

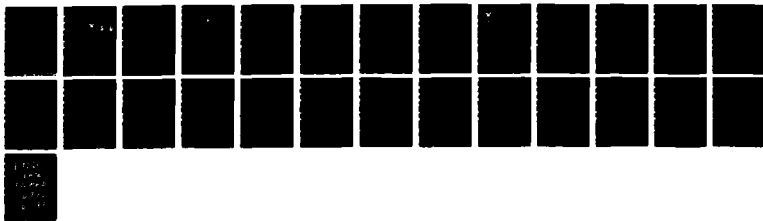
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STUDENT REPORT
DRUG INTERDICTION
AT TRANSSHIPMENT POINTS:
CAN THE US EXPECT
FOREIGN COOPERATION?
MAJOR PATRICIA MCBRIDE 88-1705
"insights into tomorrow"

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CAN THE US EXPECT FOREIGN COOPERATION?

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of
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PREFACE

The US military is deeply involved in the US drug interdiction effort both domestically and internationally. Our support to law enforcement has provided valuable assistance in organizing methods to combat trafficking. The success of this support and numerous other anti-drug programs depends on factors such as foreign economic problems and the impact of narcotics on societies at transshipment points; things not normally considered by Air Staff action officers as they run to meet their next congressional insert suspense.

Maj McElroy, HQ USAF/XOORC (Posse Comitatus Branch), deserves credit for pausing to consider the wider implications of narcotics transshipment, and to pass his ideas to me for further research. Hopefully, the information in this paper will provide some background for speculating on the odds for success of future military assistance to drug interdiction.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Patricia McBride, a Weapons Controller (AFSC 1716), was introduced to military involvement in drug interdiction during her assignment to HQ USAF/XOOR from 1983 to 1987. She worked on data link interoperability and aerostat surveillance radars with the Posse Comitatus Branch, as well as other projects not related to drug interdiction.

Major McBride's assignments include: 24th NORAD Region, Malmstrom AFB, MT; 744ACWS, Murphy Dome AFS, AK; 601TCS, Pruem AS, FRG; 601TCG, Kapaun AS, FRG; HQUSAFE/DOY, Ramstein AB, FRG; HQUSAF/XOOR, Pentagon.

She has attended Squadron Officer School, and Air Command and Staff College. From civilian schools, she holds a BA in political science from Wichita State University and an MS in systems management from the University of Southern California.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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REPORT NUMBER 88-1705

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR PATRICIA A. MCBRIDE, USAF

TITLE DRUG INTERDICTION AT TRANSSHIPMENT POINTS:
CAN THE US EXPECT FOREIGN COOPERATION?

I. Purpose: To examine the US drug interdiction program in nations used as transshipment points and to investigate other influences that could enhance program effectiveness.

II. Problem: The US spends over \$1 billion annually on drug interdiction, but the influx of illegal narcotics is increasing. Key to successful interdiction is the cooperation of nations used as transshipment points. While some cooperation has proved helpful, most results have been disappointing. These results may be improved by considering a wider range of factors impacting host nation cooperation. The host nations in this study were limited to the three major transshipment points for cocaine: Mexico, the Bahamas, and Jamaica.

III. Data: Becoming a transshipment point for narcotics brings along the crime, violence, and addiction that US society is already familiar with. These changes will not necessarily cause governments to cooperate with US interdiction programs for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the corruption that follows drug money. Another factor in lagging cooperation is the perception that the narcotics "problem" is caused by US demand,

CONTINUED

and that it should be solved by stiffer penalties where it is used, not where it is shipped from. Governments also know that drug interdiction, only one of many US interests, can be ignored when the emphasis is on higher US priorities such as security. One factor, however, will consistently spur a government to act against traffickers. When traffickers threaten government control and survival, leaders will act whether or not the US is involved.

IV. Conclusions: Measuring illegal activity is difficult, but one indication of interdiction effectiveness is the street price for cocaine, now at an eight-year low in South Florida. This implies that an abundant supply is available and interdiction as a means of stopping the flow has not worked. Nevertheless, the effort has forced shifts in trafficking operations and has denied a safe haven in the supply process.

V. Recommendations: Drug interdiction at transshipment points can be a useful part of the total US "war on drugs" if it is balanced against other parts of the US anti-drug program such as education and treatment. It should also be balanced against host nation political realities and other US objectives in the area.

