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CLANDESTINE MANUFACTURING OF DANGEROUS DRUGS

THIRTY-THIRD REPORT

BY THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 30, 1986.

Hon. THOMAS P. O'NEILL, Jr.,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: By direction of the Committee on Government Operations, I submit herewith the committee's thirty-third report to the 99th Congress. The committee's report is based on a study made by its Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee.

JACK BROOKS,
Chairman.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT
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CLANDESTINE MANUFACTURING OF DANGEROUS DRUGS

APRIL 30, 1986.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. BROOKS, from the Committee on Government Operations, submitted the following

THIRTY-THIRD REPORT

BASED ON A STUDY BY THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION, JUSTICE, AND AGRICULTURE SUBCOMMITTEE

On April 22, 1986, the Committee on Government Operations approved and adopted a report entitled "Clandestine Manufacturing of Dangerous Drugs." The chairman was directed to transmit a copy to the Speaker of the House.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Government Operations' Subcommittee on Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture is responsible for oversight of the Department of Justice and its subordinate agencies. For the past 4 years the subcommittee has been engaged in a comprehensive review of the Federal effort against drug trafficking, which has included hearings at which the various enforcement and intelligence programs of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) have been examined.[1]

[1] On February 22, 1982, the Subcommittee on Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture began a review of Federal antinarcotics programs. Since that time the subcommittee has convened 32 hearings and issued 3 related reports: *Military Assistance to Civilian Narcotics Law Enforcement, an Interim Report,* House Report No. 97-921, October 1, 1982; *Interim Report on the War Against Drug Smuggling—The Soft Underbelly of the United States,* House Report No. 98-444, October 27, 1983; and *Commercial Production and Distribution of Domestic Marijuana,* House Report No. 98-461, November 22, 1983.

The subcommittee has issued two additional reports examining cooperative programs in the Federal, State and local law enforcement infrastructure, both of which are related in some measure to drug enforcement: *Justice Department Management of the Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee Program,* House Report No. 98-1110, September 28, 1984; and *Regional Information Sharing Systems—Their Place in the National Criminal Justice System,* House Report No. 99-216, July 22, 1985.

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This report presents the results of the committee's study of illicit domestic drug manufacturing, an area in which DEA conducts extensive enforcement operations. DEA also provides assistance to State and local police agencies on a broad range of issues, to include joint task forces, training, intelligence sharing, grants, and maintenance of national statistics.

The committee's review has documented that, in addition to the well known national drug problem involving heroin and cocaine, almost all of which is imported in finished form, there is an equally alarming problem with illegal domestic manufacturing and abuse of other very potent substances, which are referred to for statistical purposes as "dangerous drugs." This report is primarily concerned with three such drugs: The stimulants amphetamine and methamphetamine, the hallucinogenic drug phencyclidine (PCP), and, increasingly, cocaine which is imported in raw form for final processing in the United States. Other drugs which are also classified as "dangerous drugs" include legitimate pharmaceutical drugs which are diverted from licit sources, and the illicit drugs LSD, methaqualone (Quaaludes), psilocybrin, and what are commonly referred to as "designer drugs."

Some controlled precursor chemicals and variants of more common drugs are also classified as "dangerous drugs" for purposes of this report. They include such substances as piperidine (a precursor for PCP); and P2P, an immediate precursor for amphetamine and methamphetamine.

A new variant of cocaine in the United States results from clandestine conversion of street cocaine into an extremely potent variant called "rock" or "crack." This new drug has recently been introduced on the streets of New York and other major cities, where local authorities are reporting extremely rapid cases of addiction among young people.[2]

The discussion section of this report frequently refers to the chemicals used in producing dangerous drugs, some of which are legally controlled substances and others of which are not. Three general classes of chemicals are utilized in the manufacturing process: *Precursors,* which react with each other to form the end product; *solvents and reagents,* which facilitate the reaction process but are not chemically represented in the finished product; and *diluents,* usually inert substances which are often added to the finished quantity to expand its apparent weight and volume by diluting it.

The subcommittee conducted two hearings on clandestine drug laboratories.[3] The first was convened in Oklahoma City, OK, on September 24, 1985, and the second in Washington, DC, on December 5, 1985. Agencies providing testimony included: DEA; the Arkansas State Police; the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE); the Maryland State Police; the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (OBN); the Oklahoma State Bureau of

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[2] "A New, Purified Form of Cocaine Causes Alarm as Abuse Increases," the New York Times, November 29, 1985. This article is reproduced in the hearings appendix.

