committee about this matter. As you know, under law you have the authority to certify the drug budgets of the various national drug control agencies and you could have prevented moving HIDTA out of your office.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.”

NATIONAL LEADERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST TRANSFERRING HIDTA

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE’S LETTER

In 2005, 90 House Members from both political parties co-signed a letter to House Appropriations Committee leaders stating: “The proposed transfer to {DOJ’s} OCDEF is contrary to existing law, and to sound drug enforcement policy. It will potentially be even more disruptive to the HIDTA program than the simple budget cuts. ...Even apart from the legal question, the move of HIDTA into OCDEF is highly problematic. The Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources recently held a hearing on this issue, receiving testimony from a number of state and local officials who actively work with the HIDTA program. Not one of them supported moving the program into OCDEF. They each pointed out that OCDEF is a very different program primarily designed to bring existing state and local cases into federal court while providing funding through the U.S. Attorneys.”

In reference to the HIDTA program, the letter continues, “This equal voice of state and local agencies has generated an unprecedented level of cooperation on the part of all participants. It is very unlikely that state and local agencies will be willing to make significant contributions of personnel and resources to HIDTA task forces if they believe they will not have an equal say in their deployment.”

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP
Page Eight

U.S. SENATE LETTER

Also in 2005, 56 Senators from both political parties co-signed a letter to Senate Appropriations Committee leadership stating: "... Additionally, we also ask for your support for maintaining funding of the HIDTA program at ONDCP rather than OCDEF, as proposed in the President's FY2006 budget request. As you know, the Senate also expressed its intention in the FY 2006 Budget Resolution that HIDTA remain within ONDCP because that is where Congress last authorized the program to reside. To date, no explanation has been provided for the proposal to move HIDTA to the Department of Justice. Therefore, until the appropriate authorizing committees in the House and Senate investigate this proposal further, we believe that it is inappropriate to move the successful HIDTA program from ONDCP to the Department of Justice..."

SENATE AMENDMENT

Senators Baucus, Grassley, Leahy, Bingaman, Murray, Talent, Smith and DeWine co-sponsored a Sense of the Senate amendment to the Senate Budget Resolution in 2005 requesting full funding for the HIDTA program and retaining the program in ONDCP. Section b of the Sense of the Senate reads: "It is the sense of the Senate that - (1) the spending level of budget function 750 (Administration of Justice) is assumed to include \$227,000,000 for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area; and (2) unless new legislation is enacted, it is assumed that the HIDTA program will remain in the Office of National Drug Control Policy, where Congress last authorized it to reside."

Senator Baucus, in presenting the Sense of the Senate stated, "...The President's budget also proposes to shift the program from ONDCP to the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force within the Department of Justice. Both of these proposals could derail the highly successful HIDTA program..."

Montana law enforcement tell me that moving the HIDTA program to OCDEF will do nothing to improve law enforcement capabilities and will undermine the unique partnerships and innovation that the HIDTA program has helped to create nationwide and that has been so successful in curbing the spread of meth in Montana. HIDTA's are about coordination and collaboration. OCDEF is more centrally managed with an assumed Federal lead and with a focus on investigations and prosecution - an important mission but not the same as the HIDTA mission. Additionally, according to the National Narcotics Officers Association the vast majority of OCDEF cases originate with HIDTA-funded operational task forces. The current organization works; why change it?...

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP
Page Nine

In presenting the Sense of the Senate amendment, Senator Grassley stated, "...In particular, the proposal to transfer to the Department of Justice and reduce the funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program - also known as the HIDTA program - would have a major impact on drug enforcement issues..."

Congress provided the Office of National Drug Control Policy with the responsibility for the management - and effectiveness - of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program. For a relatively modest investment, Federal, State and local law enforcement have tremendously benefited from the increased information sharing and improved coordination that HIDTAs create. The task forces created through the HIDTA program can serve as models for initiatives against terrorism, money laundering and other modern threats to civil society..."

MAJOR COUNTY SHERIFF'S ASSOCIATION

The Major County Sheriff's Association passed a resolution that concludes: "Now, therefore, be it resolved, the Major County Sheriff's Association does hereby call upon the United States House and Senate to restore full funding in the Department of Justice appropriations for law enforcement Byrne Grants and SCAAP, and to restore full funding in the Office of National Drug Control Policy appropriations for HIDTA."

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF STATE DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

On March 9, 2005, The National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies, representing all 50 states in the Nation, presented its position on this issue: "...Moving the HIDTA program to OCDETF will do nothing to enhance law enforcement and will hinder the continuation of partnerships and innovation that the HIDTA program has fostered. The HIDTA program has enjoyed wide acceptance by heads of state and local law enforcement agencies for two important reasons. Under HIDTA, state and local agency heads join with our federal counterparts on an equal basis to determine the direction of the individual HIDTAs. There is no other cooperative endeavor of this magnitude in law enforcement today. Secondly, the HIDTA program has been able to project a degree of separation from other federal agencies by placement within ONDCP. Although ONDCP has shown reluctance to immerse the program, it should not be placed within a department that gives the perception that it will be under the control and direction of a federal law enforcement entity. To do otherwise would certainly influence state and local participation and ownership of the program..."

