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IS THE DRUG WAR ANOTHER VIETNAM?

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OUTLINE

Over twentyfive years ago the United States committed itself and its military to a war that it could not win given the severe constraints that it imposed and its lack of resolve. If we are not careful, history may repeat itself as the nation embarks on its present War on Drugs.

- I. Defining War
- II. A Mandate and a Charter for the War on Drugs
- III. Defining the Threat
- IV. Our Objectives
- V. Measuring Success
- VI. Limitations
- VII. Command Relationships
- VIII. America's Resolve
- IX. Conclusions and Recommendations

IS THE DRUG WAR ANOTHER VIETNAM?

Is the Drug War another Vietnam? This is a question we must ask ourselves if we are to avoid another costly and divisive entanglement. What is our mandate? Who is the adversary? What are our objectives? How do we measure success? What are the limitations placed on our military? Who is in charge? Do we have the resolve to win? In answering these questions we have found striking similarities between the two. As our military begins its piecemeal involvement in the War on Drugs it is time to reevaluate our position and ask the key question: can we win?

DEFINING WAR

War described in its simplest terms is any struggle in which two or more large groups try to destroy or conquer each other. One of the most quoted theorists on war, Carl Von Clausewitz, describes war as an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfill our will. Throughout the history of mankind wars have been fought for land, wealth, power and security. The causes may be selfish, biased or

even wicked, but the reason stated is usually noble. Wars have always caused great suffering and hardships. Most people hate war. Yet for hundreds of years, war has been going on somewhere in the world nearly continuously. Earthquakes and floods happen to people; people make war themselves. The human toll on lives within the United States in its two hundred years of existence is astronomical. The Civil War alone cost over 530,000 lives.

War in the ordinary sense is a conflict among political groups, especially sovereign states, carried on by armed forces of considerable magnitude for a considerable period of time. However, the nature of war itself is more clearly characterized by the size or enormity of the situation. This to a large measure determines whether an incident will be classified as a war, conflict, or police action. Second, a real war must have longevity. Conflicts classified as war generally have lasted from 3 to 10 years.

War can be initiated by a formal declaration such as President Franklin Roosevelt's declaration of war with Japan. Ultimatums have also been used by heads of state such as President Bush's January 15, 1991 ultimatum to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. There are many ways in which wars can begin, the most common being some type of declaration. With President Reagan's formal declaration of war on drugs

in October 1982 and the subsequent legislation which provided our mandate, our present effort to stem the flow of illegal drugs into this country can indeed be called a war.

WHAT WENT WRONG IN VIETNAM?

Certainly it would be less time consuming to list what went right. Our basic foreign policy was flawed. As a result of ambiguous political and military objectives we saw the commitment of our military to a cause which divided our nation. Many historians have written volumes analyzing our failure to win in Vietnam. Vietnam has become the textbook example of what not to do in waging a war. George Santayana once said, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it." This is no less true today. Unfortunately we have failed to remember the past lessons of Vietnam as we deepen our military involvement in the War on Drugs.

A CHARTER FOR WAR

Although the United States had initiated a drug control strategy as early as 1925 it was not until October 1982 when then President Ronald Reagan declared "War on Drugs" that the country's leadership first began in earnest to view our nation's drug problem as a threat to national security. Since that time a number of pieces of legislation have been

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signed into law. Among these are the National Narcotics Act of 1984 and the Anti Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988.(2:3) In these three pieces of legislation, each progressively more encompassing, we find our "war" mandate.

The National Narcotics Act of 1984 was the first significant legislation passed by Congress to deal with the importation of illegal drugs into the United States. This Act established the Drug Enforcement Policy Board (NDEPB) within the Executive Branch to coordinate the activities of federal agencies involved in the anti drug effort. The NDEPB was to be chaired by the Attorney General, and its membership included the Secretaries of State, Treasury, Defense, Transportation, and Health and Human Services and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. As chairman, the Attorney General would act as the principal advisor to the President on national as well as international anti drug programs and policy.(2:3) Membership on the board was a collateral duty; the need to dedicate a person to oversee the massive drug control effort envisioned would come later.

