

# USAID Battles Narcotics

*Attacking a Global Problem at Its Roots*

**B**ecause poor farmers in developing countries grow the majority of the world's illicit narcotics, USAID is at the nexus of the drug control problem," says Richard Bissell, assistant administrator of the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination.

USAID's narcotics control activities of the 1980s predate the Federal Drug Abuse Strategy, adopted in 1984. However, the Agency as an institution now is more involved than ever before, he says.

"The narcotics issue has taken on new meaning for USAID," says Bissell. "We are committed to making even stronger efforts in the future. We will be held to this commitment because now there are very strong sanctions attached to the failure to combat the illicit drug industry in a number of USAID-assisted countries."

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 requires the automatic withholding of 50% of most forms of U.S. assis-

*"The inherent violence associated with illicit drug trade is a major concern in USAID's efforts to promote democracy."*

tance to major illicit drug-producing and drug-transit countries during the first half of each fiscal year.

Subject to congressional review, the sequestered funds will be released only if the President certifies to Congress that the country has "cooperated fully with the United States" or has "taken adequate steps on its own" to prevent the sale or transport of illicit drugs to the United States and to prevent the laundering of drug profits. Funds also may be released on the basis of the President's certification that U.S. "vital national interests" require providing the assistance. The certification is provided to Congress



on an annual basis; the deadline for 1987 was March 1

Of the countries involved, the President certified all but three—Afghanistan, Syria and Iran. Two countries, Laos and Lebanon, were not certified but were granted waivers on grounds of national interest.

Congress did not enact resolutions disapproving certification for any country in 1987. However, if Congress does so in subsequent years, the sequestered funds—under existing law—can then be reprogrammed by the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics Matters (INM) for purposes of interdiction and eradication.

"In essence, the funding is lost to this Agency, and that suspension of USAID support to a country is in effect for one year, until the next annual cycle of the certification process," says Bissell. He points out that the sanctions affect not only the Agency's bilateral programs, but that decertification also means a loss of U.S. backing for loans from multi-lateral development banks.

"This is the first year we have gone through this particular exercise with these kinds of stakes," he says.

## Fighting on All Fronts

To meet the increased demands and to improve communications concerning the Agency's narcotics control efforts in developing countries, USAID has established an office to coordinate all narcotics-related activities. The office is headed by Joseph A. Esposito, who for five years has overseen USAID's narcotics activities in the Asia and Near East region.

"As increased attention is directed toward the Agency's narcotics-related programs, we need to ensure a better understanding of how USAID interacts with the U.S. government's anti-narcotics efforts," Esposito says.

The Agency works closely with the White House, State Department, U.S. Information Agency (USIA) and other government agencies as well as with international organizations such as the U.N. Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

"We also intend to step up efforts to provide information to our missions in the field regarding problems

and successes in USAID narcotics-related programs, just as we share information in other sectors," he says.

The anti-drug effort has become a critical element in policy dialogue, not only because of the Omnibus Drug Act, but because it is a major domestic issue on the agenda of many of these countries as well, according to Esposito.

"Where many producing countries once saw the issue of drugs as only a U.S. problem, they now realize it is a matter of serious domestic concern, as well. They are witnessing growing addiction rates among their own people. Environmental damage also is occurring in some countries as farmers strip mountainsides of trees and vegetation to plant poppy and coca. And, drug-related violence in some countries is leading to a breakdown of civil order and a distortion of national life. Governments realize they cannot allow this to continue without facing chaos down the road."

Esposito points out that economic development assistance alone will

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not eliminate the illicit drug industry. "No one crop can provide an economic substitute for the income farmers can earn from producing narcotics. Effective policies and law enforcement measures are also necessary," he says. "There must be linkage between development and enforcement. USAID is not involved in eradication efforts, which are the direct responsibility of the host government, but eradication is essential to the success of any anti-narcotics program."

It is important, he says, that the anti-drug campaign have broadly-based public support in the country and that it be led by the country itself, not perceived as a program imposed by the United States.

"We want to avoid the subject becoming a domestic political problem in which governments are accused of

taking action only because of outside pressure. This can be enormously disruptive to mobilizing the kind of public support necessary for these efforts to succeed," Esposito says. "USAID's purpose is to lend the type of catalytic support that can be decisive to the success of indigenous activities."

## Education: A First Step

To help generate public support, USAID is increasing its efforts in narcotics awareness programs. Included in the Drug Act of 1986 is authorization for an additional \$3 million in Development Assistance funds this fiscal year for "activities aimed at increasing awareness of the effects of production and trafficking of illicit narcotics on source and transit countries." The funds may be used to support ongoing awareness programs or to initiate new projects.

In the allocation of funds, the bureaus for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and Asia and Near East (ANE) have been given broad discretion in programming. "The bureaus are encouraged to design and implement activities in consultation with USIA and INM representatives. If feasible, projects should involve co-financing or complementary projects by these two organizations," Esposito says.

In addition, USAID is stressing private sector involvement in narcotics awareness activities. "When governments cannot even afford to take care of such fundamental concerns as overcoming basic childhood diseases, they certainly cannot afford the costs associated with drug addiction," he says. "To address the drug problem requires the cooperation of all elements of society."