[3] "The Clandestine Manufacture of Illicit Drugs", hearings before a subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives, 99th Congress, 1st sess., hereinafter cited as "hearings."

Investigations; the district attorney, Oklahoma County, OK; and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).

The witnesses were unanimous in stating that the problems surrounding dangerous drug enforcement and abuse are on the increase. They expressed concern for the safety of officers and bystanders in areas where clandestine drug laboratories were in operation, citing explosions resulting from accidental and deliberate ignition of volatile chemicals, and exposure to toxic vapors from the chemicals.

Nationally, seizures of clandestine laboratories have escalated dramatically from 150 in 1977 to 312 in 1984.[4] All indications are that 1985 will set a new record as drug production and abuse continue to increase.[5]

II. Findings and Conclusions

The committee finds that:

1. Dominated by methamphetamine, the manufacturing of dangerous drugs is increasing, and these drugs now rival heroin and cocaine in numbers of abusers.

2. Domestic processing of cocaine is increasing rapidly in the State of Florida.

3. A new variant of cocaine, called "crack," is posing a significant threat to young people in several large metropolitan areas.

4. The clandestine drug manufacturing process generates toxic fumes and explosive vapors which pose significant danger to law enforcement officers and firefighters, and to communities in which it takes place.

5. Clandestine laboratories are usually located in remote areas because of the distinctive, pungent odors which are emitted during the manufacturing process, but it is not uncommon for laboratories to operate in congested, urban settings.

6. Between 1983 and 1984, seizures of illegal laboratories increased 38 percent. Seizures in 1985 were projected to show a substantial increase over 1984. It is not known with certainty whether this is a result of increased enforcement activity, or an increase in the numbers of illegal laboratories in operation. Nonetheless, increases in laboratory seizures appear to relate closely to the amount of priority placed on this activity by law enforcement policymakers.

7. Historically, most laboratory seizures have been made by DEA, but State and local police seizures have increased significantly in recent years as localities have responded more vigorously to an increased local threat.

8. Amphetamine and methamphetamine laboratory seizures made by State and local police are heavily concentrated in the States of California, Texas, Oklahoma and Florida, which have placed increased emphasis on this activity. DEA seizures are also concentrated in the Southwestern and Western United States.

9. While PCP laboratory seizures nationally decreased by 23 percent between 1983 and 1984, DEA attributes this to changes in traf-

[4] "Clandestine Laboratory Seizures in the U.S.—1984," a report of the Drug Enforcement Administration Office of Intelligence, at 3.

[5] Hearings at 43.

ficking patterns rather than decreasing abuse. Hospital emergency room mentions of PCP increased during that same period.

10. Incidents of violence by laboratory operators are increasing. Authorities in California report that in 40 percent of the laboratories seized in 1984 the suspects were armed. Instances have been documented in which violators deliberately blew up their laboratories as law enforcement officers approached.

11. Cooperating chemical manufacturers and dealers can provide excellent intelligence concerning suspected laboratory operators. Unfortunately, limited police manpower has, in the past, been unable to make optimum use of such information.

III. Discussion

History of dangerous drug abuse

The abuse of dangerous drugs achieved national attention during the decades of the 1960's and 1970's, with the hallucinogenic LSD and the stimulant amphetamine (called "speed" on the street) gaining the greatest notoriety. However, as the health hazards posed by these drugs became better known, their abuse declined. LSD was discovered to lead to intense psychotic behavior, including flashbacks long after its use was ended. The slogan "speed kills" was coined following the overdose deaths of numbers of young amphetamine abusers.

During this period phencyclidine (PCP) also emerged. First introduced as an analgesic,[6] both physicians and veterinarians determined it to be difficult to control and to have undesirable side effects in that application. It does, however, cause a "high" and induce hallucinations in humans, and it became widely abused. Eventually, PCP also gained an unsavory reputation with drug users because of its unpredictability and severe side effects, and its popularity abated somewhat.[7]

During this ebbing and flowing of drugs of choice, by 1980 heroin use had stabilized at about 500,000 addicts,[8] but heroin was often difficult to obtain, and in any event had gained a reputation as a ghetto problem. This was also the period when the first hints of the cocaine phenomenon emerged, but "coke" rapidly became identified as the millionaire's drug of choice, and for good reason—it was very expensive and difficult to obtain.

By 1980, the domestic manufacture of dangerous drugs had become a secondary enforcement effort, and laboratory seizures were infrequent. Law enforcement manpower, long concentrated against heroin at the Federal level, and against marijuana at the State and local level, became increasingly committed to a highly publicized war against cocaine, which had captured the imaginations of the press and the public.[9]

Hard drug abusers, wary of heroin and unable to afford or lacking access to cocaine, again turned to methamphetamine, amphetamine, and PCP, all of which could be manufactured in rudimentary

[6] Hearings at 94.
[7] Hearings at 95.
[8] Hearings at 18.
[9] Hearings at 19.

