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**A.I.D. and Narcotics Control:
An Issue Brief**

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SUMMARY

A.I.D. has participated in narcotics control activities for more than two decades, but Agency involvement in these activities has reached an unprecedented level in the early 1990s. The importance that America has placed on the drug issue has generated the U.S. war on drugs and in turn increased the funding for A.I.D.'s narcotics control portfolio. A.I.D.'s experience in previous counter-narcotics projects has been disappointing, particularly in crop substitution. A central lesson learned from this experience is that A.I.D. assistance needs to go beyond crop substitution to support development activities likely to offer the most viable alternatives to narcotics production regardless of sector or location as well as efforts in narcotics awareness and policy dialogue. But the most fundamental lesson learned is that, without the strong coordinated efforts of the host country, U.S. government agencies, other donors, and bordering countries, along with simultaneous efforts to reduce international demand, A.I.D.-supported activities, no matter how well designed, will have little or no lasting impact on the international narcotics problem.

BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

Narcotics--the Domestic and Foreign Policy Issue

The issue of narcotics assumed prominence as a domestic policy issue in the United States during the 1980s. Narcotics ranked as a leading concern of American voters throughout the decade, but by the late 1980s a majority of Americans viewed the problem of illegal drugs, particularly crack cocaine, as the most important national issue. Estimates of the impact of illegal drugs substantiate the concerns of many Americans:¹

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- ▶ As many as 25 million Americans used or sold illegal drugs during the 1980s
 - ▶ Gross annual profits from illegal drug sales are estimated as high as \$110 billion--more than double the profits enjoyed by all the fortune 500 companies combined
 - ▶ Three-quarters of all robberies in the 1980s were drug related
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The fact that about four-fifths of the narcotics consumed in America are produced in foreign countries also defines narcotics as a foreign policy issue. Narcotics and the powerful traffickers associated with it corrupt democratic systems, threaten judicial systems, jeopardize basic human rights, distort national economies, abet insurgency groups, and accelerate environmental damage. The international illicit drug industry is a highly sophisticated multinational enterprise financing the criminal activity of very powerful mafias and cartels.

Illicit drug production and consumption occurs in virtually every part of the world, thereby making the issues of production, trafficking, and money laundering truly transnational ones. The calls for action against narcotics by diverse nations at numerous

international fora attest to the international scope of the drug problem. Although most narcotics are produced in developing countries and consumed in developed countries, that once stark dichotomy is fading. Developing countries increasingly face their own consumption problems. For example, Pakistan, Iran, and Thailand recently have become net importers of opium produced by their neighbors in Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Laos. Likewise, the consumption of highly toxic cocaine derivatives has proliferated in the Andean region. In contrast, not only developing countries produce narcotics; the United States continues to be a major supplier of much of its own marijuana consumption.

Despite these trends, the foreign policy controversies surrounding narcotics still tend to place developing countries in conflict with developed countries and vice versa. One of the reasons for this friction is that, despite the detrimental effects of narcotics mentioned above, the cultivation of illicit crops remains extremely lucrative for peasants from Bolivia's Chapare to Pakistan's North West Frontier area. Therefore, the economic and political costs to the leaders of developing countries for eradicating narcotics are high. Since crops such as poppy and coca have long cultural traditions in these societies, these leaders must face cultural and nationalistic challenges as well. The continued strong demand for narcotics in developed countries fuels the huge profits of the international drug trade, which processes and markets the illicit crops, the same ones the developed countries state that they are eager to eliminate.

The U.S. War on Drugs and A.I.D.'s Role

Congress's passage of the Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 and the Bush Administration's release of the September 1989 *National Drug Control Strategy* represented the first integrated national approach to narcotics control, consolidating policies to reduce both supply and demand. In addition to the consolidation of approaches, the war on drugs established a Drug Czar office in the White House (the Office of National Drug Control Policy--ONDCP) and provided greatly increased resources, a requested \$11.7 billion for FY 1992 up from \$6.4 billion in FY 1989, to fight drugs. The international portion of the national drug control budget is expected to rise by 156 percent from \$304 million in FY 1989 to \$779 million in FY 1992. (See Figure 1.) Over the same FY 1989 to FY 1992 time period, the requested funding for A.I.D. is planned to expand by 1,738 percent, from \$16 million in FY 1989 to \$294 million in FY 1992.