Chapter One

US POLICIES TO STOP NARCOTICS TRANSSHIPMENT

LOOKING AT THE PROBLEM

Reducing the illegal use of narcotics in the US has been a major effort sponsored by our government. One of the most publicized portions of that effort has been stopping the flow of drugs across our borders, usually referred to as drug interdiction. Despite this initiative, 1985 drug use statistics were double what was expected and seemed to run counter to increased government efforts to stop the flow of narcotics into the US.

(9:28) The government's international drug control (IDC) policy has two major functions which focus on controlling illegal narcotics shipments, the most familiar being crop eradication programs. The second function, the apprehension, prosecution, and imprisonment of drug traffickers, has become the central effort of recent attempts to stop the transshipment of drugs.

(12:87) This discussion will examine the results of the interdiction effort by looking at three of the major transshipment points, Mexico, the Bahamas, and Jamaica, and their responses to US programs.

This chapter examines the effectiveness of the US program by looking at some representative parts of that program such as the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System, and Janus. The effectiveness of these programs depends in part on the impact drug transshipment has made on societies in Mexico, the Bahamas, and Jamaica. Chapter two will look at drug use, increased income, and perceptions of the narcotics "problem" as important local factors. The governments of transshipping nations also play an important role in any success that the US can expect from its policies. Chapter three considers corruption in government and the factors that have caused governments to act against narcotics shippers in the past.

With these factors taken into account, chapter four asks if the US program has the capability to make the costs of drug trafficking unacceptable and reduce the flow of narcotics. Budget limitations may force us to select from several proposed changes to our current program. The most effective choice could depend on support we can expect from Mexico, the Bahamas, and Jamaica, as well as a redirection of our domestic efforts.

EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act is one of the most potentially powerful measures the US government has passed to put direct pressure on nations to stop the illegal flow of narcotics to the US. It directly links results from national efforts to US economic and military aid. (14:3) The President must certify to Congress each drug-related nation's level of cooperation toward IDC goals. There are 19 Latin American countries on the list. (13:2) The first report to Congress was submitted 2 March 1987.

This report recommends no cuts in aid, but as a consolidated source of drug shipment information for Congress, it points out consistent "condoning and abetting" of traffickers. It cites Mexico as both a major grower and transshipment point. Among island nations, Jamaica and the Bahamas are also major transshipment points. (13:2; 14:3) Interestingly, these particular nations may have become prominent drug points because of another US anti-drug program involving the US Armed Forces and law enforcement agencies called the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System (NNBIS).

National Narcotics Border Interdiction System

NNBIS is the evolutionary product of the South Florida Task Force created by President Reagan in 1981. (22:2) The Task Force's mission was to stop the infiltration of Florida, mainly Dade County, by Colombian drug runners. This violent and less than secret infiltration included over 20 cocaine laboratories, indiscriminate shooting in public shopping areas, and specially equipped "war wagons" for all-out confrontations with rivals. (26:333,536,685) NNBIS was set up to coordinate planning and resources among US agencies trying to detect, interdict, and apprehend drug traffickers. The program has grown into a nationwide system of regional offices, the latest being the Hawaiian NNBIS Region. (25:380-381)

NNBIS put enough pressure on the traffickers in Dade County to quiet the "cocaine cowboys" there. The success was limited in the overall view of interdiction, however, because it caused the expansion of transshipment points in Mexico and the Caribbean. (9:28)

As NNBIS expanded its role, it looked to the armed forces to provide more assistance. That assistance was limited by the Posse Comitatus Act. Posse Comitatus allows limited cooperation between US law enforcement agencies and the armed forces while preserving the distinctions between police matters and military actions. (19:Chapter 16)

In most cases, only the President can authorize military support to law enforcement. This authorization is usually considered an emergency measure of limited duration, lasting only as long as it takes to restore civilian authority. These restrictions were developed in 1878 to curb the use of federal troops in local disturbances related to the Reconstruction Acts. (19:147) The President, through the Attorney General, has allowed expanded cooperation between the military services and law enforcement, however, US troops are not allowed to apprehend criminals.

