United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Report to the Congress

March 1988

DRUG CONTROL

U.S. International Narcotics Control Activities

GAO/NSIAD-88-114

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Comptroller General
of the United States

B-225282

March 1, 1988

To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives

As required by Section 2007 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, this report summarizes the overall results of our examination of the effectiveness of the international narcotics control assistance provided pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291).

The report analyzes the global effectiveness of narcotics control programs and identifies impediments that countries face in their ability to deal with narcotics production and trafficking.

We are sending this report today to interested congressional committees; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretary of State; the Attorney General; and the Administrator, Agency for International Development.

Frank C Conahan
for Charles A. Bowsher
Comptroller General
of the United States

In the six drug producing countries reviewed, GAO found that the effectiveness of bilateral efforts to curtail drug cultivation and production were constrained by economic, political, or cultural conditions well beyond the control of program managers. However, GAO believes that the effectiveness of some U.S.-assisted crop control and eradication programs in cooperating countries could be improved by establishing program plans which contain clear and quantifiable goals and objectives as well as systematic methods to evaluate and judge performance. Also, procedures used to develop production estimates and eradication results could be improved by the introduction of better estimating methods and aerial survey techniques.

Principal Findings

The ability and motivation of foreign governments to control drug cultivation, processing, and trafficking vary widely. Vast quantities of narcotics are produced in countries where the central government has little control over the areas where the narcotics crops are being grown and there is little expectation that this will change.

Program Constraints

However, many countries have initiated drug control and drug awareness programs, frequently with U.S. assistance. But, in most cases, their governments face difficult economic, political, and cultural problems which limit their ability to deal with drug production and trafficking. These problems include

- ineffective central government control over drug growing regions,
- competing demands for scarce host-country resources,
- weak economies which enhance the financial incentives of drug cultivation,
- corrupt or intimidated law enforcement and judicial officials and witnesses,
- legal cultivation and traditional use of drugs in some countries, and
- increasing non-traditional demand for illegal drugs.

Futhermore, drug traffickers have enormous resources to pay farmers to grow drug crops, outfit labs, and elude drug interdiction operations. When drug control programs prove effective in one area, traffickers simply establish new sources of supply.

Drug Control Strategy

The U.S. international drug control strategy has both diplomatic and programmatic goals. Through diplomatic initiatives, the United States encourages other governments to engage in unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral drug control efforts. The United States shares information about the dangers of drug trafficking and abuse within the international community, conveys its policies and attitudes concerning these problems through its embassies and other personnel abroad, and supports and participates in regional and international drug control programs.

U.S. international drug control efforts involve the coordinated efforts and assets of numerous federal agencies, including the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs Service, Department of Defense, and United States Information Agency. However, major responsibilities for U.S. overseas programs are placed in the Department of State, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and Agency for International Development (AID). The roles of these three agencies are discussed below.

The Department of State

The Department of State has primary responsibility for developing, implementing, and monitoring U.S. international anti-drug policy. Drug control programs are the responsibility of the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters (INM), directed by the Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters. Each embassy has a designated narcotics coordinator, typically the deputy chief of mission, who is responsible for reporting on and coordinating U.S. drug control efforts and maintaining liaison with representatives of host-country governments on drug-related issues and activities. At posts with major narcotics assistance programs, program management is carried out by Narcotics Assistance Units (NAUS), under the direction of the narcotics coordinators. There are NAUS in the Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand, Turkey, and Venezuela.

INM seeks to enlist foreign government cooperation through bilateral and multilateral assistance for crop control, interdiction, and related enforcement activities in producer and transit countries. INM also supports narcotics-related development assistance projects, provides technical assistance for demand reduction programs, and funds training programs for foreign personnel in narcotics enforcement and related procedures. Further, INM is responsible for negotiating, implementing, monitoring, and terminating drug control agreements with foreign governments.

Table 1.1: INM Program Budget

Dollars in millions

Programs	Fiscal Year 1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Countries:					
Bolivia	$2,670	$1,537	$3,875	$12,540	$15,000
Brazil	0	750	690	3,325	1,400
Burma	2,447	5,515	6,285	9,417	7,000
Colombia	6,765	10,650	10,600	11,553	11,000
Ecuador	72	414	1,315	1,178	1,000
Jamaica[a]	49	487	1,521	3,330	2,000
Mexico	8,318	9,696	11,600	14,500	14,500
Pakistan	3,350	3,043	3,430	6,900	4,800
Peru	2,805	2,414	3,741	8,430	5,500
Thailand	3,005	2,704	3,600	4,738	4,000
Turkey	1,000	900	0	745	700
Latin America Regional[a]	1,706	2,066	6,388	10,111	7,000
East Asia Regional	170	175	0	0	0
Southwest Asia Regional	85	100	0	0	0
Africa/Asia Regional	0	0	313	624	450
Inter-regional aviation support	0	0	0	17,834	14,500
International organizations	2,575	2,807	70	4,000	1,100
Interregional programs	3,600	4,050	3,925	7,020	5,500
Program development and support	2,524	2,731	2,618	2,194	3,300
Total	**$41,141**	**$50,039**	**$59,971**	**$118,439**	**$98,750**

[a]During 1984-86, the program in Jamaica was funded from the Latin America Regional account
Source Department of State

Drug Enforcement Administration

DEA is responsible for providing central leadership, management, and coordination for intelligence and investigative functions to suppress trafficking in illicit drugs. For the U.S. international narcotics control program, DEA provides consultation, technical assistance, and training to drug law enforcement officials in foreign countries; participates in collecting and sharing international drug data; and assists in drug control activities and investigations where authorized. In addition, DEA works with foreign governments to locate and destroy clandestine laboratories and airstrips and is expanding its program to identify and interdict the chemicals and equipment needed to process illegal drugs. DEA has over 300 personnel assigned to more than 40 countries. It's steadily increasing budget for international drug control programs is shown in table 1.2.