The major actors among the international agencies are the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics Matters (INM), A.I.D., the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Department of Defense (DOD), and the United States Information Agency (USIA). The State Department, through INM, is the coordinator of U.S. drug control activities overseas. INM's portfolio includes enforcement, eradication, crop substitution, and other activities. State also provides military assistance for counter-narcotics purposes. A.I.D. mainly funds crop or income substitution projects and narcotics education and awareness projects. The DEA is the key agency mandated to interdict narcotics in the processing and trafficking stages. DOD's role is minor and includes logistical support, mostly in the form of

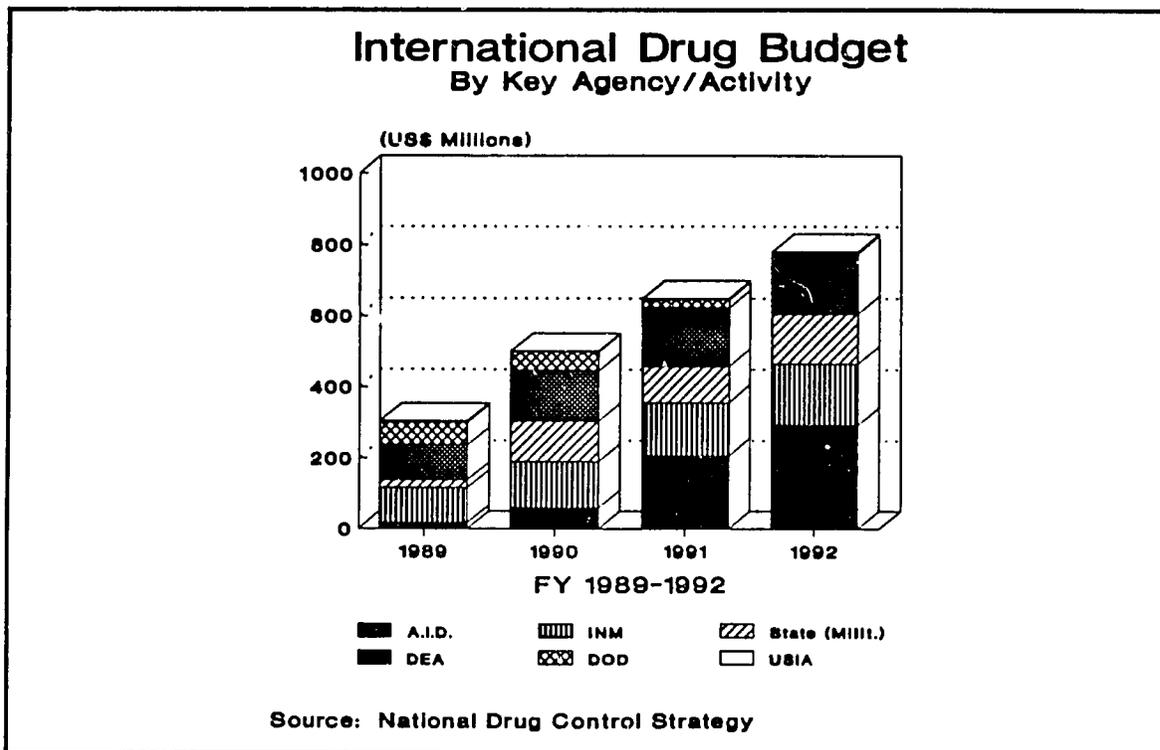


Figure 1

equipment. USIA maintains modest public education campaigns in numerous countries worldwide. A.I.D. interacts with all of these agencies in Washington through a coordination mechanism under the ONDCP. In the field, A.I.D. coordinates with INM via the Narcotics Assistance Units of the U.S. Embassy and with the DEA.

The drastic rise in resources for the drug war, for A.I.D. in particular, is primarily the result of the Andean Initiative, agreed to by President Bush and the presidents of Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia on February 16, 1990. The Initiative plans to provide \$2.2 billion to the region over a five-year period beginning in FY 1990, roughly half of which will go to A.I.D., reflecting the Andean countries preference for economic development assistance over military assistance. It is precisely this Andean Initiative funding that has caused most of the great increase in A.I.D. resources discussed above. As such, A.I.D. has entered the drug war in a very prominent way. These events have heightened the Agency's profile on the drug issue as well as the expectations of the Congress and executive branch agencies for greater results.

A.I.D.'s Experience in Counter-Narcotics Assistance

From the late 1960s to the early 1990s, A.I.D. has provided counter-narcotics assistance to over twenty-five developing countries. Approximately 90 percent of these counter-narcotics resources, however, have gone into only a few countries: Bolivia, Pakistan, Peru, and Thailand for the purpose of crop substitution.² By contrast, less than 10

percent of the total has been directed toward narcotics awareness and education projects (NAE) in roughly twenty-five countries. (See Figure 2 to compare spending by activity.)