"laboratories" from easily accessible precursor drugs, using commonly available equipment.[10] The "chemists" who cooked the drugs followed step-by-step formulas which were readily available on the street. Emergency room mentions of these drugs, as tracked by DEA's Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), again crept unward. Relatively unhampered by law enforcement pressure, supply was easily able to meet the increasing demand.

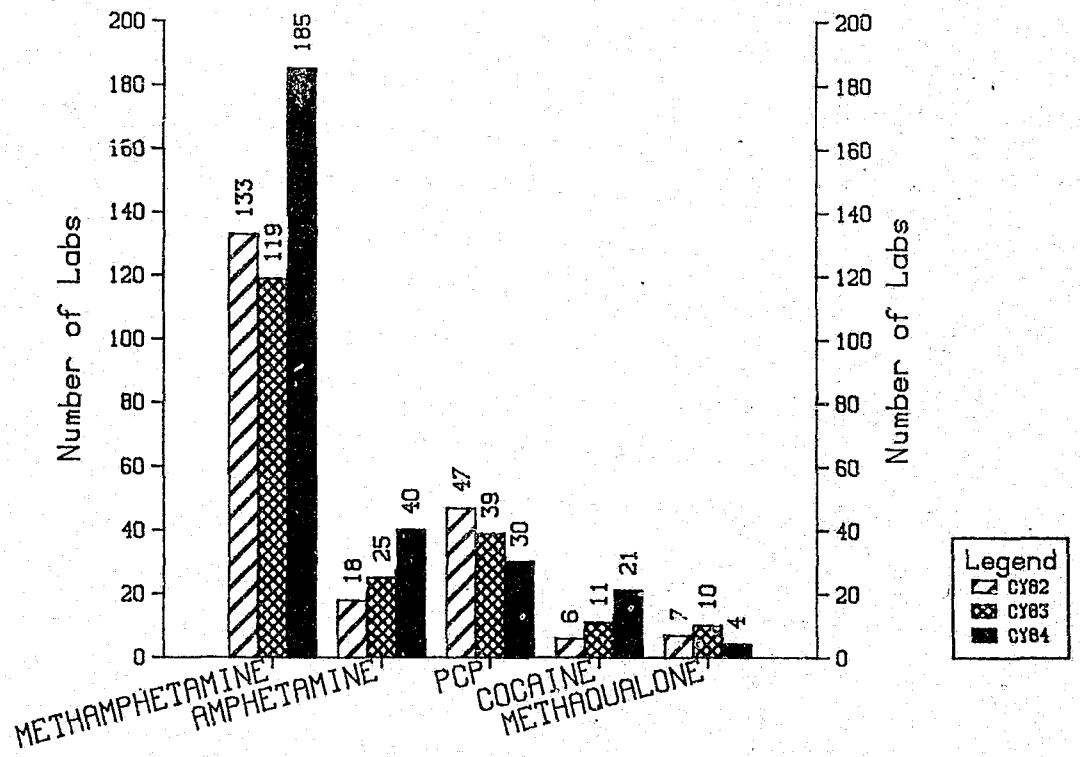
By 1985, abusers of these three drugs again constituted a major proportion of the national hard drug abuser population. Mr. Raymond L. Vinsik, Director of DEA's Dangerous Drugs Investigation Section, told the committee that in the United States DEA's current estimates are that 4.4 million people are abusing clandestinely manufactured drugs, compared to 4.2 million cocaine users.[11]

