

Drug Trafficking in the World

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Key Words : Drug Trafficking, Military threats, Paradigm shift

In earlier traditions, security has primarily meant responses to military threats to the sovereignty of states. Due to a paradigm shift after the end of the Cold War, broader definitions of security became important, which took into account ‘soft’ security issues and the corresponding threats: social, human and environmental. Drugs and drug trafficking has commonly been termed as a “new threat” in security studies. The United Nations Security Council for example classifies the international drug trafficking as a part of the threat of organised crime. The illegal trade in drugs and its ramifications in terms of political instability and cross border terrorism in large parts of the world has become a major problem. Drug trafficking has been restored to as a major fund raiser by terrorist organisations. Despite the declaration of “War on Drugs”, the fact remains that the problem is on the increase. The threat posed by drugs is unique: in the number of people it affects, the adverse impact it has on not only the social and economic, but also political lives of the individual citizens and the state. Drug traffickers getting the drugs from one continent, trafficking them to another, and marketing them in a third continent due to the organized transnational networks. The international drug trafficking situation prompts two observations: a) Organised crime networks involved in drug trafficking are transnational. They can adapt to the counter measures taken by individual States. b) All states are affected by drug trafficking in different ways; they can all agree to join in countering these trafficking by taking specific measures, according to their geographical location, the extent of their resources and the intensity of the threats that in particular affect them. Illicit markets and trafficking routes for drugs such as heroin, cocaine, crack and cannabis exist in many countries throughout the world. Illicit drug trafficking is a most profitable stage among cultivation and processing of the illicit drug to the point of final consumption. Along the many routes on which illicit drug traffic moves there appears to be some spillage, partly because of a tendency of traffickers to pay middlemen in kind.¹ UNODC *World Drug Report 2013* estimated that the manufacture and use of illegal substances.² As with practically all-illegal cocaine, which transits through West Africa originates in South America, where it is processed in Colombia and Peru using coca leaves grown in the same countries.³ Cocaine produced in the three Andean countries continues to be primarily destined for North America and West and Central Europe. 378 mt are estimated to have left the Andean region for North America in 2009. However, over the last few years, the importance

of North America has declined. The next main destinations were the countries of West and Central Europe, mostly direct shipments, though some trafficking also takes place via countries in Africa, notably West Africa (around 13 per cent of all trafficking to Europe).⁴ The trafficking of illegal drugs takes place in Trinidad and Tobago, like the rest of the Caribbean as a trans-shipment point for illegal drugs to North America and Europe.⁵

The amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)⁶ market has been overall stabilised. The UNODC estimates that there were between 14 million and 56 million users of amphetamines⁷ worldwide in 2009, a significant proportion of whom live in Asia, where the synthetic stimulant most used is, overwhelmingly, methamphetamine.⁸ Illicit methamphetamine is predominantly produced near its main consumer markets in East and South-East Asia, North America and Oceania.⁹ Usually, the majority of methamphetamine is produced domestically in the USA with the precursor chemicals smuggled into this country via Canada or Mexico. Due to combined effort of USA and Canada led to the shutdown of lot of covert laboratories operating within the USA and a shift of production across the border to Mexico. The use of cannabis, opioids, and opiates has gone up in 2009 and in the time frame 2009 to 2011 following a declining trend for the use of cocaine, amphetamine-type stimulants and “ecstasy” group substances.¹⁰

The logic of market, “supply and demand” law applies to the trade of illegal drug markets as well, as in the case of other commodities. Because of illicit nature of the trade, supply and demand depends on one another in multiple ways; there is no simple link between them. For example, a significant drug supply in trafficking transit regions appears to encourage demand in places where there was previously none.¹¹ Drug traffickers generally explore the route through politically instable and economically deprived areas and corruption has invalidate the interdiction. Illicit drug organisations, independent of their level of organization and sophistication, are adaptive and creative when it comes to distribution. African region is increasingly being exploited by drug traffickers and this trend can be expected to continue. A very careful attention is required for the trafficking routes appearing from Afghanistan via Pakistan and Central Asia to China which is seen as another potential growth area for drug traffickers.¹²

Africa:

On December 8, 2009, the U.N. Security Council held a special session on “drug trafficking as a threat to international peace and security with a focus on Africa.”¹³ Recently *World Drug Report 2013* indicates that, the African region continuously becoming vulnerable to the illicit trade and organized crime. Which may increase the political and economic instability in many countries in the region, it can also lead to an increase in the local availability and consumption of illicit substances.¹⁴ Drug traffickers have drawn to West Africa for the entry of cocaine into the region. This only happened due to weak state and security institutions. UNODC reported that West Africa is rapidly developing into a major smuggling route for cocaine from Latin America through and into Europe.¹⁵ A dramatic increase in smuggling of illegal drugs generally cocaine and heroin has been seen in the West Africa region. In the year 2009 total seizures was 6,500 kilos in this region and a decade ago, it was 100 kilos. The street value of cocaine (\$6.8 billion) estimated by World Bank in 2011 was trafficked through the region.¹⁶ The flow of cocaine through West Africa appears to have declined to about 18 tons, down from a peak of 47 tons in 2007.¹⁷

