



PacificMUN 2017

United Nations
Security Council
(UNSC)

Backgrounder Guide
Topic: The War on Drugs



PacificMUN 2017

Dare to Speak | February 24-26 2017

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Dear Delegates,

On behalf of Kevin and me, we would like to invite you to join us in the United Nations Security Council for PacificMUN 2017.

My name is Julian Lam and I am a grade 11 student at Southpointe Academy. MUN has always been an outlet that has enabled me to be a globally minded individual and has posed as a means to meet individuals from around the world. To be a part of a place where delegates meet to converse, develop solutions to various global problems and to meet the future leaders of tomorrow; it's inspiring. Outside of MUN, I enjoy playing tennis, debate and photography.

The primary function of the UNSC is to maintain the peace and security of the international community. This Council combats impending threats to the well being of the international community and deals with various acts of aggression. Being one of the more advanced committees, we expect a higher level of debate and we hope to have productive committee sessions. We encourage delegates to research extensively on the topic and ensure that they have an in-depth understanding of their country's stance on the issue.

We must remind delegates that they should be flexible in collaboration to attain solutions; however, delegates must ensure that they remain within the blocs that revolve around the established topic. As a crisis committee, delegates must be prepared for unforeseen changes within the political landscape regarding the issue. This will be challenging, however, reiterating that having a firm grasp and command of facts in relation to the issue will be pivotal to your success.

That being said, Kevin and I believe that this will be an excellent committee featuring a high level of debate among delegates. I am looking forward to meeting you all and having a great PacificMUN 2017!

Best Regards,

Julian Lam
UNSC Director



PacificMUN 2017

Committee Overview

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the most prominent of six principal organs that are tasked with maintaining international peace and security. As defined by the UN charter, the role of the UN in ensuring the collective security of nations, mandates the UNSC to recommend peaceful procedures to settle disputes between various parties, but also, allows the Council to reserve the power to call for military intervention through the passing of resolutions¹. As a result to the catastrophic loss of life from World War I, the Paris Conference established the League of Nations to maintain and ensure peace between nations. This group would later serve as the foundation for the creation of the UNSC in 1945, as an executive branch within the U.N².

With the ratification of the UNSC within the UN charter, the Council is mandated with investigating disputes and recommending methods to outline terms of settlement to ensure international peace. As such, this Council has the ability to call upon nations to completely interrupt economic relations and communication channels between one another. Having the ability to deploy U.N peacekeeping forces, this committee also has the ability to enforce various decisions militarily. The UNSC is also the only Council with the ability to create binding resolutions within the U.N³.

The Council is comprised of fifteen member states with five permanent members and ten elected members. The five permanent members are: the United States, the Russian Federation, China, France and the United Kingdom. These states reserve the right to veto resolutions. The Council's ten elected members serve two-year terms and do not hold the right to veto. These non-permanent members are elected by a two-thirds vote within the general assembly and are rendered eligible for candidacy if they contribute to the "maintenance of international security"⁴. Various subsidiary organs also aid the UNSC in carrying out its mission such as, various ad hoc committees on counter-terrorism, biological warfare, chemical weapons etc. Within the UN secretariat, there are also various departments that oversee on-the-ground operations that act as secondary organisations to the UNSC⁵.

Being the executive committee within the United Nations, the UNSC has the responsibility to preliminarily recommend peaceful solution to solve crisis, however, they set forth the precedent for which the UN will intend to maintain security of nations.

¹ <http://www.un.org/en/sc/>

² <http://www.unfoundation.org/>

³ <http://www.cfr.org/>

⁴ <https://www.globalpolicy.org>

⁵ <https://www.britannica.com>



The War on Drugs involves the campaign regarding the prohibition, governmental intervention and military prevention of the illegal drugs trade. Psychoactive drugs are chemical substances that alter brain function and lead to changes in mood, awareness and consciousness⁶. These substances are the predominant source for domestic legislation and international treaties that prevent the unauthorised and unlicensed selling of such substances. Within some instances, these psycho-pharmaceuticals have shown to be used for medical and therapeutical utility, however, many are considered illegal under the Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs created by the U.N in 1961⁷. Treaties created before 1961 primarily featured opium, cocoa, morphine, heroin and cocaine. The 'Single Convention' adopted in 1961, merged and codified these treaties by creating a multilateral convention to serve as the precedence for future treaties. The convention itself sets out clear international regulation regarding possession, use, distribution, import, export and manufacture psychotropic substances⁸. This convention also laid out that the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) was to regulate substance production, trade and legal dispensation. During the 1970s, the war on drugs was primarily centred on two fundamental pillars of eradication and interdiction. However, these policies have lead to corruption, mass incarceration, violence within Latin America and Asia as well as systematic human rights abuses around the world.

During the 1960s, drug use began to increase within western developed nations. Within the United States, the use of hallucinogens as well as various stimulants began to significantly increase, however, law enforcement lacked the adequate domestic legislation to arrest the individuals based on the type of substance itself⁹. With the counterculture movement, drug use began to increase exponentially grow within the U.S leading to the UN to take further action. During 1968, the United Nations Economic and Social Council passed a treaty calling for nations to use hallucinogens solely for scientific and medical purposes and subsequently imposed restrictions on imports and exports of such substances¹⁰. However, the Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs presented very rigid policies and definitions directed towards certain types of substances, and therefore, precluded amendment to be presented to the convention based on changing circumstances¹¹. This lead to the adoption of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances in 1971 by the U.N and broadened the scope of illegal drugs to

⁶ <http://www.who.int/>

⁷ www.unodc.org

⁸ <https://www.incb.or>

⁹ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21858961>

¹⁰ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0005/000589/058953eo.pdf>

¹¹ https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1971_en.pdf



hallucinogens. Not only were international treaties adopted, but domestic legislation was enforced in attempts to crack down on narcotics trafficking and substance abuse.