Current enforcement trends and statistics

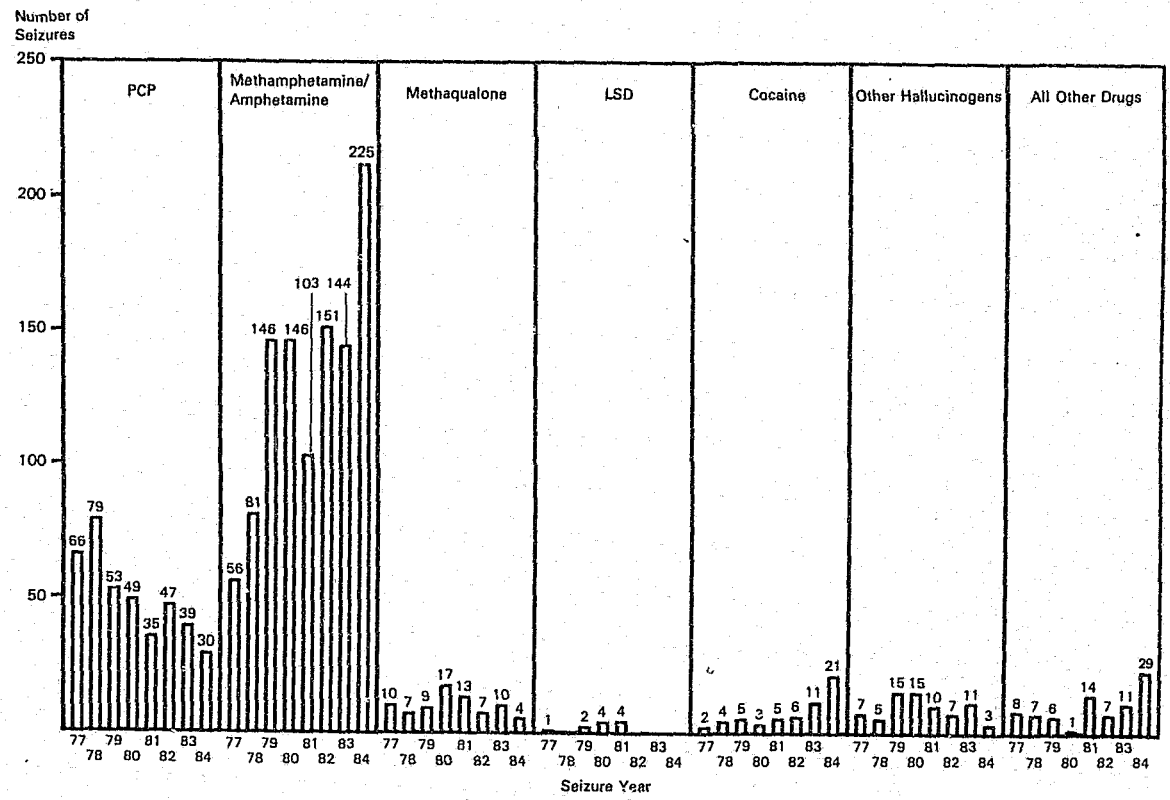
According to DEA, in the past 5 years there has been an 85-percent increase in the number of clandestine laboratories seized in the United States: From 192 in fiscal year 1981, to 356 in fiscal year 1985.[12] As can be seen from the following DEA tables,[13] methamphetamine laboratories far outstrip all others.

[10] Hearings at 12, 85.
[11] Hearings at 18.
[12] Hearings at 13.
[13] "Clandestine Laboratory Seizures in the U.S.—1984," a report of the Drug Enforcement Administration Office of Intelligence, at 10 and 12.

Total Clandestine Laboratory Seizures by Drug Type
CY 1982 – CY 1984



CLANDESTINE LABORATORY SEIZURES BY DRUG TYPE: CY 1977 – CY 1984



Production of dangerous drugs, for the most part, does not require an extensive outlay of cash, particularly when compared to the profits which can be achieved. Agent Mike Lyman of the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs told the committee: "All it requires is a formula and an individual who does have some basic knowledge of chemicals and precursors, and a minimum investment as a rule of thumb of somewhere around a thousand dollars can get somebody underway in a clandestine laboratory setting." [14]

A relatively sophisticated laboratory, exhibited by Supervisory Chemist Richard Dill of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, was estimated to cost less than $2,000.[15] In Mr. Dill's opinion, such a laboratory could produce 4 pounds of methamphetamine a day.[16]