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP

Page Ten

NATIONAL NARCOTICS OFFICERS ASSOCIATION COALITION

The National Narcotics Officers Association Coalition (NNOAC), which represents 43 state narcotics officers associations, with a combined membership of more than 60,000 police officers across the country, is strongly opposed to Director Walters' proposed budget cuts and move of the HIDTA program to DOJ. NNOAC is one of the stakeholder groups with whom Director Walters failed to consult for their expertise and experience. In mid-2005, NNOAC urged "the restoration of the HIDTA and Byrne Grant programs at the fiscal year 2005 level and the retention of the HIDTA program at ONDCP where the agency serves as a fair and honest broker on behalf of law enforcement."

CALIFORNIA SHERIFF'S ASSOCIATION

A letter from the California Sheriff's Association dated March 31, 2005 states, "...These proposals will severely weaken the federal, state and local partnerships that have developed over the years in combating California's drug problem and the successes achieved. The HIDTA program is successful because it forms equal partnerships between federal, state and local law enforcement leaders..."

UTAH LAW ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATORS AND DIRECTORS

The Salt Lake County, Utah Law Enforcement Administrators and Directors (L.E.A.D.S.) which is comprised of 32 criminal justice agencies writes, "...We were shocked and extremely disappointed when we learned that the fiscal 2006 federal budget proposal included reducing HIDTA funding by over 50% and moving it from a neutral environment in ONDCP's Office of State and Local Affairs to the U.S. Department of Justice... These changes do not reflect the collective expertise available in law enforcement. HIDTA is successful because of the equal partnership in addressing the drug threat regionally, consistent with the national goals. The key to the HIDTA program is its neutrality, the fact that there is no one on our Executive Board from ONDCP to exert pressure or to compete for the limited funds. That would not be the case if the program moved to Justice..."

PHOENIX CHIEF OF POLICE JACK HARRIS

Phoenix Chief of Police Harris stated at the hearing on March 10th before the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, "...Moving the program from ONDCP to OCDETF – I have to say that I am in total opposition to that. OCDETF is the administrative, non-operational body that provides funding and prosecution, not drug enforcement investigations.

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP
Page Eleven

HIDTA was formed, as you have heard, as a grass-roots program designated to promote interagency cooperation between federal, local and state agencies. That is occurring every day in Phoenix... that cooperation and communication between agencies is what brought down those heads of crime organizations dealing with drugs...over 90% of the OCDETF cases are conducted by local agencies. So you are going to ask us to continue to be part of that organization and to target individuals that we have no input on..."

BALTIMORE POLICE COMMISSIONER LEONARD HAMM

Baltimore, Maryland Acting Police Commissioner Hamm testified at the same hearing that: "...All partners in HIDTA work under a formula of measured success and management for results. Ending the successful HIDTA formula that law enforcement has worked on for years will jeopardize major cases, networking, leads and partnership which have proven to work... And, Mr. Chairman, there are those who question the value of HIDTA. They simply haven't taken the time to look at these measurable, life-saving results. I urge all of you to maintain an open mind and speak directly with the HIDTA Directors and law enforcement professionals who dedicate their lives to just the kind of cases which federal, state and local should be focusing on..."

HOUSTON CHIEF OF POLICE HAROLD HURTT

Houston Chief of Police Hurtt in a *Houston Chronicle* editorial writes, "Without consulting state and local law enforcement leaders, the Office of National Drug Control Policy has recommended ... moving it to the Department of Justice's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program. This is unilateral, short-sighted and a dangerous policy recommendation... As a chief executive of an agency responsible for designing and implementing the most effective counter drug strategy for the citizens of Houston and as president of the Major Cities Chiefs organization I will fight this..."

"Moving what is left of the HIDTA program to OCDETF with no guarantee of an equal voice of all participants would destroy the partnership and cooperation that makes the HIDTA program so successful. Most disturbingly, by eviscerating the HIDTA program and moving the remaining funds to OCDETF, we risk returning to the days when cooperation among law enforcement was episodic rather than systematic, delivered on a case-by-case basis, and found to be generally ineffective in disrupting drug trafficking on our streets and in our neighborhoods..."

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP

Page Twelve

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSIONER
GUY TUNNELL**

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Tunnell, in a letter to Congressman Weldon writes, "...Moving the HIDTA program to OCDETF will hinder the continuation of the existing federal, state and local law enforcement partnerships that were created with the inception of the program. Under the umbrella of the HIDTA program, state and local executive agency heads join with their federal counterparts on an equal basis to determine the strategy of their specific HIDTA. There is no other cooperative endeavor of this magnitude in law enforcement anywhere in this country... In closing, I want to emphasize that my experience has shown that the best strategy to fight the national drug problem often begins at the state and local levels by identifying national and international drug trafficking organizations that distribute illicit drugs in our country. This strategy protects the safety of the citizens we all serve..."

