

Committee: Asia-Pacific Committee

Issue: Measures to combat the illicit drug trafficking in Southeast Asia

Student Officer: Bao Quoc Pham (Brian Pham)

Position: President of the Asia-Pacific Committee

Introduction

Drug trafficking is a global trading business involving the development, manufacturing, distribution and sales of drugs that are considered prohibited. Throughout the decade started in the 1830s the war on drugs has been raised many times, by many nations, including the most recent act by the Philippines government. Despite the effort of many wars on drugs, drugs trafficking is still a world wide growing business. With organized crime listed in it's background, drug trafficking is a topic of deep concern.

Among the biggest concerns about the international drug trade is not just the trafficking of the drugs but the violence associated with drug trafficking. Gangs were blooming thanks to the rise of drug trafficking, as a result organized drug dealers, with large scale power, threaten local populations in which

they were based. The black market was formed to make the drug trade more convenient, which leads to the problem of maintaining security both nationally and internationally.

Asia is the world's most populous continent with an ongoing problem of high poverty, poor education, and high rates of unemployment. This combination makes Asia a breeding ground for criminal activity.



Caption #1: Storage of illicit drugs

Definition of Key Terms

United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP)

Established in 1991, this program works to educate the world about the dangers of drug abuse. The Programme aims to strengthen international action against drug production, trafficking and drug-related crime through alternative development projects, crop monitoring and anti-money laundering programmes. UNDCP also provides accurate statistics through the Global Assessment Programme (GAP) and helps to draft legislation and train judicial officials as part of its Legal Assistance Programme. UNDCP is part of the UN Office for Drug Control and the Prevention of Crime.

Drug Trafficking

The Smuggling and Dealing of illegal drugs; it also includes secretly importing prohibited goods such as illegal weapons, or goods on which duty (government taxes on imports and exports) is due.

Opium Wars

A series of wars fought between Qing China and Great Britain in the 19th century because of the latter's introduction of opium to the former and the former's refusal to accept it.

Golden Triangle

One of the Asia's two main opium-producing areas, including parts of Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam.

Black Market

the illicit buying and selling of goods in violation of legal price controls. This is the main route of trading illicit opium drugs, the black market are often hidden from plain site, and since there are no supervision and it is considered an unauthorized business practice, governments have little to no power over the them.

Background Information

Origins

Asia's drug related crisis has been years in the making and is mainly attributed to two geographical areas, the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle. The Golden Crescent is widely known as an area of illicit opium production consisting of: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, which holds major producers and consumers of opium. The Golden Triangle, which reigned in the Southeast Asia , is

less of a threat to national and international security, however, this region poses the biggest threat to the involvement of others crimes such as human trafficking, and prostitution.

Even though drug trafficking in Southeast Asia is not as prominent as in the middle east, it has a longer history of being involved in this crime. Before World War 2, in the 1930's ,heroin was largely produced in China. While Chinese-grown opium was used entirely for domestic consumption, some amount of it was exported to countries like the US. Raw opium from the other production centers was often exported to feed the growing worldwide demand for the drug during this period. In later years, opium cultivation rapidly spread amongst tribal people such as the Hmong and Mien in Laos. However, when World War 2 broke out, most trade routes that were used were blocked, which lead to the Hmongs in Laos to expand production into neighboring countries such as Myanmar and Thailand. Which only increased trafficking in those countries. A very famous drug trafficker and drug lord, who was named the 'King of The Golden Triangle', was Khun Sa. He created his own militia in 1963 and set up his own operations across the world.

As for the Golden Crescent, it's expansion began after the Soviet Union took power within the Afghanistan. The government of Afghanistan kept losing power over its provinces which allowed the already powerful drug lords to flourish and expand their business of opium production. In 1989, there was a major power vacuum in Afghanistan due to this repeated loss of power and lack of government control over the country. As a result, major Mujahideen factions started fighting against each other for power, which was financed by a higher volume of poppy cultivation. While Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan majorly ramped up production, cultivation and consumption, the Golden Triangle was at its peak with yields as great as 2500 tons of poppy annually.

Current Situation

Following in the footsteps of the Sinaloa cartel, the Cali and Medellin cartels, along with other Asian kingpins and gang leaders noticed the plethora of money that could be made through drug trafficking. This led to the creation of major drug gangs and corporations in countries such as India, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Laos just to name a few. The criminal groups in Asia learned that their mountains have the perfect conditions for them to cultivate and trade opium and heroin, the two most deadly drugs in the world.