Table 1.3: Estimated Foreign Production of Opium, Coca, and Marijuana, by Source Country[a]

	Production (metric tons)			
Country	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987 (estimated)**
Opium:				
Afghanistan	140 - 180	400 - 500	400 - 500	400 - 500
Burma	740	490	700 - 1,100	660 - 1,060
Iran	400 - 600	200 - 400	200 - 400	200 - 400
Laos	30	100	100 - 290	100 - 290
Mexico	20	25 - 45	20 - 40	10 - 30
Pakistan	40 - 50	40 - 70	140 - 160	100 - 130
Thailand	40	35	20 - 25	10 - 15
Total	**1,410 - 1,660**	**1,290 - 1,640**	**1,580 - 2,515**	**1,480 - 2,425**
Coca:				
Bolivia	42,000 - 63,000	42,000 - 53,200	44,000 - 52,920	40,000 - 50,000
Colombia	11,080	12,400	12,000 - 13,600	6,000 - 12,800
Ecuador	895	1,000	800 - 1,800	400 - 1,400
Peru	100,000	95,200	95,000 -120,000	90,000 -115,000
Total	**153,975-174,975**	**150,600-161,800**	**151,800-188,320**	**136,400-179,200**
Marijuana:				
Belize	1,100	645	550	330
Colombia	4,000 - 7,500	2,600 - 4,000	2,530 - 3,630	1,100 - 2,200
Jamaica	1,565	625 - 1,280	1,485 - 2,025	1,340 - 1,825
Mexico	2,500 - 3,000	3,000 - 4,000	4,000 - 6,000	2,000
Other	500	800	800 - 1,200	800 - 1,200
Total	**9,665 - 13,665**	**7,670 - 10,725**	**9,365 - 13,405**	**5,570 - 7,555**

[a]Statistics exclude production destroyed by eradication programs. They have not been reduced to reflect in-country consumption, seizures, or shipments to other markets, which affected the amount of worldwide production ultimately available in the United States. These statistics should be read as broad estimates. The reader should not be misled by the implied precision of the statistics.

Source: Department of State International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Mar. 1987.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Section 2007 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 requires the Comptroller General to investigate the effectiveness of U.S. assistance to international drug control programs, to issue interim reports, and to present a final report to the Congress by March 1, 1988.

In December 1986, we initiated a series of area- and country-specific investigations. The countries selected were chosen because of their (1) significance as source countries for drugs available for use in the United States and (2) large share of U.S. funding for international drug control

U.S. International Narcotics Control Strategy

INM develops, implements, oversees, and coordinates the international narcotics control activities and programs of the United States. INM's stated objective is to control production simultaneously in all key sectors of illicit drugs exported to the United States.

INM's principal strategy for narcotics control is to deter production and destabilize trafficking as close to the source as possible through a combination of crop control and eradication programs, development and economic assistance, and law enforcement. U.S. programs in producing countries, however, have had little effect on supply availability. In 1987, worldwide production of opium, coca, and marijuana continued at very high levels. Opium production was estimated at 1,480-2,425 metric tons, coca at 136,400-179,200 metric tons, and marijuana at 5,570-7,555 metric tons. Considering that the June 1987 NNICC report estimated the price of heroin and cocaine to be at all-time lows and marijuana to be holding at 1985 levels, a ready supply of these narcotic drugs seems to be available to the U.S. market.

Narcotics Crop Control Program

INM's first priority is crop control through government bans on cultivation, enforced by manual or chemical crop eradication. INM believes that preventing cultivation and destroying illicit narcotics at their source will prove to be the most effective means of reducing availability.

In theory, stopping drug production at the source represents a cost-effective way of controlling its availability to the world markets. Crop control programs, however, have proven difficult to develop and implement and, to date, have not effectively deterred the availability of narcotic drugs to the world and U.S. markets.

Constraints to Deterring Supply Availability

In 1986, the President's Commission on Organized Crime concluded that efforts to control illicit drug crops in source countries were inherently limited because

- many source countries were not motivated to reduce crop production;
- farmers could make far more income from illicit drug crops than from legitimate crops and alternative crops were not easily available;
- the governments in many source countries are weak and do not exert political or administrative control over growers;
- some major source countries are controlled by governments which are hostile to the United States, thus limiting U.S. influence over drug control; and

Development Assistance Programs

U.S. international narcotics control strategy generally recognizes that no crop control program will be effective unless a viable alternative is offered to the producing farmer. The United States, however, has had difficulty designing and implementing effective development alternatives to narcotics production in drug producing countries.

