

University of Alberta High School Model United Nations 2011

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - The Question of Dealing with and Eradicating Illicit Drug Crops

Scope of the Problem

Only a cooperative international community can successfully address the question of dealing with and eradicating illicit drug crops. Illicit drug crops pose a threat not only in a domestic sense, but also an international one as it threatens the rule of law on a massive scale. The drug trade is, arguably, the most pervasive form of crime on the planet. In countries such as Afghanistan, cultivating opium (poppy) crops accounts for 90% of the nation's economy; a staggering dependency on an illicit industry. Trafficking of drugs frequently crosses international borders, spreading crime and violence in its wake, therefore affecting non-producing countries as well.

Production is one of the places in the illicit drug trade where the UN could potentially intervene. Production typically occurs in countries with limited resources of enforcement and weak economies. The agricultural production of staple crops is sometimes unprofitable for farmers in third world countries because the prices for staple crops are often low. These prices are made artificially low due to subsidization by other countries. The combination of these factors make the drug trade an attractive business for many people, and possibly the only profitable source of livelihood for people in these groups. From a warlord's perspective, the drug trade is viable for income because it is a quick way to make a profit and because in less developed nations there are many places to grow these crops outside of government control. The drug trade is extraordinarily profitable for those who can operate around the authorities.

Although hallucinogenic plants have been used for millennia, the abuse of these substances has sprouted in the last few hundred years. The mid-1800s saw the First Opium War between Britain and China, marking the first time a nation (China) attempted to stop the use of a drug in their population, although unsuccessfully. This was due to the international nature of the issue. In more modern times, nations have begun to cooperate and join forces against the illicit drug trade, as they agree on the issues more so now than in earlier times. Several treaties, including the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971) and the Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988) have been signed through the United Nations as an attempt to decrease illicit drugs. In 1998, a more thorough ten-year plan was created to reduce both the supply and demand of the illicit drug trade, but after the ten years were up, the results were deemed unsatisfactory. In March of 2009, a new twenty-year plan was formulated to eliminate the supply and demand of the drug trade. Opiates (such as heroin), cocaine and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) are the focus of the anti-illicit drug plans. Third world nations are faced with the production of illicit drugs and the aggressive, nearly impossible to control drug cartels that are in charge of drug trafficking. Western nations face the problem of the consumption of illicit drugs. International cooperation is key to eliminating illicit drugs.

Possible Solutions

Multiple approaches need to be taken to stop the drug trade, cutting it off at each level. To stop illicit drug production we need to work to develop third world countries where drug crops are currently being cultivated. International subsidies can be a useful tool to help the farmers switch from growing illicit crops to legal plants. Winning the fight against organized crime will decrease the influence of violent cartels and eventually work into stopping the trafficking routes of illicit drugs.

The countries that are mostly likely to want to voice their opinion on this issue are those located in the major drug production regions: the Golden Triangle (Vietnam, Laos, Burma, Thailand), the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran), and Equatorial America (Columbia, Mexico, Bolivia, Peru). Nations in Western Europe and the United States are also likely to have strong opinions.

Points of Contention:

Some topics of disagreement among nations may include the following:

What tactics should be used to eliminate illicit drug crops?

How will the fight against illicit drugs be funded?

Should the western world be responsible in aiding the undeveloped nations implement the decided plan of action?

To what extent should a plan of action be carried through?

What can be done with illicit drug crops in third world countries?

Does the international community have the right to monitor state illicit drug production?

What is the status of regions not under control of the state?

-For example, does the international community have the mandate to eradicate poppy fields in Afghanistan under Taliban control?

Resources:

Some sites that may help with research include:

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

The UNODC website- here you can find many links to current UN action plans against illicit drugs

http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2010/World_Drug_Report_2010_lo-res.pdf

This is the 2010 version of the annual World Drug Report released by the UNODC

[https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2086.html?countryName=&countryCode=®ionCode=X)

[factbook/fields/2086.html?countryName=&countryCode=®ionCode=X](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2086.html?countryName=&countryCode=®ionCode=X)

Here you can find the definition of some illicit drugs as well as how each country is affected by the drug trade

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/f728x2mp21354737/>

Here the Drug Trafficking Networks in Europe are described

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_199804/ai_n8802161/

A review of Drug Trafficking in the Americas

<http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php->

[URL_ID=6906&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL_ID=6906&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

The social and economic impact of drug trafficking

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1417&fuseaction=topics.event_summary&event_id=533255