The means to counter drug trafficking are very minimal in West Africa. Weak legislation against trafficking in precursor chemicals in most African countries makes it easy to obtain chemicals

for illicit drug manufacture.¹⁸ In 2008, most of the cocaine entered Africa through Guinea-Bissau and Ghana and then smuggled to Europe by boat or commercial flights destined for France, the United Kingdom and Spain.¹⁹ The amounts trafficked via Africa to Europe, however, seem to have decreased in 2008 and 2009, and only partly resumed in 2010.²⁰ The drug traffickers continually used the African region as a trade route for Cannabis and ship Afghan heroin to final destinations in Europe, North America and other region. Though East Africa was reportedly the main intermediate target for these trafficking activities. Heroin is smuggled by air from South-West Asia through East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania) and West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria) into Europe and through West Africa into North America. Estimates suggest that 40-45 mt of Afghan heroin was trafficked to Africa in 2009²¹.

Americas:

In recent decades, Latin America has played a central role in several major global illicit drug markets.²² Multiple aspects of the drug supply chain take place in the region, including drug crop cultivation, drug production, drug trafficking, and, ultimately, drug consumption. South America has been the largest producer of cocaine for the global market. Mexico is the primary source for opiates and cannabis (marijuana) consumed in the United States. According to the U.S government's 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, more than 22 million Americans age 12 and older nearly 9 per cent of the U.S. population use illegal drugs.²³ For years, Central America has served as a one-way transit route for drugs traveling north toward the United States. After eradication of drug trafficking in Mexico 84 per cent of illegal cocaine reaches U S through Central America.²⁴ Furthermore, criminal groups operating from neighbouring Mexico smuggle cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, amphetamine, and marijuana into the United States. In 1970s these felonius groups distributed heroin and marijuana throughout the United States smuggled from Southwest Border. The "northern triangle" of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador has become greatly destabilized, and appears to be undergoing a rapid transformation into the new frontier for dangerous Mexican cartels. In 2011 Guatemala transported 60 percent of drugs in transit from South American-drug producing countries to the U.S.²⁵

North America is a large producer of cannabis. In recent year cannabis herb seizures in North and South America have reached dangerous level. It was most visible in several country of South America in the year 2009-10. In the year 2009 and 2010 in Colombia, cannabis herb seizures rose from 209 to 255 tons and in Brazil, cannabis herb seizures of 155 tons in 2010 and in 2009 seizures reached 84 tons in Paraguay, where extensive cultivation of cannabis has been reported.²⁶

Asia:

Asia, continuously develop as a major production and trafficking hub for ATS, accounting for 64 per cent of all such seizures worldwide in 2009. Both amphetamine and methamphetamine seizures increased in Asia over the 2005-2009 period (by 59 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively). The United Nations says increased trafficking and use of amphetamine type stimulants, or ATS, as well as the illicit production and abuse of drugs is a growing problem in Asia.²⁷ Users within the region consume the large amount of the ATS produced in the Asia and Pacific region. Large quantities of "ecstasy" are illicitly produced in Australia and Indonesia, and possibly also in China, Malaysia, Myanmar and New Zealand.²⁸ Myanmar ranked fourth of the countries in East and South-East Asia that are most frequently cited as a source of methamphetamine (both crystalline methamphetamine and methamphetamine tablets). Some armed tribal groups independent from the

central Government operating near Myanmar's Shan State's various Special Regions near the eastern border with China and Thailand, engaged in production of methamphetamine tablets because laboratories in these areas operate without fear of government forces, few significant seizures of precursor chemicals, ATS end products or clandestine laboratories occur.²⁹ In its global drug report released Tuesday, the U.N.'s Office on Drugs and Crime says "the trend is especially troubling in China and South East Asia and Asia accounts for about half of the world's ATS users." Opium production in the region also is on the rise, but opium production and use in the rest of the world has largely stabilized.³⁰

The drug market in Asia is mainly flooded with opium and heroin. The illegal drugs are trafficked and consumed within the region and finally to European markets.³¹ From the late seventies heroin processed from Afghani opium has been routed via India for export to other countries. The border areas along the states of Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Jammu and Kashmir have been utilised for this purpose. India is also passage country for drug traffickers, like cocaine is trafficked to India from South American in small quantities where it is exchanged for South-West Asian heroin bound for Europe or North America. Cross-border smuggling is relatively easy due to the porous borders between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. India is geographically situated between the countries of Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent and is a transit point for narcotic drugs produced in these regions to the West.³² The opium production fell to 3,600 tons in 2010 but resurged to 5,800 tons in 2011 in Afghanistan. Estimated opium production increased from 4,700 tons in 2010 to 7,000 tons in 2011, reaching levels comparable to the levels of previous years. Expressed as a proportion of the global illicit opium production, Afghanistan's share rose from around 20 per cent in 1980 to 70 per cent in 2000, and to more than 90 per cent since 2006. This is directly related to decreased output in the 'Golden Triangle'. But in 2011, a considerable increase in potential production of opium was reported in South-East Asia.³³ Afghanistan is estimated to produce 3,700 tons in 2012.³⁴