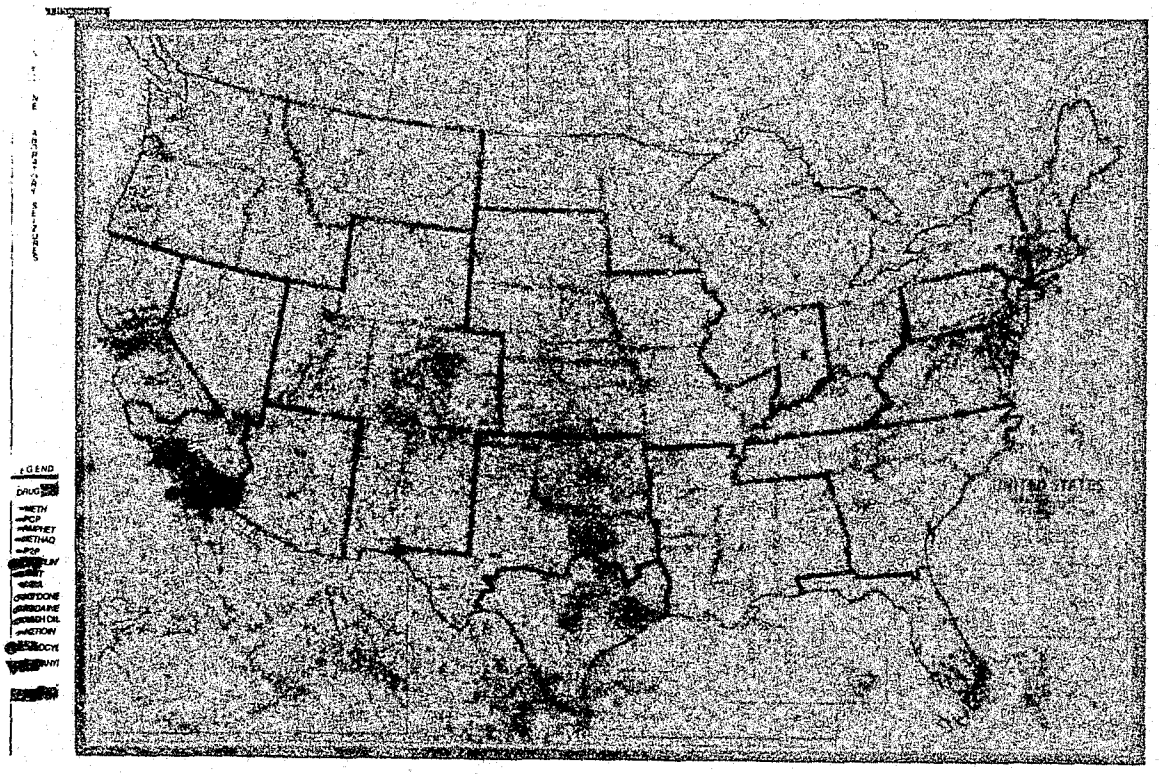
Experience has shown that it is difficult to determine the precise value of illicit drugs because of regional fluctuations in price and variations in purity encountered. However, the following calculations are useful in a general sense to illustrate the profits involved in manufacturing methamphetamine.

Applying an average *wholesale* price for methamphetamine of $17,500 per pound, as suggested by William M. Pruitt, assistant commander, narcotics service, Texas Department of Public Safety,[17] the value of the 4 pounds mentioned above would be $70,000.

Calculating the value of the drugs using Mr. Pruitt's statement of the *street price* of $125 per gram,[18] the 4 pounds would be sold for $56,000 per pound, or $224,000.

Geographic distribution of clandestine methamphetamine, amphetamine, and PCP laboratory seizures, illustrated by DEA's map of the United States on the following page which represents the location of DEA seizures from January through August 1985, shows a progressive concentration of seizures in the Southwest and West, while cocaine laboratories are almost entirely confined to Florida.

[14] Hearings at 32.
[15] Hearings at 4.
[16] Hearings at 5-6.
[17] Hearings at 36.
[18] Hearings at 36.



DEA Laboratory Seizures, January-August, 1985

States such as Texas, Oklahoma, and California contain vast, sparsely populated areas, which are frequently preferred by laboratory operators because of the relative lack of law enforcement presence and because the "cooking" process emits acrid, distinctive odors.[19] Access to such remote areas is an incentive for laboratory activity to concentrate there. Clearly, State and local law enforcement agencies in those States have recently had greater success than those in Eastern States in the investigation of clandestine drug manufacturing.[20]

DEA's dangerous drug investigations have also become concentrated in the West. According to Mr. Vinsik: "The majority of clandestine laboratory seizures conducted during 1984 took place in the Southwest and Western United States. Six of DEA's 19 field divisions—San Francisco, Dallas, Houston, Seattle, Miami, and San Diego—accounted for more than 62 percent of the total 1984 laboratory seizures." [21]

He continued: "DEA expends approximately 13 percent of its agent's man-hours on dangerous drug cases, both the illicit diversion cases and the clandestine laboratory cases. In the Dallas division, the agents expend approximately 34 percent of their time investigating dangerous drug cases. Oklahoma City falls within the Dallas division." [22]

Mr. Vinsik attributed the apparent East-to-West shift in laboratory seizures to increased law enforcement pressure in the West, combined with a shifting of law enforcement assets in the East away from laboratory investigations to the fight against cocaine. He did not feel that the statistics demonstrated a significant regional increase in the actual number of clandestine laboratories, but reflected rather a regional increase in priorities of investigations.