NNBIS requests have been the basis for increased use of military facilities, equipment, and occasionally, manpower, to combat illegal narcotics transshipment. Examples of support include radar scope positions for DEA, FBI, Customs, and Coast Guard personnel at air defense facilities; radar surveillance training; acquisition management assistance; and liaison positions in the NNBIS regions. (25:313-327) These actions do not violate Posse Comitatus. The USAF provides helicopters and crews for OPBAT--Operation Bahamas and Turks (and Caicos Islands). (21:10)

OPBAT is an example of how US military forces are used outside the US for drug interdiction. The State Department Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters gave Congressional testimony outlining the National Security Decision Directive which provided the basis for this kind of support:

Under this authority, the equipment and assistance may be used outside the land area of the United States after the Secretary of Defense and the Attorney General jointly determine that 'an emergency circumstance' exists, i.e., that the size or scope of the suspected criminal activity poses a serious threat to the interests of the United States, and that enforcement of one of the specified US laws would be seriously impaired if the assistance were not provided. (21:14,15)

OPBAT received its joint declaration of emergency in 1983. Since then, the USAF has flown and maintained two UH-1N helicopters in the Bahamas for "quick insertion of Bahamian law enforcement teams on drug apprehension missions." They flew 1,228 hours in FY 1985. (21:6,7)

Janus

The Janus Program is an example of legal cooperation between nations on the prosecution of traffickers, in contrast to the economic, political and material support programs discussed

that provides for mutual exchange of evidence developed on narcotics-related crimes. The purpose of forwarding the evidence is to allow local prosecution with what is hoped to be a stronger case for conviction. (20:40)

Congressional testimony shows that Janus is practically a one-way exchange with the US forwarding cases to the Mexican Attorney General's office. From 1975 to 1978, Mexico accepted 35 cases and issued warrants on 20 of them. The rest remain open or were still in court as of 1986. From 1979 to 1986, Mexico accepted six cases, all of which remain open. (20:41)

US DOMESTIC CONCERNS

US narcotics interdiction programs are a diverse mixture of economic, political, judicial, and material support negotiated bilaterally with nations identified as major transshipment points. US domestic support for these programs comes from concern about the estimates which say one in ten Americans has used cocaine, and that regular use is increasing. (26:11) Also of concern are the increased crime rates in general, and local presence of organized crime and violence that tends to follow narcotics traffickers. (3:122) An estimated 40% of South American cocaine bound for the US goes through the Bahamas. (8:A20) Approximately 30% is transshipped through Mexico. (2:18) As US interdiction efforts affect drug traffic routing, other nations such as Jamaica become increasingly used as transshipment points. (10:1) Perhaps nations being used as transshipment points have similar domestic problems associated with traffickers.

Chapter Two

TRANSSHIPMENT'S IMPACTS ON SOCIETY

DRUG USE

Drug use in Mexico, the Bahamas and Jamaica is difficult to compare to US consumption because of a lack of statistical data and the traditional use of drugs in native cultures. In general, trends seem to show increased use of narcotics and the accompanying problems for society. (13:1) The producing nations in South America are already aware of the toll drug addiction takes on communities to include crime, medical treatment costs, and lost productivity. (1:27A) Caribbean nations are becoming more aware of similar problems. For example:

The infusion of cheap and available narcotics, especially the highly potent form of cocaine known as crack, is affecting a generation of Bahamians, many of whom have become addicted to drugs and to the easy money associated with the drug trade, according to Bahamian officials and diplomats. (8:27A)

While it is true that there is domestic consumption of narcotics in countries used as transshipment points, an even more influential force is the economic impact of traffickers.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economic effects of narcotics transshipment are magnified by the large amounts of money trafficking generates. The increase in Mexican cocaine transshipment has been partially attributed to their national economic down turn. (20:66) Mexican traffickers made an estimated \$1.25B from cocaine shipping last year. (2:17) To compound this influence, the drug economy runs on US dollars, a much more attractive currency than most local currencies. (3:122) This creates a destabilizing effect on the nation's economy by making an underground dollar market and causing inflated prices for goods bought with local currency. "Narco-dollars" also invade banking systems that "launder" the illegal profits. The Bahamas has been cited as a leader in the offshore banking system which accepts trafficker deposits. (13:1) Some view this influx of money as beneficial to an otherwise dismal economic picture. (3:117) This is an overly optimistic view

because most narcotics money spent in large sums goes into nonproductive areas such as real estate speculation and luxury goods, or is sent out of the country all together. (13:1)