The 1961 convention took a more prohibitive approach that intended to utilise law enforcement and the military to suppress production and supply of drugs. This treaty prompted various governments to adopt harsher punitive approaches, and therefore, lead to mass incarceration and casualties¹². Governments primarily directed money towards criminal justice and interdiction policies intending to suppress drug demand and trafficking, however, fewer funds were allocated to educational strategies to combat drug use¹³. By prohibiting this commodity, the large demand for psychotropics inevitably generates profit for a parallel economy that takes advantage of this increase in demand¹⁴.

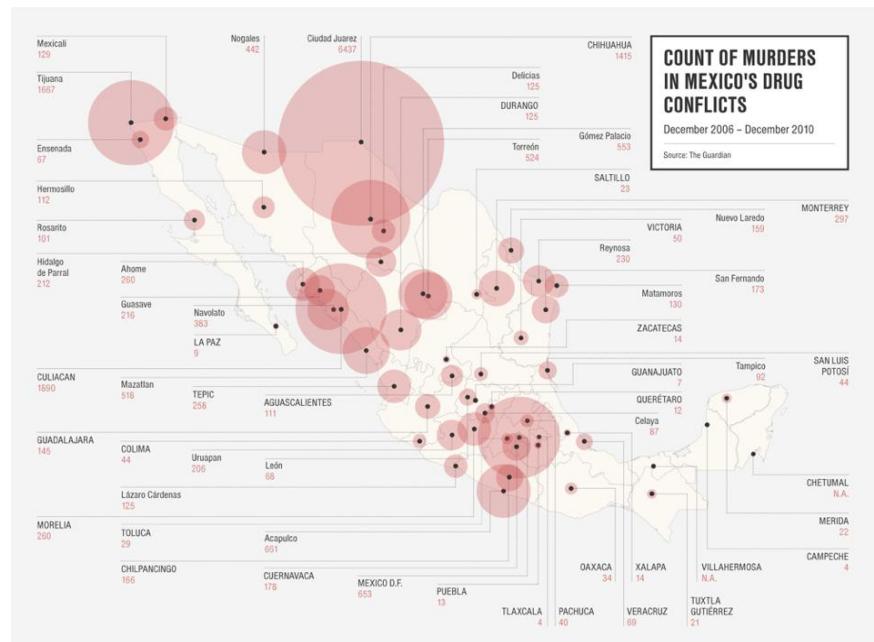
Conflict and Violence

With the absence of formal market regulation, the lucrative drug trade is controlled by criminal entrepreneurs employing violence as a means of a regulatory tool. Various cartels and criminal operations often equip private armed groups and militias, and often outgun law enforcement.

Criminal networks can merge with various separatist groups or terrorist organisations in financing their operations¹⁵.

Drug rings and traffickers normally target transit areas that have poor socio-economic structure or governance.

Therefore, this leads to these operations to target fragile states as well as remote geographic regions to carry out their operations.



A map of casualties as a result of conflicts related to drugs in Mexico

¹² http://www.countthecosts.org/sites/default/files/Development_and_security_briefing.pdf

¹³ http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/themes/gcdp_v1/pdf/Global_Commission_Report_English.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/LSE-IDEAS-DRUGS-REPORT-FINAL-WEB.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/WindleThailand-final.pdf>

A prominent example can be found in Thailand during the government's proclaimed 'war on drugs' in 2003. 2,819 people were killed during the state's intervention within the illegal drug trade, which saw criminal backed forces fighting against government forces to ensure regulation of the parallel-drug fueled economy¹⁶. Having a long history of internal violence and being the transit route between Latin America and the United States, violence in Mexico has increased greatly since 2006. Violence against the government as well as violence among criminal operations led to the deaths of more than 36,000 individuals since 2006, with 1300 being children and 4000 being women.

Undermining Governance Through Corruption

Within affected countries, the huge criminal market has corrupted institutions and individuals at every level. As a result of the large amount of monetary funds at criminal organisations' disposal, they can easily manipulate individuals in power to further their operations or they can threaten individuals with power to take bribes¹⁷. Capital markets cannot absorb such funds from these organisations before quickly becoming dependant on them. Members of the domestic judiciary or legislature can be easily "bought out" by criminal entrepreneurs and their criminal organisations. From the 1970s, the centre for cocaine trafficking and trade has been Colombia¹⁸. Mass amount of profits gained by cartels and drug operations have fueled conflict between the government and armed guerrilla movements within the country. Human rights abuses and the armed conflict itself has displaced more than 4.9 million people by 2010.

Corruption is pervasive in nature, and is subsequently exacerbated by how various individuals and states are vulnerable. Criminal operations exploit this vulnerability to assert legitimate control over their illicit economy. These economies not only undermine governance, but also, undermine cities and their various industries. This prevents various states from progressing forward and places them within the perpetual cycle that is the drug trade. In a report published by Transparency International in 2011, the world's primary producers of opium (Afghanistan and Myanmar) have the most corrupt public sectors¹⁹. In Mexico, a study carried out in 1998 indicated that traffickers offered upward of \$500 million dollars in bribes for that year itself²⁰.