He told the committee: "I, personally, believe that law enforcement is becoming much more vigorous in working on clandestine laboratories and has gained the expertise to work on clandestine laboratories; that is why we are seizing more." [23]

Several State and local witnesses did not completely agree, offering opinions that the numbers of laboratories in their States were, in fact, increasing. Mr. Pruitt, who described seizures in Texas as growing from 19 in 1982 to an estimated 100 in 1985, stated: "I also believe that there is hardly any doubt that there are more clandestine laboratories than there were several years ago.

"We in Texas have not increased in manpower that much in the last 4 years. We have been training our people specifically in the investigation of clandestine laboratories for 8 or 9 years now." [24]

There is little mystery surrounding the situation in the State of Florida, which has seen the rapid proliferation of cocaine processing laboratories. Rolando D. Bolanos, chief of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's South Region Operations Bureau, testified that several recently published reports ". . . revealed that be-

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[19] Hearings at 34-35.
[20] Hearings at 20.
[21] Hearings at 14.
[22] Hearings at 15.
[23] Hearings at 20.
[24] Hearings at 65.

tween the period of November 1982 and December 1985, a 700-percent increase in confirmed clandestine cocaine labs has been documented. In 1982–83, Dade and Broward Counties had a total of six incidents involving cocaine labs.

"During the period of January 1984 through November 1985, the number of confirmed labs has increased to 44 and horizontally spread to include Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Collier Counties." [25]

The committee cannot determine conclusively whether the national increase in seizures has resulted from increased law enforcement activity or an increase in laboratory activity, or some combination of the two. In any event, neither position is exclusive of the other, and each witness acknowledged the merits of the other's statement.

Hazards in clandestine laboratories

According to Mr. Vinsik: "There are many and serious dangers involved in the enforcement operations against laboratories. Primarily due to the caustic chemicals used, many labs are very flammable and explosive. Clandestine operators also boobytrap laboratories to injure raiding enforcement teams or to provide a screen or cover to escape arrest."[26]

One of the chemicals commonly present in clandestine laboratories is ether, which forms highly explosive vapors at room temperature. Numerous instances have been documented where clandestine laboratories have been destroyed because of accidental or deliberate detonation of ether fumes.

Mr. Frank Maldonado, the resident agent in charge of DEA's Oklahoma City office, described the deliberate destruction of a laboratory which had occurred in Vian, OK, just 1 week before the subcommittee's Oklahoma City hearing:

> [The explosion] was created by the violator having wires . . . leading from the laboratory site . . . into a mobile home that he lived in. The moment the officers approached the mobile home, he inserted the plug into the wall, the electrical outlet, which caused a current to melt probably a plastic bag that held or had rags in it that were saturated with ether. As soon as the plastic melted, we had a flash in the metal building causing the fire.[27]

Mr. Maldonado explained that the fire caused hazardous fumes to be generated from the burning chemicals in the laboratory, so that neither firemen nor agents could approach the building. He also described several instances in which similar laboratories had been discovered in residential areas, and OBN Agent Lyman further cited the recent discovery of three laboratories in the city of Durant, OK.[28]

Chief Bolanos told the committee: "Cocaine lab seizures in 1984 and 1985 in the State of Florida, in the southeastern counties, have

[25] Hearings at 117.
[26] Hearings at 12.
[27] Hearings at 29.
[28] Hearings at 29, 35.

netted anywhere from 10 to 500 gallons of ether in a single catch. Experts in the field of chemistry estimate that 10 to 15 drums of ether is sufficient chemical explosive power to level two city blocks." [29] Mr. Bolanos submitted photographs of a house in a residential area which had been totally destroyed when the illicit chemicals stored there detonated, and described finding similar laboratories in close proximity to elementary schools.[30]

He also explained that, because of the inherent dangers in clandestine laboratories, law enforcement officers were often unable to take swift, decisive action in conducting a raid. He stated: "The element of surprise is totally relinquished to the element of citizen and officer safety. Visible police perimeters and affected population evacuation is a prerequisite to engaging the target. The violators are approached by loud and clear announcement of police presence and are ordered to methodically exit the premise."

He continued: "Physical inspection and collection of evidence does not commence until after a chemist has rendered the lab safe from hazards.