Initially, A.I.D. provided counter-narcotics assistance in the form of crop substitution and public-safety assistance. Legislation enacted in 1974 prohibited A.I.D. from providing assistance in the areas of public safety and law enforcement as of July 1975. With the establishment of INM in 1978, the State Department officially absorbed all the law enforcement components of A.I.D.'s counter-narcotics portfolio.

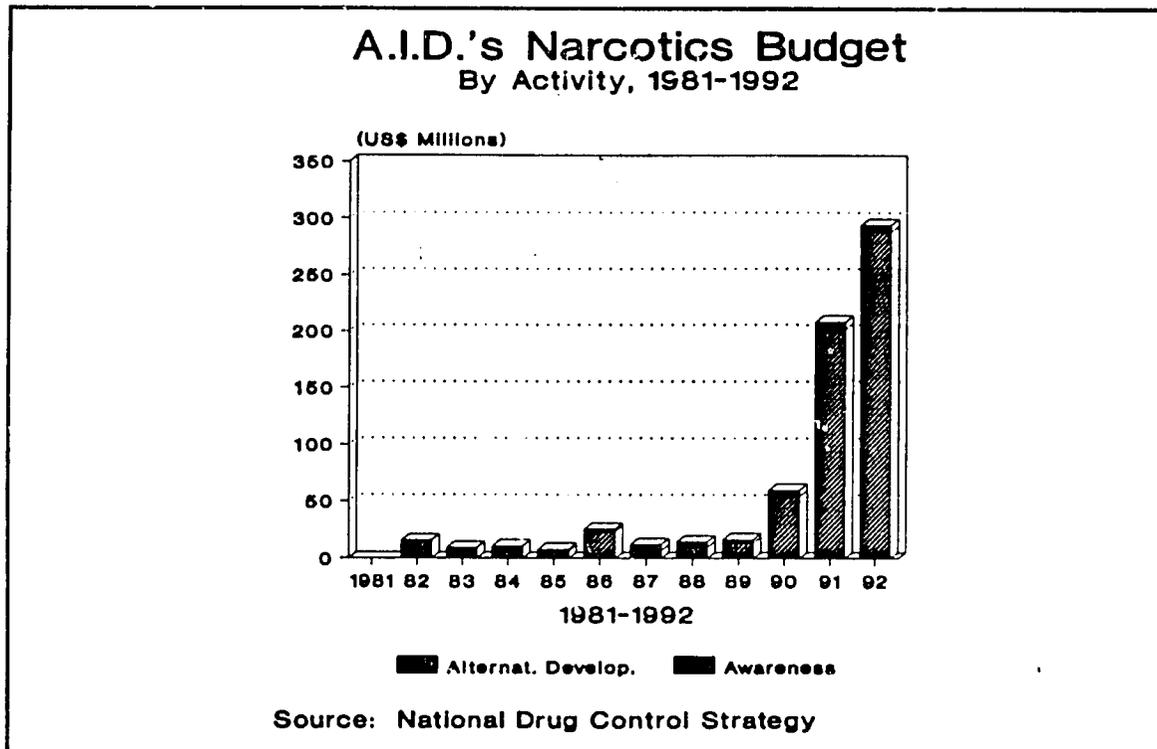


Figure 2

Section 126 of the Foreign Assistance Act, enacted in 1981 and entitled "Development and Illicit Narcotics Production," (the Gilman Amendment), mandates A.I.D. to "give priority consideration to programs which would help reduce illicit narcotics cultivation by stimulating broader development opportunities." As a result of the Gilman Amendment, the A.I.D. Administrator in 1982 issued a narcotics policy. The main points were:³

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- ▶ Provide economic alternatives to farmers in narcotics growing areas, including support for appropriate local non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
 - ▶ Cooperate with other U.S. government agencies in support of narcotics control
 - ▶ Obtain assurances from host-country governments that narcotic crops will not be permitted within A.I.D. project areas
 - ▶ Coordinate with the Department of State on a yearly narcotics analysis and in obtaining the necessary commitments from host-country governments
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Since 1982, the Agency has expanded the scope of both its crop substitution activities and its NAE activities, but its narcotics-control policy remains essentially the same. With the recent expansion in A.I.D. projects, however, the Agency now works in non-growing regions of drug-producing nations as part of its counter-narcotics activities, given the migratory propensities of narcotics producers. Otherwise, A.I.D. projects generally follow the mandate of the 1982 policy paper.