¹⁶ https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Illlicit_financial_flows_2011_web.pdf

¹⁷ <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/pdf/266.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://www.countthecosts.org/sites/default/files/Crime-briefing.pdf>

¹⁹ https://www.unodc.org/documents/frontpage/Corruption_in_Afghanistan_FINAL.pdf

²⁰ Peter Andreas, "The political economy of narco-corruption in Mexico," *Current History*, 97, 1998



1912	International Opium Convention is signed at the Hague and features the first internationally recognised treaty on drug control. Due to increasing pressure regarding the Opium trade, 13 nations developed regulations on the manufacturing, selling, trading, distributing, and exporting of Opium, Cocaine and Morphine. The primary intention of this treaty was to develop import restriction as opposed to a prohibition on cultivation of such substances for the intent of distribution and trade ²¹ .
1914	The Harrison Narcotics Tax Act was introduced as a United States federal law that featured the regulation and taxation of distribution, export and import of opiates and coca substances. Before this act was introduced by the senate, narcotics were still readily available and were used in various drinks and medicines in the U.S. The primary drivers behind this piece of legislation were medical and pharmaceutical associations and organisations that intended to impose more regulatory measures to control narcotics distribution. Intending to protect their constitutional rights of being able to prescribe medication to individuals, doctors and physicians welcomed the legislation ²² .
1916	Defence of the Realm Act is introduced within Britain which is conceived under the pretense that it constitutes "emergency wartime legislation". The possession, distribution, exportation and importation of cocaine and opium were subject to tighter regulatory measures ²³ . These laws were implemented by the Home Office as control on the drugs trade instead of the Privy Council Office under the context of a "national emergency". This legislation then overruled any parliamentary debate. Similarly to the United States, Britain enacted this legislation based on an anti-narcotics posture that had developed over the course of preceding decades.
1920	Britain passes the Dangerous Goods Act which represents its first formal drug legislation. This piece of legislation puts Britain in line under the International Opium Convention. This act places strict restriction on the importation and smoking of Opium in particular and took upon harsher punitive approaches regarding possession, supply and manufacture of morphine and heroin.

²¹ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/the-1912-hague-international-opium-convention.html>

²² <http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/library/studies/cu/cu8.html>

²³ http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/4_defence_of_the_realm.pdf



1931	International convention is introduced regarding a legal requirement for nations to present detailed statistics regarding their drugs consumption. This convention also considers of the exportation, importation and manufacture of various substances. This was known as the: <i>1931 Geneva Narcotics Manufacturing and Distribution Limitation Convention</i> ²⁴ .
1960s	With a shifting social context, drugs become a prominent and sometimes integral part of youth culture around the world and especially within western nations. This transitional period represents a shift in modern drug use as well as various policies governments and nations choose to adopt as part of their international and domestic policies. This time period marks an era for social change and presents drugs as being an imperative part of the movement.
1961	The UN introduces the Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs and creates a treaty that combines and consolidates passed legislation on drug control. This convention itself codifies nine multilateral treaties negotiated from 1912 to 1953. This renews and reforms passed legislation and is binding to all signatory states to bring domestic law in adherence to the established convention ²⁵ .
1971	The president of the United States Richard Nixon declares a full-out policy named the "War on Drugs". This policy sees the U.S adopting a full paradigm shift in adopting a much more aggressive punitive approach. This policy primarily revolves around the pillars of incarceration, interdiction and eradication as the three fronts to tackle drug use, which was stated as: "Public Enemy Number One"
1971	The United Nations introduces the Convention on Psychotropic Substances. This Treaty further defines various psychoactive substances and increases the control of international bodies on amphetamines, depressants, barbiturates and hallucinogens ²⁶ . These substances are categorised and codified based on their effects, extent of use and potential perceived therapeutic value.

²⁴ <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust00003-0001.pdf>

²⁵ https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1961_en.pdf

²⁶ https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1971_en.pdf



1980s	AIDS or Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) becomes increasingly prevalent within western nations and especially with intravenous drug users. Stigma towards groups that have the disease from the general population grows, and therefore, begins to serve as the cause for developmental drug treatment philosophies known as harm reduction/minimization. This leads to the development of various clinics and clean needle centres that begin to show lower transmission rates of blood borne viruses.
1988	Ecstasy (MDMA) begins to become a predominately used drug within youth culture and begin to show high rates of intake within Britain and the United States. During the "Second Summer of Love" within the U.K, which saw the eutrophic outbreak of MDMA usage, drug usage within parties began to grow significantly.
1988	The United Nations introduces the Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotics And Psychotropic Substances also known as the Vienna Convention. This treaty intended to combine various nations' law enforcement powers in an attempt to control trafficking through more of a unilateral standpoint. The treaty also encouraged various nations to strengthen various punitive approaches within their own domestic legislation ²⁷ . The treaty also encouraged approaches to combat money laundering by allowing nations to call for the freezing and forfeiture of assets.
1998	The U.N takes on a much more significant role to restrict the production and use of illegal drugs, and with a goal to carry out an extensive multilateral scheme to be achieved by 2008. At the U.N. General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS 1998), delegates reaffirmed the need to develop an extensive paradigm to tackle the illicit drug trade and outlined a 10 year time frame to do so ²⁸ .
2001	Portugal becomes the first country to decriminalise all drugs. This act allows Portugal to become the first nation shifting their entire policy on drugs towards harm reduction instead of adopting harsher punitive approaches. Positive changes observed demonstrated less predominance of HIV in formerly heavily infected zones as well as trafficking within the state ²⁹ .