In 1986 recognizing the drug problem had worsened, Congress enacted the Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1986. Whereas the legislation enacted in 1984 was concerned mainly with the supply side of the drug problem, the Anti Drug Abuse

Act of 1986, for the first time, addressed both supply and demand. This Act provided additional funds and resources to combat the illegal drug trade and enhanced drug abuse prevention and treatment efforts of federal, state, and local agencies.(2:4)

The third and probably most important piece of legislation was signed into law on 18 November 1988. This was the Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1988. This Act, which Created the Office of National Drug Control Policy to replace the NDEPB, for the first time established a position of a Director and two deputies, one for supply and one for demand. Congress recognized the seriousness of the threat that the nation faced concerning its drug control problem. This Act prohibited the Director or his deputies from concurrently holding any other Federal position. Congress had finally established an office whose sole purpose was dealing with the nation's drug problem.

The Director, commonly referred to as the Drug Czar, became the principal advisor to the President and Congress on drug control policies and programs. His responsibilities included the submission of a National Drug Control Strategy to the Congress through the President by 1 February of each year.(2:6) The first of these yearly strategies was submitted to the Congress for approval on 5 September 1989.

This Act, approved by Congress, was tantamount to a declaration of war, and the National Drug Control Strategy provided goals, however unclear, and a strategy for the prosecution of the war. The President, as in the Vietnam War, had taken the first step. He had Congressional approval to wage his war.

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the mandate which President Johnson sought to wage his war and which led us into Vietnam, was open ended and set no time limits nor objectives. The Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1988, the mandate for the war on drugs, however, required the submission of "realistic and measurable" objectives which could be attained in a specified period of time. The National Drug Control Strategy was narrow in scope, and the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was very general, but both charters led to policies of containment rather than elimination, one aimed at the containment of communism and the other on reduction of the drug problem. Neither attempted complete eradication.

THE THREAT

What is the Threat? Can we even define the threat? Some say the threat is "Drug Lords" in Central and South America (Panama, Columbia, Bolivia, Peru, etc.) To others,

the smugglers and dealers in the U.S. are the threat. The threat could also not only be the dealers but the drug itself.

In 1986 President Reagan signed a then secret NSD defining drug trafficking as a threat to national security.(28:5) However, pinpointing who is trafficking in illegal narcotics has been extremely difficult. People enter and leave the smuggling area casually. Determining which ship or aircraft is smuggling narcotics into the U.S. creates a dilemma for law enforcement agencies. Whom do you stop? Coast Guard and law enforcement agencies (i.e. DEA, Customs, police) do not have the resources to stop and inspect every ship and plane entering U.S. territory. Interdiction at the shoreline is impossible, prohibitively expensive and causes very visible problems with innocent civilians. What is the threat? This is a question that today remains unanswered and impacts on our current policy and objectives.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Section 1005 of the Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1988 requires that each National Drug Control Strategy include "comprehensive, researched based long range goals for reducing drug abuse in the United States" and "short term

measurable objectives which the Director determines may be realistically achieved in the 2 year period beginning on the date of the submission of the strategy." The first National Drug Control Strategy submitted on 5 September 1989 established the objectives outlined in Figure 1.(19:93-97) Are these realistic? Are they measurable? Only goal number 6 appears able to be objectively measured. What do they actually mean, and how will we be able to measure success?

MEASURING SUCCESS

As with any war, the public and the politicians want to know if we are winning. What is our success rate? We seem to fall into the trap of statistics (body counts) to determine our success or failure. A measure of effectiveness (MOE) must be established to grade the military's success rate. Limiting our measure of success to seizures and arrests will not give an accurate picture, furthermore these statistics can be tailored to fit the situation.(1:12) Huge seizures such as the 40+ tons of cocaine in California make for great headlines and sound as if the drug war is being won, but by latest accounts only 10% of all illegal narcotics are stopped.(28:10) Without the knowledge of the total drug inflow it is difficult to determine if 40 tons (or 10 or 100) will affect the street price, driving it up demonstrating a significant reduction

FIGURE 1

1. Current Overall Drug Use.

Two Year Objective: a 10% reduction in the number of people reporting any illegal use of drugs in the past month.