Crop and Income Substitution Activities

A.I.D.'s crop substitution projects have proven extremely difficult to implement. This has also been the experience of other donors.⁴ According to Peter Reuter of the Rand Corporation, "there are no instances in which crop substitution has actually been achieved on a large scale⁵." A.I.D.'s crop substitution projects have evolved considerably since the 1970s from merely crop substitution to income substitution to area development. All share the same goal of present alternative development schemes--replacing illegal economic opportunities with legal ones. Despite this evolution, A.I.D.'s crop substitution projects have largely failed.

A.I.D.'s crop substitution projects have centered around the principal recipients of counter-narcotics funds: Bolivia, Pakistan, Peru, and Thailand. In the early 1970s, the Agency implemented a crop substitution project in Turkey which enjoyed some success, but A.I.D. was only briefly involved. An overview of the individual country experiences of the four major recipients of crop substitution assistance places A.I.D.'s lessons learned in a useful context.

Some form of A.I.D. crop substitution activities has existed in Bolivia since 1975. Since 1983, A.I.D.'s narcotics control efforts in Bolivia have focused on the area development of the Chapare region, the country's main coca-growing area. Not until the late 1980s, however, was a modest amount of momentum achieved as the Bolivian government became increasingly disposed to work with the United States. As a result of improved cooperation, coca eradication increased from roughly 200 hectares in 1986 to as many as

8,000 hectares in 1990. Despite these eradication efforts, net coca production in Bolivia (total hectares cultivated less coca eradicated) increased by 37 percent from 1986 to 1990. (See Figure 3 for data on coca growth and eradication in the Andes.)