Both AID and INM provide development assistance in support of narcotics control objectives. AID attempts to provide long-term assistance to help reduce illicit narcotics cultivation by stimulating alternative and broader development opportunities. INM efforts are more short term in scope and are aimed at immediate goals, such as influencing farmers to take crops out of production in return for supplies for growing alternative crops, as well as other forms of assistance.

Agency for International Development Programs

AID's participation in narcotics control has evolved from a crop substitution approach to a targeted area development strategy. Early attempts at providing alternative crops as a substitute for narcotics crops were less than successful because

- identification of adequate substitute crops is difficult,
- narcotic crops are grown on marginally productive land,
- alternative crops could not provide the same level of income as narcotic crops, and
- enforcement or control programs were not an integral part of crop substitution projects.

AID now believes that a targeted area development approach, coupled with narcotics awareness programs, is the best way for it to contribute to U.S. international narcotics crop reduction goals. A targeted area development strategy provides comprehensive agricultural services to farmers, promotes employment, and strengthens infrastructures through long-term sustained development efforts. A main objective of these activities is to provide rural populations adversely affected by narcotics control efforts with alternative sources of income and employment (including off-farm employment). These activities also promote the extension of government administration and services as part of the modernization process in major narcotics growing areas. This approach recognizes that this strategy calls for a long-term sustained effort, possibly over a 5 to 10 year period, and that AID's efforts are aimed at providing a "safety net" of services and could not possibly generate a return that approaches the earnings available from the production of illicit narcotics. This approach is also predicated on the assumption that the host

in Thailand do not agree on the development approach to be taken to support U.S. narcotics reduction goals in that country, suggests that these agencies need to work together in a more cooperative manner to identify the most effective and efficient use of U.S. resources available for narcotics-related development activities.

AID activities in Pakistan seem better directed toward narcotics reduction. It's Northwest Frontier Area Development project, initiated in 1983 and funded at $30 million, is a comprehensive attempt to promote integrated rural development to eliminate opium poppy cultivation and change the project area—the Gadoon-Amazai—from an opium-based economy to a diversified agricultural and nonagricultural economy. The project funds activities designed to increase traditional food crop yields, promote new substitute cash crops, improve livestock and range management practices, and build physical infrastructure.

According to a September 1986 contract evaluation, the project's long-term development results may fall short of original goals. Short-term expenditures being made to reach a peaceful and effective compromise on banning opium poppy cultivation are essentially political and may result in a lower level of overall development in the future. The evaluation stated that the project has become more oriented toward welfare transfer payments and quieting the area's leaders rather than toward long-term development.

AID is also developing and implementing a series of drug awareness and education projects in a number of countries. These projects are designed to inform the leaders and general public that narcotics production, trafficking, and abuse are dangerous indigenous problems and not just a U.S. concern. AID believes that the awareness of the dangers of narcotics and public support for drug control activities are principal conditions necessary for successful enforcement of narcotics production bans and effective interdiction. For example, in fiscal year 1987 AID programmed about $1.2 million to support drug abuse prevention, awareness, and education projects in Thailand. AID also supported three narcotics awareness programs in Bolivia with a budget of about $2.7 million and two projects in Colombia at a cost of $496,000. While we did not examine whether these projects have been effective in reducing demand for illicit narcotic drugs, AID's Assistant Administrator for Latin America believes these projects are having considerable success in developing community awareness of the problems associated with drug production and processing and in mobilizing grass roots support for better enforcement.

their ability to effectively curtail production and trafficking of illicit narcotics in their respective countries.

For example, according to U.S. officials, corruption is an underlying issue which undermines the effectiveness of host-country narcotics law enforcement organizations. Law enforcement officials are often poorly paid and tend to be susceptible to bribes from traffickers.

Also, some of the principal law enforcement agencies in countries receiving U.S. assistance still need to improve their operations. U.S. officials in one country, for example, believe that the country's narcotics control board lacks a comprehensive program to identify, arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate major narcotics traffickers. U.S. officials cited several reasons for the lack of effective action against major traffickers, including the inability or unwillingness of law enforcement agencies, except in a few cases, to make arrests because of protection money paid by the traffickers to enforcement officials and to various officials at airports, seaports, and other check points to facilitate smuggling. Another reason is that although government narcotics investigative units may have interdiction responsibilities and understand interdiction techniques, they are unfamiliar with the specialized investigative techniques required to develop cases against major traffickers.

Extradition Treaties and Narcotics Laws

Effective extradition treaties between the United States and other countries are essential to bring illicit drug producers and traffickers to justice. Although the United States has extradition treaties with 103 countries, many of these treaties do not provide for extradition for drug offenses. Some of the countries covered in our review have no effective extradition treaties or have treaties of questionable utility for narcotics offenders. For example, the U.S. treaty with Colombia was hailed by U.S. government officials as a significant advance in U.S.-Colombian affairs and 16 traffickers were extradited to the United States from 1984 to 1987; however, the Supreme Court of Colombia has recently ruled that the treaty is no longer valid.

