

University of Alberta High School Model United Nations 2011

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime – The Question of Human Trafficking in Relation to the Trafficking of Narcotics

Scope of the Problem

Worth \$47 billion every year, the trafficking of narcotic drugs is an issue of immense international and national importance; proceeds from illegal narcotics sales are not only siphoned by international drug lords, but are used to fund entire national economies as well. While drug trafficking is a complex issue in itself, it is complicated by its relation to human trafficking. These two industries, through the use of human drug mules and other commonalities, often coincide in their sources of funding, routes, and prominent individuals. In this year's discussion, it is not only important to discuss a working definition of narcotics, but the involvement of human rights abuses in the trafficking of these drugs.

Over time, the term 'narcotic' has been used to refer to different things. Originally, the term referred to any psychoactive compound; however, the inclusion of substances such as caffeine in this definition, make it difficult to use. Today, narcotics are defined as any psychoactive that are also explicitly prohibited in certain amounts, such as opiates, amphetamines, and hallucinogens. Because different countries have different classification and legal approaches to controlled substances, the term narcotic in relation to specific substances in specific doses must be agreed upon. The UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances would be a sound place to begin your research on this facet of the issue.

Possible Solutions

While traditional methods of preventing drug trafficking have seen some success, they have not adequately grown to adapt to changing methods, including the use of human mules. For example, while a package containing illicit substances would be checked in airports or in the mail, it is exponentially more difficult to search and seize drugs when they are swallowed by mules in pill form, or are otherwise transported within the body of a person. Thus, airport security and border security, are issues that should be discussed within an international framework, if possible.

While once only a regional concern, due to globalization drug trafficking now affects every member of the global community. Focusing on the transport of drugs, particularly using human mules, it becomes clear that many of the things that we associate with globalization - communication, travel, tourism, transportation, financial transactions, and trade- aid the trafficking of illegal drugs. Globalization's push towards the deregulation, privatization, and outsourcing of governmental functions, has also compromised governments' abilities to police their borders.

Because of this, every country is affected and should have a role in making the resolution. There are, however, some countries which are more commonly brought up when speaking about certain drugs than others.

1. Afghanistan and Pakistan are infamous for their opium trafficking which leads to production of heroine. Revenue from opium sales goes mainly to the Taliban and so this issue will be a very volatile one for the two countries as well as for the United States.
2. Cocaine trafficking from Mexico and other Central American countries such as Columbia to the United States is a prominent issue as well.

Narcotics trafficking is a very volatile issue. Many profit from this business including governments and influential groups. This is why the UN Economic and Social Council created the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. This commission is the UN's major resource against the trafficking of narcotics and also uphold and implements the UN's three conventions on drug trafficking: the Single Convention of Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. These conventions complement each other and are responsible for keep specific drugs for medical purposes while keep these same drugs away from illicit purposes. They would be a good place to begin your research, and a centre around which the discussion could be framed.

Resources

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/index.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/special/math.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcotic>

Other Useful Sites:

<http://www.narcoterror.org/>

http://www.drugwarfacts.org/cms/Drug_Interdiction

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/factsht/crime/index.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/business/map.html>

Film: Maria Full of Grace