"The implications herein are that losing the ability to quickly and safely surprise and detain the violators increases the likelihood of officer injury and decreases the likelihood of confiscating cocaine." [31]

Maryland State Police Corporal Terry Katz described becoming violently ill after driving a van loaded with seized chemicals from a raid site to the local FBI office. He told the committee: "A danger to those of us who have worked on lab operations is that we know very little of the long-term effects of the drug on police officers or firefighters who interrupt the lab while it's in operation and, in doing so, have to breathe the fumes which that lab operation produces." [32]

Protective clothing and other equipment necessary to deal with these labs while assuring the safety of law enforcement personnel is not available in Maryland and surrounding States, according to Corporal Katz. In response to a question from Mr. Lightfoot, Katz said that he did not know whether the Environmental Protection Agency would be in a position to assist law enforcement agencies by making protective equipment, such as that used in the cleanup of a hazardous materials spill, available to such agencies. Acknowledging the budgetary restraints faced by Government agencies, Katz suggested that the risk of long-term health effects could be reduced if such equipment could be made available on an emergency basis.[33]

The link between dangerous drugs and crime

As mentioned earlier in this report, there has been a shifting of law enforcement emphasis in many areas of the United States away from clandestine laboratory investigations to the area of cocaine investigations.

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[29] Hearings at 119.
[30] Hearings at 119.
[31] Hearings at 121.
[32] Hearings at 87.
[33] Hearings at 107, 111.

In the following colloquy, Chairman English asked Mr. Vinsik whether placing a renewed emphasis on clandestine laboratories would have a significant effect on this Nation's crime problem.

> Mr. ENGLISH. I know we have heard many times of the linkage between crime and drugs, not just from the standpoint of the sale, but the linkage to other crimes. I think that, generally speaking, Federal, State, and local law enforcement agree that around 50 percent of all crime is directly related to drugs.
>
> I know (Oklahoma County) District Attorney Bob Macy has testified before our subcommittee in the past that here in Oklahoma County, possibly as high as 70 percent of the violent crime is drug related. Would these drugs, methamphetamine, amphetamines, and PCP, in particular, would they be drugs that would likely be linked to violent crime?
>
> Mr. VINSIK. They would certainly lend themselves to a person committing a violent crime and not having any afterthought about doing it. Also, as mentioned earlier, the great problem of violence in a clandestine laboratory, these people now are well armed. When you go into a laboratory, we almost invariably find weapons that they will use. The last two shootings, serious shootings, that we had were on methamphetamine laboratories. . . . Yes; these people are prone to violence when they are abusing the drug. Although they may not be prone to violence without taking the drug, once they do take it, they feel this great surge of energy, strength and that they can do a lot of things they wouldn't normally do.[34]

Maryland State Police Corporal Katz elaborated on the effects of PCP on a suspect:

> PCP can turn users into schizophrenics, manic depressives and other psychotic ailments. When they are under the influence of this drug, they are violent and in many cases become out of control. Attempting to subdue a person, when you're a law enforcement officer who has to arrest someone who is high on phencyclidine, is a real struggle. These people believe that they're fighting the devil, a tiger, or a gorilla. Therefore, these people don't feel pain because of the analgesic effects of PCP, they have superhuman strength. So, now you're faced with subduing a person that, on one hand, has superhuman strength and then doesn't feel pain.
>
> . . . The loss of life occurs not only to PCP users, but it will happen to people that are around them. For example . . . there was an individual who had been abusing PCP over a long period of time. He had an infant son. He believed that that infant was the devil, so he killed him and almost cut the infant's head off completely.[35]

[34] Hearings at 21.
[35] Hearings at 88-89.

Also speaking of PCP, Mr. Vinsik added:

> . . . There are horror stories of people under the influence breaking apart handcuffs, or being shot four and five times with no effect on a person who keeps coming . . .[36]

Chairman English asked Mr. Vinsik whether it would be possible, through increased Federal, State and local law enforcement pressure, to eliminate the clandestine manufacturing of dangerous drugs. Mr. Vinsik replied: "We are talking about a drug that is produced here. If we had enough people working on it, enough well-trained, experienced, well-equipped people working on laboratories, we could really do a great job in the reduction of these drugs." [37]

Asked what the impact of such reductions in drug manufacturing would have on crime, Mr. Vinsik stated that it would be substantial.[38]

Domestically produced methamphetamine, amphetamine, PCP, and domestically finished cocaine require large amounts of precursor chemicals which are "cooked" in laboratories. (Corporal Katz described mobile laboratories, but this type of activity appears to be minimal.) The most efficient method of attacking clandestine drug production, other than through using informants, would appear to be concentration of enforcement efforts on the sources of chemicals and the laboratories, which can be considered as "choke points" in the drug supply chain.[39]

DEA has initiated both a domestic and an international program in an effort to control the supply of precursor chemicals. According to DEA, the international effort, called Operation Origination, seeks ". . . to limit production of chemicals used in production of the four most highly abused dangerous drugs by eliciting the voluntary cooperation of manufacturers who produce the chemicals. This enforcement endeavor focuses on LSD, methaqualone (Quaaludes), methamphetamine, and phencyclidine (PCP), and the four main precursor chemicals associated with them: Orgotamine tartrate, antranillic acid, phenylacetic acid/P2P, and piperidine." [40] This is primarily a preventive rather than enforcement oriented program, and is designed to deny access to vital chemicals.