Pakistan has failed to honor any extradition requests made to date under the U.S.-Pakistan extradition treaty. The United States has been working on an extradition request made to Pakistan in October 1984. For various reasons, the individual has not been given over to U.S. custody. U.S. officials in Pakistan view this as a test case, and see no basis for advancing additional extradition requests until Pakistani policy for drug offenders is clearly established.

assessment is reasonable. Nevertheless, new ways of implementing current strategy may need to be developed if the United States expects to achieve any significant decreases in the amounts of narcotics available from producing and transiting countries.

eradication objectives, standards for availability and use of aircraft, and methodology to verify and evaluate program results.

Similar problems exist in other countries covered in our review. The U.S.-Thailand program, as another example, suffered from the absence of mutually acceptable program goals and performance standards and incomplete procedures for validating and evaluating activities and results.

Questionable Cultivation, Production, and Eradication Statistics

The accuracy of existing production and eradication statistics to evaluate crop control program results is questionable. NAU officials in several of the countries in our review told us that they consider available statistics suitable only for establishing trends and not for estimating actual production.

Cultivation Statistics

Statistics reported for narcotics crop cultivation are estimates based on aerial surveys, other photographic information, and intelligence gathered on the ground. A comprehensive aerial survey is needed to provide a reliable baseline for reporting production statistics and for verifying eradication results. Until a complete survey is made, estimates will be questionable and no reliable baseline will be available to evaluate the effectiveness of crop control programs.

In addition, it is essential to conduct aerial surveys at the right time of the growing season. Delayed surveys will distort cultivation estimates.

U.S. officials in one country told us that the host government had not made a comprehensive aerial survey and does not perform aerial surveys in areas not controlled by the central government. Also, U.S.-provided survey equipment and training had not always been used for the principal purpose for which it was provided.

Aerial surveys in two other countries were delayed about 3 months in 1987 due to aircraft problems. In one of these countries, the aerial surveyors did not photograph a 10-mile strip along the country's border and other areas in the country where no eradication efforts were conducted.

- encourage host governments to perform complete and more timely aerial surveys and require more validation of host- government eradication results to improve the accuracy of production and eradication statistics.

We also recommended that the Secretary of State and the AID Administrator take steps to ensure that the NAUs and AID missions work together to make certain that the most effective approach is followed in providing narcotics-related development assistance to Pakistan and Thailand.

In our report, DRUG CONTROL: U.S. Mexico Opium Poppy and Marijuana Aerial Eradicaton Program, (GAO/NSIAD-88-73), dated January 11, 1988, we recommended that the Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters negotiate with the government of Mexico to

- revise the formal agreements which form the framework of the bilateral program, to include provisions for (1) developing comprehensive aerial surveys to identify the extent and location of opium poppy and marijuana cultivation, (2) setting annual eradication goals consistent with reasonable standards for aircraft use and availability, and (3) validating and evaluating the program's activities and progress, and
- define the scope of the aircraft maintenance contractor's responsbilities and financial accountability for (1) determining maintenance requirements and maintaining spare parts inventories which are reasonable in relation to the distance of the program from its major suppliers and to the mission and deployment of the air fleet, (2) procuring spare parts and repairs and distributing spare parts, and (3) security of on-hand inventories.

We also recommended that the Secretary of State not request funding to purchase additional aircraft for the program in Mexico unless the Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics Matters determines (1) the extent of eradication which the Mexican government could accomplish if it uses its existing air fleet in accordance with reasonable standards for use and availability and (2) the number and type of additional aircraft, if any, which the program needs to achieve complete crop control.

Actions Taken or Planned to Improve Management Procedures

In commenting on our prior reports, INM informed us it has recognized the need for improved management procedures and techniques and has instructed all U.S. embassies involved in narcotics control activities to prepare project-based operating plans for both current and prior year projects. These plans are to include objectives, targets of performance, milestones of activity, and measures of effectiveness. This process will

monitoring and reporting system. INM is also acting to correct specific management deficiencies identified in our individual country reports. Effective implementation of the actions planned and underway should improve the effectiveness of future program operations.

Requests for copies of GAO reports should be sent to:

U.S. General Accounting Office
Post Office Box 6015
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877

Telephone 202-275-6241

The first five copies of each report are free. Additional copies are $2.00 each.

There is a 25% discount on orders for 100 or more copies mailed to a single address.

Orders must be prepaid by cash or by check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents.

provide U.S. officials with a framework or plan for tracking and evaluating program progress as well as financial obligations and expenditures.

INM also informed us that it would establish a performance monitoring and reporting system in fiscal year 1988 as well as create a four-person planning and evaluation division.

INM is also acting to correct some of the more specific management problems identified in our report on the U.S-Mexico program. For example, it is negotiating a new agreement with Mexico to govern the operation of an aircraft maintenance contract. The new contract is expected to establish clearer lines of authority and responsibility, thereby partially dealing with some of the problems we noted which hindered effective performance in 1987 and prior years.

INM agrees that yield and eradication statistics provided by cooperating governments are not as accurate as needed to support its program and reports that it is making efforts to improve systems and evaluate results. INM also recognizes the need for improved aerial surveys and said that the introduction of better systems of crop surveying and verification are high U.S. priorities for U.S. programs in cooperating countries.

INM is also trying to improve the aircraft parts procurement process and inventory management procedures, problems associated with program management in the U.S.-Mexico program.