²⁷ https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1988_en.pdf

²⁸ <https://www.tni.org/en/article/unwritten-history-1998-united-nations-general-assembly-special-session-drugs>

²⁹ https://www.drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/DPA_Fact_Sheet_Portugal_Decriminalization_Feb2015.pdf



2002	The Home Affairs Select Committee Report is published in the U.K and calls for Government to collaborate with the Commission in Narcotics Drugs to develop innovative and alternative ways to address the illicit drug trade through convention and legislation.
2003	UNGASS reconvene to review their project at its halfway point. Progress has been made, however, domestic legislation have not been applied within respective nations to their fullest extent. Research and application of harm reduction practices have been put into place, which has lead to calls for decriminalisation by various nations.
2005	The WHO Framework on Tobacco control comes into effect to attempt to control and target the illegal tobacco trade. An experimental framework with ambitious goals, the WHO intends to take on the illicit tobacco trade.
2005	Various NGOs publish independent reports regarding the 'failures' of the prohibition and various governmental policies that have been enforced regarding the illicit trade of psychotropics. These independent reports present fallacies regarding country's international commitments and domestic application, and therefore, highlight the lack of a unilateral approach.
2006	The World Drug Report is published and raises the special topic of cannabis. The report itself implies discrepancies between various nations' policies in what the substance is classified as and how domestic legislation is enforced to combat its trafficking. This particular subject matter is intended to demonstrate the need for more of a unilateral approach in combating drugs by all nations.
2006	Mexican President Felipe Calderon launches his own war on drugs, and primarily attempts to target drug trafficking rings and cartels. This will spell the beginning of an indirect civil war in which many civilians will fall victim to ³⁰ .

³⁰ <http://www.cfr.org/mexico/mexicos-drug-war/p13689>



2007	The European Council (EC) adopts a drug control policy, intending to improve general public health. Being primarily a demonstration of attitude shift against drug use and the illicit drugs trade. Instead of a harsher punitive stance, the EC intends to demonstrate a paradigm shift to more of a public health based approach ³¹ .
2008	The United Nations publishes its annual drug report and publicly acknowledges the negative outcomes of the war on drugs.
2008	The Mérida Initiative is launched and involves an agreement between the governments of the United States, Mexico and Central America. This plan involves cooperation between various nations to combat the illicit trade of psychotropics, transnational crime and money laundering ³² .
2008	The U.N meet in Vienna to discuss progress made on the goals set out in the Special Session on Drugs in 1998. Nations believe that they have achieved significant progress in ratifying major problems regarding the illicit drugs trade, and subsequently, addressing them unilaterally. New approaches in harm reduction have proven fairly successful, and therefore, domestic legislation has begun to be tabled within various states to enact such policies.
2010	The Czech Republic decriminalizes all drugs and becomes the second country in Europe to do so. Personal use no longer mandates a criminal sentence ³³ .
2011	Global Commission on drug Policy report is published, and calls for the Decriminalise drug possession and experiment with new drug legislation to be enforced on a domestic basis. Promoted by numerous prominent politicians and social advocates, this new policy advocates for the use of humane and scientifically based approaches to combat the illicit drug trade.
2013	The Organisation of American States (OAS) launches a report outlining positive scenarios for future drug regulatory measures through an intergovernmental approach.

³¹http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/drug-control/ic/index_en.htm

³² <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/merida/>

³³ http://www.antoniocasella.eu/archila/Alliance_feb2013.pdf



The formal introduction of the “War on Drugs” is a fairly modern policy that revolves around prohibitive stances taken by governments against the illicit drugs trade. Similar prohibitive ideologies have been used in various cultures historically. Religious based beliefs have traditionally denounced the use of various prohibitive substances and have served as a platform for prominent religious bodies to enact and enforce various punitive approaches. A notable example can be found within Islamic culture regarding the prohibition of various intoxicants³⁴. Passages within the Qur'an deplore the use of alcohol and various substances. This religious text guides Islamic law (Sharia law) and historically served as a basis for various prominent figures to denounce the use of such substances and to employ various policies to prevent further use during the 7th century. Religious intolerance was also the basis for a cannabis prohibition during the 15 century in Europe, and therefore, fueled the persecution of heretics that used various medical and hallucinogenic herbs. The use of various medicinal plants within South America and Mesoamerica were deplored by the church as works of the devil³⁵.

During the Qing dynasty in imperial China, opium was heavily used within the southern part of the country. Being imported by the British East India Company (BEIC), the Chinese government used the trade as a means to open its traditionally isolated country to western nations and to foreign trade. However with widespread addiction, socio-economic conditions began to deteriorate as a direct result of this. This lead the government to attempt to end the trade in the late 1830s, and retaliation, Britain declared war against the Chinese which became known as the First Opium War³⁶.

During the late 19th century, the United States began to introduce prohibitive legislation aimed towards controlling the usage of various psychotropic substances. Laws regarding opium usage bans as well as increasing punitive approaches towards opium trafficking were adopted. Cocaine was banned in the United States during the early 20th century and deplored its usage by associating cocaine with the African-American populace.

Traditional Principles

Interdiction

Traditionally, exercising the use of prohibitions and restrictions towards various substances has been a commonality between various authoritative bodies for the past century. Focusing on targeting smuggling and underground operations, international governments have aimed to reduce the movement of these substances by introducing domestic and federal legislation that focuses on seizures. This practice has been the primary mindset of the U.S government in targeting various drug trafficking operations; however, critics argue that these criminals have been able to circumvent such actions. Interdiction follows three fundamental principles of detection and sorting, monitoring and pursuit and apprehension. Often governments have intended to step up interdiction practices along

³⁴ <http://www.substance.com/intoxicants-in-the-islamic-world-a-rich-and-telling-history/17818/>

³⁵ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3202501/>

³⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Opium-Wars>



various routes known for smuggling as well as imposed restrictions on various substances and facilities individuals can utilise to produce various psychotropics.