The republics of Central Asia have been infiltrated with Afghan opium and this has caused many social, political and economic problems as criminal groups are exerting an increasing amount of influence on the already weak political apparatus of the Central Asian States.³⁵ The heroin smuggled to Europe via Balkan route from Afghanistan was estimated as one third of total heroin produced in 2012.³⁶ Opiate seizures in Central Asia has largely been concentrated in Tajikistan, where the majority of drugs are assumed to cross the border from Afghanistan following the "northern route" towards their primary markets in the Russian Federation and Europe.³⁷ After crossing the Afghanistan Pakistan (Baluchistan) border same drugs are transported across the Iranian province of, Sistan, Balochistan for onward movement towards Turkey and Western Europe.³⁸ Some of the Pakistani shipments end up in the major port of Karachi or the smaller, more remote port of Bandar Abbas and then transit the Gulf countries to Europe.³⁹

In the recent years the hashish trade has grown in Central Asia, which rival Morocco, the primary supplier of Europe. All of Afghanistan's neighbours have reported increase in cannabis seizures, and cannabis production has been reported in 20 of Afghanistan's 33. The UNODC estimates that over three-quarters of the heroin sold in Europe, and virtually all heroin sold in Russia and Central Asian States, originates in Afghanistan. Central Asia has become a principal transporter for Afghan-origin opium and heroin ineffective border controls and weak drug prohibition capability. The easy accessibility of opiates in Central Asia has also a result of spread of HIV/AIDS. There has been a 30 per cent increase in the number of officially registered cases of HIV/AIDS in Central Asia, from 14,799 cases in 2005 to 19,197 in 2006, mainly due to injecting drug abuse.⁴⁰

Europe:

Cannabis continues to be the most prevalent drug in Europe. 49 per cent of total global seizures of cannabis were found in Europe in 2009. Cannabis resin found on the European market originates primarily in Morocco.⁴¹ Moroccan cannabis resin is typically smuggled into Europe through the Iberian Peninsula, with the Netherlands and Belgium having a role as secondary distribution and storage centers and more limited trafficking elsewhere. Use of light aircraft to smuggle drugs across borders is not new, it may have increased between the African coast and the Iberian Peninsula in recent years. The drug trafficked is primarily cannabis resin, which is flown from Morocco in batches of between 100 kg and 1.5 tonnes per flight.⁴² According to the seizure cases cocaine trafficked by air are higher in Europe, still the most favoured route used for trafficking is sea route. In recent year the naval containers have increased for trafficking of cocaine into the EU. Cocaine importation and distribution in Europe is mainly concentrated in West European countries. The Iberian Peninsula is considered the main entry point for cocaine into Europe.⁴³

Practically the entire heroin in European illicit drug markets comes from Afghanistan. The conflict in Georgia, has reportedly led to an increase in the volume of heroin trafficking from that country to Europe via the Black Sea. Turkey is the main corridor for heroin consignments destined for Western Europe.⁴⁴ Heroin seizures are mostly concentrated in South-East Europe (63 per cent of all heroin seizures in Europe), mainly reflecting the strong seizure efforts of Turkey as heroin is shipped via the Islamic Republic of Iran to Turkey and then along the various branches of the 'Balkan route to western Europe.'⁴⁵ Organised crime groups from this region have established operational bases in Latin America for sourcing cocaine directly from producers and for the logistical support for the trafficking of cocaine to Europe.⁴⁶ The smuggled of Heroin for local consumption in Russian Federation and also for European Union member States come along so-called "silk route" through Central Asia. The bulk of the heroin trafficked along this route (approximately 55 to 60 mt) travels to Germany and the Netherlands through Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary and Austria, or through Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Austria. From Germany and the Netherlands, heroin shipments are trafficked onwards to larger markets in France, the United Kingdom and Spain.⁴⁷ However in 2010 and 2011, direct shipments from Pakistan and Islamic Republic of Iran and via Africa to Western and Central Europe have emerged.⁴⁸

Oceania:

The amounts of drugs seized in Oceania tend to be very small by international standards. Significant ATS manufacture occurs throughout Oceania (methamphetamine and, to a lesser extent, amphetamine and ecstasy) (UNODC, 2010b, *World Drug Report*; 96). In addition to domestic supply significant amounts of ecstasy by local standards are still being smuggled from Europe and South-East Asia into Oceania (notably Australia). Cannabis continues to be the drug most often used in Oceania. International Narcotics Control Board indicated that, 14.6 per cent population of New Zealand (highest in the world) aged between 14 -64 year consume cannabis.⁴⁹ After cannabis, the second largest seizures in volume terms were of cocaine, accounting for 0.04 per cent of global seizures. Cocaine seizures increased over the 2005-2008 period, but declined again in 2009. Cocaine is trafficked from South America to Australia.

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