The Department of State and AID also generally concurred that coordinated planning and delivery of STATE/AID development efforts would be useful.

Overall GAO Observations

The effectiveness of U.S.-assisted crop control and eradication programs in cooperating countries could be improved by establishing program plans containing clear and quantifiable goals and objectives and systematic methods for evaluating and judging performance. Procedures used to develop production estimates and eradication results could be improved through better estimating methods and aerial survey techniques.

INM has initiated action to develop project-based operating plans, and improved evaluation procedures. It will also establish a performance

Production and Eradication Statistics

Net production figures are based on cultivation, yield, and eradication estimates. Net production estimates in the countries in our review are of questionable validity not only because yield estimates vary widely but also because host-government eradication statistics are questionable. Optimistic reporting of eradication results in these countries has caused NAU officials to be concerned about the accuracy of host-government reporting.

To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of eradication programs accurately, eradication results must be verified systematically; however, U.S. agencies in some of the countries we reviewed do not systematically verify the results of government eradication efforts. Verification programs in other countries have been more effective but could be improved by the introduction of better surveillance techniques and procedures.

Based on limited U.S. spot checks, NAU officials have reason to doubt some reported eradication statistics. For example, at an eradication site in one country, U.S. officials found that the eradication attempt was less than 50 percent effective in eradicating opium and had left a significant poppy crop intact in surrounding areas. U.S. officials on additional on-site visits made similar observations.

During our field visit to an eradication site in one country, we observed that eradication took place after the crop had been partially harvested. U.S. officials in another country told us that that country's eradication estimates have been overstated and that they have documented cases of over-reporting. We also viewed the results of spraying activities in other countries and found that sprayed fields did not sustain consistent damage.

GAO Recommendations in Prior Reports

In two reports on this subject issued in January and February 1988, we made a series of recommendations to the Department of State and to AID aimed at improving program management. In our report, DRUG CONTROL: U.S.-Supported Efforts in Burma, Pakistan, and Thailand, (GAO/NSIAD-88-94) dated February 26, 1988, we recommended that the Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters

- seek to develop more specific, quantifiable goals in project agreements and perform required evaluations, including evaluating the results of development assistance, and

Program Management

Despite the constraints and limitations associated with U.S. efforts in foreign countries, the effectiveness of U.S. international narcotics control programs could be improved. Our review of program management in six drug producing countries indicated that

- clear program goals and objectives had not been established for all country programs;
- periodic evaluations to assess performance and redirect programs had not been systematically made;
- some program activities, like aerial surveys, could be better managed; and
- cultivation and eradication statistics were of questionable validity.

Program Goals and Evaluations

To assess the capability and gauge the success of drug suppression efforts overseas, U.S. embassies need to develop detailed plans for implementing and evaluating narcotics activities in individual countries. In 1979 we reported that existing plans lacked consistency, clearly defined objectives, and well-defined projects.[1] Plans which explicitly include the means to achieve established short and long-term goals as well as proposed initiatives were generally recognized as needed to guide program performance.

Our current review of planning and programming documents in six drug producing countries indicated that NAUs in some of those countries continue to operate without clear and quantifiable goals and objectives or systematic methods to evaluate and judge program performance. For example, U.S. objectives were sometimes stated in macro terms, such as the total eradication of illicit production. While this is a desirable long-term goal, action programs, to be effectively managed, need to be expressed in more precise and quantifiable terms. U.S. program managers need to express what they expect to accomplish with the funds allocated. Without a realistic assessment of what the U.S. program is intended to accomplish, it is difficult to evaluate program performance.

The U.S. program in Mexico is a case in point. That program suffered from the lack of bilateral agreement on program goals, standards, and evaluations. We noted, for example, that the United States and Mexico have been partners in the narcotics eradication program for more than a decade without agreeing on such critical issues as the frequency and scope of surveys to determine the extent of illegal cultivation, annual

[1] Gains Made in Controlling Illegal Drugs, Yet the Drug Trade Flourishes (GGD-80-4) Oct. 25, 1979.

The United States views the need for effective asset seizure and conspiracy laws as necessary in foreign government attempts to curtail the drug trade in their countries. Conspiracy laws would allow law enforcement officials more latitude to expand prosecutions from the specific individual charged with a crime to those who have aided and abetted the criminal act. Seizure laws would enable law enforcement officials to confiscate assets which were acquired with illegal profits of the criminal act. Colombia has asset seizure and conspiracy laws. At the time of our review, U.S. efforts to persuade the other countries to enact such laws have not been effective.

Conclusions

The need to attack supply availability at the source, within the context of a total U.S. strategy of law enforcement and demand reduction, is a key element in the U.S. fight against narcotic drugs. INM's primary strategy of controlling drug production at its source has resulted in increased levels of eradication but has not kept pace with expanding and shifting levels of production. Despite increased assistance for eradication, crop control, and law enforcement to source countries, opium, coca, and marijuana production continue at high levels and narcotics supplies remain plentiful.

Some reduction in the foreign production of marijuana has been achieved in recent years. However, total control of opium production seems outside the reach of the United States. Even if control is achieved in countries assisted by the United States, other countries outside U.S. political influence remain as major producers.