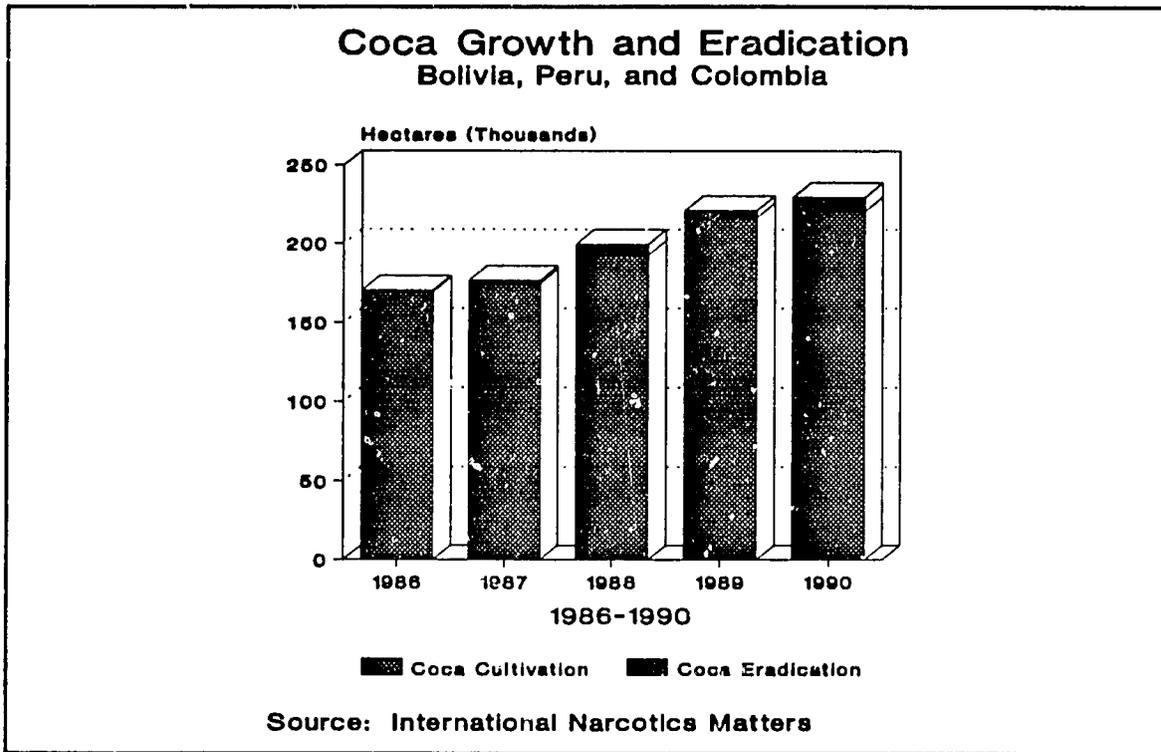


Figure 3

The crop substitution project in Pakistan, first implemented in 1983, also achieved some limited goals. A positive component of the project was the relatively high level of coordination among A.I.D., INM, and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control--(UNFDAC). The project in the North West Frontier reduced the poppy grown in the project area; however, growers moved to bordering areas, and Pakistan's national production data has not demonstrated the declines of the A.I.D. project areas. For example, metric ton production of opium fluctuated in the 1980s, with 1990 levels still slightly above 1986 levels.⁶ Data on hectares of poppy cultivated in the late 1980s does, however, point to stronger declines, but no clear trends have developed. As such, crop substitution in Pakistan has failed to achieve significant impact at the national level. The Pakistan case best demonstrates the limits of the area development approach. (See Figure 4 for trends in poppy output worldwide.)

Although A.I.D. has worked on crop substitution in Peru since 1981, the experience there has been discouraging. Peru's economy seriously deteriorated during the 1980s while a powerful insurgency group, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) gained strength. The Shining Path operates as a middleman between the Colombian cocaine cartels (the coca processors and traffickers) and Peru's impoverished peasantry (the growers), with the result that coca

production has soared to the detriment of counter-narcotics programs and the country's stability. According to INM, the number of hectares eradicated increased from zero in 1986 to over 5,000 in 1988 but declined to zero hectares in 1990. Over the same period Peru's net coca output expanded by nearly 21 percent.