Ten Year Objective: a 50% reduction in the number of people reporting any illegal use of drugs in the past month.

2. Current Adolescent Drug Use.

Two Year Objective: a 10% reduction in the number of adolescents reporting illegal use of drugs in the past month.

Ten Year Objective: a 50% reduction in the number of adolescents reporting illegal use of drugs in the past month.

3. Occasional Cocaine Use.

Two Year Objective: a 10% reduction in the number of people reporting less often than once a month cocaine use in the past year.

Ten Year Objective: a 50% reduction in the number of people reporting less often than once a month cocaine use in the past year.

4. Frequent Cocaine Use.

Two Year Objective: a 50% reduce rate on increase in the number of people reporting weekly or more frequent cocaine use.

Ten Year Objective: a 50% reduction in the number of people reporting weekly or more frequent cocaine use.

5. Current Adolescent Cocaine Use.

Two Year Objective: a 20% reduction in the number of adolescents reporting past month cocaine use.

Ten Year Objective: a 50% reduction in the number of

adolescents reporting past month cocaine use.

6. Drug Related Medical Emergencies.

Two Year Objective: a 10% reduction in the number of hospital emergency room mentions for cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and dangerous drugs.

Ten Year Objective: a 50% reduction in the number of hospital emergency room mentions for cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and dangerous drugs.

7. Drug Availability.

Two Year Objective: a 10% reduction in estimated amounts of cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and dangerous drugs entering the United States: and

a 10% reduction in the number of people reporting that cocaine, marijuana, heroin and dangerous drugs are easy to obtain in their communities.

Ten Year Objective: a 50% reduction in estimated amounts of cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and dangerous drugs entering the United States: and

a 50% reduction in the number of people reporting that cocaine, marijuana, heroin and dangerous drugs are easy to obtain in their communities.

8. Domestic Marijuana Production.

Two Year Objective: a 10% decrease in estimated domestic marijuana production.

Ten Year Objective: a 50% decrease in estimated domestic marijuana production.

9. Student Attitudes Toward Drug Use.

Two Year Objective: a 10% reduction in the number of

high school students who report
that they do not disapprove of
illegal drug use.

Ten Year Objective: a 50% reduction in the number of
high school students who report
that they do not disapprove of
illegal drug use.

in supplies of drugs into this country. The number of ships and planes smuggling into the U.S. is minuscule compared to the traffic that flows into the U.S.. The Coast Guard's Pacific Area Intelligence Division (PACAREA Intel) estimates that 20 ships smuggle marijuana from the golden triangle each year, while statistics indicate a total of some 5000 vessels operate in the Pacific each day, and thousands of planes enter U.S. airspace each day.(12:56)

The budget for the drug war in FY 81 was \$1 million. The FY 91 budget calls for \$1.2 billion for counter narcotics operations in the military.(1:3) Are we throwing money on the problem? The answer is a resounding yes. An examination of the effort reveals:

(1) In FY 87 the DoN provided over 2500 ship days to the Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) program. 20 vessels were seized, 110 arrests were made and over 225,000 pounds of marijuana and 550 pounds of cocaine were seized. The cost to the USN and USCG was \$40 million, equalling \$2 million per bust. Add to the surface action the use of DoD surveillance platforms (E-3A, E-2C, P-3, S-3) for over 1000 flight hours, resulting in 6 seizures and 10 arrests. The cost to DoD was \$2.6 million (\$339,000/bust).(1:6)

(2) In FY 88 the DoN's participation in detection and

monitoring (D&M) consisted of 2037 ship days and 7382 flight hours by all types of aircraft. By FY 90 estimates indicated 4340 ship days and over 20,000 flight hours.(1:13)

Military, USCG, Customs, and DEA aircraft, combined with CVBG, ATF, cruisers, destroyers, PHM's, frigates, and cutters set up in a chain of D&M stations interlocked with Aerostats and ground radars attempt to spot that elusive ship or plane. Total cost per bust is in excess of \$3 million. Would this be considered successful? With the small percentage of drugs being seized at astronomical costs, are we winning? Statistics are what make the headlines and this is what Congress wants, specifically historical data on aircraft intercepted, number forced to land, and of those, number of times civilian law enforcement was and was not available.(28:22)