The United States government has made interdiction an integral part of their policy to control the supply of drugs coming into the country. This policy has involved both federal agencies and the military in seizing large quantities of drugs as well as exchanging intelligence regarding various operations. The primary goals of their interdiction policy was to decrease demand for drugs by making it more difficult to facilitate the movement of substances by smugglers, and therefore, increasing the risk and monetary investment for these illicit businesses. The intention fundamentally of the American government is to increase the risk for smugglers to transport drugs, and thus, increase the probability of arresting the courier. Interdiction policies can vary however, based on the type of substance. Heroin for example, has fewer restrictions and authoritative prohibitions due to it being usually transported through conventional cargo or by individuals themselves. Routine inspections of shipments and individuals are the primary means of heroin seizure³⁷.

Eradication

The eradication of various illicit drugs has intensified over the past preceding decades and has involved the use of more complex chemical and biological agents to do so. Localised targeting has shown to reduce production for various amounts of time, however, have primarily displaced production sites. Aerial eradication is primarily used to control the growth of various illicit substances; however, this comes at the cost of impacting human health, the environment and various cultures³⁸. Various governments have used eradication in attempts to disrupt drug production and the market for the illicit substance. This practice is aimed at reducing supply effectively and efficiently.

Extensive crop eradication programmes within South East Asia, Afghanistan and Colombia have been carried out for several decades intending to target cannabis, coca and opium production. Globally supplying 90% of illicit opium, Afghanistan has been subject to widespread eradication programmes as initiated by the coalition invasion in 2001. In July 2000, Mullah Mohammed Omar (leader of the Taliban) advocated for poppy eradication and formally declared that the use of Opium was un-Islamic. The United Nations also ran an anti-heroin production campaign within Afghanistan during the same year, and therefore, led to an extremely successful campaign³⁹. However with the deposition of the Taliban, this victory was short lived as the Taliban solely enforced anti-opium “law” within their controlled areas.

³⁷ <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/focus/counternarcotics/eradication/>

³⁸ <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/61022.pdf>

³⁹ <http://www.understandingwar.org/narcotics>



Modern Principles

Harm Reduction

This modern practice utilises fundamental strategies associated with reducing the negative and harmful effects of drug use in educating individuals and communities about illicit substances. Being a highly contentious topic, this modern practice appears to thwart past efforts to control drug use and according to the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse (CCSA) has; “polarized groups with a common goal”. This concept involves the direct confrontation of two opposing philosophies that intend to accomplish the same outcome. The term “harm reduction” specifically refers to any policy intended to decrease the social and health effects concomitantly associated with drug use. The primary concept that underpins this type of policy is that individuals do not have to discontinue their usage of drugs, so long that various bodies intervene to prevent adverse effects on health and social outcomes.

This type of policy asserts that individuals are unable to abstain from using various illicit substances, and hence, governments can provide them with safer options to circumvent the potentiality of overdose, infection and spread of communicable diseases. Harm reduction involves a policy in which authoritative bodies are taking an approach to minimize damage caused by drug users on themselves. However, those who follow a ‘zero tolerance’ approach believe that harm reduction encourages further use of illicit substances and veils support for the decriminalisation of various psychotropic substances. This type of approach is thought to be more pragmatic and concedes the realities of illicit substance use. Also, this type of approach does not present a moral judgement to be made in which authoritative bodies deplore substance abuse and those who are practicing such acts⁴⁰.

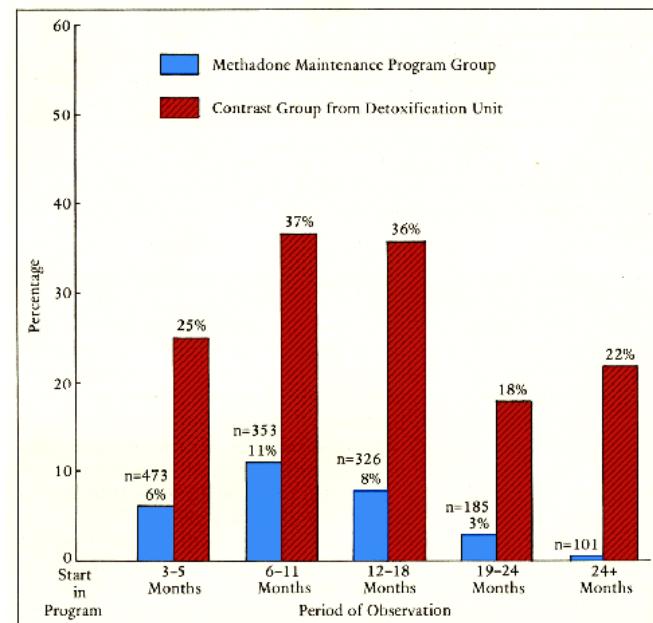
A prominent example of harm reduction in practice is needle exchange programs. This involves the provision of sanitary facilities for individuals to inject drugs, as well as clean syringes do so. Non-sterile syringes pose a danger in the spread of blood-borne pathogens, STDs and various infections. Canada has a multitude of needle exchange programs, however, there are various restrictions based on province in regards to operational formats. There are multiple clinics and pharmacies that distribute syringes as well as host facilities for individuals to take various substances. These programs have shown to reduce high-risk injection practices, lending and borrowing of syringes as well as re-use. “Methadone Maintenance” is another practice used by various governments in which oral methadone is used as a substitute for illegal injectable opiates. This provides a means for individuals to develop more of stable lifestyle in which personal and social resources can be developed to

⁴⁰ <http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/ccsa0115302008e.pdf>



be free from injectable opiates⁴¹. With this, detoxification programs are providing the necessary economic and social support to substance users and “motivates” drug users to become abstinent. Methadone maintenance therapy has proven to be a beneficial means to decrease opioid dependence. Therefore, this has lead to decreases in various drug-related offences, reduced transmission and reduced risk behaviour. Drug substitution is also a beneficial practice carried out by various governing bodies, in which legal substances are provided as a “substitute” for various illegal drugs. This paradigm is intended to control dosage and quality of substances, and provide users with adequate health and social services.