DEA's domestic Precursor Liaison Program is more designed to gather information on the sale of ether and other related chemicals. One such effort involved Metroplex,[41] a cooperating chemical company in Dallas, TX. Metroplex employees agreed to provide to DEA the identities of customers who purchased certain precursor chemicals, but DEA found itself unable to investigate all the leads, and the program was terminated.[42] Nonetheless, the cooperation of chemical manufacturers is obviously vital to an efficient, concentrated enforcement effort, and must be encouraged.

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[36] Hearings at 21.
[37] Hearings at 26.
[38] Hearings at 22.
[39] Hearings at 26.
[40] Hearings at 15.
[41] Hearings at 23.
[42] Hearings at 25.

According to Mr. Vinsik, DEA also conducts numerous specialized training schools for both DEA and non-Federal enforcement officers. He told the committee that in 1985 DEA held seven such schools which trained 149 State and local officers. There are also two DEA-sponsored State and local task forces formed especially to investigate clandestine laboratories, one in Fort Worth, TX, and the other in Washington, DC.[43]

Crack

As discussed in this report, fads in drug abuse come and go, and law enforcement resources must shift with the threat. Such a new fad drug, a purified form of cocaine, was described in the New York Times on November 29, 1985.[44] Called "crack" or "rock" on the street, the drug is described by the Times ". . . already processed into the purified form that enables cocaine users to smoke, or free-base the powerful stimulant of the central nervous system."

The article continues:

> According to data collected through the national cocaine hot line, 800-COCAINE, 60 percent of the users snort the drug, with the remaining 40 percent evenly divided between free-basing and intravenous use. That pattern, however, seems to be changing.
>
> Of the three methods of use, free-basing offers the most immediate high (within 10 seconds) and the shortest one (approximately 5 minutes) and thus leads to the most frequent, debilitating and costly habit, experts say.
>
> "Unlike normal cocaine, people who free-base can't stop," said Mr. Hopkins. "They free-base until all their money is used up. The way crack is spreading is almost verification of that."

Experts quoted in the article described young people ". . . with no history of phychiatric illness. They were in the top half of their class, college bound, and they were addicted almost instantaneously. They were rendered completely dysfunctional by crack in a two- or three-month period."

At the committee's hearing in Washington, DC, Corporal Katz testified:

> Basically, what has occurred is that when one utilized cocaine as an abuser, you had to be able to take that drug and purify it to make it free-baseable so it could be smoked. What is now occurring with crack is that the drug is already purified to its rock form, which is almost pure cocaine hydrochloride. It is then shaved off and smoked. Now that there is an easier way to acquire the drug, people are going to do so if they're into free-basing. Free-basers of cocaine are very violent individuals as they can be very addicted to that substance. It has been shown that cocaine is more addictive than heroin in recent lab studies. So, if you increase the availability of the highest purified

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[43] Hearings at 16.

[44] The New York Times, "A New, Purified Form of Cocaine Causes Alarm as Abuse Increases," November 29, 1985, reproduced in Hearings appendix.

form of cocaine, you are going to increase cocaine addiction and its incident problems.[45]

If Mr. Vinsik is correct that increased law enforcement pressure can increase the success rate in stopping dangerous drug production, then this new drug would appear to present a natural and vital area for greatly increased operations.

IV. Recommendations

The committee recommends that:

1. Because the dangerous drug problem appears to be increasing, serious consideration should be given by law enforcement agencies at all levels of enforcement to increasing their investigations of such criminal activities. There appears to be some urgency concerning the new drug called crack, because of its severe addictive qualities and the young age group that seems to be attracted to it.

2. The Environmental Protection Agency, in cooperation with the DEA, should review the requirements for protective clothing or other measures which could be made available to Federal, State and local officers who must enter clandestine laboratories.

3. DEA's precursor programs provide valuable intelligence in an area of drug enforcement where other intelligence is difficult to obtain. If these programs generate more leads than can be investigated by available manpower, then additional manpower should be made available, rather than terminating the unexpectedly successful intelligence collection efforts.

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[45] Hearings at 110.