Are we more interested in the truth or in statistical data that makes politicians and law enforcement agencies look good to the public? The military has stated that to stop the flow of illegal drugs into the U.S. it would require 50 Aerostats, 1000 fighters, 90 infantry battalions, and 160 surface combatants at a cost of \$20 billion a year. House of Representatives figures, although more conservative, are still substantial: 24 E-3A's and 24 helicopters could probably do an effective job of stopping

the low and slow flyers, and 70 infantry battalions could seal off the overland route. This does not include the 4000 miles of coastline.(1)

Are we successful? On the small scale yes, on the grand scheme maybe not. The price of cocaine has in fact dropped and the U.S. is becoming the world's largest grower of marijuana. In 1987 alone, 7.4 million cultivated marijuana plants (7.4 million pounds) were seized in the U.S.. This amount is triple to that seized at ports coming into the U.S..(28:24-25)

One could easily argue that the War on Drugs, in stark contrast to the Vietnam War, has easily definable objectives. At first glance this appears to be true; however, what good are objectives if attaining them doesn't solve the problem? We would argue that the stated objectives are not clearly measurable. It is thus difficult for us to determine whether we are winning the war or not.

Not only do we face an ambiguous threat and have established meaningless objectives, the military once again finds itself in a position where it has been given responsibility for winning a war, but not allowed to take the appropriate measures needed to successfully prosecute it.

LIMITATIONS

Three distinct failures in policy attributed to the U.S. failure in the Vietnam War. The rules of engagement designed to protect civilians actually alienated them from the U.S.. Second, political considerations influenced decisions affecting the establishment of "sanctuaries" for the enemy in Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam. Finally the enemy was allowed to take advantage of negotiated cease fires, particularly halts initiated by the North Vietnamese.

Counter insurgency operations in guerilla warfare require the isolation of the civilian population. The U.S. rules of engagement outlined three steps. A village could be fired upon without warning if American troops had received fire from within it. Any village known to be hostile could be fired upon if its inhabitants were warned in advance. Once the civilian population had been moved out, the village and surrounding country might be declared a free fire zone.

There were three basic fallacies implied within the rules. The first fallacy was that the civilians possessed the power and willingness to expel guerillas. The second was that civilians would not refuse to leave their village,

and the third that the term hostile was allowed to be interpreted by the local commander.

Implementation of these rules failed because a higher priority was placed on results (body counts) than on security of the civilian population. General Westmoreland's strategy encouraged commanders to generate high body counts. One survey of generals who served in Vietnam revealed that only 29 percent felt the rules of engagement were understood prior to the My Lai massacre. Only 19 percent claimed that they were adhered to. (11:199) The total environment associated with the development and enforcement of the rules of engagement eventually grew out of control. Destruction of the civilian structure in South Vietnam was as much attributable to the U.S. as it was to guerilla forces.

The "sanctuary syndrome" (4:75) protected enemy forces outside territorial South Vietnam. The enemy's supplies flowed freely into Haiphong Harbor throughout the war. The neutrality of Cambodia and Laos was honored by the U.S. while both countries were fully occupied by the NVA. North Vietnamese targets were extremely limited throughout the conflict. The political implications were clearly understood; China and the Soviet Union were not to be drawn into the war. The Soviet Union, however, was there providing full support, and China never once challenged any

assault on North Vietnamese targets. The advantage was freely passed to the enemy at the expense of limiting the U.S.' ability to win.

This same advantage was repeatedly passed to the North during periodic cease fires and bombing halts. The Tet Offensive of 1968 illustrated the North's deceptive use of the cease fire when they utilized it to reestablish their presence in the South with resupply and reorganization. The bombing halts were associated with the peace talks and coincided with the North's need for recovery. These halts negated friendly successes experienced in the DMZ, on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and from bombing targets in North Vietnam.

The U.S. basically fought a self imposed limited action. The enemy adhered to no limited actions, whatsoever, and fully exploited our weakness in the absence of a sound policy. Our analysis of the enemy was poor indeed.