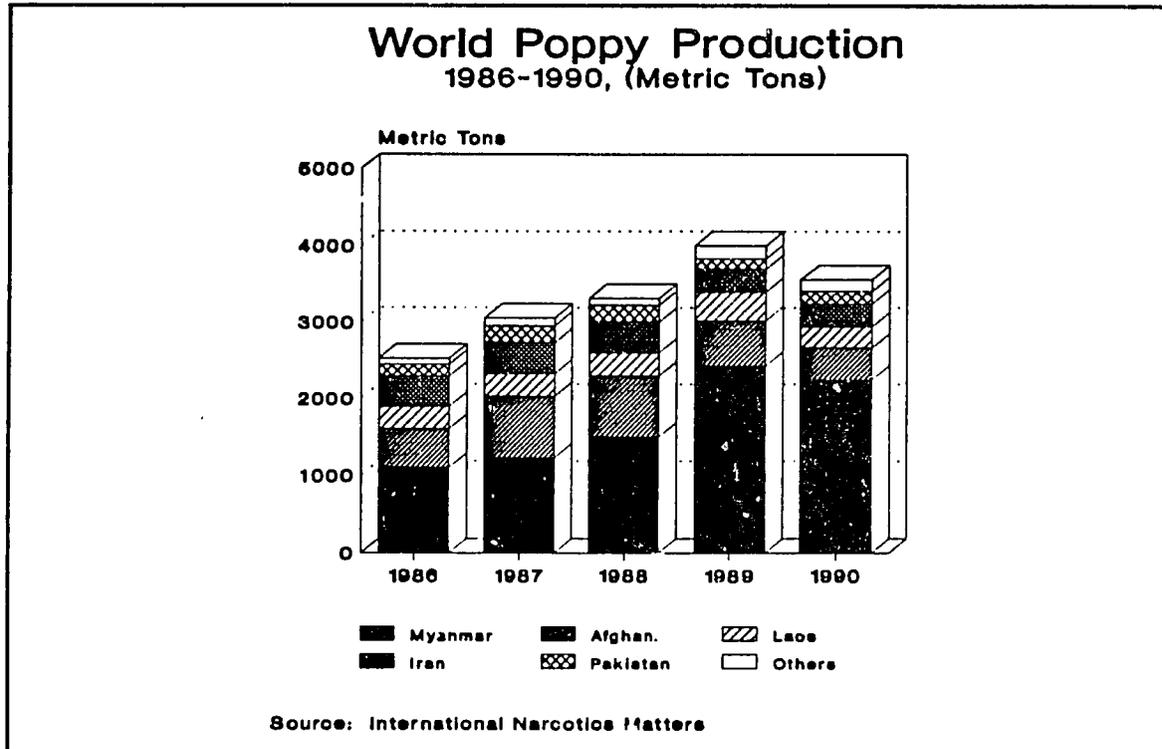


Figure 4

The experience of Thailand has mirrored that of Pakistan in that substitution has occurred only in a limited area. Like Pakistan, Thailand's data for hectares of poppy cultivated and poppy produced demonstrate no clear trends, with both increases and decreases in recent years. A.I.D. and UNFDAC crop substitution projects have been in place since the 1970s, although A.I.D.'s last project phased out in 1989. While A.I.D. and other donor support for crop substitution, along with government eradication efforts, appeared to slow poppy cultivation in project areas, overall poppy production increased by over sixty percent from 1986 to 1991. The latter data, however, do mask Thailand's apparent success over the longer term, as production data in the late 1980s represented only about one-half of estimated pre-1985 levels and about one-quarter of estimates from the mid-1960s. A major factor behind this performance was the government's decision in the early 1980s to support eradication activities, buttressed by INM and DEA assistance. Thailand, a prospering developing country, has in the interim become a net-importer of opium as larger-scale and cheaper producers in Myanmar and other neighboring countries have become its principal suppliers.

The production data cited and displayed in Figures 3 and 4 are presented to demonstrate overall trends rather than attribution for success or failure in A.I.D.'s crop substitution programs. A.I.D. is only one of a number of U.S., bilateral, multilateral, and host-country government agencies involved in narcotics control. These production trends point to the overall lack of success of all these implementing agencies. Some of the main reasons for the disappointing results of the A.I.D. portion of the crop substitution projects are discussed below.

Political Expectations

Narcotics projects are typically high-profile activities initiated by Washington, either in the executive branch or Congress. As such, these projects face the problems of any A.I.D. project generated and strongly driven by Washington. One potential problem with these projects is that the local actors, both the mission and the host country government, do not fully support the projects' assumptions, goals, and purposes. Such projects were created during the heroin epidemic in the 1960s and the 1970s and now again with the cocaine epidemic of the 1980s. The high Washington profile of narcotics projects creates special project management challenges, and chief among them is that of unrealistically high expectations. As a consequence of these expectations, monitoring and evaluation of narcotics-control projects face the temptation of public-relations type reporting rather than concrete and quantifiable reporting of indicators.

Economic Factors

Several decades of experience have shown that there are few if any crops that are as economically attractive for growers as coca and poppy. These lucrative crops yield several crops a year, are light to carry, are simple to process, and serve markets with a strong demand and a high price. These are just the attributes of crops that host country governments have sought to promote. Few, if any, substitutes, provide as great an economic return as these illicit crops.

Socio-Political Factors

The economics of substitution projects are further affected by the micro-politics that they display. First, peasants often have cultivated "illicit" crops for centuries to meet the need of various local practices. Such cultivation and local use historically have not generated the narcotics abuse so prevalent in developed countries. Second, peasants often feel removed from the policies of their own governments and even more so from the those of the U.S. government. As a result, even when economic incentives are in place for farmers, there are few guarantees that farmers will want to accept them. For example, even if the United States can provide greater market access to producing countries for their agricultural exports, that action is not necessarily related to the decisions peasants in the interior of a country may make when they cultivate their land. The socio-political challenge lies in translating the host-

country government's commitment toward narcotics control into compliance on the part of that government's citizenry.

Enforcement and Control

A.I.D.'s own experience demonstrates that crop and income substitution projects cannot succeed without critical levels of drug enforcement, eradication, interdiction, and the physical control by the host-country government of the crop-growing area.⁷ A.I.D., INM, other donors, and host country governments dangle the carrot (cash for eradication, credit, agricultural inputs, infrastructure, etc.), and the enforcement agencies (host-government enforcement agencies assisted by INM and DEA) employ the stick to force the acceptance of the incentive. In other words, economic incentives will be successful only if combined with strong legal and political action.

Substitution policies can begin to work only if these and other factors are met, such as public education campaigns, relatively price-competitive substitutes, and reduced corruption among enforcement agencies. Bolivia is a case in point. In the late 1980s the Bolivian government demonstrated unprecedented commitment to coca eradication. As cocaine prices fell in the late 1980s, alternative crops improved in price competitiveness, making substitution at least feasible. More importantly, the Bolivian military has helped enforce the eradication policies by making it clear to peasants that, although lucrative, coca cultivation is illegal and punishable. The combination of these and other factors has begun to develop an atmosphere in which substitution may find some eventual success. Despite these trends, however, crop eradication\crop substitution in Bolivia has not lowered net cultivation.