The sum of economic complications from narcotics transshipment is an increasing lack of control over the local economy by the government. The money brought in by traffickers becomes an uncontrollable, negative force. (13:2)

VIOLENCE AND CRIME

Narcotics transshipment is a crime in all three countries discussed here. So far, Jamaica has been fortunate to encounter mainly financial crime related to traffickers. (21:115) When traffickers expand to trading drugs for guns or other more violent activities, the government has quickly moved to thwart the action. (12:91) Jamaican gangs in the US, however, are some of the most violent individuals involved in the narcotics business. (4:31) Bahamian society rarely sees violence related to trafficking because most transshipment takes place near one of the several hundred uninhabited islands in the archipelago. (22:173) Any violence is usually between police and criminals. Mexico has not been as lucky for two reasons: displacement of Colombian traffickers from South Florida to Mexico (3:122); and Mexican traffickers' growing control over several regions. (2:19)

The US received a taste of Mexican narcotics violence in 1985 when DEA agent Enrique Camarena and his Mexican pilot were tortured and murdered. (20:5) That same year in November, 17 Mexican police officers were murdered in the Veracruz state in a display of narcotics trafficker authority. Another example of this violence was the 1986 murder of 80 peasants in the same area. (2:19)

This sort of violence is usually linked to an increase in gunrunning. Most of these weapons are US-made. Recent increases in border confiscations indicate that Mexican traffickers are buying large quantities of fire arms. (2:19) Although there is not a large-scale insurgent threat in Mexico, some of these weapons have found their way into the hands of leftist peasants who have challenged local authorities. (2:19)

There is evidence that gunrunning as a part of narcotics trafficking is also a growing problem for Jamaica. US-based gangs send guns to Jamaican neighborhood gangs for inflated prices. Weapons seized by police include assault rifles and machine guns purchased in the US. The Jamaican government is taking strong action to apprehend and convict these gunrunners. (4:35)

SOCIETY'S PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM

The effects of narcotics trafficking on these nations seem to be destabilizing both politically and economically. Not all effects are classified as negative by the citizens, however. Availability of dollars and real estate investments provide increased standards of living for some, even though the increase comes from an underground economy. This increase compares favorably with the poorer legitimate economy. (3:122)

The negative effects of trafficking are laid squarely back on the US. Our consumption is the real problem. (3:121) In this light, the US is partially responsible for the addiction, inflation, and violence. Cocaine "is far more likely to be shipped than smoked" outside the US. (3:118) The trafficking, the money, the guns, are directly linked to the demand in the US for narcotics.

Chapter Three

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR US PROGRAMS

Although narcotics transshipment has affected society in Mexico, the Bahamas, and Jamaica, this has not always moved these countries to work more closely with the US on interdiction efforts. There seems to be a toleration line that traffickers must violate before governments will act against them on a large scale. (11:94-95) This line is influenced by the amount of corruption in government, whether or not the shippers also produce their products, and challenges to governmental control. Another factor which directly relates to support for US efforts is the opinion that US narcotics policy is second to more vital interests in the region.

CORRUPTION

US interdiction efforts are seriously affected by corrupt officials in host governments. Traffickers offer huge financial rewards for a variety of services from police protection to benign neglect. Josue Saenz, a former Mexican official, discussed corruption in government at a 1985 seminar on "Mexican Survival":

Corruption is another factor in the Mexican crisis and should not be underestimated. We have all types of corruption. We have direct corruption in which one man orders those below him to act in a corrupt manner. We have cooperative corruption in which members of the same level cooperate in carrying out corrupt acts. We have shared corruption, we have pyramidal corruption, we have functional corruption--that's corruption as a lubricant--and we have structural corruption in which corruption is part of the systems of control used by the government to maintain its political stability. (27:177)

Narcotics corruption occurs in all these forms. Traffickers have been found carrying government credentials giving them access to Mexican intelligence operations. (2:18; 3:120) Police at the Guadalajara airport accepted trafficker Caro Quintero's

personal check for \$300,000 and allowed him to fly out of Mexico instead of arresting him as they had been ordered to do. One officer was paid \$70,000 for using his forces to load narcotics cargo bound for the US. Several Mexican governors have been linked to illegal narcotics activity by US sources. (2:17)

