

**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY,  
AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

**“How can the Federal Government Assist State and Local Programs  
to Protect Citizens and Communities Against Drug-Related  
Violence?”**

**TESTIMONY**

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**HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA PROGRAM**

***Progress Report on the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA Baltimore Targeting Initiative***

In response to the Dawson family tragedy that took place in October 2002, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) took immediate steps to help restore public safety and the public trust in the City of Baltimore. As you know, Mrs. Dawson was a community activist who stood her ground against the flagrant drug dealing in her neighborhood. Her activism drew the ire of the local drug dealers and eventually led not only to her murder, but also the murders of Mr. Dawson and their four children.

At the request of Congressman Elijah Cummings, ONDCP directed the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA to work with the Baltimore Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration in developing an initiative designed to significantly and quickly reduce the drug dealing and its attendant violence occurring in Baltimore. ONDCP authorized up to \$2 million to fund this effort.

In November 2002 the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA submitted its proposal and received approval to proceed with the implementation of the Baltimore Targeting Initiative. Operations commenced December 1, 2002. Based upon a thorough analysis of the crime data, the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA and the Baltimore Police Department identified three geographic areas in the city for enhanced street-level enforcement. We

targeted these three areas because of their pervasive levels of violence and drug activity. The following information details the results of the enforcement efforts brought about through the additional funding from ONDCP. See Figures 1 and 2.

As illustrated, the Baltimore Targeting Initiative has produced dramatic reductions in serious crime in all three target areas. Clearly, the implications of this data are that targeted and sustained enforcement efforts against street-level drug dealing can have a far reaching impact on other serious crimes. There is little doubt, based on this data, that drug trafficking and drug use are linked to robberies, prostitution, burglaries and other serious felonies and misdemeanors that erode the quality of life in Baltimore.

The Baltimore Targeting Initiative also provided resources to support other HIDTA initiative efforts in Baltimore. HIDTA's Major Drug Traffickers Initiative received an additional \$100,000 to target several major drug trafficking organizations serving as the drug source for the street level traffickers. Funds have been used to purchase evidence and information on four drug trafficking organizations and to cover expenses associated with court ordered electronic eavesdropping.

The Major Drug Traffickers Initiative presented evidence gathered in a Title III investigation to a state grand jury on February 26. This investigation focused on the Peppers drug trafficking organization that operated in and about the Eastern District (target area 3). The grand jury indicted 27 members of the Peppers organization. Twelve search warrants were executed in connection with this probe. DEA reports that this organization was a principle supplier of cocaine and marijuana in the target area.

In a separate investigation, Major Drug Traffickers Initiative investigators have been purchasing heroin from another drug trafficking organization that DEA characterizes as "a significant heroin supplier" to the city. They have identified the New York suppliers and are using all possible investigative techniques to dismantle the organization. This organization distributes high-grade heroin to street-level dealers operating in target areas 1 and 2.

Two additional major investigations are underway in the target areas; one of these investigations has qualified for additional funding as a Consolidated Priority Organization Target or CPOT. CPOT targets are considered to be international organizations meriting the utmost attention of Federal law enforcement agencies.

Of the \$2 million committed to the Baltimore Targeting Initiative, the Major Drug Traffickers Initiative has expended \$70,500 and the Baltimore Police Department has encumbered \$888, 200. HIDTA purchased and installed 14 computers, a number of scanners and printers as well as software for use in the Baltimore Police Department's Bureau of Organized Crime. Investigators are now using HIDTA's case management system, Case Explorer, to gather information and transmit it to the HIDTA Watch Center, where it can be shared on a nationwide basis with other law enforcement agencies. Further, HIDTA funding has been used to consolidate the 28 unique drug databases used in the police department and link them with the department's report management system.

This helped to eliminate duplicative efforts and promote communication among the various drug enforcement components in the department as well as between HIDTA initiatives and the other law enforcement agencies working in and about the city.

In conclusion, I am pleased to report that this coordinated, intelligence-driven initiative has produced a noteworthy reduction in serious crime. Historically, law enforcement has all too often not relied on sound data and reliable intelligence as a foundation for its efforts. This initiative has met with success because of the hard work and dedication of the men and women of the Baltimore Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration, and because it was smartly devised and professionally executed. The coordination and planning that went into its development and implementation are nothing less than an exemplary use of data and intelligence.

Nevertheless, there are two serious concerns that need to be addressed. The first concern is with the ability of the three targeted communities to sustain the gains that have been made. Without sustained community support and involvement, there is no question that the criminal elements will quickly reclaim these communities. Congressman Cummings has held several meetings to address this concern and, with the support of ONDCP's Office of Demand Reduction, we are hopeful that his efforts will be fruitful.

Secondly, we have to be mindful of the displacement factor. While we have made considerable headway in reducing serious crime in these three areas, we may have just pushed the crime and the criminals into nearby areas. If this is so, then no real gains have been made. We are tracking crime displacement data and will be able to report our findings to you in the next few months.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Committee with a progress report on the Baltimore Targeting Initiative. All of us involved in the Initiative are very optimistic as a result of the impact achieved through the initiative thus far.