According to Craig Buck, director of the Office of South American and Mexican Affairs and LAC anti-narcotics coordinator, the \$2.2 million allocation that the bureau will receive from the congressionally-mandated fund will support expansion of existing programs and establishment of pilot programs in Bolivia, Belize, Jamaica, Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico. The allocation will be com-

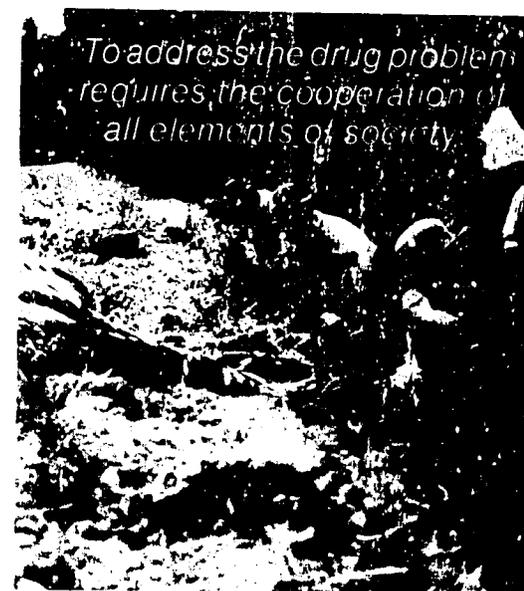
plemented by additional funds from the bureau's budget.

"Almost all of our drug awareness activities are carried out through the private sector because it is the driving force in efforts to increase knowledge about the indigenous drug problem," says Buck.

He explains that the enormous economic power wielded by drug traffickers in the region poses a major threat to legitimate business. "In the case of Bolivia, for example, the potential is very real for drug dealers to virtually control the formal economy at some point in the future. In the process of laundering drug profits through 'front' businesses, they undercut legitimate businessmen and drive them to bankruptcy."

A USAID program in Bolivia provides support to the Confederation of Bolivian Private Entrepreneurs, an activist organization concerned with narcotics money penetrating legitimate business. The \$500,000 grant agreement calls for the development of a comprehensive narcotics awareness program. A USAID-funded series of graphic documentaries, produced by Bolivians, on the harmful effects of coca production on the economy and society already has been shown at length on Bolivian television.

"To indicate the difficulties faced by those in the forefront of the anti-narcotics effort—and also a measure of the success of the broadcast—the producer of the programs has been threatened by narcotics traffickers because of the message he was able to get across," says Buck.



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The great wealth and inherent violence associated with the illicit drug trade are major concerns in USAID's efforts to promote democracy and a competitive and viable private sector in Latin America, Buck says.

"The potential link between nar-

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cotics producers and terrorist groups in this region also is a priority issue for the national leadership in both the public and private sectors. In Peru, the "Sendero Luminoso" (Shining Path) terrorist organization is believed to have some ties to the drug trade, and in Colombia, M-19 terrorists may be funded by drug traffickers."

In Peru, a group of 80 prominent citizens from all walks of life, bound by their concern over the implications of the drug problem for national survival, in October 1986 formed the Center of Information and Education for the Prevention of Drug Abuse (CEDRO). USAID supports the activities of CEDRO through a \$4 million Drug Education and Public Awareness project.

CEDRO serves as a clearinghouse for information on the drug problem for a nationwide network of organizations it has helped establish. The organization is carrying out a multi-

media drug awareness campaign via television, radio, theaters and the press.

Through the project, USAID also funded a national epidemiological survey to determine the prevalence and incidence of drug abuse in Peru. The survey results, which confirmed a dramatic increase in per capita drug use, were made public at a news conference in November 1986 attended by all major Peruvian newspaper, radio and television organizations.

In Ecuador and Belize, USAID is working with the private sector and private voluntary organizations in establishing narcotics awareness programs. And, in Jamaica the Agency is funding a survey to determine the extent of domestic drug abuse.

## A Coordinated Attack

In the Asia and Near East region, USAID is designing a regional narcotics awareness program based on the results of a survey undertaken in Pakistan, Nepal, Thailand, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Burma, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. The survey was completed in May 1987.

"A regional program will provide a centralized capability to support efforts in individual missions to develop narcotics-related activities," says James Norris, deputy assistant administrator of ANE.

"The program will vary from country to country," he says, "depending on the nature and magnitude of the problem and the most productive vehicles for addressing it."

In addition to initiating a regional program, USAID is supporting a narcotics awareness program in Pakistan linked to integrated development activities in opium-producing regions. Through such area-targeted programs, USAID provides comprehensive agricultural services to farmers, vocational training and infrastructure improvements. The primary objective is to provide rural populations economic alternatives to illicit narcotics production.

The importance of public education for laying the groundwork for successful eradication and supporting area-targeted activities can be seen in

the Pakistani experience, says Norris.

"From the late-1970s to the early-1980s, Pakistan went from being a major producing nation with no real addiction problem to one that now has a large domestic addiction problem," he says.