This corruption has made capture and prosecution of traffickers in Mexico almost impossible. No major trafficker had been arrested in Mexico since 1975. (16:10A; 26:48-49) Even when corruption is punished, the penalties are rarely severe. When 400 agents of Mexico's national police forces were dismissed for their narcotics connections, none were prosecuted. (2:17) The murder of one US DEA agent by traffickers, and the torture of another, perhaps by Mexican police, have caused additional problems of cooperation between the governments. (3:120)

Similar problems exist in the Bahamas. Although the Bahamian government has allowed the US unusual privileges such as the right of "hot pursuit" to pursue traffickers, and special bank access to find narcotics payoffs, there is doubt about how much support exists at higher levels. (10:428; 8:20A) Prime Minister Lynden Pindling has accused his opposition of narcotics involvement, but has not disciplined senior members of his own party for accepting bribes. He has also not made clear how he was able to spend \$3.5 million over a seven year period when his salary was one-eighth that amount. (8:19A) The US Congress has viewed recent Bahamian cooperation with programs such as OPBAT as mechanically acceptable, but doubted if any real progress in denying cooperation to the traffickers was being made. (17:30)

Corruption in Jamaica related to transshipment as compared to local production has not surfaced as an important factor in supporting US actions. The Jamaican government recently negotiated a banking agreement to allow US officials access to suspected narcotics-related accounts. (24:32)

SHIPPERS VERSUS GROWERS

The financial gains for corrupt government agents push the narcotics transshipment toleration line away from US interests, but there are other factors which could benefit the interdiction program.

Transshipment bosses are usually foreigners. When the US asks for evidence of a nation's willingness to join in the drug war, most governments are more likely to go after these people rather than their citizens. The reason for this is political. First, there are many more citizen farmers than foreign shippers. Also, it may not be illegal to grow narcotic plants if this is a part of traditional society. Trafficking is a crime in most

part of traditional society. Trafficking is a crime in most countries despite an apparent lapse in enforcement. Host nations seem to be willing to sacrifice shippers first to keep domestic support. (12:95)

Jamaica, for example, has widespread cultural drug use. Many small farmers grow narcotics for both this reason and for export. This crop provides a substantial income and strengthens the economy. What Jamaica and other countries in similar circumstances do is to divert US pressure from crop destruction to cooperation in apprehending a trafficker. This allows them to deal with their political realities while satisfying a portion of the US request. (12:91)

CHALLENGES TO AUTHORITY

Another major influence on the transshipment toleration line is any threat to host government control within its own country by growth of narcotics trading. Governments know that they cannot afford to lose control of their countrysides and populations and still remain in power. This threat could move the government to more actively support US interdiction efforts.

The money and weapons available to traffickers can be used to establish secure operations areas. In Mexico, the state of Sinaloa has been intermittently cut off from central authority and controlled by transshipment rings. (2:18) Bimini in the Bahamas has also been recognized as an area separated from the government and run solely by the rule of traffickers. (24:51) These take-overs are clear challenges to governmental authority.

Although illegal imports of guns are increasing in Mexico and the Bahamas, they seem to be going to shipment rings and not to any combined drug/insurgent operation as seen in other parts of Central and South America. (18:142) Jamaica, however, saw the influx of weapons and the rise in trafficking organizations as a direct threat and has a history of tough apprehension measures when its toleration line is crossed. (12:91)

The greatest threat to US interests in the question of host nation authority is that a government may be too corrupt or wait too long to respond to this threat and become totally ineffective, or be replaced by a less friendly government. (12:89)

PERCEPTIONS OF US POLICY

The combination of toleration line factors within the host country and the pressure from the US to act against traffickers

combines to determine a nation's response to transshipment. Some countries view US IDC policy as a secondary US interest that can be manipulated based on other more vital interests. (12:95)

Mexico's history of turbulent relations with the US makes sovereignty more important than US pressure to pursue traffickers. They refuse to allow US law enforcement to go in "hot pursuit" of traffickers by either land or air means. Detected traffickers know to return to Mexico if threatened with capture. (22:167) Meetings between US and Mexican Attorney Generals continue to work out cooperative agreements and strengthen programs like Janus, but short-term progress seems unlikely. The US furor over the Camarena killing seemed excessive to the Mexican government, corruption aside, compared to the hundreds of Mexican police killed during narcotics investigations and apprehension efforts. (3:120)