Pharmaceutical heroin has been provided in the U.K and Canada for multiple years. Harm reduction practices have been widely used for multiple types of chronic diseases, and have been used to suppress the likelihood of secondary diseases as well⁴².



Economic Situation

On average, prohibitionist drug control systems have cost an annual amount of \$100 billion dollars per annum. The trade of illicit substances has grown significantly over preceding decades and is estimated to turn over more than \$330 billion dollars per year. In 2005, experts estimated that the global drug trade was worth \$439 billion dollars based on the production level, wholesale level and retail level. Profits earned by various illicit and criminal operations have enabled them to undermine institutional authority and various governance systems. Within many developed and underdeveloped nations, parallel economies have formed and in many instances, many nations have begun to become heavily reliant on their illicit economy. With the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs, critics have asserted that the U.N has unintentionally created two parallel markets for legal and non-legal substances⁴³.

Various governments have implemented austerity measures in which more funding has been allocated to drug enforcement policies in contrast to other public expenditures. Also as a

⁴¹ <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/adp-apd/methadone-treatment-traitement/index-eng.php>

⁴² <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/ioppn/about/difference/19-Pharmaceutical-heroin-Treating-chronic-addiction.aspx>

⁴³ http://www.countthecosts.org/sites/default/files/Development_and_security_briefing.pdf



result of mass incarceration practices, governments have had to allocate larger amounts of monetary funds to upkeep various facilities. As an example, drug related incarceration has significantly increased within the United States, and hence, the ONDCP has estimated at approximate loss of \$40 billion dollars annually based on the population incarcerated.

Various researchers believe that legalisation of various substances with government taxation and regulation could yield large profits and savings. However, this would involve various governments to adopt more of a “harm reductive” stance in regards to various illicit substances. Jeffrey Miron (a Harvard economist) created a speculative report that the legalisation of illicit substances within the U.S, would allow the government to reap tens of billions of dollars in savings⁴⁴.

Drug Law Enforcement Expenditure

Over the last 40 years, the United States’ drug department had estimated drug enforcement expenditure to be a \$1 trillion dollars. An estimated \$15 billion dollars is spent annually by the federal department, in which 35% of funds go to treatment and prevention while 50% goes to interdiction and eradication (this amount does not include costs in regards to incarceration)⁴⁵.

Annual government expenditure for drug enforcement in the United Kingdom is estimated to be £1.1 billion. Funds are primarily directed towards treatment and around £300 million is spent on intervention and interdiction practices. In regards to looking at drug relation to the total government reactive expenditure in, staticians believe that this would cost around £3.355 billion.

In 2010, it is estimated that the Mexican government spend around \$9 billion on their “war on drugs” campaign. However, this does not involve the intervention costs by the United States and drug related incarceration expenses. Being a predominantly used transit route for various drug trafficking operations, Mexico has intended to heavily invest in their punitive approaches and policy enforcement programs.

During 2002 and 2003, Australia has spent \$1.3 billion dollars on “proactive expenditure”, in which funds were primarily allocated to enforcement and prevention and fewer funds to treatment and harm reduction. \$1.9 billion dollars was spent on consequences of drug

⁴⁴ <http://www.countthecosts.org/sites/default/files/Economics-briefing.pdf>

⁴⁵ <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/jmd/legacy/2014/08/03/fy12-dea-justification.pdf>



related offences, which would primarily deal with rising incarceration levels as result of drug policy enforcement⁴⁶.

Dynamics of an Illicit Market

Based on the primary principles that are driving market forces, supply and demand are the two forces that move the illicit market for narcotics forward within the modern day and age. Governments have utilised strategies of eradication and interdiction to attempt to eliminate supply, and henceforth, reduce demand, however, with the market for illicit substances, demand is an un-fluctuating force that remains more or less a constant. By targeting various transit routes and areas of production. With stricter policies employed by governments, the price of drugs simply inflates as it moves through the various transit routes to the intended destination. As an example, drugs produced in Colombia can make its way through Nicaragua, Mexico and then into the United States. Over the years, large cartel monopolies have begun to break up into small and flexible criminal enterprises.

Money flowing towards various operations is based on the provision of monetary funds by users. Understanding that this market has far reaching illicit foundations, the money that is used for users to pay for their drugs often is illegally procured. Therefore, acquisitive crime costs have grown significantly, and as such, are costing governments billions of dollars to enforce preventative measures. Traditionally, illicit markets functioned on the primary basis of large scale criminal operations that provided an end product to the user, and as consequence, monetary funds from users fueled the market⁴⁷. However, many critics and analysts argue that various governments' interdiction and prohibition policies have broken large operations into a multitude of smaller operations that cannot be eliminated. They then assert the 'War on Drugs' to be a failure, and hence, has worked counter intuitively by allowing the illicit market to evolve and grow.

Undermining Legitimate Economies

The use of bribery by mass criminal operations has caused corruption to become a driving force undermining the progress of many nations' economies. Criminal operations and cartels utilise funds to further their interests and expand their various businesses by fueling funds towards various government officials. Corruption is pervasive in nature and is visible at all levels of institution. Police, judiciary and politics are all targeted by criminal operations and often weak governmental institutions situated in low socio-economic zones are particularly

⁴⁶ http://www.countthecosts.org/sites/default/files/Development_and_security_briefing.pdf

⁴⁷ <http://home.sandiego.edu/~kaufmann/hnrs325/Colombia.pdf>



vulnerable to these types of groups. Money laundering is also widely used by criminal operations in hiding large profits from the police and various authoritative bodies⁴⁸.