## The Pakistan Experience

In support of government eradication efforts in the Gadoon-Amazai region of Pakistan, USAID launched in 1983 a five-year, \$20 million Northwest Frontier Area Development (NWFAD) project designed to offer farmers alternative sources of income in traditional poppy-growing areas. The NWFAD project links these development activities to a strict schedule of narcotics enforcement by the government of Pakistan.

"In 1986 the government's eradication efforts came to a grinding halt when violence resulted between farmers and government eradication workers," says Norris. "The subject became a major domestic political issue with newspaper articles and statements by members of parliament expressing sympathy for the farmers. This was in part due to Pakistan's internal domestic political situation but also because public opinion had not fully coalesced to see narcotics as a major domestic problem."

To increase public understanding, USAID has helped the Pakistan Narcotics Control Board develop an anti-drug mass-media campaign and information center.

"At the beginning of 1986-87 the growing season, the government laid the groundwork very carefully, working closely with the local leadership so that people understand the risks the country is facing from the narcotics problem," he says. "Members of parliament now quite clearly understand the significance of the problem and so do journalists. The nature of articles and comments by public figures were enormously different from the previous year.

"The government has made it very clear at all levels that planting poppy is going to result in eradication," says Norris. "Either farmers can remove



it voluntarily, or the government will remove it forcibly and do aerial spraying."

As a result of Pakistan's narcotics-control efforts, USAID is planning to expand the NWFAD project into other poppy-growing areas of the Northwest Frontier Province. "These areas are very remote, but the government of Pakistan is determined to expand its eradication efforts and has asked for USAID's assistance," says Norris.

USAID also assisted the government in organizing the multidonor Special Development and Enforcement Plan (SDEP) to internationalize the concern and funding for narcotics control in Pakistan. Administered by UN-DAC and with a U.S. contribution of \$10 million for expansion of the NWFAD project, the SDEP umbrella program now has gained the financial support of other donors, including Italy, Great Britain, Canada, West Germany and the Netherlands.

In Thailand, USAID has funded \$10 million to support an integrated development project in the Mae Chaem watershed. A major innovation of the program is the "Land Use Certification Program," which provides certificates to farmers with the specific stipulation that if the recipient grows narcotics, he will lose title to the land, in addition to being subject to criminal penalties.

In conjunction with the project, USAID also has funded a drug rehabilitation center to treat hill tribe opium addicts in the project area. In addition, the mission is considering assistance to the hill tribes radio station for narcotics-related educational programming.

To reach a broader audience, the mission encourages U.S. and Thai private volunteer organizations to submit anti-narcotics proposals for consideration. In August 1986, USAID awarded a \$345,000 grant to CARE to work with the Royal Thai Government Ministry of Education to develop supplementary teaching and reading materials in narcotics education and related areas.

In the LAC region, USAID has targeted the Chapare region of Bolivia



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and the Upper Huallaga region of Peru for integrated development activities.

The Chapare project focuses on infrastructure improvement, agricultural and forestry production, agribusiness development and marketing, and institutional development. "We are attempting to provide an economic 'safety net' to meet the basic human needs of those farmers who are cooperating in the government's anti-narcotics efforts," says Buck.

Similar programs are included in the USAID project in the Upper Huallaga Valley in Peru, but extreme violence carried out by narcotics traffickers and Sendero Luminoso terrorists has disrupted key activities and hampered progress in the area. At last count, says Buck, 17 people involved in the anti-narcotics effort had been killed.

"The governments of Peru and Bolivia have taken very courageous steps in making the difficult political decisions to continue eradication efforts in the face of such obstacles," Buck says. In addition to allowing U.S. troops to participate in Operation Blast Furnace in 1986, Bolivia soon will adopt a three-year program under which the government intends

to destroy all illicit coca production, he says.

In Peru, the government continues to maintain the strong security presence in the Upper Huallaga area essential to eradication efforts, even though faced with major political problems and terrorist violence.

To counter the influence of narcotics traffickers and terrorists and to strengthen government authority in the Upper Huallaga Valley, an amendment to the project was approved in fiscal 1986 through which USAID obligated \$5.4 million in Economic Support Funds to carry out high-impact community development activities.

USAID also is coordinating with the U.N. Fund for Drug Abuse Control in the Upper Huallaga area and with British, Canadian and Dutch government representatives in Peru to encourage their participation in the valley's development and in narcotics awareness activities.

A new USAID program in the LAC region, though not designed as part of the U.S. anti-narcotics strategy, is helping to support the objectives of that effort. The Administration of Justice program is intended to strengthen democracy in the region by improving the independence, efficiency and fairness of the judicial system. "Improvements in the judicial system relating to criminal justice should result in more effective prosecution of narcotics traffickers as well as a strengthened capacity to enforce laws relating to narcotics abuse," says Buck.

"The key point in the battle against narcotics is that you cannot focus on just one aspect of the problem," Esposito emphasizes. "It must be fought on all fronts."

"This is a long-term problem, and there are no easy solutions," he says. "We are, however, seeing modest successes from our efforts in a wide range of activities. Further success will require persistence and creativity in addressing the problem."

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