Frustrations with the perceived lack of Mexican cooperation were not reflected in the President's certification of continued US aid based on the 2 March 1987 Narcotics Control Strategy Report. (24:4) Oil, debt, and immigration seem to be more important areas of mutual concern. Regardless of the statements made by US congressmen and officials such as Customs Commissioner Von Raab about problems with Mexico in drug interdiction, relations between Mexico and the US continue unchanged by any pressure from US IDC policy. (3:120)

The Bahamas is also used as an example of conflicting US policy. The accusation is that we tolerate a corrupt Prime Minister Pindling and his low-level drug interdiction efforts because we value his friendly government more than we do the instability real narcotics crackdowns would bring. (12:95,24:50)

The governments of Mexico, the Bahamas, and Jamaica, like their citizens, also view the narcotics problem as primarily a US demand problem. They see the pressure for interdiction to be out of balance with internal US efforts to solve what they perceive to be the cause of transshipment; the willingness of US people to buy illegal narcotics, and the lack of penalties to do so. (12:95)

While the US may protest the rise of traffickers in neighboring countries, these nations may not have reached their limit of trafficker influence. Instead, they tend to view US IDC policies as maddlesome and inconsistent with what they know to be higher order US goals such as regional security and economic interests.

Chapter Four

RESULTS

The US needs the cooperation of other nations to successfully control the flow of illegal narcotics. In 1986, federal expenditure to stop narcotics at the 96,000 miles of US land border and coastline was \$762 million. The most optimistic estimate of seizures was 20% of total shipments. Even with substantial increases in spending, only a few percentage point improvement could be expected. (25:170; 254) Our international interdiction programs were supposed to improve interdiction results by not waiting until the narcotics came to the difficult border control situation. One of the problems associated with measuring the effectiveness of interdiction is finding a reliable measurement to go by.

MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

The major narcotics coming into the US from Mexico, the Bahamas and Jamaica are cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. Law enforcement officials use cocaine as the index reference because it is US society's current drug of choice, it is easily concealed, and it is a more expensive, yet commonly obtainable street drug. (22:239-240) As noted previously, the Bahamas is the transshipment point for 40% of the cocaine entering the US. Mexico is the transshipment point for over 30%.

Tons of marijuana, and thousand-pound hauls of cocaine make the headlines but are not accurate references for interdiction effectiveness. These results cannot be tied to any reliable estimates of total shipments. US government agencies publish several different estimates for shipment and seizures, and are unable to agree on any consistent methods of analysis of this information. More seizures may mean more shipments rather than effective interdiction. The estimates of shipment and seizure given to the US by other countries are also suspect, not only due to the difficulty of quantifying illegal activities, but also due to possible government corruption involving the shipment process. (25:15-16)

Law enforcement agencies agree on another method of analysis based on the law of supply and demand. They look at the purity and street price of cocaine. If cocaine supplies are scarce, sellers cut the drug with other substances and raise the price. (25:16) Unfortunately, the current status in the US is that cocaine is available in an almost pure state at some of the lowest prices within the last eight years. A kilo of cocaine in South Florida sells for \$11,000, a drop of over 50% from the \$30,000 it sold for two years ago. (17:31)

Using this indicator, US IDC policy has not deterred any substantial amount of narcotics shipment. Although US programs have not stopped drug flow, they do deserve some credit for other affects on transshipment. As noted previously, efforts in South Florida forced a shift in cocaine shipment patterns causing a buildup in Mexico. There is some evidence that US operations in the Bahamas are causing trafficker to relocate in the Dominican Republic. (24:32) There seems to be the ability to harass, which has potential for future efforts. For example, our interdiction efforts could be used to manipulate traffickers to operate in areas more advantageous to our overall efforts. (25:216)

AREAS FOR INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS

The limited effectiveness of drug interdiction at transshipment points and US budget pressures have caused legislators to question whether the program should continue, and if so, in what form. (25:32) Interdiction alone is not the most cost-effective answer. (25:3) Several things could be done to improve interdiction's contribution to US IDC efforts.