All of the world's opium comes from Asia; out of which 90% is made in Afghanistan. These two drugs are very cheap to purchase and very easy to cultivate which makes it win-win situation for the drug gangs. They have collected large sums of money from simply smuggling through the borders into countries with high demand for such drugs. An important point of discussion is to understand that within Asia there are emerging powers and every country has their own border security to prevent such events from taking place. However, these gangs manage to conduct their activities with absolute ease. While

most of the drug being trafficked to other parts of the world, the countries that receive the highest volume of opium from Asia are Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

Tourism plays an important role in the continuous rise of drug trafficking. Supply and demand economics is the basis of the illicit drug trade; consumers of the illicit substances create the demand and the suppliers provide the substances. With the sturdy demand for drugs, the suppliers always find a method for supplying the despite the efforts of law enforcement. Currently 4.8% of the world's population uses illegal drugs annually, the most represented group being tourists, according to the 2007 World Drug Report, UNODC. The drug market is estimated to be the largest in value of all black markets, and it has been seen that the potential profit are significantly greater than other criminal activity. Drug trafficking has given criminal organizations the opportunity to obtain huge profits which may be used for other criminal or even political activities. Powerful gangs and criminal organizations have profound effects on local, as well as global economies

Major Parties and Countries Views

Thailand

Notoriously known for holding one of the world most famous drug lord Khun Sa, The Thai government has since been in a constant battle against Khun Sa clan even after his death. Many trade routes were mapped in Thailand, and to this day is still being continuously used for trafficking of heroin. Thailand's government has taken many measures to combat against the high trafficking of illegal drugs, but the problem doesn't seem to want to die down. Tourism being a large income of the country, makes it more challenging for the government to take action, the high demand for illicit drugs of tourists keeps pumping out more dealers.

Myanmar

Myanmar is the world's second largest producer of opium accounting for 25% of the entire world production. Furthermore, Myanmar is a major source of other illegal drugs including amphetamines. Although Opium bans were implemented since 2002, Myanmar fails to properly regulate the illicit drug trade taking place near the Thai border due to a lack of adequate infrastructure.

Laos

Laos is one of three countries in the opium poppy growing region known as the "Golden Triangle." According to the 2007 UNODC report, the poppy cultivation area in Laos was 15 km². Similar to Myanmar, drug control is not effective in Laos due to the remoteness of many cultivation areas, the lack of communication, and the scarcity in essential resources.

Timeline of Relevant, Treaties, and Events

Dates	Description of events
1850s	Chinese immigrants introduce opium to the West. A large wave of immigrants left their country in the 1850's to move west, bringing with them large quantities of Opium as a form of currency. When they arrived at the destination, they trade Opium as payment for shelter and food. Thus Opening the first trade route, and identifying customers for Asian drug lords to transport their product further into Europe and the Americas.
1939-1945	During the World War II, the outbreak of demand for illicit opium rose as the war spreaded closer to Southeast Asia. Popularly known for their amazing ability to treat many conditions, Amphetamine and methamphetamine were both pharmaceutical drugs used in many military forces as instant pain killers, Xanax was also used to help reduce the pain of wounds and to stabilize the mental fears of the soldiers. These pharmaceutical products are a combinations of Opium, poppy and other substances. Due to the high demands for these ingredients, the trafficking of illicit opium reached its golden age.
January 1996	<p>Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army, one of the most influential gangs and dealer of opium, was captured.</p> <p>Their base operation, which started out in Myanmar but later spread to Thailand, was attacked, this the first combat tactics against narcotics within the Southeast Asian region. This plan was carried out by the army forces of 3 nations to ensure the disband of the Mong Tai. Though to be a success the problem of drug trafficking in Asia had since slowly declined. However, recently, there have been signs of the clan's return after a decade of being absent.</p>
2003	The Paris Pact Initiative (PPI), was established with the goal of combating the trafficking of opium, and other narcotics, originating from Southeast Asia and Afghanistan, Their method of approaching this situation is through a balanced and comprehensive manner, recognizing that the problem of drug trafficking is a common responsibility. With 58 partner countries and 23 organizations, including UNODC, PPI is a credible source for statistical reports and effective measures.

2016 The Regional Programme (RP), constructed by the UNODC, allows the UNODC to interfere with any narcotics related issue in the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle, This is accomplished through means such as supporting nations financially and providing legal and military support to counter narcotics activities within these regions.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The issue of drug trafficking isn't the responsibility of one nation or one region, rather a global problem that needs to be stopped. With that interest, the United Nations, along with partner organizations, has come up with methods for countering drug trafficking and has recognized that it is crucial to continue to implement past frameworks while discussing new policies. Relevant UN treaties are as follow:

- Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs-**1961**
- United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances-**1988**
- the Commission on Narcotic Drugs - **1991**
- International Narcotics Control Board
- Thematic Debate of the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly - **26 June 2012**

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