By disguising the illegitimate origins of money, criminal operations place money into financial systems, reinvest it and then move it between various jurisdictions. With use of “front companies”, tax havens, internet gambling, international money transfer services etc., illicit operations have taken many steps to essentially “clean” “dirty” money. Funds can also be laundered within legitimate financial institutions, in which various banks have and have not been aware of such malpractices. Various analysts assert that laundering may have been a driving force behind the 2008 economic crisis. Critics believe that many banks found money from the drugs trade to be the only “liquid investment capital” during the crisis to form inter-bank loans.

Transit Routes

Latin America

Latin America has been the primary producer of illicit substances that are exported to the North America. Colombia, Peru and Bolivia constitute the largest cocaine exporters to the United States and 60 to 65 percent of all cocaine manufactured within Latin America is trafficked to the U.S. 40 to 45 percent of the remainder is transferred to the Caribbean island chain to be exported abroad. Within Colombia, the principal narco player is the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or FARC). This organisation is involved in multiple aspects of the drug trade from production, to trafficking. Earning \$200 million to \$300 million USD a year in illicit activities, the FARC has used the insurgent war against the Bogotá government as a front. Other major players include the Bandas Criminales emergentes (BACRIM) that are various criminal groups and gangs that take part within the drug trade in Colombia. A notable player is the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, or ELN) that primarily focuses their efforts on the north pacific coast. The groups that take part in this trade are primarily guerilla factions, stemmed from political movements for progressive ideologies that have traditionally required sources of funding⁴⁹.

In Bolivia and Peru, drug operations are primarily controlled by amorphous groups that are largely dispersed geographically. Focusing on production, these groups have been traditionally involved in the cultivation aspects of the illicit drug trade, and hence, refining generally takes place within Argentina and Brazil. Various criminal organisations within

⁴⁸ https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Illlicit_financial_flows_2011_web.pdf

⁴⁹ http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2011/RAND_MG1076.pdf

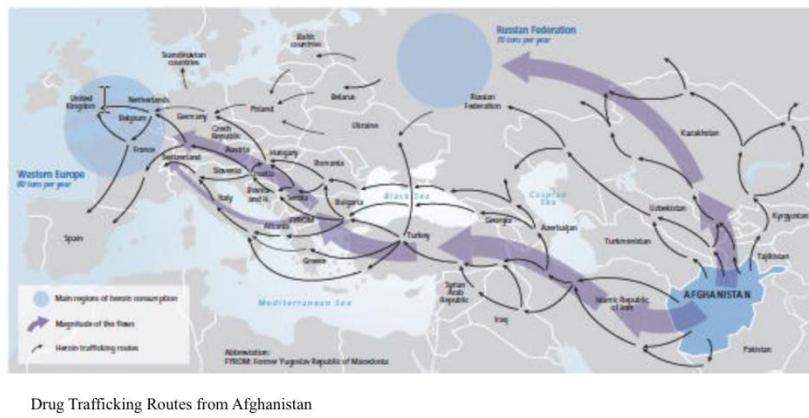


Mexico plays a critical role within the Latin America's drug trade. Being the transit route into the United States via South America, Mexican drug cartels play a critical role in the movement of illicit substances into the United States itself. It is believed that these groups yield billions of dollars in revenue through their illegal operations. There are currently seven primary cartels that operate within the region with two main competing blocs⁵⁰.

Europe

Balkan routes as well as various routes from West Africa, play vital roles in the transportation of illicit substances into Europe. The Balkan routes in particular involve the movement of opium from Afghanistan through the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. This particular

market is estimated to be worth \$20 billion dollars. Illicit substances trafficked from Asia generally follow south eastern European routes. Analysts believe that high corruption rates are resulting indicators that demonstrate how illicit operations are intending to target particularly vulnerable states⁵¹. Publications from organisations such as SELEC and Frontex, have submitted reports analyzing how South Eastern Europe is being used as a transit route into Western Europe from the Middle East and Asia.



Mass drug trafficking networks have been formed all across Europe, with many countries traditionally adopting principles of interdiction and eradication. However in recent times, countries like the Czech Republic and Portugal have employed more "harm reductive" policies by decriminalising illicit substances and setting up treatment clinics.

⁵⁰ https://www.wola.org/sites/default/files/downloadable/Drug%20Policy/past/ddhr_exec_sum_brief.pdf

⁵¹ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2015/November/drug-money-and-opiate-trafficking-on-the-balkan-route--focus-of-new-unodc-report.html>

The United Nations has played a fairly significant role in controlling the trafficking of illicit substances and has aided with establishment of treaties and conventions to combat this. The UN helped to create the first formal international legislation on illicit substances (Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs created by the U.N in 1961), which has served as the precedent document to further international treaties. Later the United Nations introduced the Convention on Psychotropic Substances in 1971, which furthered the definition of psychotropic substances that were considered illegal under international convention. With continual efforts to control transnational drug trafficking, the United Nations established the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 1997. With this, more specialised reports were produced by the commission providing key analysis on efforts to circumvent the movement of illicit substances internationally. In 1998, the UN convened at the General Assembly Special Session on Drugs to set out plans to make significant progress regarding eliminating the illicit drug market for the following decade⁵².

With further international efforts, the United Nations had served as a means for international dialogue to discuss the efficiency of various domestic and international policies held by various nations. Due to the topic of drug trafficking being primarily centralised around the enforcement of domestic policy and legislation, international treaties hold the burden of a binding obligation to enact such convention. By the creation of binding convention, variance and polarisation of drug policy enforcement can be prevented, and therefore, a more consistent coherent plan can be employed internationally. As such, the controversial practice of harm reduction has not been formally introduced within international convention, due to its prospect of forcing the adoption of an entirely new approach. This would involve an entire paradigm shift that is based on fairly recent scientific research. The Russian delegation currently believe that international drug trafficking is an international security concern, and therefore, recently becomes a topic of debate in the United Nations Security Council.