Cocaine production, which seems to be the most serious threat to the public health of the United States, remains at high levels. U.S. programs in Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia to reduce cocaine availability have had little effect to date.

INM believes, however, that its focus on supply reduction and related efforts is a sound approach. Results, it believes, have to be measured over a much longer term than that examined in our review and program performance needs to be seen in the context of potentially far more serious outcomes had crop control and enforcement efforts not been undertaken. INM also believes that its performance needs to be judged with due consideration of the cultural, political, economic, and criminal forces that are difficult to modify in the normal course of foreign relations. Given the intractable characteristics of this problem, we believe INM's

INM Development Assistance

INM also provides agricultural and technical assistance and small infrastructure projects to assist cooperating governments to enforce bans on narcotics production and to encourage farmers to stop growing opium poppies, coca, and marijuana.

INM's Malakand area development and agriculture outreach activities in Pakistan are its foremost attempts to provide development to achieve a narcotics reduction goal. This strategy is similar to an income replacement approach but it contains a clearly defined enforcement orientation. The project in Pakistan seems to have accomplished its short-term goals. However, there was concern that once the project is terminated, farmers may revert to growing opium poppies since no long-term economic alternative was provided.

NAU officials in Pakistan were looking to AID to more closely program long-term development assistance in support of INM's short-term program so that the progress made could be sustained through a more lasting development contribution.

Enforcement Assistance

U.S. strategy overseas also recognizes the need to improve the capabilities of host-country law enforcement agencies and to seek the enactment of needed narcotics conspiracy and asset seizure laws to complement crop control goals and objectives. INM funds training for law enforcement officers and personnel and for operational support for narcotics law enforcement agencies. INM also attempts to help source countries improve their legal and judicial systems, especially in the areas of investigation and case presentation, so they can function more efficiently in identifying and prosecuting drug offenders.

Some progress has been made in these areas, but substantial improvements are possible.

Adequacy of Host-Country Law Enforcement Organizations

The United States provides law enforcement agencies in each of the countries included in our review with training, equipment, and operational and technical support. It also provides advisory assistance to help host governments develop programs to reduce the supply of drugs, immobilize refineries, identify export staging areas, and interdict drug shipments.

Although U.S. assistance has improved the capabilities of these organizations, they still have substantial problems to overcome to improve

government will institute and implement effective crop control and enforcement programs.

Whether this approach will deliver the long-term development results with the attendant reduction in narcotics crop reduction remains to be seen. Attempts at area development have not been fully successful due to inadequate project design, poor project administration, and lack of host-government commitment to project objectives.

For example, the Chapare Regional Development project in Bolivia, one of AID's earlier attempts at area development, has shown little result to date. It was begun in 1984 with a projected U.S. cost of $16.9 million but has been plagued by faulty design; inefficient project administration; and, more importantly, failure of the host government to introduce needed enforcement and control methods.

In early 1986, AID's Assistant Administrator for Latin America, after observing that the Chapare project was not having the intended impact, suspended most elements of the project until the Bolivian government could marshall a more effective enforcement and control program. Later in 1986, in a more formal evaluation of the project, AID found that little progress had been made, the basic strategy underlining the project's approach was flawed, and coca crops had not been controlled or substantially reduced. AID noted that the initial project had too many components and diversified activities for successful implementation and did not produce the control essential to success.

The evaluation also pointed out that (1) the ecology of the Chapare region is not sufficient to support adequately the numbers of people now living there, thus necessitating a revised strategy to influence farmers to migrate from that area to more productive areas of the region, and (2) AID/Bolivia failed to assign adequate project management resources and to use effective procurement processes.

In February 1987, AID decided to redirect the project to correct the problems identified in the 1986 assessment. However, it is too soon to tell whether the redesigned project will overcome prior strategy defects and administrative deficiencies.

Although prior drug reduction programs have contributed to lower production, AID's current area development project in Thailand has no explicit narcotics reduction goals and is located in a marginal opium poppy production area. This, coupled with the fact that the NAU and AID

- the set of source countries is not fixed, thus new producers emerge to replace suppressed production.

U.S. officials we interviewed and reports we reviewed during our review indicated that these constraints continue to exist. For example, as discussed below, governments continue to lack effective control over producers and traffickers, drug production continues to shift from one producing area to another, and some major producing countries do not have drug control programs.

Lack of Government Control

Governments in many countries which are attempting to cooperate with U.S. crop reduction efforts continue to be hampered by ineffective control over growers. In Burma, for example, the government has no control over the major growing areas and there is little prospect that this situation will change in the immediate future. Pakistan is cooperating with the United States to limit opium poppy production, but some of the producing areas are outside of its political control. Bolivia still has no effective force to control the activities of narcotics traffickers and producers.

Uncooperative and Hostile Governments

Much of the opium is produced in countries where, for various reasons, it is not possible to undertake U.S.-assisted narcotics control activities. For example, Iran, Afghanistan, and Laos, countries which are hostile to the United States, produce more than 49 percent of the world supply. Thus, reductions achieved in other countries would not significantly offset the supply available to the United States, since annual heroin consumption in the United States is the equivalent of 60 to 70 tons of opium and these countries produce an estimated 1,190 tons, 17 to 20 times U.S. demand.