In fighting the drug war, several rules have been applied to the military that can be considered as limiting our capability to fight effectively. Within the borders of the U.S., the military is guided by the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which prohibits the use of the military to conduct direct civil law enforcement, specifically search, seizure,

and arrest. Although the law does not specifically address the Navy and Marine Corps, DoD has adopted restrictions to apply to these services.(1:4) DoD has been using the Posse Comitatus Act to keep from getting involved in the drug war. This Act can be amended or eliminated by Congress. It has attempted to do just that. The DoD Authorization Act of 1982 amended portions of the Posse Comitatus Act in order to permit limited cooperation between DoD and civilian law enforcement agencies.(28:11)

Again in May and in June 1988, concerning the 1989 Defense Act, additional amendments were proposed to give full law enforcement powers to DoD in the area of drug interdiction. These amendments were successfully opposed by then Secretary of Defense Weinberger.

Greater leverage was provided to DoD in supporting law enforcement agency operations; however, the law is still restrictive in regards to direct assistance. It prohibits:

- interdiction of a vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other similar activity

- a search or seizure

- an arrest, apprehension, stop and frisk, or similar activity

- use of military personnel for surveillance or pursuit

of individuals, or as informants, undercover agents, investigators, or interrogators

--any other activity which subjects civilians to exercise of military power that is regulatory, proscriptive, or compulsory in nature.(1:5)

William Huffcut Jr makes a comparison of the Vietnam War and the War on Drugs, stating that, "The piecemeal involvement of the U.S. military in this conflict is reminiscent of our initial employment of forces in Vietnam."(10:19) The 1989 Defense Act did give the military more of a mission than it wanted, but much less than its critics wanted. It identified DoD as the leading agency for detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs into the U.S. This mission poses a significant challenge to the DoD.(28:15) This piecemeal involvement and lack of coordination of all agencies involved in the War on Drugs has definitely hampered the military's ability to fight.

(1) Intelligence gathering by military agencies relative to drug trafficking often is not available for dissemination due to sensitive sources and the inability to handle sensitive classified information within law enforcement agencies.(1:17-18) For example:

A military D&M station has received information confirming the location of a positively identified trafficking operation, but due to the nature of the information is unable to pass all of it to a Coast Guard station. Without positive proof, the Coast Guard will not conduct a search because of the limited assets available. Information must be confirmed by them.

(2) DoD personnel operating D&M assets are authorized to intercept and direct vessels and aircraft to land or dock for inspection by law enforcement agencies. They are not authorized to compel the interceptee to obey, and they cannot impede the vessel or aircraft if they choose to ignore the directions.(28:17-18)

(3) Monitoring radio frequencies is authorized to determine locations of suspected smuggling operations. However, the monitoring of U.S. citizens is not authorized and information gathered cannot be used.

(4) U.S. Navy ships operating in D&M are not authorized to board suspect vessels even if the trafficking is taking place within sight, if there is no law enforcement agency detachment on board.

(5) U.S. aircraft are not authorized to chase suspect

aircraft within specified distances from sovereign nations. Coast Guard aircraft can get closer but still must turn away upon reaching the established 12 nautical mile zone.

The military has been given a mission to stem the flow of illegal drugs into the United States but has had strict rules of engagement placed on it. The drug smugglers do not have any rules and play the game as they see fit. Knowing the restrictions placed on the military, the smugglers can take full advantage of these limitations. The smugglers ignore any instruction to land given by the military and use the airspace of foreign countries and coastal areas for transshipments knowing full well that we cannot maintain our vigilance. Some nations accused of supporting drug smuggling operations are free from interdiction by U.S. military or law enforcement agencies.

COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

In the final analysis the Vietnam War illustrates the failure to set a political objective attainable through the use of military force. The poor unity of command structure during the Vietnam War did not cause our defeat; it was merely a symptom of our failure to coordinate politics and the military. Unity of command is required to facilitate attainment of the objective. This basic principle was

violated in the U.S. military structure and in our coalition with the South Vietnamese military.