Lessons Learned in Crop Substitution

All the above factors raise serious issues of A.I.D. management of crop and income substitution projects. The most fundamental of these issues is whether A.I.D. can ever expect counter-narcotics projects to accomplish their objectives without simultaneous efforts by other parties to deal with other critical factors that impinge upon ultimate project success and which A.I.D. cannot control. For example, issues like international demand and enforcement are out of A.I.D.'s control yet can have a decisive effect on project success. Project evaluations thus far demonstrate that A.I.D. has not been able to effectively manage these types of projects.⁸

General lessons learned in crop and income substitution projects include:

- ▶ Given the worldwide magnitude of narcotics production, A.I.D.'s impact has been limited
- ▶ Host-country commitment is essential to success

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- ▶ Eradication and enforcement will have a greater impact than substitution, particularly in the short and medium term; in fact, as experience in Bolivia suggests, they can help develop an environment where crop substitution efforts could be more successful over the longer term
 - ▶ The power and corrupting influence of trafficking organizations threaten the safety and integrity of project managers, participating farmers, and local institutions
 - ▶ Counter-narcotics projects are high profile and often demand short-term results despite the fact that crop substitution projects are designed for long-term solutions
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Some more specific lessons learned include the following:

- ▶ NGOs, which implement portions of such projects, could play a decisive role in project success based on respect for NGOs in growing areas
 - ▶ Remote growing areas remain difficult for most donors to successfully implement substitution
 - ▶ It is extremely difficult, and often impossible, to provide economically competitive alternatives to growers in a timely manner
 - ▶ Once the prerequisites for crop substitution are attained, these projects will continue to face the normal problems of donor-funded integrated rural development projects
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Narcotics Awareness and Education

Since the mid-1980s, A.I.D.'s portfolio in counter narcotics has included a growing role for NAE activities. NAE projects recognize that narcotics is a worldwide problem affecting developing as well as developed countries. NAE activities function to curb local drug abuse and to strengthen host-country support against drug production, processing, and trafficking. NAE projects also serve to inform the public on the possible negative health effects of narcotics abuse, such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), as well as other social, economic, and political consequences.

As of early 1991, at least twenty-five countries have participated in some form of A.I.D. sponsored NAE activities. These included, for example, the attendance of several non-A.I.D. recipient countries in Asia through one or more regional awareness conferences

sponsored in cooperation with INM. The following countries have participated in A.I.D. NAE activities:

Afghanistan	Costa Rica	Haiti	Panama
Bangladesh	Dom. Republic	Laos	Paraguay
Belize	Ecuador	Jamaica	Peru
Bolivia	El Salvador	Malaysia	Philippines
Brazil	India	Mexico	Singapore
Colombia	Indonesia	Nepal	Sri Lanka
			Thailand

NAE projects often include a variety of components but generally avoid A.I.D. involvement in drug treatment overseas. A.I.D.'s NAE projects typically encompass the following types of activities:

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- ▶ Epidemiological surveys to measure the extent of drug abuse
 - ▶ Education and communication strategies for drug abuse prevention, including the dissemination of the results of epidemiological surveys
 - ▶ Training of local counterparts to institutionalize expertise in narcotics awareness and education
 - ▶ Policy dialogue on narcotics through briefings for host-country policy makers on the impact (social, political, and economic) of narcotics to support U.S. objectives
 - ▶ Dissemination of state-of-the-art methods, resources, and lessons learned through newsletters, networking, and other mechanisms
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Some in A.I.D. favor NAE activities over crop substitution projects because of the Agency's extensive experience working in health and education projects. Supporters argue that A.I.D. is particularly well equipped to undertake institution building and health communications projects. Because NAE projects are relatively new, there exists only a modicum of limited lessons learned thus far. Early experience points to some moderate successes. A recent evaluation of the Center for the Prevention of Drug Abuse (CEDRO) in Peru found CEDRO to be a "a permanent, prestigious and independent drug education and information center." The evaluation goes on to state that "CEDRO's public awareness efforts have been effective" and that CEDRO could be used as a model for similar projects in other countries in Latin America and worldwide."⁹ Although NAE activities alone will not

be sufficient to curb narcotics production and trafficking, they may play an important complementary role to crop substitution projects, as well as help prevent a non-drug producing nation from becoming a drug producing one.

A.I.D.'s Present Portfolio in Narcotics Control

A.I.D.'s narcotics control portfolio continues to expand and change in the early 1990s. The major cause of this expansion, as discussed above, is the Andean Initiative, which has targeted enormous new A.I.D. resources to Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. The Andean Initiative was also the major source of change in A.I.D.'s narcotics portfolio, with an increasingly greater share going to Latin America. The fact that approximately ninety percent of the world's poppy grows in countries in which A.I.D. is prohibited from operating, is another reason why A.I.D.'s maximum impact, particularly in crop substitution, is likely to occur in Latin America as opposed to Asia.

