

**Thomas W. Padden**  
Senior Executive Service, Retired  
March 2026

Thomas W. Padden was a career federal prosecutor and Senior Executive serving as the Acting Director of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF). OCDETF was a prosecutor-led, joint law enforcement component of the Department of Justice, and was the cornerstone of the Department's strategy to disrupt and dismantle the command-and-control elements of transnational criminal organizations.

From April 2019 through March 2020, Mr. Padden served on detail to the Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy as the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator (USIC). In his role as USIC, Mr. Padden was the principal advisor to the Drug Czar on interdiction and law enforcement efforts to reduce the availability of illegal and dangerous drugs in the United States. During his tenure as USIC, he led the development of the National Interdiction Command and Control Plan, the Southwest Border Counter-Narcotics Strategy, the Northern Border Strategy, and the Caribbean Border Strategy. Mr. Padden worked closely with The Interdiction Committee (TIC) and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program to enhance HIDTA's role at TIC, and to develop fulsome interdiction plans and capabilities to identify and exploit drug traffickers' vulnerabilities at all points along the transportation space.

From June 2008 through March 2025, Mr. Padden served as OCDETF's Deputy Director, providing leadership continuity to the Program's priority targeting, intelligence and information sharing, coordination, and directed-resourcing efforts in support of the multi-agency mission to disrupt, degrade, and dismantle transnational criminal networks that pose priority threats to the United States. Under OCDETF governance, and in partnership with the 93 U.S. Attorneys, 19 multi-agency Strike Forces and approximately 5,000 case-specific OCDETF task forces conducted coordinated, intelligence-driven investigations and prosecution of criminal networks. Mr. Padden's focus upon intelligence and information sharing, and his support of the OCDETF Fusion Center and OCDETF's International Organized Crime Intelligence and Operations Center (IOC-2), helped to drive the expansion of relevant data at those centers allowing for more complete illumination of criminal network threats.

Before his assignment as the OCDETF Deputy Director, Mr. Padden served in Senior Executive leadership positions within DOJ at the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) and the Criminal Division's Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section (NDDS). At NDIC, he served as the Center's Deputy Director and as its Assistant Director of Intelligence, leading the production of strategic intelligence reporting and threat assessments. At NDIC, he led the expansion of the Center's Document and Media Exploitation (DOMEX) efforts in support of OCDETF operations, including the integration of NDIC DOMEX Teams into selected OCDETF Co-Located Strike Forces.

During his time at NDDS, Mr. Padden served in a progression of leadership positions after starting as a line prosecutor who led investigations of major Mexican and South American drug trafficking networks. He served as one of the first coordinating prosecutors, and later as the Deputy Chief, at

the multi-agency Special Operations Division (SOD). At SOD, he handled the intelligence-based targeting of drug trafficking and narco-terrorist organizations and coordinated the resulting multi-jurisdiction, multi-national wiretap investigations. He also served as NDDDS's Deputy Chief for Litigation, leading the Bi-lateral Case Initiative (BCI) targeting drug cartel leadership using Title 21, Sections 959 and 960. After his service as a Deputy Chief, he was appointed to the Senior Executive Service and served as the section's Principal Deputy Chief and Acting Chief.

Mr. Padden began serving DOJ as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney (SAUSA) in the Eastern District of Virginia (EDVA) while on active duty as a U.S. Marine Corps Judge Advocate. He prosecuted federal criminal cases involving violent crimes, drug offenses, weapons violations, theft of government property, and conspiracies to commit federal crimes. After leaving active duty, and before joining DOJ, Mr. Padden served as a civilian attorney in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, where he continued his service as an EDVA SAUSA on detailed assignment from DOD.

Mr. Padden served on active duty as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Marine Corps for over twelve years. His military service included deployments with infantry battalions to Lebanon, Okinawa, the Philippines, and Japan. After his service with the Fleet Marine Forces, he attended law school while on active duty. He served one tour as a military prosecutor at Marine Corps Base Quantico, serving as a trial counsel, Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, and the base Military Justice Officer.

Mr. Padden earned a B.S. from the U.S. Naval Academy and a J.D. from the University of Notre Dame Law School.

Mr. Padden retired from federal service on September 30, 2025, after more than 47 years of combined military and civil service.