Command relationships in Vietnam were markedly independent. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) functioned through the Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC) while the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) dealt directly with General Westmoreland vice the theater commander, CINCPAC. Compounding the problem with this relationship was the development of the pacification program under a separate administrator and the White House involvement in conducting remote air operations against North Vietnam. Westmoreland was the tactical commander only; Strategic direction came from NCA and CINCPAC.

Before the national sovereignty of South Vietnam was a major concern, the Korean model of joint command under U.S. control was not adopted. The result was a formulation of a liaison command and a decentralized military effort. ARVN shortcomings were simply overcome with increases in U.S. personnel, and no consistent effort was made to integrate South vietnamese forces into the overall scheme until 1972.

We are clearly seeing this lack of unity of command in our War on Drugs. In fighting the drug war almost 40 agencies and their congressional subcommittees have

jurisdiction.(5:88) This creates a nightmare for DoD and the department of Transportation (DoT). Who works for whom? What is the chain of command and how do military organizations coordinate with civilian agencies? In an attempt to solve the command relationship problems and coordinate the drug war effort, the Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1988 created a Director of National Drug Control Policy. William Bennet was the principal advisor to the NSC on national drug control policy. Mr. Bennett was also given the authority to make changes in organization, management and budgets of federal departments and agencies engaged in drug enforcement and allocation of personnel within such departments or agencies.(28:13) The problem lies in defining "engaged in drug enforcement." This definition leaves the military open for criticism when it does not support the drug war to the satisfaction of some critics. However, over zealous commanders may find themselves on the receiving end of criticism from military seniors. Section 1103 of the 1989 Defense Act requires that C3I assets dedicated to drug interdiction be integrated into an effective communications network and that the President develop a plan for assigning responsibility for operating that network.(26:15-16) Out of this Act we saw the creation of Joint Task Forces (JTF) 4, 5, and 6.

The JTF's fall under the CINC's for support within

their areas of operation, but have no dedicated assets assigned to them. In an attempt to coordinate military, DoT, and other civilian agencies into the command structure, the Coast Guard was given command of the JTF's and augmented with personnel from the Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, Customs, and several other federal agencies. Assets from all services were scooped up to perform D&M operations with little regard for capability or requirements. No service balked at providing assets for fear of being blamed for any failure of the drug war. Representative Duncan Hunter (R-Calif) was quoted as saying, "In the past two years we have seen little improvement in our ability to interdict smugglers coming across the border. The military can do the job and they must do the job. If they cannot stop a Cessna filled with drugs how can we expect them to stop terrorists from flying across our borders?"(28:6) What he fails to see or refuses to admit is that the military hardware we are throwing into the battle was not designed to track Cessnas or sink pleasure craft. Unfortunately the thoughts expressed by Congressman Hunter seem to be prevalent within our political hierarchy as evidenced by an amendment to the 1989 Defense Act passed in the House of Representatives on 5 May 1988. The amendment required the military within 45 days of enactment of the 1989 Defense Act to substantially halt the flow of illegal narcotics into the U.S. This amendment passed in the House by a vote of 385 to 23 but did

not survive the final bill.(28:7)

The Director of National Drug Control Policy was still not given the powers to command the coordinated effort. He was still only a figurehead outside the chain of command capable of influencing the military involvement in the War on Drugs.

AMERICA'S RESOLVE

When one thinks of a nation's resolve, what quickly comes to mind is total commitment on everyone's part in achieving an objective. Such was the case when America embarked on the mission to defeat Germany and Japan during World War II. Never before, with the possible exception of the Civil War, has the nation been so obsessed with victory as during that war. From the mobilization of our heavy industry, to an entertainment industry, America was indeed obsessed. This obsession permeated every aspect of American life and from this unified effort, victory became a reality.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about America's resolve to win the War on Drugs. The problems are multi-faceted, ranging from glamourization of drugs by the mass media and entertainment industry to problems within DEA itself. Morally, the U.S. is not committed to winning this

war. Some drugs, cocaine in particular, are fashionable. (27:24) An estimated 5 million Americans use cocaine regularly and 1 million of those could be called addicts. It is viewed as the drug of choice for the middle and upper classes. Drug related problems have taken a wide toll of an enormous range of prominent people like David Kennedy, son of the late Senator Robert Kennedy, Ronald Roberts, son of evangelist Oral Roberts, comic John Belushi, singer actress Judy Garland, and collegiate basketball stand out Len Bias. Not only in the press but in plays, films, and television, cocaine is glorified as the status symbol for those who like to think they are living in the fast lane. (27:25) How can the nation prepare to conquer drugs if it is seen as socially acceptable night after night on television? Some social scientists argue that real progress won't be made until drug use is seen as socially unacceptable.