Another cause of this shift in A.I.D.'s narcotics control portfolio is programmatic. This shift refers to the Agency's magnified role in counter-narcotics activities that do not directly target the growing area. This indicates a move away from what has been called "pure crop substitution/income substitution/area development" in favor of a country or regional level approach that considers a wide range of factors--economic, demographic, legal, and cultural--as determinants of the overall environment for narcotics production and trafficking. Such an approach is also called alternative development. As a result of past experience, the Agency now works with a wider range of citizens in a geographic sense--especially potential migrants to growing areas.

The narcotics-related portfolio in the Bolivian mission most clearly reflects these program trends. For example, the Bolivian mission's portfolio currently includes crop substitution, narcotics awareness, policy reform, financial market development, rural electrification, and rural road activities. All of these activities support the mission's counter-narcotics strategy. Peru's counter-narcotics activities include administration of justice, investment and export promotion, policy reform, and narcotics education and public awareness. The counter-narcotics program in Colombia includes judicial protection, demand reduction, and export promotion. In addition, the missions frequently consider other narcotics-related issues in their on-going policy dialogue with the host country. These include such issues as money laundering, the availability of precursor chemicals in the processing stage, and issues related to trafficking. The other major programmatic change, as discussed above, is the growth in NAE activities, now encompassing over two dozen countries.

CONCLUSIONS

A.I.D. has implemented narcotics control activities for more than two decades, but results have been disappointing, particularly in crop substitution. As a participating agency in U.S. foreign policy, A.I.D. has become inevitably involved in international narcotics

control, which is a high priority issue for Americans. A.I.D.'s implementation of previous narcotics control projects has yielded minimal results. As such, the Agency has not had the luxury of building its present program on success. The main causes of failure have stemmed from a series of factors largely beyond A.I.D.'s control, such as international demand, enforcement, and host-country support. A.I.D.'s NAE projects have demonstrated some modest success and have expanded to educate dozens of nations on narcotics problems.

A.I.D. has learned some lessons from its previous projects in crop substitution but still has much to learn. Its new narcotics portfolio in the Andean region now targets growing and non-growing areas in the host country in an attempt to provide alternative development options at a national level, rather than in a specific project area. Likewise, A.I.D. has increasingly integrated a wide range of narcotics-related issues into its on-going policy dialogue with developing countries. However, missions will continue to face many structural obstacles, as outlined above, that will, in the absence of strong efforts by other parties, constrain these projects. In fact, A.I.D. will continue to control only a small portion of the key variables that will determine ultimate success. As a consequence, Congress and the executive branch agencies leading the U.S. war on drugs should evaluate A.I.D.'s future impact cognizant of the specific impediments that the Agency faces and the structural problems inherent to international supply reduction.

NOTES

1. The White House, National Drug Control Strategy, February 1991 and Raphael F. Perl, "Drug Control: International Policy and Options." Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division. Issue Brief IB 88093. Updated June 13, 1989.
2. White House. National Drug Control Strategy. Budget Summary. Washington, DC: GPO. February 1991.
3. USAID. "Narcotics." Policy Determination PD-1. Washington, DC: U.S. Agency for International Development. 1982.
4. André McNicoll. Drug Trafficking. A North-South Perspective. Ottawa: The North-South Institute. 1983.
5. Peter Reuter. "Eternal Hope: America's International Narcotics Efforts." The Rand Corporation. February, 1985.
6. Illicit crop cultivation and production figures vary considerably. According to INM, data in terms of hectares cultivated is generally preferred as a measure of production because of the superior accuracy of aerial photographs, particularly for coca. In the case of poppy and opium, however, INM cultivation data are spotty; therefore, production figures are often presented in terms of metric tons processed as is done here.
7. See Kumar et al., 1986.
8. Krishna Kumar, Ernest Carter, and Stan Samuelson. A Review of A.I.D.'s Narcotics Control Development Assistance Program. A.I.D. Evaluation Special Study No. 29. March 1986. The majority of these lessons learned come from various A.I.D.-sponsored studies on crop substitution activities, the most comprehensive of which is Kumar et al. See the attached bibliography for country-specific evaluations since the 1986 CDIE study.
9. Louis Berger International. Development Economics Group. August 1990. Evaluation of the Drug Education and Public Awareness Project. Final Report. (Prepared for USAID/Peru, Contract No. 527-0288).

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