Shifting Production Base

The history of control efforts shows that when control efforts are successful in one country, the base of production shifts to another, making it very difficult to control overall production. Thailand is a case in point. U.S.-Thai efforts have been relatively successful in reducing annual opium production from 40 metric tons in 1984 to 10 to 15 metric tons in 1987. However, at the same time, production in Laos increased from 30 tons in 1984 to 100 to 290 tons in 1987, more than offsetting the decreased production in Thailand. Similar shifts have been seen in other countries. For example, reductions in marijuana production in Colombia have been met with increased production in other producing countries. Also marijuana is now being cultivated more extensively in Thailand.

programs. We visited and reviewed drug control programs in Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia, Pakistan, Burma, and Thailand. We also interviewed officials of the U.N. Fund for Drug Abuse Control in Vienna. We issued the following interim reports: (1) Drug Control: U.S. Mexico Opium Poppy and Marijuana Aerial Eradication Program, GAO/NSIAD 88-73, January 11, 1988; (2) Drug Control: U.S.-Supported Efforts in Burma, Pakistan, and Thailand, GAO/NSIAD 88-94, February 26, 1988; and (3) Drug Control: River Patrol Craft for the Government of Bolivia, GAO/NSIAD 88-101FS, February 2, 1988. A report on the Colombia/Bolivia program is in process. This report summarizes the overall results of our work pursuant to section 2007 of act.

Our objectives in preparing this report were to provide overall observations regarding the worldwide narcotics problem and to summarize the (1) constraints on the implementation of successful drug control programs and (2) problems in the administration of the U.S. international drug control effort expressed in our interim reports.

We did not obtain formal comments on this report. We discussed the contents of a draft of this report with responsible officials of the Department of State and AID and have incorporated their views in appropriate sections of the report. Informal views of the National Drug Policy Board have also been noted in the report.

Table 1.2: DEA Budget Authority for International Drug Control Efforts

Dollars in millions

Fiscal year	Budget amount
1981	$31 0
1982	34.3
1983	41.5
1984	48.6
1985	51.0
1986	60.4
1987	86.9
1988	93.7

Source· National and International Drug Law Enforcement Strategy, National Drug Enforcement Policy Board, Jan 1987, and DEA.

Agency for International Development

AID has focused its narcotics production control efforts on rural development programs in traditional drug growing regions. During fiscal years 1986-88, AID committed more than $46.6 million in direct support of U.S. drug control objectives in developing countries. It currently has four area development projects in Bolivia, Pakistan, Peru, and Thailand. AID also works with similar agencies in other donor countries to enlist support for development programs in drug source countries.

In addition, since 1985, AID has initiated drug awareness programs in Pakistan and Thailand and several Latin American countries. Awareness programs are designed to convince officials and the general public in drug producing and drug transit countries that drugs are not just a U.S. problem but also affects their own societies through increased crime, increased spending for drug treatment, and overall decline in societal values.

Extent of Opium, Coca, and Marijuana Production

The U.S. budget for international drug control is modest relative to the scope of worldwide production of illegal drugs and the vast funds available to drug traffickers. Table 1.3 shows the extent of opium, coca, and marijuana production by source country from 1984 through 1987.

INM also produces the annual International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, which was mandated by Congress in 1983. This report includes detailed country summaries and strategies and forms the basis for the President's certification of the adequacy of drug control cooperation by individual foreign governments.

Section 2005 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 further amended the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to require automatic withholding of the obligation or expenditure of 50 percent of U.S. foreign assistance allocated to any major illicit drug producing or drug transit country. In addition, the act requires U.S. executive directors of multilateral development banks to vote against any loan to or funds for such a country. However, these restrictions will not apply if the President determines that the country either has fully cooperated with the United States or has taken adequate steps of its own to control illicit drugs. The President may also allocate all of the funds if he certifies that the "vital national interests" of the United States require such assistance. The Congress may reject the President's certification and sustain the withholdings.

INM Budget

Table 1.1 shows INM's budget allocations for fiscal years 1984 through 1988. The preponderance of INM funding has been allocated to crop control and interdiction programs in the major drug source countries. In fiscal year 1987, INM assisted more than 35 countries, including major drug transit countries, under its regional programs.

Training for foreign officials is a key component of the regional efforts, which also include financial assistance for Executive Observation Programs, demand reduction and public awareness initiatives, and support for participation in international conferences. Funds are made available for communications equipment, fuel, and other costs incurred by the foreign governments in supporting drug control programs. Although it does provide funding to countries which lie along transit paths to the United States, INM relies heavily on U.S. law enforcement agencies, including DEA, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Customs Service, to support interdiction programs in such countries as the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands.

Introduction

Drug abuse is a major international problem with adverse social, political, and economic impacts. Initially viewed as a problem primarily in industrialized consumer nations, drug abuse is now recognized as a major concern in many drug producing and transit countries. International drug control has become a critical element of U.S. foreign policy as the United States encourages other governments to curtail cultivation, processing, and trafficking of illicit drugs.

The 1985-86 report of the National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee (NNICC) discussed U.S. use of illegal drugs during 1982 through 1985. According to NNICC, the most recent estimate of the number of heroin users was made in 1981, at which time, there were an estimated 490,000 heroin addicts/users. From 1978 through 1984, heroin-related hospital emergencies and deaths and the use of heroin in combination with other drugs have increased. In addition, the connection between intravenous drug use and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome has become a serious health issue.