FARMINGTON HILLS CHIEF OF POLICE WILLIAM DWYER

Farmington Hills, Michigan Chief of Police Dwyer writes: "...the proposed removal of the HIDTA program from the ONDCP will further reduce the effectiveness and impact of the program. The HIDTA program was specifically designed not to be another federal agency, but rather to be a unique and flexible program that provides shared authority among federal, state and local agencies to address the specific problems in the region in a neutral form. If the proposed transfer of HIDTA to DOJ occurs, the program will inevitably lose the unique balance it achieved between local and federal agencies..."

NNOAC PRESIDENT RON BROOKS

Ron Brooks, President of the National Narcotics Officers Association Coalition is quoted in the *San Mateo Daily Journal*: "Moving HIDTA to the Department of Justice Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program will only serve to destroy the partnership between federal, state and local law enforcement as we know it today."

ONDCP DIRECTOR WALTERS

ONDCP Director John Walters, in introducing the 2004 HIDTA Annual Report for the National HIDTA Conference in December 2004, wrote: "...This past year, the HIDTA program continued to bring federal, state and local law enforcement together to make a measurable difference in disrupting the market for illegal drugs."

HIDTA Should Remain at ONDCP
Page Thirteen

Investigations of high level traffickers and seizures that disrupt drug trafficking organizations remain the hallmark of the program. A pre-condition of the HIDTA program being effective is the ability to get federal, state and local law enforcement to work together in a coordinated fashion. This, in turn enhances the security of our country from threats both foreign and domestic, and serves as a model for other agencies.”

Walters ends his letter by stating, “As we gather to honor the achievements of individuals, groups and HDTAs, I thank you for your fine work and wish you the best in the year ahead as we work together to disrupt the market for illegal drugs in our great nation. Less than two months later, he proposed reducing the funding for HIDTA by 56% and moving the program from ONDCP to U.S. Department of Justice.

CONCLUSION

There are two legitimate questions that are repeatedly asked as it relates to Director Walters’ recent recommendation related to the HIDTA program.

Question 1: Why would Director Walters recommend transferring the HIDTA program out of ONDCP when it is such an effective and strongly supported program?

In 2005, the HIDTA Directors heard and read different reasons for Director Walters’ FY06 proposals. These reasons included a lack of program focus, and that the HIDTA program would be, for some reason, more effective under DOJ. None of these assertions are supported by data, research or accurate information. The HIDTA Directors remain as perplexed as everyone else over the underlying reason for this ill-conceived proposal.

However, the Directors are aware that U.S. governmental agencies have been under pressure to reduce funding. In FY2005, ONDCP’s funding was \$507 million. The two largest portions, or 68% of that budget, were the National Anti-Drug Youth Media Campaign (\$120 million) and HIDTA (\$227 million). Even though the media campaign received a lower PART score than HIDTA, Director Walters remains very supportive of the campaign. In 2005, he chose to reduce HIDTA by \$127 million and transfer the remaining \$100 million for HIDTA to DOJ. This reflects a 46% reduction in ONDCP’s budget. Is this good fiscal management or poor public policy?

Question 2: Since Director Walters apparently does not support the HIDTA program in ONDCP, why would law enforcement leaders choose to remain there?

Most of the answers to this question are found throughout this report. Specifically, the HIDTA program is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Office of State and Local Affairs within ONDCP. Officials in the Office of State and Local Affairs understand and support the program. They manage HIDTA well; thus, the program, under their stewardship, has been successful and effective. They believe in the federal, state and local partnership as well as working closely with directors to enhance the program. Director Walters, during his term in office, has had limited interaction with the HIDTA program and little impact other than the allocation of discretionary funding.

The unanimous opinion of the HIDTA Directors and the majority of the state and local leadership representing the executive boards is that the independence, neutrality and flexibility offered under ONDCP far outweighs the potential negative influence of Director Walters's lack of support of the program and the significant potential to federalize HIDTA at DOJ.

The HIDTA Directors (formerly federal, state and local law enforcement managers), in accord with hundreds of law enforcement executives across the country, are convinced that should the transfer to DOJ occur, it would significantly impact the program's effectiveness. The HIDTA Directors strongly believe that the program is the most effective national drug enforcement effort they have experienced in their careers. This proposal is an affront to the 12,000 heroic men and women in the program who are combating drug abuse and violence across the Nation. The HIDTA Directors have pledged to support their efforts and to keep the leaders and policy makers informed about this remarkable program. They invite decision makers to ask their law enforcement leaders and officers across the country their opinion about the tremendous impact of HIDTA.

For more information on the National HIDTA Directors Association and its position on Director Walters' FY2007 HIDTA-related proposals, visit www.hidtadirectors.org or call (703) 217-5888.