⁵² <http://idpc.net/policy-advocacy/the-un-general-assembly-special-session-on-drugs-ungass-2016>



Considering developing viable solutions to combat the illicit drugs trade, one must understand the difference between traditional and modern principles that serve as the basis for paradigm shifts. Countries still employ the traditional principles of interdiction and eradication as a means to combat drug trafficking and production. As such, this policy has come under much criticism as it has been attributed to the growth of the illicit markets, systemic human rights violations and the incarceration of thousands of individuals⁵³. By taking more of a prohibitive stance, governments and authoritative bodies have intended to use intervention as a means to combat the drugs trade. Focusing less on treatment and education, governments have tried to eradicate various crop production facilities as well arrest individuals involved with mass criminal operations as part of their “War on drugs” campaign⁵⁴.

With modern approaches to combat the illicit drug market, countries have attempted to decriminalise all drugs and focus primarily on the modern principle of harm reduction. Harm reduction poses as a new innovative strategy that concedes the fact that individuals have drug dependency, and therefore, the market force of “demand” will not falter easily. Approaches taken by Switzerland, Portugal and Canada, have all shown promise as a means of helping individuals to lose their dependency as well as treating the drugs trade as more of a legitimate market in the sense that the government holds a monopoly⁵⁵. Being a highly controversial approach, governments and critics have taken opposing sides regarding adopting optimal approaches to combat the war on drugs. Political motives are also a driving force for various countries to circumvent the addition of harm reduction practices to be added to international treaties as they undermine past and current efforts. As an example, the United States invasion of Afghanistan had one of its primary goals as the eradication of Opium production. Therefore, they had employed the use of eradication of the crops themselves and enlisted the help of various authoritative bodies within the region to help aid with interdiction practices.

With the publication of numerous reports by various organisations internationally, the call to educate and improve treatment practices for drug users has grown. Being viewed as a cultural taboo, various governmental bodies can take the necessary steps to improve the social and economic assistance to substance abusers and to aid communities in harm prevention and reduction. By developing the necessary means to stamp out corruption also will be an integral part of enabling harm reduction practices to be efficient and essentially to move forward with any new paradigm. By ensuring that the governance of legitimate institutions is not undermined, nations can begin to take the necessary steps to remain transparent and employ combative measures against the drugs trade⁵⁶.

⁵³ https://cna-aiic.ca/~media/cna/page-content/pdf-en/harm_reduction_2011_e.pdf

⁵⁴ http://canadianharmreduction.com/sites/default/files/Harm%20Reduction%20in%20Canada_0.pdf

⁵⁵ https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/podat_1.pdf

⁵⁶ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/>

European Union

The EU has taken various prohibitive stances against the illicit drug trade, and has attempted to experiment with new measures regarding harm reduction and treatment. With South Eastern Europe being used as a transit route for illicit substances, the EU has taken preventative measures in attempting to prevent the flow of illicit drugs into Western Europe⁵⁷. The primary objective under the EU Drugs Strategy formulated in 2013, intends to address the availability of illicit drugs and dismantling OCGs. Intelligence sharing and the use of multilateral task forces are seen to be beneficial in combating large scale criminal operations and cross-border drug operations⁵⁸.

Latin America

These nations have formed coalitions between regional governments in attempts to combat the illicit drugs market. Member states of the Central American Integration System (SICA) have developed treaties to combat illicit operations across Latin America and the Caribbean by targeting transit routes and production facilities to complement Central American and Mexican Security Strategy plan. The Santo Domingo Pact or the SICA-UNODC Mechanism has been developed by states within the region to primarily enhance regional and national policies regarding organised crime and drug trafficking, ensuring information exchange between member nations and implementing various UN conventions on organised crime. Within the Latin American bloc, regional cooperation is key in the development of multilateral strategies to combat transnational crime and to prevent the growth of the illicit drugs market⁵⁹.

United States

The U.S has taken strong approaches in their practices of eradication and interdiction. Spearheading major operations within Afghanistan and Latin America, the United States has invested large amounts of monetary funds in combating illegal trafficking operations as well as large scale criminal operations. Traditionally involving itself within many coalitions in Latin America, the U.S has helped provide logistical and military support to aid with the fight against the illicit drugs trade. However, recently the United States president Barack Obama has formally expressed the need to develop more extensive measures to deal with harm treatment and education, which potentially demonstrates the early beginnings of a paradigm shift for the federal government's "war on drugs"⁶⁰.

⁵⁷http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/drug-control/index_en.htm

⁵⁸[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52012XG1229\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52012XG1229(01))

⁵⁹https://www.unodc.org/ropan/en/ResearchandTrendAnalysis/SDPSUM/sdp_sum.html

⁶⁰<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/239560.pdf>



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Discussion Questions

1. How many modern principles of harm reduction and treatment are more beneficial than eradication and interdiction?
2. What ways can international bodies ensure that criminal operations undermine the legitimacy of institutions?
3. To what extent are governmental bodies responsible to obligate themselves to introduce domestic legislation after signing to international convention?
4. How can monetary funds be allocated more resourcefully to prevent mass incarceration?
5. What ways can governments circumvent the movement of illicit substances from their point of origin?
6. What steps should regional coalitions take in combating the movement of illicit drugs?
7. How can governments ensure that financial institutions do not disregard legislation relevant to money laundering?



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