Cocaine poses the most serious drug problem for the United States because of its widespread availability, use, and significant health consequences. Cocaine consumption per year in the United States increased from 31 metric tons in 1982 to 72.3 metric tons in 1985. A 1982 survey by the National Institute on Drug Abuse estimated that 4.2 million Americans were cocaine users; a similar survey in 1985 estimated the number at 5.8 million. During this period, the widespread availability of "crack," a less expensive and highly addictive form of cocaine, and "black tar," a less expensive and highly pure form of heroin, caused significant increases in drug-related hospital emergencies. During 1982-85, the amount of marijuana consumed in the United States declined 4 percent and the number of users dropped from an estimated 20 million to 18.6 million Americans.

U.S. strategy to curb the extent and impact of drug abuse in the United States is outlined in the 1987 National and International Drug Law Enforcement Strategy issued by the National Drug Enforcement Policy Board. The strategy links five major components of the drug program: international drug control; intelligence; interdiction and border control; investigation and prosecution; and diversion and controlled substance analogue regulation. Other components of the strategy include drug abuse education and prevention, medical detoxification and treatment, and research. The National Drug Policy Board, created by Executive Order 12590 on March 26, 1987, is developing an updated strategy document which it expects to release in the near future.

Contents

Executive Summary		2
Chapter 1 Introduction		8
	Drug Control Strategy	9
	Extent of Opium, Coca, and Marijuana Production	12
	Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	13
Chapter 2 U.S. International Narcotics Control Strategy		15
	Narcotics Crop Control Program	15
	Development Assistance Programs	17
	Enforcement Assistance	20
	Conclusions	22
Chapter 3 Program Management		24
	Program Goals and Evaluations	24
	Questionable Cultivation, Production, and Eradication Statistics	25
	GAO Recommendations in Prior Reports	26
	Actions Taken or Planned to Improve Management Procedures	27
	Overall GAO Observations	28
Tables		
	Table 1.1: INM Program Budget	11
	Table 1.2: DEA Budget Authority for International Drug Control Efforts	12
	Table 1.3: Estimated Foreign Production of Opium, Coca, and Marijuana, by Source Country	13

Abbreviations

AID	Agency for International Development
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
INM	Bureau of International Narcotics Matters
NAU	Narcotics Assistance Unit
NNICC	National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee

Development Strategy

AID has provided long-term assistance to help reduce illicit narcotics cultivation initially through crop substitution and now through area development programs. These programs were only partly successful for a variety of reasons, including difficulties in identifying substitute crops and in integrating enforcement or control programs with development projects.

AID's present strategy is to couple area development programs with narcotics awareness programs. Area development programs are aimed at providing rural populations that are adversely affected by narcotics control efforts with alternative sources of income and employment. These programs also promote the extension of government administration and services as part of the modernization process in major narcotics growing areas. This strategy calls for a long-term sustained effort, possibly over a 5- to 10-year period.

Program Management

GAO also observed that program management in the six producing countries included in its review could be improved by establishing clear program goals and objectives, conducting periodic evaluations to assess program performance, and improving aerial surveys and cultivation and eradication statistics.

Recommendations

The two reports which GAO has completed on U.S. narcotics control programs, one concerning Mexico and the other concerning Burma, Pakistan, and Thailand, contain recommendations to the Department of State and AID aimed at improving program management.

Agency Comments

The agencies generally agreed with GAO's country-specific recommendations. These recommendations together with agency actions taken or planned in response to them are discussed in chapter 3.

Executive Summary

Purpose

Section 2007 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 requires the GAO to investigate the effectiveness of assistance provided through the U.S. international narcotics control program and to report periodically to Congress on the results of its reviews.

In response to the act, GAO in 1987 reviewed U.S.-assisted drug control programs in Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Burma, Pakistan, and Thailand. At that time, these countries accounted for about 35 percent of the worldwide production of coca, 51 percent of the opium, and substantial quantities of the marijuana.

This report summarizes the overall results of GAO's efforts pursuant to the statute. The report discusses the global effectiveness of narcotics control programs and identifies impediments that countries face in their ability to deal with drug production and trafficking. Two separate reports containing country-specific details were previously issued by GAO, and one additional one will be issued shortly.

Background

Drug abuse is a major international problem and its control has become a critical element of U.S. foreign policy. U.S. international narcotics control efforts involve the coordinated efforts and assets of numerous federal agencies. For example:

- The Department of State has overall responsibility for U.S. international drug control activities. It has narcotics assistance units in 13 major drug source and transit countries, and in 1987 it assisted more than 40 foreign governments and multilateral organizations with drug control.
- The Agency for International Development (AID) has implemented comprehensive development projects in drug growing regions and has funded drug awareness programs.
- The Drug Enforcement Administration has more than 245 agents in foreign countries and works closely with foreign governments to improve their law enforcement capabilities.

Results in Brief

Despite increased U.S. assistance to cooperating countries' crop control and law enforcement efforts and increased eradication, narcotics production remains at high levels and supplies available to the United States remain plentiful.