DEA has been plagued by serious management problems that have reduced efficiency, fostered friction with other police agencies, and sometimes jeopardized important drug investigations. For example, heroin supplies have increased while DEA arrests have declined for two years in the northeast. Despite scathing evaluations, little was done to improve heroin enforcement under the regional director who has recently announced his retirement. (3:15)

In addition to a low budget and mismanagement, DEA's best efforts are often thwarted in courtrooms where low bail and light sentencing for drug dealers have tamed some of this country's toughest criminal laws. A computer survey of drug cases in the southern district during the last three years shows a 68% conviction rate for the government, relatively high compared to state courts. However, only 17% of those defendants received sentences of five years or more. The Government's failure to enact a successful drug policy is sweeping, numbing, and disputed by almost no one.

(25:10)

The U.S. is carrying a heavy burden as it struggles to hold its own against unprecedented scientific, technological, and economic challenges not only from the Soviet Union but also from Japan and our allies in western Europe. Industry is losing as much as \$25 billion a year as a result of employees who swallow, inhale, or inject illicit substances. The toll takes the form of slow productivity, absenteeism, lateness, and irrational decisions. An official of the U.S. Health and Human Services Department says that the \$25 billion estimate of annual industry losses is conservative.

Former Attorney General William French Smith is worried about drug money corrupting public officials. He says,

"When a sheriff accepts \$50,000 to look the other way while traffickers make a single landing at a makeshift airport as happened last year, the drug problem became an assault on the very foundation of law and law enforcement." Other officials point out the enormous sums that the drug culture siphons off from the economy. Trafficking is an \$80 to \$90 billion a year business, all of it tax free.

CONCLUSION

Identifying the real enemy in Vietnam was often an exercise in frustration. This was thought to be the first and last time such a situation would exist. Now our new War on Drugs has taken its place. Do we really know who the enemy is? Are we ready to totally commit to eliminating the enemy at the cost of changing society as we know it? We see a close comparison between the Vietnam War and the drug war -- the piecemealing of assets against the enemy, an undefined enemy, restrictive rules of engagement preventing the military from fully executing its mission, and a lack of national resolve. Limited objectives amplified by self defeating restrictions on friendly forces will steadily erode the resolve of the citizens and their elected officials who fund the drug war. The Government's only defense against cessation of funds has been to rationalize through the use of statistics. This false measurement of

success is already apparent. Political restrictions on an international level are prohibiting the use of force to eliminate the supply side of the war. Containment policies will be ineffective. Given the current drug control strategy, we cannot win. We are finding ourselves in a situation where we are throwing money and resources at the problem without solving it.

RECOMMENDATION

The United States must take another look at its view of the War on Drugs. If it is indeed a threat to our national security as our political leadership contends then we should treat it as such and solicit public support to use all of the resources at our disposal to eliminate that threat. As we have learned from Vietnam our military should only be committed if there is a clear intent to win. If the military is committed then it should be a total commitment and not the piecemealing of assets that we saw in Vietnam and continue to see today. This means we need to change our policy and objectives to focus on elimination rather than containment.

We need to clearly define what the threat is. If we determine that the coca growers in South America are the real threat and indeed a threat to national security then we

should target them for elimination. We must establish a clearly defined and centralized chain of command and delineate responsibilities. Those charged with responsibilities, however, must be given the authority to carry out those responsibilities. That means that if the military is charged with winning the War on Drugs it must have its hands untied and allowed to do so. This is why it is so important to have the support of the American public and its elected representatives in both the executive and legislative branches which would be charged with revising laws such as the Posse Comitatus Act and enacting new legislation to allow the military to accomplish its mission within the framework of the Constitution. Finally, leaders must be held accountable and know that they are.

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