US Domestic Efforts

The US consumer demand for narcotics is considered the root cause of our problem. (25:202) In 1987, the President requested \$1.8 billion for interdiction, not including State Department activities. (22:34) Domestic drug education had a \$250 million request. Social workers and counselors fear recent budget cuts will reduce local programs to almost nothing. (9:28) Even with estimates of only small increases in effectiveness, the interdiction budget is expected to hover around \$1 billion or more for the next few years. (25:132) Of the amount requested for interdiction in 1987, 43% was for border control, 24% for criminal investigations, 8% for international narcotics control, and 8% for federal prosecution. (22:34)

Nations used as trafficking points criticize the US for its consumption and lack of penalties. (12:95,26:203) Looking at budgetary emphasis, they may have a point. Congressional reviews also question the lack of federal education programs or federal

support for state programs. (25:4; 23:8) Border interdiction may receive more money because it can buy tangible assets like radars and ships, and produce narcotics seizures as visible evidence of progress. Education and counseling suffer due to their lack of short-term tangible results. (9:28)

If demand is a major factor, any future narcotics program should be reviewed for balance between interdiction and education efforts. Evidence of our national commitment to reduce demand could increase cooperation of transshipment nations and improve interdiction efforts as a part of the total US anti-drug program.

International Efforts

Interdiction is an important link in US IDC policy despite frustrations in cooperation with transshipment nations. Shipment points and methods are exploitable things that can be used to stop narcotics before they arrive at US borders. Like domestic efforts, international interdiction efforts need to be reviewed to ensure US policy emphasizes the most effective actions.

Requests for interdiction support without reviewing the political realities within the host nation will probably build unrealistic expectations. For instance, the Mexican government's second priority is to reduce corruption. Its first priority, however, is improved economics. (3:121) Asking it to divert resources away from the economy, or to reduce even illegal incomes at critical times will probably not be effective. It is even more unrealistic to expect cooperation if the effects of narcotics transshipment have not been recognized as an imminent danger to Mexico, compared to other concerns. (12:91)

Not understanding political realities, and then not integrating US positions on narcotics matters into our overall international activities sends mixed signals to host nations. The US continues to deal with corrupt, drug-running officials, and apologizes when anti-narcotics statements disturb them. (26:47-48) This tells the host nation that other US priorities will be rewarded more than cooperation on interdiction.

Narcotics is not always the number-one priority in US international negotiations, but enacting laws such as the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act continue to spread confusion. No nation lost US aid based on the first report to Congress this year despite the perceived difficulties and alleged corruption attributed to transshipment nations such as Mexico and the Bahamas. (24:4) This implies a lack of resolve. Legislators are also beginning to question the wisdom of cutting aid on the basis of judgements about drug interdiction when economic difficulties may be the major reason drug traffickers thrive. (24:58)

Serious consideration of narcotics flow reduction may require reorganizing US objectives. Whatever the priorities are, they should be understood throughout US agencies. Also, understanding host nation politics and having a coordinated plan can increase effectiveness and save face. (20:47)

Another improvement that could increase effectiveness is to give host nations credit when they do enforce anti-drug measures. This would be especially important for unilateral efforts. As narcotics traffickers reach the toleration line, nations will act to protect their sovereignty. Combined with an appreciation of the political realities, US recognition of a nation's efforts to reduce corruption or enforce travel restrictions would reinforce combined efforts. (3:118)

FUTURE EFFORTS

Interdiction should not be abandoned because it would give traffickers a safe operations point within the narcotics industry. An important part of US IDC policy, drug interdiction depends on cooperation with nations used as transshipment points. The results have been frustrating and disappointing. Our current efforts have not reduced the flow of narcotics into the US. These results are based on unrealistic expectations of host government support, and lack of a balanced and coordinated US program. Cooperation on interdiction can be improved by showing that the US is acting to reduce domestic demand, and by US acknowledgement of host nation activities to combat trafficking. The most important improvement would be balancing trafficking initiatives with other objectives to provide a consistent policy and realistic expectations.

Now would be a good time to review the US program to create this balanced approach. As the pressure to cut agency budgets increases, having this plan would allow more reasonable decisions and ensure the government has the most effective program for its investment.

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